

The Expert Edge

Your quarterly community newsletter from Jade & Natasha

+ This Issue: Artificial Intelligence & You

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01 - FROM YOUR ERM TEAM

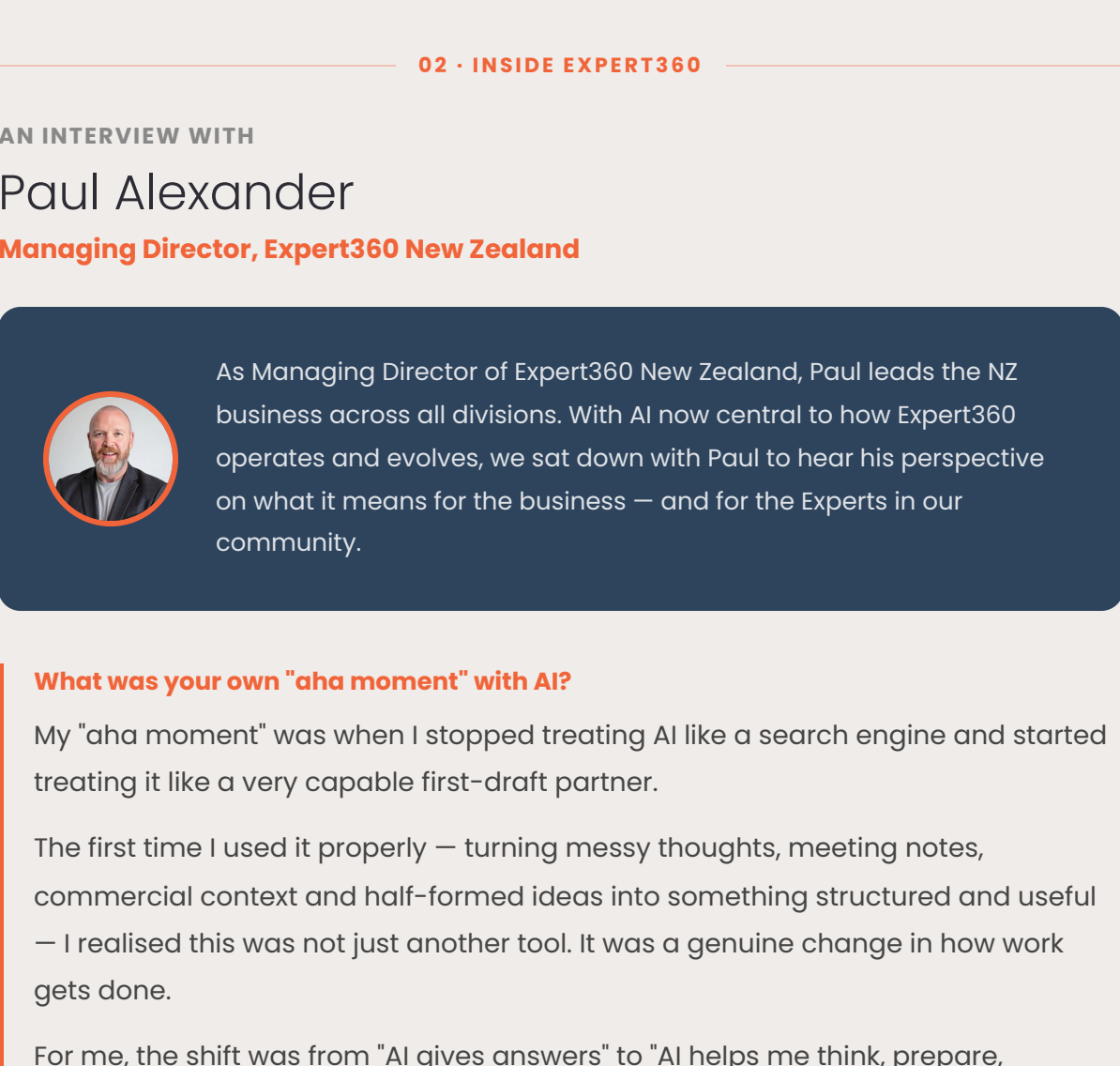


Jade & Natasha

Expert Relationship Managers - Wellington & Auckland

Welcome to Issue 2

Welcome to Issue 2 of the Expert Edge! We're back and this one has a special energy to it... make sure you read all the way to the end to see our very own GM Setu Evan Belford meeting "The Rock" Dwayne Johnson!



