**Speakers**

* Josh Hickford, TSB New Zealand Senior Management Accountant
* Poncho Rivera-Pavon, Next Step General Manager
* Alex Tyrrel, Graduate Connection National Account Manager
* Josh has a background with a Big 4 Accounting firm (PWC), Banking, not for profits and is a member of the Institute of Directors
* Resilience Definition: The process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress. It means, “bouncing back from difficult experiences”.
* These could be in your family/relationships/health/workplace/Finance
* “Your hardest times often lead to the greatest moments of your life”
* Josh was diagnosed with cancer in 2017 and he initially learnt as much as he could about his condition
* Resilience can be learned
* It is important to have a positive mindset
* He took a sports approach – he could lose wickets, but not the game
* He built a good network relying on family and his workplace. He believes this is crucial
* Josh worked 70% of the time and took a flexible approach
* He had his mind set on Castaway New Zealand and went on (2 months after he achieved remission) as the first CA
* He learnt a lot about himself and took the opportunity to push himself outside of his comfort zone
* He went in with his instinct
* He believes money could not buy the experience and It is one he will never forget
* Josh defeated cancer and took on a physical challenge – iron man
* He set goals, some seemed impossible
* He hired a trainer and identified mentors for their experience, insights and independent voices
* Mentors can be a boss, parent or community leader who enjoys sharing knowledge
* It is very useful to have a mentor in your life
* He created milestones and celebrated these to keep him going
* He trusted the process
* It was one of the most satisfying moments of his life
* Sir Edmond Hillary, “It is not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves. You don’t have to be a fantastic hero to do certain things to compete. You can just be an ordinary chap, sufficiently motivated to reach challenging goals”
* Being a CA opens doors, it is a well-respected and trusted body
* We are all showing resilience as we face COVID right now – in our households and communities
* Josh recently launched a mobile app with the Cancer Society
* This involved a lot of learning
* He believes he has the skillset to walk into a room with people who are vastly more experienced and feel comfortable due to his CA background
* It is important to always grow and adapt, seek information and listen to people
* Network constantly, you never know who you will meet (at any time) that could be your future employer
* Josh is now a Chief Executive at Te Karaka, his dream job
* Through his experience and fight with cancer, he was pushed in the right direction
* The CA game him the exposure to different industries
* Josh has been on the front of an international magazine – Acuity and his is proud to represent the profession
* He believes that your personal and professional lives are closely linked and you shouldn’t be afraid to connect them

**Graduate Connections is Australia’s largest student job board**

* It includes 400 of Australia’s largest employers incorporating Accounting firms, Banks and Corporates ranging from IBM to Coles
* There is a lot of fake news about a lack of graduate opportunities
* There is a downturn, but not much a reduction in advertisements and applications for graduate recruitment
* Some organisations pushed back their recruitment to change selection processes to make them virtual
* 80% of employers are planning on going ahead with graduate programs
* Internships took a hit, many were put on hold
* Virtual internships are now happening
* There is an increate in applications and students are considering different pathways
* The changes are not the same as the Global Financial Crisis. Employers learnt their lesson that if they put recruitment on hold, they will have a disadvantage in young talent
* Employer events are virtual and the people joining are engaged with specific brands
* While psyche testing and parts of interviews were already online, the virus has caused things to be taken one step further
* Virtual interviews and assessment centres have become the norm
* More of a shift is expected for next year and 2022
* There are quite a few entry level roles
* It is expected that roles will move onshore
* Get experience wherever you can – volunteer or take part-time roles
* Onboarding graduates will be virtual, as will buddies and mentors
* Virtual learning access will be granted early
* Don’t give up, apply
* No-one has been here before so take the initiative to take positive steps and help out
* Build your graduate community
* Beat the crowd and try applying to organisations direct
* Take on volunteer or part-time work
* Don’t try to predict what you think a recruiter wants you to be
* Seek growth potential and broad roles
* Trust the process, don’t be single minded
* Get experience and you will thrive in these challenging times