



PACIFIC PEOPLES' WORKFORCE CHALLENGE

Accelerating the advancement of Pacific people in the workforce



MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

The
**Southern
Initiative**



TOGETHER WE DISCOVER



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Southern Initiative, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and Auckland Co-Design Lab would like to thank the Pacific employees, their families, employers and other organisations that have contributed to the work.

We also thank our partners who have worked with us on this project, including the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, Moana Research, the Ministry of Education and ThinkPlace.



ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document is a summary of the work to date on accelerating the advancement of Pacific people in the workforce challenge.

It covers why we chose to look into how we accelerate the advancement of Pacific people in the workforce, what we have learnt and what we and others can do to support transformational economic outcomes for Pacific people and their families.

The findings in this report help us to better understand and respond to the challenges and opportunities for Pacific people and their families in finding quality employment opportunities and advancing in the workforce.

While our focus was Pacific people in South Auckland, we believe the relevance of the findings reach far wider than this.

We hope this report will inform the work of those who play a role in setting, maintaining and changing the employment landscape for Pacific people including employers, agencies, community organisations and other interested people.



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ABOUT US

This project has been a partnership between The Southern Initiative, the Auckland Co-Design Lab and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. It arose out of our common interest in increasing the workplace readiness, skills, earning power, progression, and business ownership and management roles of Pacific peoples.

THE SOUTHERN INITIATIVE AND THE AUCKLAND CO-DESIGN LAB

The Southern Initiative (TSI) is a place-based initiative in the Auckland Plan, and its role is to champion, stimulate and enable social and community innovation in South Auckland.

The Southern Initiative area spans four council local board areas: **Māngere-Ōtāhuhu, Ōtara-Papatoetoe, Manurewa and Papakura.**

The Southern Initiative focuses on selected projects to unlock South Auckland's potential. The team works with whānau, local social change agents, grassroots entrepreneurs, businesses and agencies to explore, create and test radical solutions to some of our most pressing challenges.

The Southern Initiative works with the Auckland Co-Design Lab (The Lab) to bring a human-centred approach to its work and support rapid innovation. The Lab is a collaboration between central and local government and focuses on supporting co-design projects and developing and sharing co-design practice.

The team's central philosophy is strengths based, whānau centric and is founded on the idea that "only the hood can change the hood". The Southern Initiative supports local people and groups in this mission rather than creating more services to 'fix' South Auckland.

The Southern Initiative is concentrating on three areas where community innovation can create deep change: whānau, employment and entrepreneurship.

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND EMPLOYMENT

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's (MBIE) purpose is to 'grow New Zealand for all.' MBIE supports Pacific communities' economic development through better coordination and facilitation of economic development initiatives, and by working collaboratively with other government agencies.

MBIE's Pacific Economic Strategy outlines how we can support Pacific people to participate and share in New Zealand's economic success. The strategy aims to improve Pacific people's involvement and contribution to the New Zealand economy through:

- more sustainable Pacific-owned businesses
- more sustainable job opportunities for Pacific people
- more affordable and suitable housing for Pacific people

Working towards these three outcomes helps to empower and build the capabilities of Pacific communities, so that they are able to realise their potential, improve their own personal and household incomes, improve their wellbeing as well as contributing to the New Zealand economy. This project is part of MBIE's work in improving outcomes for Pacific people.



WHAT WE HAVE LEARNT

Pacific peoples make up the youngest and fastest growing population in New Zealand, particularly in South Auckland where Pacific people make up 40% (101,937 people) of the total population. Workforce projections indicate that by 2026, Pacific people will make up a third of Auckland's total workforce.

To maximise the contribution Pacific people can make to realising New Zealand's future economic success, the research tells us that much more needs to be done to address the current situation, where Pacific people continue to:

- have the lowest median income levels across all ethnic groups in New Zealand (\$19,700 compared to \$28,500 for the total population)
- be over-represented in low-skilled, low paid roles in sectors that are most at-risk of automation over the next 30 years
- have significantly lower net worth than the average New Zealander (the average net worth for Auckland's Pacific population is \$12,000 compared to \$87,000 for the non-Pacific population)

Based on the findings from this report, we know that to make the required changes that will lead to the acceleration of Pacific people's advancement in New Zealand's workforce the following opportunities for

eight recommended actions exist for government, employers and Pacific communities:

ADDRESS the factors that create and perpetuate the current state of play by:

1. Streamlining targeted interventions that directly and quickly tackle transportation barriers that affect Auckland-based Pacific people's workforce participation.
2. Undertaking research into Pacific women's entry and reintegration into the workforce pre and post motherhood.

CREATE local conditions for Pacific people and employers that support workforce progression by:

3. Recognising employers willing to go the extra mile by having work-place arrangements and practices that recognise that the value and importance of 'family' as a key driver for success and decision-making for Pacific people.
4. Investing in initiatives that grow the capability and capacity of Māori and Pacific businesses, especially those committed to Pacific People's workforce advancement.

USE levers for behaviour and systems change by:

5. Providing dedicated career-advancement support (mentoring, advice and coaching) for Pacific staff who've been in the workforce for at least five years and are earning between the minimum wage and living-wage income brackets in sectors and roles identified as being at risk of automation in the next 30 years; to support them through the process of transitioning into higher income-bracket roles and into new sectors.
6. Investing in the provision of affordable, accessible and inclusive cultural-competency-based training, advice and support for employers to give them an opportunity to gain insight into Pacific people's drivers and values and develop strategies for creating organisations that are culturally-supportive.
7. Designing and implementing targeted settlement-support services for new Pacific migrants and their families, including financial literacy, upskilling and/or training for employment and career advice and support for partners and children.

GENERATE collaboration between employers, agencies and organisations to positively work together to implement the actions outlined above, by:

8. Creating a vision-led network of partners willing to champion and implement the vision of accelerated Pacific people's workforce outcomes, including by leveraging their own organisational resources, communication channels and networks to do so.



OUR PURPOSE

Pacific people have made significant contributions to New Zealand's economy through their participation in the workforce and their roles across a range of sectors.

In recent years, the Pacific unemployment rate has decreased and representation in skilled occupations has improved with increasing numbers seen in areas such as Manufacturing, Construction and Management.

But this progress has not translated to significant gains for Pacific people relative to people of other ethnicities living in New Zealand, or in terms of financial remuneration or capital worth. It is apparent that Pacific workers are not progressing up through higher levels of responsibility and leadership and thus remuneration. Now, more than 70 years on from the start of the economic migration, Pacific people are still over-represented in low skilled, low paid roles. These same occupations are the most at risk of automation over the next 30 years, as innovation increases productivity.

While this is a risk, it also presents an opportunity. As the Pacific population grows, so does its potential to contribute to New Zealand's economic goals, if Pacific people are able to anticipate the future and if employers are ready to take measures that will support greater development and advancement for Pacific employees.

The Southern Initiative, along with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, wanted to understand more about patterns of advancement

for Pacific people, and the reasons behind the lack of progression. We wanted to understand more about how Pacific people enter, and move within, the workforce.

Our key question was: How might we accelerate the advancement of Pacific people in the workforce?