Bridget Loudon-Harris (Founder & CEO, Expert360) visits the Wellington team — May 2026

In early May, we were thrilled to welcome Bridget Loudon-Harris, Founder and CEO of Expert360, to New Zealand — visiting from Sydney, Australia. It was a fantastic opportunity for Bridget to connect with our NZ team and clients, and a real highlight of the quarter for all of us.

This quarter, we've leaned into a theme that's impossible to ignore — **Artificial Intelligence**. Whether you're already deep in the AI space, or simply noticing it creeping into your day-to-day, it's reshaping the way we all work.

02 - INSIDE EXPERT360

AN INTERVIEW WITH

Paul Alexander

Managing Director, Expert360 New Zealand



As Managing Director of Expert360 New Zealand, Paul leads the NZ business across all divisions. With AI now central to how Expert360 operates and evolves, we sat down with Paul to hear his perspective on what it means for the business — and for the Experts in our community.

What was your own "aha moment" with AI?

My "aha moment" was when I stopped treating AI like a search engine and started treating it like a very capable first-draft partner.

The first time I used it properly — turning messy thoughts, meeting notes, commercial context and half-formed ideas into something structured and useful — I realised this was not just another tool. It was a genuine change in how work gets done.

For me, the shift was from "AI gives answers" to "AI helps me think, prepare, communicate and move faster." That was the moment it clicked.

"Don't make AI a theoretical topic. Make it a daily habit."

— Paul Alexander, Managing Director, Expert360 New Zealand

[Read the full interview](#)

03 - AI IN OUR WORLD

How your ERMs are using AI

Our job has always been about human connection — and that hasn't changed. AI is simply helping us free up more time for exactly that. *"We're becoming the human in the loop — and we wouldn't have it any other way."*

— Jade & Natasha

WHERE AI SHOWS UP DAY-TO-DAY

Reporting & planning

Faster dashboards, flagging Experts approaching contract end.

Communication drafting

Fast first drafts, then making it personal.

