

Sue Turnbull, Capital Training

Walk the Talk

Working for Capital Training can mean long, demanding days in the classroom as staff do their best to make a difference in the lives of the young people they work with. But thanks to the leadership of General Manager Sue Turnbull, her team knows they'll get the personal and professional support they need.

Since joining the team in 2013, Sue has launched a wide range of initiatives that improves the way the company delivers programmes to youth who might otherwise miss out, and has ensured the growth and development of staff.

Capital Training is a private training establishment that offers a number of courses and qualifications to prepare young people for the workplace.

Managing Director Mike Kelleher offered Sue the job after a Skype interview while she was still living in the United Kingdom. It was a risk, but one that paid off.

"Sue is extremely clever, she has the ability to make everyone feel special and is passionate about what we do," he says.

The team at Capital Training is increasingly culturally diverse (American, Serbian, Croatian, British, Pasifika, Samoan, Chinese, Korean, Maori, and New Zealand European) as Sue has made appointments to better reflect the community it works with.

Resource Developer Rodney August says Sue believes the company's best business assets are the staff, and she has made a concerted effort to build a positive team culture and sense of community between the six centres throughout the lower North Island. A busy staff social calendar gives employees the chance to unwind and get to know each other away from their desks.

"Our staff work hard in the classroom and go the extra mile to help our learners. It would be very easy to lose our motivation and passion, as we have a difficult and often thankless job. But Sue really is the driving force behind keeping our staff motivated and cheerful in the face of some pretty hard days in the classroom," he says.

"Sue models leadership by leading from the front and providing the encouragement that others need to follow in her tracks. Sue's tasks are varied and many with all of them stemming from her goal to grow Capital Training and the staff that comprise the team. Sue's mentality of leading from the front means that she is always in the thick of things. She travels between all of our centres and has time for all of our staff. Sue has this way of speaking to you about your ideas and making them seem like they are the most important ideas in the world."



Staff members report that Sue manages a diverse workforce by utilising the strengths and experiences of those within the team. One example of this is the establishment of a Maori and Pacifica rōpū, with staff members working together to advise on cultural wellbeing within the organisation and improve cultural knowledge and practices.

The benefits of Sue's leadership are tangible with an unprecedented period of growth and development seen within the company. Programme delivery has increased by 77 percent, and Capital Training is now ranked a NZQA Category 1 education provider. New qualifications have been developed to meet the needs of prospective learners and provide meaningful pathways into the workplace, while the introduction of new processes have ensured contractual obligations are met and staff are clear about responsibilities. Sue has developed strong relationships both with the wider youth and education communities, and inside the organisation.

Angelina Pele, office administrator at the Lambton Quay centre in central Wellington, says Sue is able to connect with everyone on staff.

"Sue has the ability to show appreciation for all staff and their work, which is something that I haven't seen in a manager before. It makes us all want to be a team player. Sue brought us together and gave us the tools to grow and succeed."

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