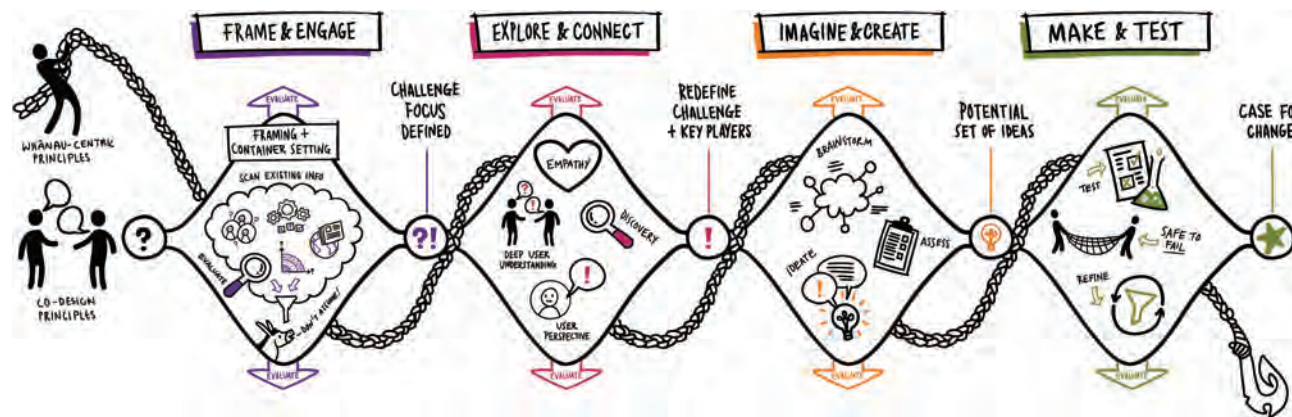
Through this work, we wanted to:

- Understand what has created and continues to perpetuate the lack of progression for Pacific people in the workforce
- Understand the role of local conditions in creating both barriers and opportunities to progression
- Identify the levers for behaviour and systems change
- Generate meaningful collaboration between employers, agencies and organisations to positively change the employment landscape for Pacific employees.

With this knowledge, we hope to be able to contribute to future work and initiatives to accelerate the advancement of Pacific people in the workforce.

OUR METHOD

The team used data analysis and innovative co-design methodologies to highlight the lived realities of progressing in the workforce as a Pacific person working in specific sectors in South Auckland. This process identified opportunities to test different ideas developed by the end users, Pacific employees and employers of Pacific people.



STAGE 1 FRAME AND ENGAGE

In this stage we worked with partners to set the intent for the challenge, and to identify and source the statistical and empirical data that would focus the challenge.

We commissioned a literature review to create a clear, relevant and concise summary of the existing data and insights for the project to build on.

This included a review of Census data and information from the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research. We also drew on two previous Challenges, which provided relevant insights to guide us:

- The 2016 Attitude Gap Challenge report¹ was sponsored by MBIE and was developed by the Auckland Co-design Lab with a cross agency team, including The Southern Initiative. The Attitude Gap Challenge focused on the gap between young South Auckland people looking for work, and employers looking for staff, and showed that South Aucklanders struggle not only to prepare for, get, and stay in work, but also to progress once they are there.
- The 2017 Early Years Challenge work² which explored the challenges and opportunities for young families in South Auckland, particularly in the first 1000 days of a child's life.

The literature review was used to inform the next stage of our process, by helping us to identify the key sectors and industries that employers needed to be from and

helped to develop the Pacific employee criteria. The literature review was also used to develop the key lines of enquiry for both the employer and employee interview.

STAGE 2 EXPLORE AND CONNECT

In the Explore and Connect phase we conducted interviews with employees and employers to understand their lived experiences. In this phase, we digested the insights from the in-depth interviews, and used these to shape personas, which brought the stories we heard to life.

¹ <https://www.aucklandco-lab.nz/reports/>
² <https://www.aucklandco-lab.nz/reports/>

These insights and personas form the main findings set out in this document, and they provide valuable markers for how we might accelerate the advancement of Pacific people in the workforce.

STAGE 3 IMAGINE AND CREATE

This phase of the design process concentrates on idea generation informed by the insights and evidence. The aim of this phase is to generate a broad range of possibilities to learn from and test.

In this phase we engaged with over 200 people from a range of sectors to get their feedback on the insights, collectively brainstorm concepts and help define which concepts should be developed further.

Initiatives in this phase included:

OPEN HOMES: We held “open home” sessions to test the draft insights with businesses, agencies and organisations working in and with the manufacturing, logistics, construction and retail and services sectors. These included industry training organisations and other education providers, funders, government organisations, employers and employees.

IDEATION WORKSHOPS: We held two Ideation Workshops in January 2018, one focussed on the needs of employees and the second on the needs of employers.

Attendees included representatives from Youth Connections, The Electrical Training Company (ETCO), CBD Skills Hub, Department of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Affirming Works (AW), Building Construction Industry Training Organisation (BCITO), Skills Industry Training Organisation (Skills.org), Work and Income New Zealand, Pacific Business Trust (PBT), Tamaki Regeneration Company, Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED), Healthy Families MMP, Auckland Wide Housing Initiative (AWHI), Māori Pacific Trades Training (MPTT), Commission for Financial Capability, Fletchers, City Rail Link (CRL), Ministry of Education, Oceania Careers Academy and Aro Advisors.

The two workshops resulted in the development of more than 20 concept sheets.

CUSTOMER SERVICES REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENTIAL

WORKSHOP: A small cohort of Pacific customer service representatives from an employer involved in the project came together with us to share their experiences on progressing in the workforce to generate ideas and as a means to sense-check our work to date.

CHECK-IN INTERVIEWS WITH CLEANING COMPANY

STAFF: Three Pacific migrant employees of an Auckland based cleaning company shared their experiences in the workforce with two members of the working group. The conversation was conducted completely in Samoan as all three employees were migrants to New Zealand.

STATIC INSTALLATIONS AND WELLINGTON

WORKSHOPS: An interactive static installation was created and put on display in The Southern Initiative in Manukau and MBIE in Wellington to socialise the project and findings with a wider audience. We also held a set of experiential workshops, where people were invited to feedback on existing concepts and generate new ideas based on where they saw gaps in the work. The open homes, ideation workshops, Pacific employee engagements, static installations and Wellington workshops were all held over a 4-month period and in total generated more than 60 ideas.

STAGE 4 MAKE AND TEST

The testing phase for this challenge is still underway. Over 60 concepts were sense checked with subject matter experts, employers, small business owners and employees. From this process ten concepts were identified and considered for further development. These concepts will be assessed for feasibility and viability to be tested on a small scale in the real world, in partnership with Pacific employees, employers, agencies and organisations who hold the resources and ability to enable more Pacific people to progress in the workforce. Each prototype addresses a different aspect of the system.



OUR CONTEXT

There's a dearth of quality data about Pacific people's progression in the workforce. For this project, we have made use of Statistics New Zealand, the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research and Auckland Regional Health Services data to shed light on the current context for Pacific people. In addition, there is the potential to make better use of existing data, such as the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI), to track and trace the movement of Pacific people into, within and out of the workforce.

This section sets out key points from our literature review from three perspectives: nation-wide, Auckland region and South Auckland. It is imperative to note that The Southern Initiative area of South Auckland as mentioned throughout this document spans across local board areas: Māngere-Ōtāhuhu, Manurewa, Ōtara-Papatoetoe, Papakura and excludes Franklin and Howick.

A YOUNG AND GROWING POPULATION

- Pacific people are the youngest and fastest natural growing population in New Zealand
- One in three births in Auckland is of Pacific heritage, and 60% of the Pacific population were born in New Zealand
- The median age for Pacific people in the TSI area is 22.1 years, compared with 23.9 years for Māori and 38 years for all New Zealanders
- By 2026, Pacific people will potentially make up nearly a third of the Auckland workforce
- TSI South Auckland is home to 101,937 Pacific people – 40.3% of the total Auckland Pacific population. In local board areas like Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Pacific People constitute over 60% of residents
- By comparison, Pacific people make up just over 7.7% of the New Zealand population, and 15.2% of the Auckland population

LOWER PARTICIPATION, REMUNERATION AND PROGRESSION IN THE WORKFORCE

- In 2013 Pacific people had a slightly lower overall labour force participation rate (60.7%) and employment rate (50.5%) than the overall Auckland population
- While Pacific workers were represented in all occupational categories, they were generally over-represented in the lower-skilled (and often lower-paid) occupations
- In 2013 the proportion of the Auckland Pacific population in employment with an occupation classified as managerial or professional was less than half that of the proportion for the non-Pacific employed population (22%, compared with 47% for non-Pacific people)
- In contrast, the proportion of the employed Pacific population classified as labourer, machinery operator or driver was over three times that of the non-Pacific employed population