Content like this newsletter

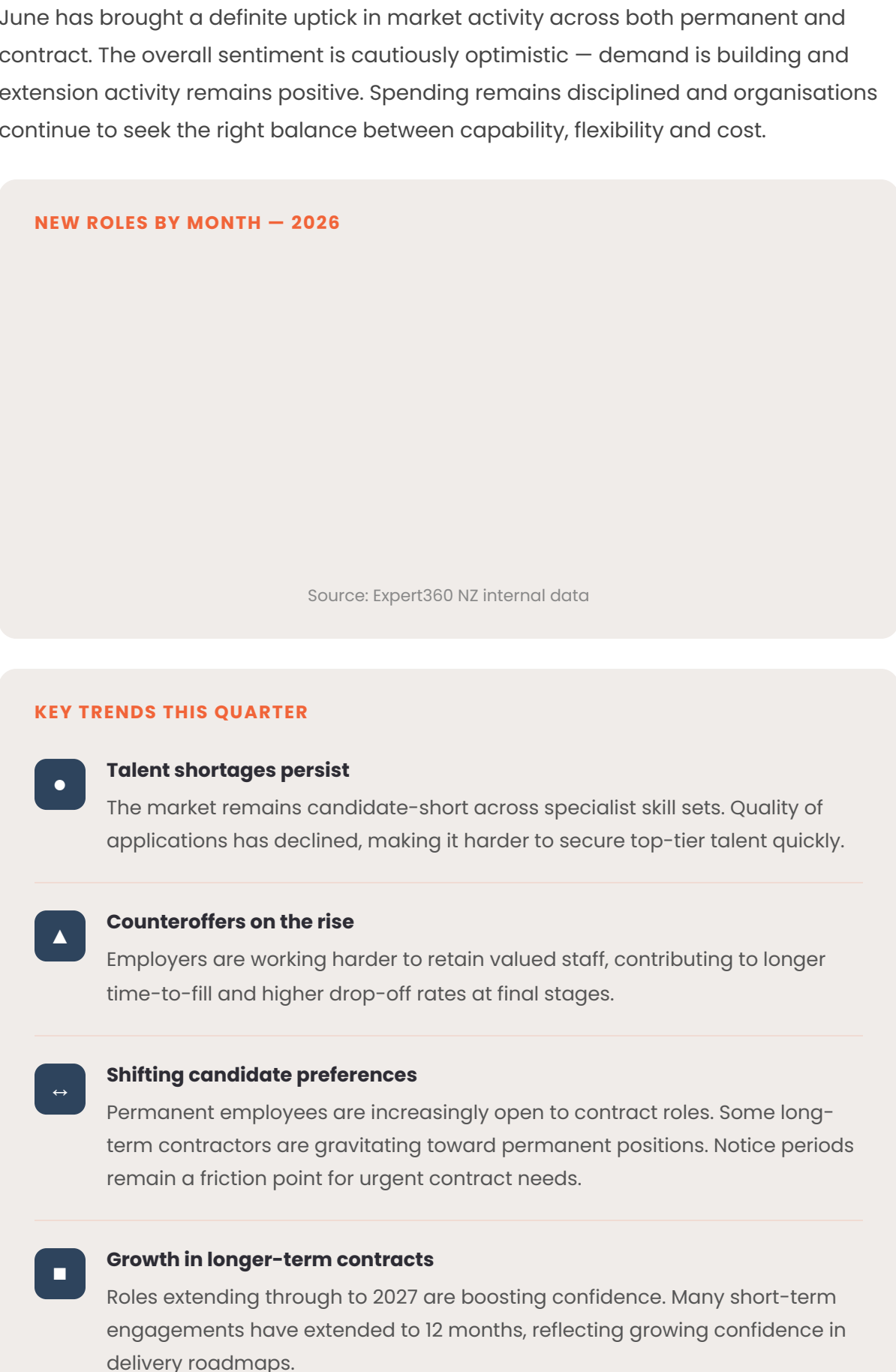
AI helps structure it. The ideas, relationships, and final voice? Still very much us.

Meeting prep & follow-up

Summarising notes and drafting actions after check-ins.

Market research

Surfacing trends and sector movements quickly.

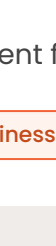


🏆 **Ka Pai Award - May 2026** — And speaking of AI... we're chuffed to share that we (Jade & Natasha) were recognised with a Ka Pai Award for **Always Evolve**, for our adoption of AI and willingness to lead from the front.

The key takeaway

AI is a tool, not a replacement for genuine connection. We're using it to show up better for you — and we'd love to hear how you're using it in your own work.

04 - DAY IN THE LIFE



Anna Chow

Associate - Engage

E360 Expert

"Being surrounded by Subject Matter Experts provides a valuable opportunity to learn across a range of sectors."

TELL US ABOUT YOUR CURRENT ROLE

I support internal stakeholders on client-related projects by gathering and understanding business requirements, collating and analysing data to deliver effective, client-focused solutions.

WHAT DOES A TYPICAL DAY LOOK LIKE?

I collaborate with internal stakeholders to ensure alignment on client requirements, using shared insights to continuously refine and iterate deliverables.

HOW HAS AI STARTED TO SHOW UP IN YOUR WORK?

Integrating Claude into the analysis process has improved our efficiency, converting findings into client-ready documents while facilitating a more effective peer review process.

WHAT'S BEEN THE BEST PART OF THE E360 COMMUNITY?

Being surrounded by Subject Matter Experts with extensive industry knowledge provides a valuable opportunity to learn and gain diverse perspectives across a range of sectors.

05 - FEATURE ARTICLE

AI & the NZ Job Market — What It Means for Your Career

The government has announced plans to cut approximately 9,000 public service roles by 2029, with AI explicitly named as part of the strategy.

