



Yellow

INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

SMALL-MEDIUM ORGANISATION FINALIST

**WATCH
VIDEO**



THE STORY

By providing free equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) training, Yellow is supporting Kiwi small to medium enterprises to thrive in the wake of Covid and continuing the inclusion journey that is integral to the company's business strategy.

The organisation's Human First initiative allows Yellow to share the positive benefits of its own work in the EDI space with its SME clients based all around New Zealand, while creating opportunities for staff development and better customer relationships.

Yellow is a multi-channel marketing agency, employing 70 people across New Zealand. The organisation has been on a journey of transformation in recent years, working to optimise its solutions to support Kiwi businesses.

The company's leaders have adopted a strategy of putting people – including its teams, its customers and the community - at the heart of everything Yellow does. The first initiative in its EDI programme was company-wide unconscious bias training.

“We know from our own learning about unconscious bias that in order to create an environment where everyone feels psychologically safe to contribute, they must feel a sense of belonging,” says Human First Partner Jovita Stellmacher.

Yellow wanted to share this with its customer community, helping smaller businesses that were less likely to have funding for this kind of training, particularly in the wake of the

Covid-19 pandemic, to drive systemic change in the people and culture space and positively influence the communities they work in.

Partnering with Diversity Works New Zealand, Yellow trained 10 of its staff to deliver a condensed unconscious bias workshop. The chosen group, from diverse demographics and roles within Yellow, helped co-design the workshop and learned how to present the material and engage with an audience. They were encouraged to share their personal stories and connections to the content as a powerful tool to connect with customers and spark interest in EDI.

In rolling out the initiative, the team first had to give customers an understanding of EDI and unconscious bias, Jovita says. The next step was demonstrating how addressing these issues can impact their businesses.

The Human First training is a two-hour workshop which includes an introduction to EDI and why it's relevant in a business context from a Diversity Works New Zealand expert, followed by a one-hour unconscious bias session facilitated by Yellow trainers.

Three workshops with 30 attendees were held prior to May this year – the first in Palmerston North, the second in Auckland and the most recent via Zoom due to Covid restrictions.

“We chose Palmerston North as the location of our first workshop to emphasise the importance of focusing equally on regions. With many of New Zealand’s larger organisations based in Auckland, people there are more likely to come across some form of EDI training through their work.”

It was a challenge to spark interest in the training amongst Yellow’s Palmerston North customer base, which Jovita says demonstrates the need to focus on regional New Zealand. The feedback from the workshops has been positive - attendees said they learned something new that they could apply within their organisations and reported implementing changes in their workplace which have empowered them to be more inclusive with clients.

The programme has opened up opportunities outside of their core roles for the 10 Yellow trainers, who have learned new skills and increased their confidence.

Jovita also hopes the initiative will create a more inclusive workplace for Yellow’s customer-facing employees, especially those with English as a second language or names not commonly found in New Zealand.

“It is not uncommon for these employees to have challenging interactions with customers who make assumptions about their capability based on their accent or name. Providing an accessible means for our customers to learn about unconscious bias has potential to positively impact our customers’ interactions with our employees over time.”

Yellow’s intention is to run several Human First workshops as face-to-face sessions across New Zealand each year.

“Providing an accessible means for our customers to learn about unconscious bias has potential to positively impact our customers’ interactions with our employees.”

“We see this as an opportunity for us to drive societal change. We know this work creates ripples and the impact is wider than those who turn up to a workshop.”

THE AIM

Yellow wanted to provide a way for its small to medium size business customers to begin to harness the positive benefits that an inclusive workplace can have on commercial success and employee experience while continuing its own inclusion journey.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

- Design Human First, a two-hour workshop initiative offering Yellow clients free training on equality, diversity and inclusion and unconscious bias
- Train 10 Yellow team members to facilitate courses around New Zealand
- Focus on delivering the programme in regional New Zealand where there are fewer opportunities for people to receive workplace inclusion training



RESULTS AND BENEFITS

- Thirty people trained at three workshops delivered in Palmerston North, Auckland and online
- Positive feedback from attendees who have reported they have learned new information and have implemented workplace changes that have empowered them to be more inclusive with their own clients
- Opportunities for Yellow team members to have career development outside of their core roles and gain confidence in facilitating and presenting
- Some trained facilitators have moved to roles in other companies, providing an opportunity to expand the reach of the work Yellow has done in this space

KEY LEARNING

By sharing their own EDI learnings and experiences with their customers, Yellow has been able to continue to drive change for a more inclusive and equitable Aotearoa, both internally and externally.

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

Visit diversityworks.nz or call 0800 DIVERSITY (0800 348 377)