LARGER FAMILY SIZE THAN NATIONAL AVERAGE

- Over a quarter of Pacific mothers have four or more children
- The proportion of Auckland Pacific population families with more than six members was almost six times that of other New Zealanders – 26.2% and 4.2% respectively
- The proportion of the Pacific population reporting to reside in homes with at least seven people present was over six times that of the non-Pacific population (32.6% as compared with 5.1%)
- Pacific women tend to have children earlier and are likely to have children in quick succession. More research is required to understand the impact that this has on their entry and reintegration into the workforce pre and post motherhood

ECONOMIC OUTCOMES ARE LOWER FOR PACIFIC PEOPLE

- Pacific people's home ownership rate is under one-third that of the non-Pacific population (17.4% and 47.5% respectively)
- Wages are the main source of income for Pacific households
- Median income for Pacific people decreased between 2006 and 2013
- The median personal income of Pacific adults in TSI area is \$17,600 compared to \$18,900 for Auckland Pacific people, and \$29,600 for Auckland overall
- Individual net worth is lower for Pacific people – average net worth in the Auckland Pacific population is \$12,000 compared to \$87,000 for the non-Pacific population

TRANSPORTATION FACTORS AFFECT WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION

- Vehicle access data suggests a greater reliance on others to get to work for the Auckland Pacific population – with 7.8% having no vehicle access, compared to 4.5% of the non-Pacific population.
- Just over 11% of the Auckland Pacific population travel to work as a passenger, compared to 4% of the non-Pacific population.

MEDIAN INCOMES IN THE SOUTHERN INITIATIVE

As at June 2018, the median income for Pacific people in South Auckland was 44% less than the median income for the rest of Auckland and 20% less than the South Auckland median income; the Pacific median income was \$28,006 compared to \$49,991 for the rest of Auckland and \$34,855 for South Auckland. In addition, the Pacific median income decreased 1% compared to 2017 – it was \$28,285 in 2017 – and the gap compared to the rest of Auckland has worsened by three percentage points.

NZIER, in their report for The Southern Initiative on closing the income gap, estimated that even if South Auckland incomes grow 50% faster than the rest of Auckland, it would still take quarter of a century to close the income gap between South Auckland and the rest of Auckland.

ANNUAL INCOMES	2013 NZIER	June 2018 Est.	June 2019 forecast.	June 2020 forecast.
Rest of Auckland	\$39,898	\$49,991	\$51,741	\$53,552
TSI Area	\$27,822	\$34,855	\$36,075	\$37,338
Māori in TSI area	\$26,611	\$34,915	\$36,137	\$37,402
Pasifika in TSI area	\$22,441	\$28,006	\$28,986	\$30,000

Source: Auckland Council Chief Economist, June 2018. The 2018 estimate and 2019 and 2020 forecasts are based on NZIER’s income analysis in their 2016 report to The Southern Initiative, Resilient South. NZIER used 2013 census data and adjusted South Auckland median incomes to account for the different population structure (ethnicity and age) compared to the rest of Auckland (so that we are better comparing ‘apples with apples’). This means that the median income for Pacific people in this scenario is higher than census median income.



OUR INSIGHTS

Throughout this challenge we have observed the duality/tension of world views between Pacific and western concepts of advancement and success. Pacific employees consistently showed us they place a high value on the success of the ‘collective’, and interpreted success in a collective rather than individual way, whereas western society, which governs the employment landscape, places a high value on the success of the ‘individual’, and often measures success at work in individual terms.

What we heard was that Pacific employees want to progress, but want or need to do this in a way that still serves the needs of the wider family group or community.

A successful career could be seen as simply being able to consistently support their parent/parents regardless of any opportunities that could afford them with an increase in remuneration. This was also true of framing time away from family and community; this was seen as a deterrent to progression, especially if there was no planned pathway that demonstrated the progression would link with increased income.

At the same time, we heard that while some employers were empathetic towards this cultural context, others were less clear on ways to connect with their employees to bring out the best in them and to support those who would like to progress.

The difference in world views and values was apparent at every level of engagement through our Challenge process. Participants interviewed highlighted this and it continued to be reiterated by others within the employment eco-system including the 300+ people involved in the first open home sessions and ideation workshop.

EMPLOYEE INSIGHTS

EMPLOYER INSIGHTS

THE COMMON GOOD

I know when I'm more successful I have more to give my family but it's difficult for me to disappoint or not meet their needs. In the meantime, I'm likely to sacrifice my ambitions for the common good.

BATTLING A BIAS

I feel like I am up against an unconscious bias and have to work even harder to prove myself. But when I feel accepted as a Pacific Islander I can achieve anything.

ONE PERSON MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

One person's support can make a huge difference to my working life.

LONG-TERM GAIN, SHORT-TERM PAIN

When I'm more successful at work I have more money to give my family in the long-term, but less time to give them in the short-term.

WHOLE SELF

I naturally bring my cultural practices and values to work – my whole self. My team become my family.

SECOND LANGUAGE

English as a second language puts me on the back foot for progression.

SHARED INSIGHTS

HIDDEN SKILLS

Employees often have hidden skills and knowledge from what they do at home and in their community. When they are empowered to use those skills, businesses thrive and so do they.

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE COUNTS

Investment in creating a workplace recognising cultural practices works! Employees thrive & productivity increases.

SUCCESSFUL SETTLEMENT HAS A LASTING IMPACT FOR A MIGRANT AND THEIR FAMILY

Improving our understanding of the migrant employment journey

COMMUNICATION GAP

I want to help my employees to progress, but I'm not sure they're up for it.

ATTITUDE MATTERS

I feel frustrated when basic work ethic is not a given.

SOME BUSINESS LEADERS NEED HELP

I'd be glad to do more, but I don't know how, and other issues take priority

WORK IS A PLACE TO LEARN AND TO WORK

I don't understand why my workforce doesn't take up the learning and advancement opportunities that are there.

EMPLOYEE INSIGHTS

1. THE COMMON GOOD

I know when I'm more successful I have more to give my family but it's difficult for me to disappoint or not meet their needs. In the meantime, I'm likely to sacrifice my ambitions for the common good.

We heard from everyone that family is important. Many had sacrificed career and life ambitions to support their family financially. Often this enabled siblings to pursue their dreams as the immediate needs of the family were met.

When presented with an opportunity to pursue their dream careers or aspirations, those who had put them on hold were hesitant to pick them back up. The gap between security of a job and the uncertainty of pursuing dreams was too big, and the rewards of being part of a close-knit family and community were significant and well-understood.

Proximity to family was also important. Being able to look after your parents and help with the day to day needs of the wider family was a big consideration for people when looking for work, and was regarded as a measure of success in itself. The need for proximity to family could reduce the choices available for participants, yet low paid, unskilled labour jobs – which may be easier to acquire in the short term – don't

provide the flexibility required for Pacific people to meet the needs of their families over the longer term.

"I had a great opportunity overseas with awesome money, but I didn't want to leave my mum."

NZ-born participant

"I wanted to go back to study, but I know that I'm the eldest, I just need to support the family."

NZ-born participant

2. BATTLING A BIAS

I feel like I am up against an unconscious bias and have to work even harder to prove myself. But when I feel accepted as a Pacific Islander I can achieve anything.

Many people spoke about the unconscious bias they faced when they applied for roles. One person found it difficult to get a job interview due to an 'island' name. They changed to their maiden name and instantly got interviews. This made them feel ashamed, but was necessary to progress. There was the feeling that as a Pacific person they had to work harder to prove themselves, or distance themselves from their real selves, in order to be respected by other colleagues.

On the other hand, we heard that when people are accepted for who they are as a Pacific person, it added

value to the workplace and allowed them to express themselves more freely. Pacific workers thrive when they are managed by people who are Pacific or who understand their culture and background: these positive relationships provide the right environment for Pacific people to flourish.