The question isn't *whether* AI will reshape the workforce — it *already* is. The real question is how you position yourself in that shift.

"The professionals who will thrive aren't the ones who fear AI — they're the ones who learn to work alongside it."

Thoughts on AI in your sector? Hit reply and tell us.

HOW TO STAY AHEAD

01 Start using AI in your day-to-day

Pick one repetitive part of your work — meeting prep, drafting comms, summarising documents — and use AI to help. Small daily habits build real fluency faster than any course.

02 Your experience is your edge

Clients aren't looking for pure AI specialists — they're looking for experienced professionals who understand how AI applies in their sector. Domain expertise plus AI literacy is the winning combination.

03 Build skills that AI can't replace

Strategic thinking, stakeholder management, judgement, and communication remain deeply human. Keep sharpening these alongside your technical capability — they are what clients will pay a premium for.

06 - TALENT & MARKET INSIGHTS

NZ Market Update — Q2 2026



June uptick across permanent & contract

143%

Rise in AI job ad references since March 2025
**SEEK Data*

5x

AI mentions in job ads vs 2019 levels
**SEEK Data*

June has brought a definite uptick in market activity across both permanent and contract. The overall sentiment is cautiously optimistic — demand is building and extension activity remains positive. Spending remains disciplined and organisations continue to seek the right balance between capability, flexibility and cost.

NEW ROLES BY MONTH — 2026

Source: Expert360 NZ internal data

KEY TRENDS THIS QUARTER



Talent shortages persist

The market remains candidate-short across specialist skill sets. Quality of applications has declined, making it harder to secure top-tier talent quickly.

Counteroffers on the rise

Employers are working harder to retain valued staff, contributing to longer time-to-fill and higher drop-off rates at final stages.

Shifting candidate preferences

Permanent employees are increasingly open to contract roles. Some long-term contractors are gravitating toward permanent positions. Notice periods remain a friction point for urgent contract needs.

Growth in longer-term contracts

Roles extending through to 2027 are boosting confidence. Many short-term engagements have extended to 12 months, reflecting growing confidence in delivery roadmaps.

Budget pressure & value scrutiny

Many customers await FY27 budget confirmation. Procurement teams are challenging costs, but the volume of discussions suggests a healthy pipeline building for H2.

AI demand — watch this space

Many clients are exploring AI potential and pursuing MVP opportunities. Seek data shows AI job ad references up 143.5% since March 2025 — now 5x their 2019 levels.

"We're seeing a strong June uptick with a number of exclusive recruitment projects underway. Having four concurrent clients working with us exclusively on volume and executive hires has been a standout highlight this quarter."

Jason Bishop — General Manager, Sourced

"Overall the market feels cautiously optimistic. Demand is building and new programme conversations are increasing — but elections on the horizon may slow activity again."

Setu Evan Belford — General Manager, MarketPlace - Jason Bishop — General Manager, Sourced

Current focus areas:

Business Analysis

Change Management

Payroll Remediation (Security Cleared)

Changes in demand: Within the technology space (particularly data and development), demand has leaned more toward permanent hiring, or roles being fulfilled through established vendor channels — reducing the volume of contract opportunities in this area.

Our advice to Experts: Keep your CV sharp, your portfolio current, and be ready to move quickly.

07 - REMINDERS & PROMPTS

Operational Reminders

Q3 SCHOOL HOLIDAYS & PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

A reminder of key dates coming up in Q3. Please ensure you have notified your ERM of any planned leave in advance, and confirmed your approver will be available to approve timesheets while you are away.

- **School Holidays** — 6–19 July.
- **Matariki** — Thursday 10 July (public holiday).
- **End of Term 3** — Friday 26 September. If you have school-aged children, now is a good time to plan ahead for the October school holidays.

WEEKLY TIMESHEETS

Submit by COB Friday each week. Approvals completed weekly where possible. If you are on leave, ensure your approver is aware and able to cover.

