

Pacific Steel New Zealand Limited

Emerging Diversity and Inclusion

Pacific Steel NZ Limited's management feels strongly that its employees shouldn't feel they need to change their cultural identity to fit into its workplace.

In January 2018 the company rolled out an initiative to support a more diverse workforce and build a more inclusive Pacific Steel culture. This built on work already in progress - the company started its diversity and inclusion journey in 2016 with a strong focus on recruiting a more gender diverse workforce.

Pacific Steel NZ Limited is a heavy manufacturing business which produces more than 190,000 tons of steel reinforcing and wire products. Based in South Auckland, the company employs 170 people.



The cultural identity initiative began with diversity and inclusion training workshops for supervisors and team leaders in January this year. After the workshops, the participants engaged with their direct team members and discussed the ideas and concepts they had discovered.

The next step was to engage the wider team. "With the thought in mind that 'people are more likely to engage in that they have constructed themselves,' we set out to see what phrases employees could come up with on the topic of diversity and inclusion," says Process and Business Improvement Leader Elizabeth Mitchell.

Teams with the best phrases demonstrating an understanding of diversity and inclusion were given the opportunity to feature on a poster with their phrase. The five top posters would be displayed throughout the organisation. Each poster featured two languages, one being English and the second being the language the group chose or identified with.

Photoshoots and design work followed to include the phrases into Pacific Steel's own diversity and inclusion posters. "Most importantly, posters of our own people standing proudly beside their chosen phrase about diversity and inclusion," says Elizabeth.

An inclusion campaign poster is now rolled out monthly and displayed throughout the organisation.

"Our aim was to train and develop our employees to a level in which they would be able to bring about a culture shift on their own, in their own words and in their own way. Visually representing this culture shift means employees themselves become the leaders of the culture shift, they become the ambassadors of diversity and the flag bearers of an inclusive Pacific Steel culture in the future," says Elizabeth.

"The posters visually represent to employees, contractors and new starters that Pacific Steel is inclusive of all genders, ethnicities and languages, which has hopefully made for an easier transition and integration into the workplace for a new starter who may not identify with one of the more dominant employee groups," she says.

The initiative is supported by leaders from all levels of the business, from the Production Line Team Leaders to the Manager Operations and the General Manager. Senior managers were heavily involved in the training workshops which were the building blocks of the initiatives.

By the end of the roll out, all 130 employees will have had the opportunity to work together on the initiative.

Pacific Steel General Manager Lianne Meiklejohn says, "Having an inclusive workforce means employees are likely to stay within the business for longer, people feel valued and respected and have an inclusive platform to bring forth new ideas and engage across the business. This generation of new ideas, retention of intellectual capital, and strong cross functional teamwork is highly valued by the business to help us remain competitive, provide better service to our customers, and create a safe and engaged workforce."



Staff feedback has been positive. Om Naiker, a mechanical tradesperson, says: "They are great. Having these posters of ourselves helps us all to value and respect each other so we can work better as a team."

Marianne Katoa, Pacific Steel Production Operator, explains what it means for her to have company posters translated into Tongan. "It feels really good for me seeing my own language displayed. I think if a new person came into the company who was Tongan, seeing the posters would make them feel more welcomed and accepted here."

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