

Emerging Diversity and Inclusion Award Entrant: HSBC

Traditionally the banking and finance industry has not been known for championing flexi-time for family or personal activities, but this is something that HSBC in New Zealand has been changing as part of their increased focus on diversity and inclusion.

HSBC is one of the world's largest banking and financial services organisations, serving more than 47 million customers through four global businesses. HSBC operates in New Zealand as a branch of The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited, with an employee base of approximately 230.

The cultural change at the bank began with a new People Agenda first presented in January 2014, which put forward as key focus areas:

- Introducing family-friendly policies including paid parental leave and flexible work practices
- Building a pipeline of female talent to increase female representation at senior levels
- Working with recruitment agencies to ensure diverse candidate slates are presented for all roles
- Developing organisational awareness of diversity and the proven impact it has on team and business performance
- Arranging events and activities in support of key dates on the diversity calendar, such as International Woman's Day.

These initiatives were to support the bank's strategy of creating a diverse and inclusive workplace fostering continuous professional development, flexible working and opportunities for everyone to grow and progress based on merit.

For the first year of HSBC in New Zealand's diversity journey, the focus was on enablers of change.

Policies were introduced covering diversity and inclusion, discrimination, harassment, workplace bullying, and paid parental and partner's leave. After a successful pilot in the retail banking area, flexible working was implemented across the bank in April 2015.

A number of different events were held to build awareness of the new initiatives, including a 'Developing the Skills to Lead with Confidence' workshop held for female talent. Employees were also invited to panel discussions with senior staff and invited guests on creating an inclusive culture, and why building a diverse and inclusive culture is important.

Diversity metrics (female and age bracket by band level) are distributed monthly at senior management levels and succession planning process changes ensure particular emphasis is given to female representation.

In year two, the focus has been continuing to build on the foundation established in the first year. In January 2016 the bank formed a Diversity and Inclusion Committee, made up of senior staff and representatives from across the business, and Employee Resource Groups

(ERG) have been set up to help enable the Diversity and Inclusion plan. The 'Nurture' (caring for others) ERG has been established and is in the process of organising their launch event, and a 'Balance' (focusing on gender balance across the business) ERG is in the process of being arranged.

A pay equity review has been undertaken to identify the extent of the pay gap between male and female employees. Post the review, an action plan is being developed by the Diversity & Inclusion Committee to address the findings.

The New Zealand Development Programme was launched as a means to develop a strong pipeline of local talent. Programme participants include female leaders who are being developed for more senior roles.

Employees have been selected from across the business to be role models and advocate for the bank's values whilst supporting the "Embedding our Culture" Plan for 2016. They will also support the bank's diversity and inclusion agenda.

The DIAN Diagnostic Survey was deployed to all employees to gauge their perspective on where HSBC in New Zealand is now at on its diversity and inclusion journey. This will enable the bank to establish a benchmark and to identify next steps.

HSBC in New Zealand has great sponsorship and support for these initiatives at CEO level from Chris Russell, former Chair for the HSBC Australia Diversity and Inclusion Committee, who now leads the New Zealand business. Head of RBWM (Retail and Wealth Management) Glen Tonks was appointed as the sponsor for diversity and inclusion to provide leadership and visible support for this area and create a strong tone from the top.

The Executive Committee team has also been sharing with their teams the diversity and inclusion plans for the 2016 year. Senior leaders in the organisation spearheaded the launch of the flexibility programme and CEO Chris Russell communicated the importance of the initiative and how he works flexibly himself.

Another indicator of the progress that's been made in establishing a more diverse and inclusive culture are the metrics showing female representation across the different band levels at the bank – 20 per cent of the executive committee, 23 per cent of senior managers and 53 per cent of middle managers are women. Among the employees identified as talent, a third are women, and more than half of those on the New Zealand Development Programme are female. Within the bank's succession plans, 35 per cent of employees identified as successors for key risk roles are women.

For employees, the changes are making a difference every day. A survey indicated 50 per cent of the bank's staff were working more flexibly after the launch of the programme and, as the feedback from one parent suggests, this allows more focus on the important things in life.

"I personally take advantage of flexibility by coming in late three days a week in order to drop my son off at school, and by taking a long lunch break twice a week for exercise. I am also fortunate to have remote working capability, allowing me to manage late meetings and my workload without missing reading my boys a bedtime story, which is important to me."