MONTH-END TIMESHEETS

Timesheets must be submitted by **3:00pm on the last working day of the month**, with approvals completed by COB on the first working day of the month. Two month-ends this quarter fall mid-week — you will need to submit **two separate timesheets** for each of these months: one to close off the current month, and a second for the first few days of the next month.

- **August** — Monday 31 August is the last working day. Submit by 3:00pm Monday 31 August.
- **September** — Wednesday 30 September is the last working day. Submit by 3:00pm Wednesday 30 September.

PLANNING LEAVE THROUGH TO CHRISTMAS?

The second half of the year tends to move fast — with October school holidays, Labour Day, and the Christmas/New Year period all coming up. If you are planning any leave between now and the end of the year, please give your ERM as much notice as possible. Early communication helps us plan ahead with your client and ensure a smooth handover where needed. The more notice the better — we appreciate it!

08 - KA PAI CORNER

Ka Pai Corner

Ka Pai is te reo Māori for **congratulations, well done, good work** — and it's the name Expert360 has adopted for our quarterly awards recognising those who have gone above and beyond.

Q2 2026 KA PAI AWARD

AA

Aruna Arunkumar

New Zealand - Nominated by Jade Kiel

Aim to Wow

"Well done and thank you for providing great support and leading cross-team collaboration. This is another example of where you took the lead in connecting delivery teams with the broader service transition community. Your service mindset and knowledge about our space really helped the team, who are under quite a bit of pressure. Thank you for making a real difference and being a great ambassador."

Client feedback - ACC

HOW DOES IT WORK?

1

Monthly nominations

Each month, nominations open for team members or Experts who have excelled in helping our customers and team members do the best work of their lives.

2

Open to everyone

Team members and Experts can nominate each other — and clients can nominate Expert360 members or Experts. Anyone who embodies what we stand for is eligible.

3

Chosen by leadership

Winners are selected by the Leadership Team and celebrated monthly.

We're looking for people who demonstrate our values:

✓ We Own It

✓ Aim to Wow

✓ Always Evolve

✓ Trust

✓ One Team, One Dream

Know someone deserving a Ka Pai?

Reach out to your ERM to put forward a nomination — or keep an eye out for when nominations open each month.

