

Philip Morris New Zealand Limited

Emerging Diversity and Inclusion

Rather than having management call the shots, Philip Morris New Zealand Limited handed the chance to drive its diversity and inclusion initiatives over to staff, to ensure any new programmes reflected the voice of the employees.

The result is the Culture Club, run, headed and managed by staff members of the global tobacco company, which has 67 employees in its New Zealand office. The club holds activities throughout the year including cultural celebrations, social activities, and giving back to the community.

The initiative owes its beginnings to an employee opinion survey, performed by parent company Philip Morris International (PMI) every three years.

The survey aims to get an idea of how employees feel about their workplace by measuring their engagement with the wider organisation, their sense of inclusion and comfort in having their voice heard, and their assessment of work life balance. It also asked how PMI could develop these issues.

New Zealand scored significantly lower compared to the Asian markets across all categories. People and Culture Manager Anna Kaye David says after consultation with all departments, it was identified that this was not so much because of lack of initiatives, but the incorrect activities were being offered to employees.

"In 2016, during a town hall meeting, everyone was given a chance to propose what activities they wanted to run for the year to promote engagement and camaraderie within the affiliate. Everyone was given the chance to vote on the activities and the top voted ideas were executed throughout the year," says Anna.

Volunteers were asked to represent the various departments and to put the ideas raised into practice. The Culture Club held its first activity in March 2017, celebrating International Women's Day. Roses and a handwritten note from the general manager of PMNZ were given to each female staff member. Positive feedback was immediate, with employees posting their appreciation on the company's internal social media site.

Subsequent activities were organised within four categories to make sure they stayed on track with the objectives of the initiative.

Cultural celebration: Philippine Independence, Argentina Day, Diwali, Chinese New Year, and Matariki are just some of the occasions that have been celebrated, reflecting the cultures staff members identify with. Commemorations usually include a presentation on the culture being celebrated, with background on what is being celebrated, followed by a traditional shared lunch.

Collaboration activities: These create a platform outside work to develop camaraderie between employees and include Friday drinks and 'Ask me anything' coffee sessions with the management team.



PMNZ gives back: The emphasis is on giving back to the community and employees. Events have included a food and clothes' drive for charity, and 15-minute massage breaks for employees.

The People and Culture Manager of PMNZ is the project sponsor and the management team shows its support for the Culture Club by raising awareness of, and taking part in, activities and providing space for them to be held.

Six months after its introduction, staff were asked for their feedback on the Culture Club.

"Thank you so much for putting in so much effort in organising all the activities. I really enjoy it. Thank you for taking consideration month-end close for the finance team so that we can join the activities as well."

"I've thoroughly enjoyed Culture Club and the change up it brings to the office. Thank you."

"It has been a really great addition in the workplace and it makes me very happy to be an employee of PMI."

Questions in the survey also included some from the original employee opinion survey. Answering the question, "How likely are you to refer the company to your friends?" 77 per cent of the office-based employees and 70 per cent of the field sales force responded, "Certain".

"Alongside the survey there is a visible change in the energy in the office and field, team members are proposing activities to the club and expressing interest in sharing customs from their own culture," says Anna.



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