A shared cultural understanding in the workplace, meant people were more likely to feel comfortable taking on more work and progressing in newer roles.

"These guys make me feel comfortable in the workplace because that guy the manager is a good guy you know"

Migrant participant

"When they [HR recruiters] look at the last name and they can't pronounce it they just think that they probably can't speak English, although most of those people probably grew up in New Zealand and they were born here."

Migrant participant

3. ONE PERSON MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

One person's support can make a huge difference to my working life.

People told us that they faced many barriers both getting into and progressing in the workforce in New Zealand. But we heard over and over again how one compassionate or visionary person can make the difference between success and failure in the workplace. A supportive manager who took the time to understand their situation, a colleague

who could translate on their behalf, a family member who gave good advice around setting up a bank account and IRD number were all hallmarks of a person's success in New Zealand. These stories repeatedly showed how powerful even one good interaction could be in building resilience and confidence to stay in the workforce and to persevere.

“When I was looking to find a job and they were the only one who actually did care and give me a chance and I felt that loyalty.”

Migrant participant

4. LONG-TERM GAIN, SHORT-TERM PAIN

When I'm more successful at work I have more money to give my family in the long-term, but less time to give them in the short-term.

People identified tensions between progressing at work and meeting family, church or cultural obligations. Progression at work often came at the immediate expense of family obligations, but those who had progressed at work reaped bigger long-term benefits, both financial and social.

With increased income, comes increased responsibility to family, through church and cultural obligations. However, it was also recognised that success in your career does not translate to a change in status in your family, i.e. making more money does not give you more say, but it does mean you can give more. This was seen as a positive: 'cultural hierarchy keeps people grounded in their values and culture.'

For some of our respondents, progression at work meant physically separating themselves from family, living in different homes and missing family events. Conversely, while people wanted to contribute to the success of the collective, they also felt burdened by family and cultural obligations and often weren't able to progress in their workplace or get financially ahead.

“ ...I mean I have had bad times with this job, it does put a strain on my family when I 'm not home, but again I always say to my family, the benefits are, I get paid, we get to do a lot more.”

Migrant participant

5. WHOLE SELF

I naturally bring my cultural practices and values to work – my whole self. My team become my family.

The workplaces where people were able to act out their personal values were the workplaces where people felt valued for more than their work ethic. These workplaces tended to create greater loyalty, as they showed commitment towards understanding the employee better. In these environments, employees might have started going to work for the money, but often chose to continue in the job because of the relationships they create with colleagues and clients rather than simply the work. Sharing of food, opportunities to get to know how their contribution made a difference to the organisation's success and team, as well as personal/team recognition

were all noted as important parts of people being able to bring their 'whole selves' to work.

It was evident from the interviews that Pacific people had long tenures in their organisations, and are loyal employees.

This loyalty did not always instigate a pathway for upwards progression, instead sometimes it created tension. Within the framing of pan-Pacific cultural practices of valuing the collective and reciprocity, upward movement in work hierarchy could sometimes be seen as counter-cultural, as people progress away from each other, from work mate to supervisor.

For others, though, workplaces that reflected and respected their cultural practices were welcoming and positive places to work, and where they felt more supported to pursue promotion.

What is clear is that a supportive cultural environment alone will not ensure progression of Pacific people in the workplace, but is an important foundation for building connection and belonging.

“They [employer] come and say hello to you, ask what you want, anything you need, it makes you feel comfortable in the workplace and you want to work to another level”

Migrant participant

6. SECOND LANGUAGE

English as a second language puts me on the back foot for progression.

The Pacific migrants interviewed said that having a limited understanding of English affected their confidence in finding work and asserting their rights once in the workplace. With no clear way to communicate with their employer, it led to a delay in getting into work and getting stuck at the bottom once in a job.

A lack of language affects their confidence to speak up and communicate for fear of saying the ‘wrong thing.’ We heard that people were taken advantage of because they couldn’t read their contracts or didn’t understand what was being said to them and because of this can cycle through numerous casual and/or part-time jobs, or not receive the benefits they are entitled to.

“English is my second language, sometimes I don’t understand the law.”

Migrant participant

EMPLOYER INSIGHTS



1. COMMUNICATION GAP

I want to help my employees to progress, but I’m not sure they’re up for it.

Employers told us that they were looking for staff to verbalise their desire to progress. Employees on the other hand, told us they believed that a ‘head down, bum up’ attitude was required, meaning they didn’t always put their hands up for advancement.

We also heard how employees were struggling with stepping outside of their cultural norms in order to signal that they are ready for progression, by putting themselves forward.

Some employers were able to bridge the gap through hiring Māori and Pacific people in leadership roles within the business and developing a great organisational culture which put a value on cultural identity and diversity workplace.

“You want to put your efforts into people who are worth training and [that] they are going to be reliable.”

SME Owner

2. ATTITUDE MATTERS

I feel frustrated when basic work ethic is not a given.

Employers told us that they’ll give most people a go, but their ideal employees have the right attitude: they want to work, turn up on time, be part of the team and are consistent. They said reliability, punctuality and ability to communicate were areas that tend to be lacking with many less experienced, younger Pacific employees.

We heard that relational behaviour is necessary in project-based work, especially in sectors where you are only as good as your last job, where reputation matters. You need to know who you can trust and who has the right attitude to help deliver the project to completion.

All employers recognised their role in building the capability of their workforce, including work readiness. One employer shared how they had paired an older Pacific person with a younger Pacific person and increased overall productivity of the pair. The older employee modelled the work ethic that the employer was wanting and the younger employee was able to act as a translator/primary communicator on behalf of the pair.

“Yeah, so when I talk about quality what I’m probably talking about is attitude and I’ve got to be honest, generally speaking, we struggle with attitude, we struggle with communication.”

Project Manager (Construction)

“Give me a guy with good work ethic and I’ll move mountains for you, fill my team with people with a good attitude and there’s nothing we can’t achieve, you know we can teach ability but what we can’t teach is the want to be part of a team, the want to do the right thing, the want to turn up five minutes early and not five minutes late.”

Project Manager (Construction)

3. SOME BUSINESS LEADERS NEED HELP

I’d be glad to do more, but I don’t know how, and other issues take priority.

We heard that growing a business is hard work. Some employers don’t have time for supporting career progression for their employees because they need to prioritise other parts of the business. However, we also heard that employers recognise the importance to have and/or set goals with a future vision for employees.

We heard employers who were able to anticipate the growth of their business; were mindful of its impact on staff, and concerned with the inevitable transition of moving away from focusing on individuals and staff and moving towards becoming more ‘corporate’ leading to organisational culture focused on productivity and profitability; a culture of capitalism.

“I was like geez I can’t, I definitely don’t have more time, I don’t have any skills [to develop a progression plan for staff].”

SME Owner

“One thing that we do not have yet, is a full time HR [function].”

SME owner

4. WORK IS A PLACE TO LEARN AND TO WORK

I don’t understand why my workforce doesn’t take up the learning and advancement opportunities that are there.

We heard employers provide qualifications and on the job training to up-skill their staff with the expectation that staff will take advantage of the opportunity. When there isn’t uptake, employers think that employees do not want to progress.

Some employers told us they understood there are diverse paths for work readiness and advancement. They also acknowledged that they could see that for some staff, it was a lack of confidence.

One employer told us it was important to understand barriers to learning and remove them. He encouraged an employee to give fork-lift driving a go and just practice without fear of failure, which made the employee feel more confident about going ahead and getting his license.

Employees told us that they believed that work was a place to work and not to learn. They said that they would not take up extra training if it took time away from their families. They also said they did not know how the training would lead to increased income.

“I think it’s still a little bit of, a fear of the unknown, lack of confidence, probably not positive experiences at school.”

Human Resource Lead (on why there is little uptake for free industry standard qualifications).

 **SHARED INSIGHTS****1. HIDDEN SKILLS**

Employees often have hidden skills and knowledge from what they do at home and in their community. When they are empowered to use those skills, businesses thrive and so do they.