09 - COMMUNITY NEWS

Beyond the Desk

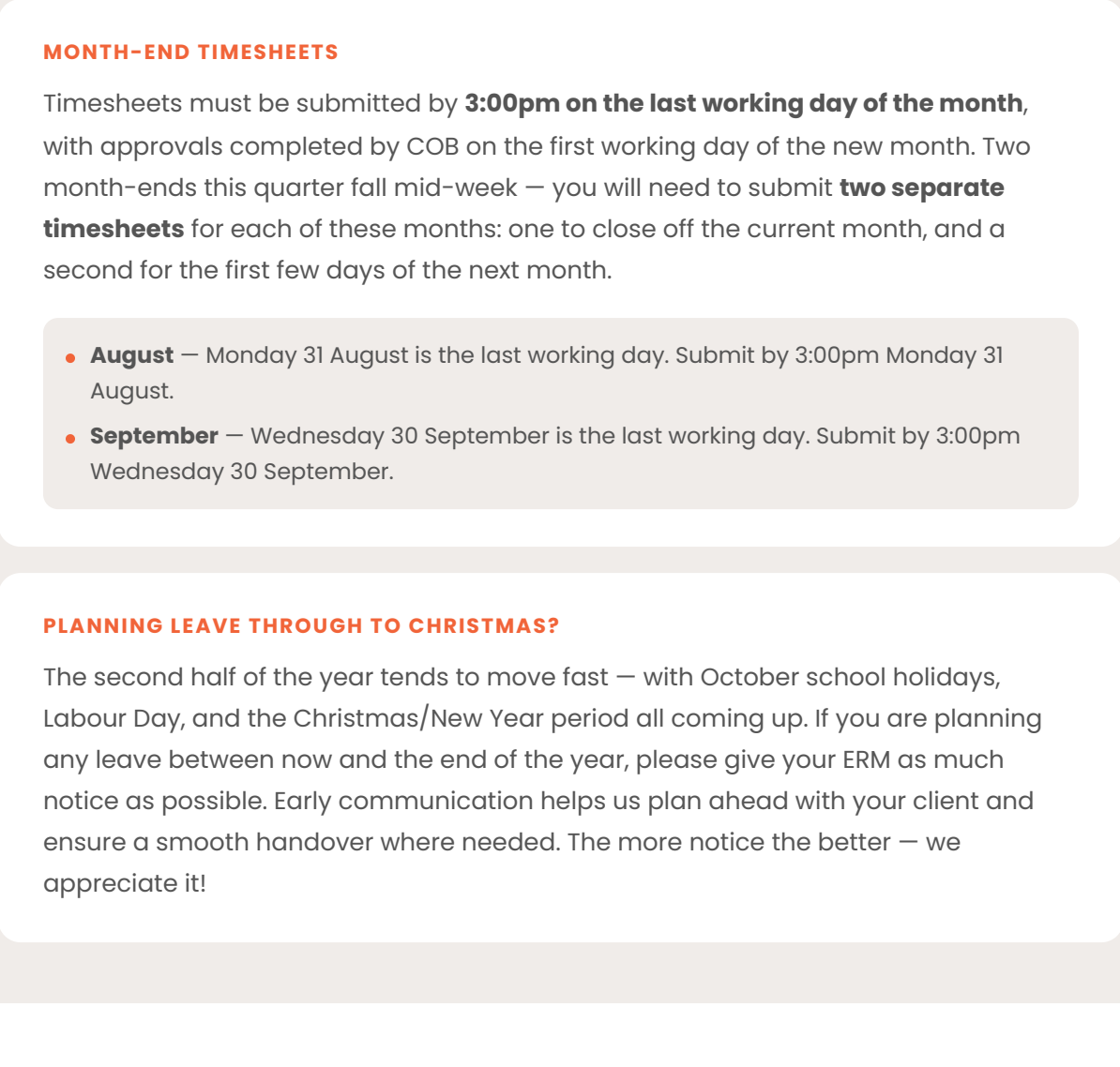
One of the things we love about the Expert360 community is that the people in it are genuinely remarkable — not just in their professional lives, but outside work too. This quarter, we want to shine a spotlight on one of our own.



Setu Evan Belford

General Manager, MarketPlace

Setu is a member of **Signature Choir** — and this quarter the choir was invited by **Disney** to the **Australian premiere of Moana Live Action**. Not only did they perform at the event, they had the chance to meet none other than **Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson** and sing alongside him. Yes, really. 🎶

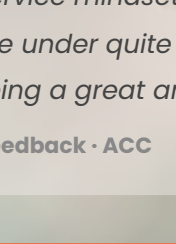


Setu & Signature Choir meet The Rock

Moana Live Action Australian Premiere, Sydney, 2026

We love seeing this side of our community — the talent, passion and personality that people bring to everything they do. If you've got a story worth sharing, let your ERM know.

Own It • Aim to Wow • Always Evolve • Trust • One Team, One Dream



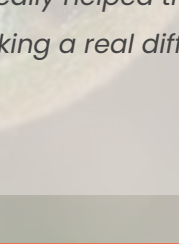
Jade Kiel

Expert Relationship Manager

+64 27 644 4903

jade.kiel@expert360.co.nz

30 Waring Taylor Street, Wellington



Natasha Symonds

Expert Relationship Manager

+64 22 069 5284

natasha.symonds@expert360.co.nz

Suite 5.2, 1 Albert Street, Auckland

Our Mission is to empower you to do the best work of your life.

Our Vision is to be the #1 destination in the world for the best talent.

AN INTERVIEW WITH

Paul Alexander

Managing Director, Expert360 New Zealand

As Managing Director of Expert360 New Zealand, Paul leads the NZ business across all divisions — bringing together clients, Experts and the broader Expert360 team to deliver exceptional outcomes. With AI now central to how Expert360 operates and evolves, we sat down with Paul to hear his full, unedited perspective on what it means for the business, and for the Experts in our community.

What was your own "aha moment" with AI?

My "aha moment" was when I stopped treating AI like a search engine and started treating it like a very capable first-draft partner.

