

## Tomorrow's Workforce Award Entrant: MGS Stations Ltd



When it comes time to fill up our gas tanks, New Zealanders are not short on options. Intersections and highways are crammed with door to door stations and each has to work hard to earn our loyalty.

MGS Stations Ltd, who operate 14 Z petrol sites between Auckland's North Shore and Warkworth, know that to earn repeat patronage, they have to provide a high standard of customer service.

And so they became very concerned that the large turnover of staff they were experiencing in a short period of time was resulting in a poor trip to the gas station and a decline in repeat customers.

A shortage of quality frontline staff and a loss of experience and expertise had led to site standards declining dramatically and so MGS decided to diversify their staff recruitment process.

They decided that for each site to be effectively operational there needed to be a well-trained site leader assisted by an equally competent 2IC and good crew members.

To achieve that they changed their recruitment process, drawing from a variety of socio-economic areas to create a culturally diverse environment. Employees would contribute to the overall success of the organisation from a diversely rich platform.

Firstly, recruitment sources were reviewed to include WINZ, Trademe and local newspapers.

Any roles that required higher skills, such as 2IC or site leaders, would be internally sourced first prior to looking outside of the business.

A Training Manager was appointed to head full staff training for all new recruits and at the same time all existing staff were put through a refresher on their roles as well as cross-training programmes. The director, admin team and operations managers worked alongside staff members, to lead by example and assist in the training.

Certificate in Retail Levels 2 & 3 endorsed by NZQA are now provided to crew members who successfully complete all their training. A selected group of staff were enrolled for Certificate in Retail Level 3 and all 75 candidates successfully completed and achieved Level 3 credentials.

In addition a second batch of staff are enrolled in basic numeracy and literacy training, and a third in leadership training.

The approach has had proven success. To date all 14 sites under MGS's umbrella boast site leaders who had initially joined the organisation on entry level and have worked their way up. Each of them has been internally promoted. A number of 2ICs have followed suite and are in the process of completing their site leader's training.

Site leader for Z Lakeside, Amrinder, is a shining example. Amrinder joined the company as a "graveyarder" working 10pm-7am shifts five nights a week. He gained experience but could not get promotion due to poor English speaking ability and communication.

Amrinder was helped to enrol in an English school and has since been promoted to a site leader's role. Amrinder is one of the most effective site leaders within the organisation.

Another site leader, for Z Albany, named Ranjodhbir was in a similar situation as Amrinder. Ranjodhbir now manages a busy Z site and was awarded the Site Leader of the Year for 2015.

Both Amrinder and Ranjodhbir have been enrolled in the upcoming Z Leadership Factor Training.

MGS Stations have also tried to develop a more enjoyable work experience. Fun activities have been introduced to the team culture. Things like wearing a fancy hat, blackout uniforms to support the All Blacks games, observing Valentine's Day, Father's Day and Mother's Day, as well as Z Santa visits to hospitals have helped bring the workplace to life.

The combination of changes is reaping rewards. From staff turnover of 70%, retention is now sitting on 53.6%.

The ethnicity mix at MGS Stations Ltd has Indians, Fijians, Samoans, Tongans, South Africans, Kiwis, Europeans, Koreans and Maoris who make up the roster.

And the final word lies with the public. Customer satisfaction (measured by customer survey) has risen from 82.8% in April 2015 to 87.4% in March 2016.