We heard that Pacific people are intrinsically part of their family and often leaders that exist in their own cultural community are not always valued the same way in their workplace.

Both employers and employees told us that roles in the workplace can be enhanced by understanding roles within employees' homes. A matriarch's love at home can be powerful and holds the family together: this characteristic could act in a similar way in the workplace when recognised as a strength.

One employer told us they were able to utilise the exceptional leadership of one employee to build a highly engaged team. The leader was able to use his culture and language to mentor and grow staff.

When employers have allowed for new styles of leadership to flourish they have had surprising results. Initiatives like informal buddying have increased productivity and supported the employees to develop their own solutions to challenges in the workplace.

"We have a Tongan team and I don't speak Tongan but they are always happy because they have someone to go to, and that's Dave."

Business owner

2. ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE COUNTS

Investment in creating a workplace recognising cultural practices works! Employees thrive and productivity increases.

By creating an environment that embraces shared values such as culture or faith we heard that the employers can find ways to bring people together, reduce tension, and help workers progress.

Environments that allow employees to embody their cultural, spiritual, and faith-based approach lead to transformation of the business and also the staff employed.

Some employers experimented with partnering people based on shared language, culture, faith or respect for one another. Such partnerships increased productivity and provided an approach to develop better work ethics.

"I want us to be educated in a system that suits us and the most important thing is that our culture is going to keep us alive."

Manager (on using cultural practice in the workplace in Health & Safety)

3. SUCCESSFUL SETTLEMENT HAS A LASTING IMPACT FOR A MIGRANT AND THEIR FAMILY.

Improving our understanding of the migrant employment journey

We heard that Pacific migrants came to New Zealand for a better way of life. This generally meant increased income and educational opportunities that could not be attained in their homeland. Employment opportunities were generally through family members or agencies suggested by people who also assisted with their visa applications.

People we engaged with through this process genuinely believed that New Zealand is and continues to be a land of opportunity. We heard that when people were contemplating moving from their island homes to New Zealand, they were lured by the community perception that the 'grass is greener' fuelled by what they see when relatives returned for holidays and what their families were telling them about the kiwi dream. Many assumed making the move to New Zealand would be easy and life would be similar to back home.

But we also heard that while people thought they were prepared for life in New Zealand, the culture shock, coupled with the cold, was overwhelming and that the kiwi dream was not what they thought it was going to be. Some who had qualifications and work experience in the Pacific struggled to get back into their field of expertise due to not having any NZ work experience and others fell into the same pitfalls as family, getting bad advice around the settlement process, racking up large debt and facing housing and employment

insecurity. These circumstances often put immense pressure on the family already settled in New Zealand to support their relatives, creating negative social and economic outcomes for the new migrants, their families established in New Zealand and their relatives back home relying on their remittances. Once within the cycle, it was a long and difficult road to get their way back out of debt and hopelessness.

Conversely, we heard that when a new migrant has engaged with support available through a New Zealand immigration scheme in the home country prior to moving to New Zealand, got good advice from family and friends living in New Zealand and been better supported in their settlement journey by both agencies, family and the wider community, people have flourished.

“My family is very important to me, and that’s why I came here, I need to look for a job so I can put up my family and take care of especially my mother. I love my mother, so yeah, that’s all my family life.”

Migrant participant



OUR PEOPLE

Through this challenge we have learnt a great deal about Pacific people in the workforce. The series of personas bring the research and insights to life, which can help with understanding the lived experience for Pacific people, as they engage in New Zealand workplaces.

Of course, these personas do not cover every circumstance or experience for Pacific people, or employers of Pacific people but they do capture and illustrate the key insights that have arisen through this work.

These personas are set out in this section.

COHORT

EMPLOYEES

PARTICIPANTS

14

DETAILS

Our employees were a mixture of people who were unemployed, full-time employed, NZ-born, migrant, with 10+ years in the workforce, university graduates, no formal qualifications, team leaders, team members, aged 24-60yo and were of Samoan, Cook Island, Tongan and Niuean descent.

EMPLOYERS

6

Our employers were people who have an understanding of what progression looks like in their organisation, either business owner, manager supervisor, at least 20% staff of Pacific descent, 5+ years in a senior position from the manufacturing, wholesale, retail, construction, healthcare and social assistance sectors.

OPEN HOME SESSIONS

80+

We had a range of employers and employees from the building and construction sector, work brokers, recruitment agencies, central and local government agencies and Pacific employees.

IDEATION WORKSHOPS

200+

These workshops were held in Wellington with participants from central government agencies, NGOs, and the building and construction sector.

SIONE



56 years old Migrant

Never advanced in the workforce

Stay-at-home Grandfather

Sione migrated to New Zealand from Tonga over 30 years ago. He came in search of better opportunities, with a plan to bring his parents and siblings over eventually.

Sione's uncle in New Zealand brought him over on a Visitor's Visa with the intention of helping Sione find full time employment and become a permanent resident.

After a short period in New Zealand Sione married and started a family. Before getting married Sione had tried to get New Zealand residency a number of times but could not get an employer to sponsor his application. This affected his ability to get full-time, legal work.

In the end, his wife, who was born in New Zealand, helped Sione to gain permanent resident status. Due to the costs, job insecurity and the confusing immigration process it took nearly five years for him to become a permanent resident.



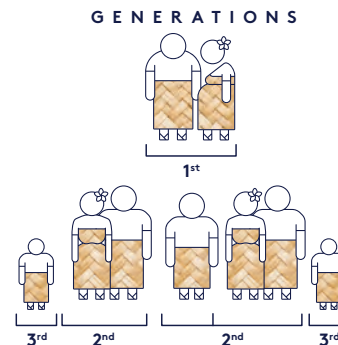
WORK HISTORY Sione did not speak English and had no understanding of what he was coming to, so from the outset found it difficult to find and maintain legitimate work.

While usually friendly and sociable, Sione kept his head down at work because he wasn't sure what he could say to his boss. So out of fear of saying the wrong thing he chose to say nothing.

There were long periods where he didn't have legitimate work so ended up taking under the table jobs to make ends meet and work in New Zealand illegally.

ADVANCING AT WORK When permanent roles came up in the workplace, he was overlooked and so moved on to a new workplace. He lost confidence and became resigned to taking on casual work.

RIGHT NOW His main job now is looking after the grandchildren, which he loves. He is financially supported by his wife and two of his children who are all in full time work. They are all living in the same house with their partners and young children. There are nine people in their three bedroom home. A nephew from Tonga has just arrived to stay with the family. He has come in search of work and starting a new life in New Zealand.



"I was hopeful and excited about coming to NZ"

"I keep my head down and work hard at work but can never get a permanent job"

"English is my second language"

"I have no formal qualifications"

"I am a migrant"

"I am a proud Pacific Islander"

"I love my grandchildren, they are my full time job"



PROTECTIVE FACTORS:

- Family support
- Good social skills
- Motivated to work and make money - driven by wanting to bring his parents to NZ
- Wife has a stable full time job



RISK FACTORS:

- No English
- No formal qualifications
- No real idea of what life is going to be like in NZ
- Only on a short term visa at first, so dependent on finding and keeping full-time work

AKE

45 years old

New Zealand Born

Mother

Some experience of advancing

20 years working for the same organisation in the service industry

Currently on sickness benefit



Ake was born in New Zealand to migrant parents from the Cook Islands. She had a wonderful childhood, surrounded by family who all owned their own homes next to each other.

With some support from her parents, Ake and her husband were able to buy a house behind the family home where they live with their two teenage children and her nine year old nephew.

Ake plays a big role in her extended family, she's the 'organiser' and is always helping to coordinate family events and activities.

WORK HISTORY Ake developed a good work ethic early on in life, modelled by her parents and had part time jobs throughout

her teenage years which she juggled between church and cultural activities.