The first time I used it properly to turn messy thoughts, meeting notes, commercial context and half-formed ideas into something structured and useful, I realised this was not just another tool. It was a genuine change in how work gets done.

For me, the shift was from "AI gives answers" to "AI helps me think, prepare, communicate and move faster". That was the moment it clicked. But that was quite a while ago now!

How has your own day-to-day changed since E360 started embedding AI tools?

The biggest change is speed to first draft.

I use AI constantly now to help structure thinking, prepare for meetings, sharpen client messages, summarise complex topics, draft plans, stress-test ideas and turn conversations into actions.

It has not replaced judgement... but it has absolutely reduced the blank-page problem. I can get to a useful starting point much faster, then spend my time improving, challenging and commercialising the output.

In practical terms, I am doing more of the thinking work earlier, with better structure, and with less admin drag.

Paul, in plain terms — where is E360 on its AI journey right now?

We are past the "is this real?" stage.

We are now in the "how do we embed this properly?" stage.

That means using AI in practical, everyday ways across our business — not as a gimmick, but as a productivity and quality uplift. We are looking at how AI can support better intake, better matching, better communication, faster shortlists, stronger proposals, better account planning and better use of the knowledge we already have across the business.

We are still learning. Everyone is. But the direction is clear. AI will increasingly become part of how high-performing people and teams work.

"We are past the 'is this real?' stage. We are now in the 'how do we embed this properly?' stage."

— PAUL ALEXANDER

What does that look like practically for our Expert community?

For Experts, I think the opportunity is very real.

Clients are already asking how to do more with less, how to move faster, how to improve service delivery, and how to use AI safely and practically. Experts who can combine strong domain experience with practical AI literacy will be extremely valuable.

That does not mean every Expert needs to become a technologist. It means understanding how AI can help in your area of expertise.

For example:

- A project manager using AI to improve planning, reporting and risk tracking.
- A business analyst using AI to accelerate discovery, documentation and synthesis.
- A change manager using AI to tailor comms, training and stakeholder material.
- A consultant using AI to build sharper options papers and recommendations.
- A delivery lead using AI to improve cadence, visibility and decision-making.

The Experts who lean in will have an advantage. Not because AI replaces their expertise... but because it amplifies it.

What's your message to Experts who are looking to start their AI journey?

Start small. Start today. Do not wait until you feel like an expert.

Pick one part of your work that is repetitive, slow or annoying, and use AI to help with that. It might be drafting meeting notes, preparing interview questions, summarising a document, creating a stakeholder update, building a first-cut plan or pressure-testing a recommendation.

The key is to keep the human in the loop. AI should not be blindly trusted, and it should not be used carelessly with sensitive information. But used well, it can be an incredible assistant.

My advice is simple... do not make AI a theoretical topic. Make it a daily habit.

Any exciting things on the horizon you can share?

The exciting thing for me is not one single tool. It is the way AI starts connecting the whole Expert360 model.

Better understanding of client needs. Faster identification of the right Experts. Better matching of skills to outcomes. Stronger proposals. More useful market insight. More efficient delivery support. Better visibility across the work we are already doing.

The long-term opportunity is to make the experience better for everyone... clients, Experts and our internal teams.

For Experts, that should mean better visibility of relevant opportunities, better use of their capability and a more efficient way of connecting the right people to the right work.

What's the one AI tool or habit you'd recommend every Expert tries before the end of 2026?

The habit I would recommend is building your own AI "prep partner".

Before any important meeting, workshop, interview, proposal or client conversation, use AI to help you prepare.

Ask it to challenge your thinking. Ask it what questions you should ask. Ask it what risks you may have missed. Ask it to summarise the audience, the likely objections and the best way to explain your recommendation in plain English.

That one habit alone can make people sharper, faster and more confident.

The tool matters less than the behaviour. The real unlock is learning how to ask better questions.

"Don't make AI a theoretical topic. Make it a daily habit."

— PAUL ALEXANDER, MANAGING DIRECTOR, EXPERT360 NEW ZEALAND