



Recreation Aotearoa

WORK LIFE BALANCE FINALIST



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VIDEO**

THE STORY

Recreation Aotearoa is an organisation based on the benefits of recreation, so it was natural to integrate it as the backbone of its employee wellbeing policy.

Recreation Aotearoa represents professionals in the recreation industry and has 12 staff which make up its small and tight-knit team. The organisation is built on the idea that recreation should be second nature to all Kiwis, and recognizes that this should be reflected within the workplace.

Recreation Aotearoa has a number of policies which reflect its commitment to its employees' physical and mental health and wellbeing. All employees are offered two hours a week to undertake recreational activities, a perk which every employee takes advantage of, for example to take a run in the morning, kayak at lunchtime or cycle home from work. The whole organisation also takes time out of the office every month to do a recreational activity as a team, and each employee gets contributions from Recreation Aotearoa up to the value of \$200 per year for pursuing their personal wellness goals.

As well as exercise, Recreation Aotearoa supports its employees in other areas of wellbeing. All employees are reimbursed for their annual flu vaccination, are given adjustable desks and ergonomic equipment for their workspace, and are supported in their personal wellness goals, which are identified annually. Employees are also given a day off for their birthday, either on the day or the next working day.

Recreation Aotearoa has partnered with the Health Promotion Agency to give its team and membership access to resources which promote wellbeing, good mental health practices and remaining SunSmart.

It is important to the organisation that it provides a fun and supportive workplace atmosphere, and it has instituted a number of traditions, such as a monthly team lunch and doing the quiz in the paper together each morning. These little things add up, on top of the big-picture wellbeing policies, to a workplace that employees enjoy coming too.

When asked for feedback on the workplace wellbeing policy, employees were extremely positive. One employee, who went through treatment for cancer while working at Recreation Aotearoa, says, “The recreation time and the support of my work whānau has made my recovery time shorter – working here has genuinely made my life better.”

Another employee says, “I particularly enjoy the opportunity to take part in team recreation activities which help to build healthy relationships between team members.

“A lot of organisations state that they care about their employees’ wellbeing, but this is the first organisation I have worked for which actually does this effectively.”

“The recreation time and support of my work whānau has made my recovery time shorter. Working here has genuinely made my life better.”

THE CHALLENGE

Recreation Aotearoa wants to reflect its outward purpose of supporting physical and mental wellbeing in its own workplace.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

- Employees get two hours a week to undertake recreational activities to promote their wellbeing.
- Every month the team does a recreational activity together, such as mountain biking or orienteering.
- Employees receive a contribution towards achieving their personal wellness goals up to the value of \$200 per year.



- Employees are reimbursed for their annual flu vaccination.

- Employees are provided occupational workstation assessments and ergonomic equipment for their workspace, including an adjustable standing desk.
- Recreation Aotearoa offers employees a day off on their birthday, to be used on the day or on the next working day.
- The team does a number of social activities unrelated to work, such as doing the newspaper quiz every morning and monthly team lunches.

RESULTS AND BENEFITS

- A more engaged group of employees who give very positive feedback on the policies
- The organisation better represents its outward work on the benefits of recreation
- The organisation leads by example and can share stories in social media and email communications with other organisations.

KEY LEARNING

Providing a supportive workplace doesn't have to come with huge budget commitments; it can come from day-to-day support of employees and building genuine company culture.

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AND DO WELL BECAUSE OF IT.**

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