When she finished high school she started training to be a teacher, but applied for a job as a carer in the health sector half way through her studies and was successful. She always intended to go back to study, but enjoyed her work and making money so didn't return to university.

ADVANCING IN THE WORKFORCE Ake didn't really think about advancing until five years into her tenure, her direct manager asked her if she'd be interested in covering for her while she went on a leave of absence.

She hesitantly took up the opportunity,

motivated by the fact that she'd be doing her team a favour rather than for personal gain. She enjoyed the challenge but clashed with her superior, who was worried that she'd want his role in the future and wasn't sure how to deal with it.

She was happy to go back to her original role when the secondment was over and went on to become the union representative for her and her colleagues.

Ake worked long hours and was dedicated to the organisation she worked for. This often meant finding other ways to contribute to family activities as she wasn't always able to be there.

RIGHT NOW The long hours of shift work have taken a toll on Ake's health and she had to leave work to focus on getting well. She also feels the long hours at work have put a strain on her relationship with her son and daughter and is excited to be able to spend more time investing in home life.

This is the first time that Ake has not been in paid employment in her whole life and she is worried about making ends meet. She is now the primary caregiver for her ailing parents and is thinking about retraining. She thinks that she still has lots to offer the workforce and is keen to get back into paid work when the time is right.

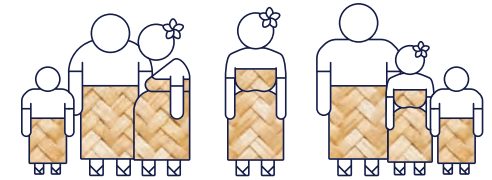
"I am a proud Cook Islander"

"I am a committed worker and enjoy what I do"

"I do everything I do for my family"

"I just want to do my job and don't care about progression"

"I am a homeowner"



PROTECTIVE FACTORS:

- Strong family support
- Had some qualifications (finished high school)
- Has a good work ethic and history
- Stable family base - many of her family owned their own homes
- Really enjoys her job
- Speaks fluent English



RISK FACTORS:

- No work life balance
- Lots of family commitments
- Tendency to overwork - long shifts, physical work

ZANE



33 years old

Father

New Zealand born

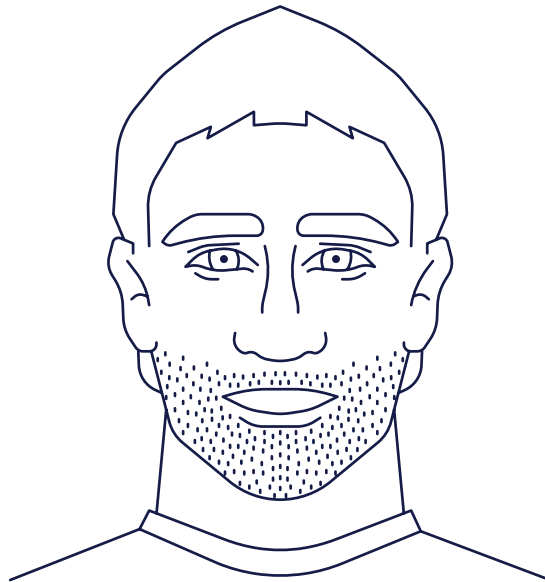
Zane is a third generation Samoan New Zealander.

He is the eldest of 10 children from a one-parent family and is proud to be from South Auckland.

Zane loved playing sport and was often in representative teams growing up. He excelled in school and did well enough to get a scholarship to university. He had dreams to become a community worker, but had to get a job before he could complete his degree, to help look after his little brother who got sick.

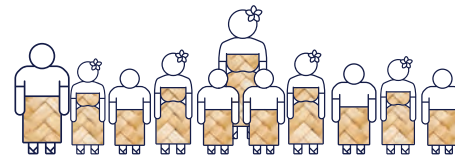
WORK HISTORY His uncle was able to get him a job with him at the logistics warehouse down the road. He enjoyed being with his cousins who also worked at the warehouse and was glad to be able to help his mum with the family's expenses.

Zane had natural leadership skills and thrived in the workplace. At 23 he was one of the younger members of the team, but



people respected him. During a visit from senior management Zane was recognised for his innovative thinking around making things more efficient on the shop floor and was identified as an up and coming leader.

ADVANCING AT WORK After six months of working, Zane bought himself a car to get to and from work, but got into debt after his sister crashed it. Zane was really upset about losing



the freedom his car gave him. After the car accident Zane had to rely on his girlfriend to drop him at work, and was often late. Because he had a good relationship with his boss, Zane was able to explain what had happened and why he continued to be late. His manager allowed him to start his shift later so he wouldn't be late and helped him consolidate the debt so he could buy another car. He also helped him to get some insurance so the car would be covered if something like that happened again.

RIGHT NOW Eight years later, Zane has a family of his own, his youngest has just turned 1 and he is still with the same business, managing the entire night shift workforce.

He and his partner recently moved into a small rental house down the road from his mum and siblings and one of his sisters has just started working with him at the logistics warehouse.

"I am a proud Samoan and South Aucklander"

"I place the needs of my family before my own"

"I am a good communicator developed through playing sport and have excelled academically"

"My social network helped me get a job"

"I am willing to work hard and use my initiative but it only takes one thing to derail my success "



PROTECTIVE FACTORS:

- Skills learnt through participating in sport and school
- Strong family values and support
- Finished school and is a quick learner
- Is motivated to succeed and ambitious at work, driven by the desire for his family to have a better life
- Had a great boss who saw his potential and supported him to grow



RISK FACTORS:

- Resilience is low, especially when starting out in the workforce
- His success can be easily derailed by external factors
- Lots of responsibility at home - mum still relies on him and he now has a family of his own

LUCY



Pakeha

58 years old

Self-employed business owner / operator

Highly experienced business owner but no experience in working with Pacific employees

Sector: Hospitality

Drivers: Increasing staff retention and engagement and decreasing staff turnover



Lucy is the proud new owner of three restaurants which are a part of a global franchise. All of the restaurants are based in South Auckland and most of her staff live locally and are of Pacific descent.

Lucy loves that the restaurants are a part of the community and is passionate about providing local people with work

LUCY'S FOCUS While the businesses are doing well, Lucy has been struggling with motivating and retaining her Pacific employees. She has now enlisted the help of head office in helping her get the best out of her people so she is

able to spend less time on training and managing staff.

APPROACH TO RECRUITMENT &

PROGRESSION All of the operating and Human Resource (HR) policies are defined by the head office of the global franchise. There are clear pathways for staff to progress in the business and franchise owners are encouraged to use the resources and tools provided to them

to enable progression from within. While the resources have sections on diversity, there is nothing specific about working to get the best out of Pacific employees.

RIGHT NOW Lucy wants to know more about the drivers for Pacific people, their culture, values system and community structures so she is able to find ways of enabling her Pacific staff to succeed at work.

She sees the latent potential and recognises that Pacific people will continue to be her main workforce unless she looks further afield than the local community for employees.

"I love that my business provides a service for locals and am committed to providing jobs for local people"

"Pacific people are the biggest consumers of my products and services and are the largest communities surrounding my restaurants"

"I recognise that I don't know anything about Pacific communities and need to learn so that I can get the best out of my Pacific staff"

"At the end of the day, I am still running a business and will do whatever it takes to keep the business afloat."



OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SECTOR:

- An experienced business owner who needs good staff and wants to be a good employer
- An appreciation of her role in the South Auckland community, and the benefits to her business and the community in employing and retaining Pacific staff



RISKS FOR THE SECTOR:

- Inexperienced at managing Pacific employees, and unfamiliar with Pacific culture
- In start up-phase with the business, so unlikely to be able to tolerate significant shocks or losses
- Owner-operator, so enormously busy; trying to manage everything herself

MIRANDA AND HAARE



42 years old

Married

Māori/Polynesian couple

Sector: Construction

Drivers: You can make money and do good



Miranda and her husband Haare own a small construction business. Haare leads the guys on site and Miranda does the administration.

