

Annamarie Jamieson, Stuff Walk the Talk

Being the company conscience was never part of Annamarie Jamieson's official job description, but it's a role she has assumed naturally, championing greater diversity within Stuff's workforce of more than 1400 people.

It's Annamarie's personal view that companies such as Stuff (formerly Fairfax Media), should focus on what people can do, rather than what they cannot do. That's the theory behind initiatives she has championed in her role first as editorial operations manager, and in the recently-created executive position of People and Culture Director.

Under Annamarie's leadership, Stuff has made significant inroads in creating a more diverse and inclusive workforce – during a time a time of significant change for the New Zealand media industry.

Stuff Chief Executive Officer Sinead Boucher says Annamarie is one of the key people within the organisation helping to influence opinion and create real change.

"Stuff has moved from a predominantly print and old-school business to a modern digital-facing one. That requires modernising our culture to make it a more open and inclusive one for everyone - across genders, ethnic groups, ages and to reflect, in general, the diversity in New Zealand society," she says.

Diversity and inclusion is one of the five pillars of Stuff's Corporate Social Responsibility action plan. Annamarie is the force behind two initiatives that put that plan into action. As an advocate for the young people with intellectual and physical disabilities, Annamarie developed the Creative Spirit programme, which has seen eight young people with disabilities employed at Stuff.

After leaving school, Portia Johnson from Hamilton spent two years looking for a job and faced constant rejection.

"My problem is not my disability," she said in an AttitudeLive documentary on her long journey to employment. "It is more about how other people see me or treat me."

However, that rejection ended when Annamarie offered Portia a job doing basic administrative duties in the company's Waikato office. Another employee under the programme burst into tears when she first saw her desk in the Auckland office - it was an opportunity she never thought she'd get.

"Annamarie's contribution has resulted in real change in people's lives. Her enthusiasm and evangelism in this area has led to dozens of other employers mimicking the scheme," says Sinead.

Another life-changing initiative pioneered by Annamarie is the Coffee Co-op, set up in December 2016. The pop-up style coffee shop is located on the 7th floor balcony area of Stuff's Auckland offices, and has employed five deaf baristas. Not only have Stuff staff learned to use sign language to place their orders, it has opened the eyes of other managers within the organisation.



“An example of this was the hiring of a deaf graphic artist. The senior manager conceded they would have never considered the employee if they had not seen what deaf people could do at the Coffee Co-op venture set up by Annamarie,” says Sinead.

As a result of Annamarie’s initiatives, Stuff was the recipient of the 2017 Attitude ACC Employer of the Year Award.

“It was a proud moment for Annamarie as one of the Creative Spirit employees spoke spontaneously and passionately about how her life had changed for the better,” says Sinead.

“Such awards provide recognition and credibility for our social purpose endeavours. As a media organisation, we are adept at using our influence for the greater good. Stuff reaches more than two million Kiwis each month - and this has given the diversity conversation unprecedented exposure. Annamarie has faced internal and external challenges in trying to reset the scene for people with disabilities in the corporate sector. She has pushed her way through the politics and bureaucracy typical of any sizeable business to become a standard bearer for social justice in the corporate community.”

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