



Sharesies

WORK LIFE BALANCE WINNER



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VIDEO**

THE STORY

Sharesies is a company that aims to create the most financially empowered generation through its products. In order to best achieve this goal, it must first build a work environment that empowers its employees.

Sharesies is a Wellington-based company with 28 staff, which creates a product which helps young people begin their investment journeys. It's a bold aim, and the company has developed a number of initiatives that ensure that it can grow in a sustainable way which supports its staff as well as people who invest using its platform.

The first key part of this is flexible and remote working practices. Sharesies encourages its team to make use of flexible hours and working remotely, using tools which ensure that the team can remain connected regardless of people's individual locations. This is introduced as standard practice to new staff in their contracts from induction.

Plans for flexible working have been co-designed by the whole team and are designed to change to suit the needs of individual employees. This helps team members focus on the goals in their personal lives as well as their professional life, and each week at team meetings, employees share one thing that is coming up for them outside of work.

As well as making it easier to fit work into their home lives, Sharesies also invests in team building for its employees. This includes a social club, team activities and monthly lunches together. Tamara Buckland, People Experience Advisor, says, "We value this as we know a key part of feeling connected and part of a trusting environment is having strong friendships and relationships with each other."

The other key feature of Sharesies' employee support programme is a focus on mental health. Sharesies has an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) in place, as well as in-house mental health activities and mental health first aiders on site. Each employee is also offered an optional Wellbeing Plan and two days paid Wellness Leave.

Sharesies' mental health activities include Wellness Windows, in which one of the mental health first aiders has an open space every week where any of the team can talk through any mental health related thoughts or issues they're experiencing, and Emotional Workouts, where the team sets aside time to prioritise their mental health.

Buckland says that with these activities, Sharesies is "creating a workplace that acknowledges that people need to be able to bring their whole selves to work in order to do their important mahi."

These initiatives have had a real, positive impact in the workplace. In a recent wellbeing survey, when surveyed on how well they thought they could take care of their own physical, social, mental and emotional needs while at work, staff reported an average score of 8.3 out of 10. Sharesies also noticed reduced absenteeism after the new mental health initiatives were put in place, and 89 per cent of staff say that they can take steps to reduce negative feelings in times of stress.

Employees have responded very positively in their feedback around work-life balance. One employee describes the team as "social and fun. Taking this flexibility more often to re-charge and keep the home fires going helps heaps."

Another employee says of the mental health support in the company, "It feels safe to talk about mental health at Sharesies because it has been communicated clearly that there are channels available to talk about these things and an openness to assist if you did have issues."

The judging panel said that Sharesies has proven that even a very small organisation dealing with rapid growth can make flexibility and inclusion part of its culture to get the best out of its employees. Supporting people to harmonise work and life and celebrating diversity of thought and individual contributions to a shared company culture is bringing positive benefits to the mental health and wellness of its workforce. It also ensures a small team can without disruption when workload pressures are high.

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THE CHALLENGE

Sharesies wants to reflect its business goal of empowering a generation in its workplace environment.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

- Flexible work policies which allow employees to work on their own terms, with room to be adapted to people's individual needs
- Investment in team building, through monthly team lunches and regular team activities



- In-house mental health support, including mental health first aiders who have an open door during Wellness Windows
- Two days of paid wellness leave for all employees and an optional personal Wellbeing Plan

RESULTS AND BENEFITS

- Employees gave an average score of 8.3/10 on how well they thought they could take care of their own physical, social, mental and emotional needs while at work.
- 89 per cent of staff say they can take steps to reduce negative feelings in times of stress.
- Lower levels of absenteeism
- Average score of 8.6/10 in weekly “vibe” surveys in 2019

KEY LEARNING

In order to do their best work, people must be able to bring their whole selves to work, and work in a way that best fits their individual needs.

**DO WORKPLACE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION WELL
AND DO WELL BECAUSE OF IT.**

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