The business specialises in commercial construction so they mostly do sub-contracting to the big construction firms.

MIRANDA AND HAARE'S FOCUS Over 10 years they've grown their business from just Haare on the tools as a builder, to a 14 person operation who are mostly of Māori and/or Pacific descent.

Besides a few old hands that Miranda and Haare have had with them from the start of their expansion most of their staff are young and new to the workforce.

Both Miranda and Haare are happy with how the business is going. They have a

good reputation in the industry and have a long pipeline of work.

Haare had a great mentor when he started out as an apprentice who has continued to help him as his business has grown. He'd like to spend less time on the tools and more time on creating more opportunities for the business, particularly around developing relevant training and development programmes for Māori and Pacific young people into the workforce.

Miranda helped to nourish Haare's passion for mentoring new employees by creating a good structure for the business.

APPROACH TO TRAINING AND PROGRESSION Haare enjoys mentoring young people because they bring lots of energy and have great ideas but gets frustrated with their tardiness and

perceived lack of commitment to the job. Haare works hard to help his employees settle into a good work pattern and invests lots of his time training and coaching new staff. Miranda helps source training opportunities for all staff through the networks she's built up in the sector.

Because the business is small and margins are tight, there aren't a lot of opportunities for people to earn a lot more money. So while Miranda and Haare are great employers they aren't able to compete with the pay rises that the big construction firms are able to offer. Both Miranda and Haare are frustrated with training people up to be stolen by bigger firms when they're up and running and feel like they're not recognised for the quality people they are contributing to the construction sector workforce.

Their employees love working for the couple because of the values driven approach they take to running their business, every staff member is family.

RIGHT NOW To combat the staff retention issues Miranda has been thinking about teaming up with other small businesses in the construction sector to rotate staff so they're able to learn new skills and grow.

"We are driven by our faith in God"

"We are proud to be able to provide our whānau and community with quality work opportunities"

"Our sector needs to invest in training and development for staff"

"We want to create a network of businesses interested in rotating staff so they continue to learn and grow and hopefully we'll be able to hold on to them longer"



OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SECTOR:

- Support small Māori and Pacific owned businesses in their coaching and mentoring capability
- Recognise and invest in the role that small businesses play in growing skilled and capable staff for the construction sector
- Support innovative ideas and HR structures which enable staff in small businesses to upskill, grow and retain staff



RISKS FOR THE SECTOR:

- Māori and Pacific Small-Medium Enterprises (SME) may get frustrated and not invest in training and development anymore
- Status quo - the skills shortage of quality, skilled staff gets bigger in the construction sector
- Young people entering the workforce have a bad start which hinders their progression in the workforce in later years

TODD



60 years old

Pakeha

Sector: Engineering, manufacturing

Drivers: Sales volumes, efficiency and productivity



Todd is a Senior Manager for a small but growing, locally owned, engineering company. About 40% of the staff are of Pacific descent and are primarily based on the shop floor, managing machinery and making moulds.

He likes employing Pacific people because they work hard, are generally happy workers and are loyal to the company. He's proud to say he even has three generations of one Pacific family working in the business.

He reckons the company must be doing something right because they have a low staff turnover rate. Todd doesn't recognise that he has been able to attract and keep his Pacific staff because of their personal ties to each other, more than their loyalty to the organisation.

TODD'S FOCUS The business is growing rapidly and the senior management have been directed by the board to increase the workforce and plant operation hours, in order to meet the growing market demand, and make the most of the business opportunity.

Todd has put the word out through his existing Pacific staff for more workers but is worried about the quality of staff that he'll be able to attract and retain. He needs more skilled staff to help maintain machinery and is thinking of bringing in migrant workers to fill the gap.

APPROACH TO RECRUITMENT AND PROGRESSION They have a flat structure in the company, so opportunities to go

"I am a proud South Auckland with hard work, anything is possible"

"Qualifications aren't required - I'll give anyone with the right attitude a go"

"If you perform you'll have a job with us for life"

"We urgently need more skilled workers"

up are few and far between but people who show initiative are informally given the chance to move around the plant, learning all of the different roles and growing their skills.

However, there is huge pressure on the business to meet targets, so it is hard for management to give people time out from work to do courses and upskill outside of on the job learning. This is something that Todd would like to address in the future. The company is currently working with an industry training organisation to identify training opportunities.

RIGHT NOW While he is immensely proud of his team, he feels helpless and frustrated when half his staff don't

turn up to a shift because an event has happened in their community. This, alongside the need for skilled workers, is driving his decision to try and diversify the makeup of his team.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SECTOR:

- Staff are motivated and loyal
- Opportunity to accelerate the training of existing staff for higher skilled roles within the organisation
- Great Pacific staff network – Ability to tap into Pacific staff networks to attract more staff – have found that the relationship with existing staff reduces issues with absenteeism and productivity because those that have worked in the business keep the new ones accountable



RISKS FOR THE SECTOR:

- Because of the collective nature of Pacific communities and the personal ties between staff, there will be times when a group of people will be away at the same time due to events such as a funeral. While this makes sense in a cultural context – how does Todd make it work in a business context?
- There is only a superficial understanding of the drivers and values of Pacific staff by senior leadership
- Worried about alienating other staff who don't have the context - how does the business keep everyone happy?



OUR KEY PRINCIPLES

The following insights have emerged as a result of an extensive codesign process involving both employers and employees. Each of these insights may be read as principles and as a basis to be applied by The Southern Initiative and key partners as we move into the next stage of the Pacific Peoples work force challenge, the making and testing phase.

1. LOOK BEYOND THE INDIVIDUAL

While this work was initially started to understand how we accelerate the advancement of Pacific people in the workforce, it has been hard to ignore the positive and negative impacts advancement has on the individual's family, as well as the critical importance of family and community for Pacific people, and the effect these will have on their career decision-making.

Through this work, we now recognise that with additional support for the family, advancement can provide opportunities much further reaching and lasting than just increase in money, skills and responsibility for the individual.

It's also clear that we need to find ways to shift the common narrative, from a focus on 'any old job', to an understanding that quality jobs can be achievable and balanced with family and community commitments.

2. CLOSE THE CULTURAL AND COMMUNICATION GAP

The study shows that there is a big cultural and communication gap between employers and Pacific employees that is sometimes about language, but often goes beyond that.

There is currently a mismatch between what Pacific employees think is demonstrating readiness for progression (head down, bum up mentality) and what employers see. Employers are looking for more verbal expressions of ambition, and saw the lack of verbal communication as an indication that they are happy where they are.

This gap also plays out in attitudes towards and participation in workplace learning. Employers expect employees to take up learning opportunities, and are often baffled when employees are slow to do so. We can do more to align expectations and help employees learn and progress more fully.

3. MAP OUT CLEAR PROGRESSION PATHWAYS / ARA

This Challenge shows that Pacific employees don't always understand what progression is available, or what the route towards progression is. There is room to create more obvious and explicit pathways, and support mechanisms for Pacific employees along that path.

Key things to consider should include; how might we set standards around learning and progression so employees know that progression is a part of the culture of the organisation and that progression is expected and that progression pathways are clearly communicated.

4. BUILD CULTURE-FRIENDLY WORKPLACES

This challenge showed clearly that supportive individuals and supportive workplace cultures made a big difference on Pacific people's happiness in the workforce, and also their progression. We heard we need to work towards encouraging people to be the difference to employee's success in the workplace; that when a Pacific person is happy in their workplace (valued, purposeful and supported) they feel accepted to bring their whole selves to work.

There is potential to find new ways to support people as they enter the workforce or a new workplace and it's clear that positive experiences help breed confidence and trust which will help with progression in the future.

5. CHANGE THE SETTLEMENT NARRATIVE

Settlement into New Zealand for new migrants has a lasting impact on their family and future generations. Enabling good settlement outcomes for Pacific migrants will have a positive flow on effect for future generations of the family.

