

Matt Bowker

"Even though the industry was going through Psa, I could see the opportunity and my career path."

Current position in the kiwifruit industry –

Site Manager - EastPack Washer Road

Who do you work for?

EastPack Ltd

What does your role involve?

I'm responsible for managing the site to ensure our performance safely meets the needs of EastPack, growers and marketers. I also strive to create an environment where staff are valued and encouraged to continuously improve to achieve their potential.

What was your career path?

I was born, raised and schooled in Hamilton and after sixth form did a tourism certificate at the polytech. I moved to Tauranga when I was 18 and found work in Te Puke in various engineering workshops. In 2004 I got a job with LENZ equipment (now Compac) and also found a mentor who over the four and a half years taught me a lot about engineering and also about life. It was this development that set me up for my next employer EastPack.

I started with EastPack in 2008 as a line manager and it was quite a shift in responsibility. It required a lot of people skills as it was overwhelming how many people worked in the pack-house. I was the packhouse manager for a season at Opotiki and then stepped up into the site manager role for the next three seasons and from there I was hooked. With a young family I had always intended on moving back to Te Puke and with my son starting school the call was made to shift back up. With a big company there's usually a few doors that open, and lucky for me it was a big one...

Late 2014 I became the site manager at EastPack Washer Road, which was a non-packing site while volumes were down. With the projected growth and overwhelming estimates the company had decided to open the doors again and invest in new equipment. My job was to put this in place for the 2015 harvest and to assemble a new team to run it. Now mid-harvest things are running smoothly and the team is strong. I'm now currently working on further development for the site with the intention to increase packing and coolstore capacity.

What do you like about working within the kiwifruit industry?

The industry is huge and by being involved with a large supplier I'm seriously overwhelmed with the effort that goes into our product and the Zespri brand. There are so many people involved in making this a successful industry and I'm stoked to be a part of it.

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**Kiwifruit contains antioxidants,
which are necessary for whole
body health**