We heard that there is a need to connect with migrants before they leave their home countries. This would be with the purpose of providing accessibility to services in preparation for their arrival to their new lives in New Zealand. This would include support services around literacy, numeracy, upskilling and/or training for employment, in order to lay solid employment foundations for the employee.



6. GROW THE CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY OF MĀORI AND PACIFIC BUSINESSES

A study of five local social enterprises that ran simultaneously alongside this challenge revealed that Māori and Pacific owned businesses are more likely to hire Pacific staff, give them training opportunities and pay them higher wages.

We heard that the ability to operate in a dual world, where success is measured accordingly within a western construct or collective behaviour, generally collectivism was at the centre of its operations.

Growing Māori and Pacific owned business through good support mechanisms is great for the whole community.



OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

With a significantly younger median age (22 years) than the New Zealand national average (38 years), Pacific people make up the youngest and fastest growing population in New Zealand, particularly in South Auckland where Pacific people make up 40% (101,937 people) of the total population. Workforce projections indicate that by 2026, Pacific people will make up a third of Auckland's total workforce.

Within this context, Pacific peoples are also likely to have significant care-giving responsibilities for their families due to having larger than average family sizes (Pacific peoples are six times more likely to have larger families of six people or more than other New Zealanders), that Pacific women tend to have children earlier and are likely to have a number of children in quick succession. For Pacific women, in particular, more research is required to understand the impact this has on their entry and reintegration on the workforce pre and post motherhood.

In order to maximise the contribution Pacific people can make to realising Auckland and New Zealand's future economic success, the research tells us that much more needs to be done to address the current situation, where Pacific people continue to:

- have the lowest median income levels across all ethnic groups in New Zealand (\$19,700 compared to \$28,500 for the total population)

- be over-represented in low-skilled, low paid roles in sectors that are most at-risk of automation over the next 30 years
- have significantly lower net worth than the average New Zealander (the average net worth for Auckland's Pacific population is \$12,000 compared to \$87,000 for the non-Pacific population)
- have a home-ownership rate that is one-third that of the non-Pacific population

Based on the findings from this report, we know that in order to make the required changes that will lead to the acceleration Pacific peoples advancement in New Zealand's workforce the following opportunities for eight recommended actions exist for government, employers and Pacific communities:

ADDRESS the factors that create and perpetuate the current state of play by:

1. **Streamlining targeted interventions that directly and quickly tackle transportation barriers that affect Auckland-based Pacific peoples' workforce participation.**

Why? We know that transportation factors directly affect workforce participation decisions, and the research tells us that:

- Auckland's working Pacific population has a higher likelihood of having restricted to little to no vehicle access than the non-Pacific population;

- proximity to family is important, being able to get home from work quickly and easily to help with the needs of the wider family is a big consideration for Pacific people when looking for work and thinking about the role choices available
2. **Undertaking research into Pacific womens' entry and reintegration into the workforce pre and post motherhood.**

Why? We know caregiving responsibilities directly affect workforce participation and advancement, and the research tells us that:

- Pacific women tend to have children earlier and are likely to have children in quick succession;
- we need to understand the exact nature of the impact of this trend on Pacific people's career-decision making to design ways to accelerate opportunities for advancement within this context

CREATE local conditions for Pacific people and employers that support workforce progression by:

3. **Recognising employers willing to go the extra mile by having work-place arrangements and practices that recognise that the value and importance of 'family' as a key driver for success and decision-making for Pacific people.**

Why? We know that investment in creating a workplace that recognises cultural practices and the importance of family works. Employees thrive and productivity increases, and the research tells us that:

- there is a gap between the expectations of employers and Pacific employees which is exacerbated by progression being tied up by a one-size-fits-all system
- we know that when Pacific employees feel accepted for who they are – with acknowledgement of their ‘hidden skills’ (the things they do for their families and communities) that they feel empowered to use those skills and the businesses they work in turn thrive because their employees feel valued

4. Investing in initiatives that grow the capability and capacity of Māori and Pacific businesses, especially those committed to Pacific People’s workforce advancement.

Why? We know that Māori and Pacific businesses are more likely to operate in a dual world, where success is measured accordingly where collectivism is likely to be at the centre of operations, and the research tells us that:

- Māori and Pacific-owned businesses are more likely to hire Pacific staff, give them coaching and training opportunities and pay them higher wages leading to greater opportunities for accelerated workforce progression and skills transfer

USE levers for behaviour and systems change by:

5. Providing dedicated career-advancement support (mentoring, advice and coaching) for Pacific staff who’ve been in the workforce for at least five years and are earning between the minimum wage and living-wage income brackets in sectors and roles identified as being at risk of automation in the next 30 years, to support them through the process of transitioning into higher income-bracket roles and into new sectors.

Why? We know that Pacific peoples are over-represented in low-waged, low-skilled roles within sectors that are at risk for rapid automation in order to achieve productivity gains in the next 30 years, and the research tells us that:

- transitioning this segment of the Pacific workforce into higher income-bracket roles and new sectors requires intensive career support and guidance
- if this transition does not occur quickly, the impact of automation on this segment of Pacific peoples’ population is likely to undermine any other external efforts to accelerate workforce advance and participation in the short term
- ensuring this support is provided in a way that is effective will require facilitated collaborative relationships and a strong monitoring and evaluation mechanism and framework to track progress and identify and address barriers quickly

6. Investing in the provision of affordable, accessible and inclusive cultural-competency-based training, advice and support for employers to give them an opportunity to gain insight into Pacific drivers and values and develop strategies for creating organisations that are culturally-supportive.

Why? We know that it is common for both employers and Pacific employees to feel like there is a ‘communication gap’ where employees may want to progress but their actions are mistaken by employers as meaning something different, and the research tells us that:

- business leaders may be willing, but they often do not have the capacity or skills to focus on their staff’s career development
- there is a gap between the expectations of employers and employees which is exacerbated by progression being tied up in a one-size-fits-all system
- many Pacific employees feel like they are up against an ‘unconscious bias’ and have to work harder to prove themselves
- Pacific employees often have hidden skills and knowledge from what they do at home and in their community which are not recognised in their workplace

7. Designing and implementing targeted settlement-support services for new Pacific migrants and their families, including financial literacy, upskilling and/or training for employment and career advice and support for partners and children

in order to get the gains required requires a network of key partners who believe in the vision and have the necessary resources and systems that can be leveraged to get the 'whole-of-system' shift this report indicates are needed

Why? We know that settlement into New Zealand for new migrants has a lasting impact on their family and future generations, and the research tells us that:

- there is a need for greater targeted support services for new Pacific migrants to lay solid employment foundations for Pacific employees and their families in New Zealand

GENERATE collaboration between employers, agencies and organisations to positively work together to implement the actions outlined above, by:

8. Creating a vision-led network of partners willing to champion and implement initiatives that lead to accelerated Pacific peoples workforce outcomes, including by leveraging their own organisational resources, communication channels and networks to do so

Why? We know from the research that to get transformational accelerated workforce outcomes for Pacific people. It requires a multi-pronged collaborative approach based on a shared vision. We also know that the need to be able to move quickly and nimbly, during the next phase of the process ('making and testing'),




THE NEXT PHASE

The Pacific Peoples' Workplace Challenge is now ready to move into the making and testing phase which involves exploring what the application of the key findings from this report might look like when implemented to support transformational economic outcomes for Pacific people and their families.

The first step in this phase of the process will be for The Southern Initiative, Auckland Co-design Lab and Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment to discuss the findings from the report with critical partners identified as being key in supporting the 'whole-of-system' shift needed to get the changes the findings from this report tell us are needed.

As part of these discussions, conceptual proto-type opportunities for partnership and collaboration focused on accelerating Pacific peoples' employment outcomes will be identified and agreed upon, before being assessed for viability, feasibility and impact.

Monitoring, evaluation and opportunities for further iteration will also be central to the overarching design and implementation of this phase as new insights and learnings are gained through the process.



