New Zealand Intelligence Community
INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE
MEDIUM–LARGE ORGANISATION FINALIST

THE STORY

The New Zealand Intelligence Community's project to address the complexity and inconsistencies around the way it handles requests from staff wanting to change their name to better align with their identity is a game changer for its LGBTQI+ staff.

The New Zealand Intelligence Community (NZIC) is made up of two organisations with a mission to keep Aotearoa safe and secure. The Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) is New Zealand's lead organisation for signals intelligence, cyber security and resilience. The New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS) is New Zealand's domestic security and intelligence agency.

Together, the GCSB and NZSIS's mission is to keep New Zealanders safe from significant national security threats. Diversity, equity and inclusion is essential for better decision making and improving public trust and confidence.

A report undertaken as part of the reaccreditation process for the Rainbow Tick highlighted challenges employees encountered when attempting to change their personal information. The GCSB and NZSIS have strict security settings which include maintaining a clearance internally aligned with registered legal names. This means when an employee changes their legal name, their access is affected. The multiple lines of effort required to facilitate a name change for an employee were found to be disconnected, undocumented and unsupported.

NZIC says, "For some, this experience was particularly difficult and highlighted that even a small reference to a previous name, for example logging in to systems, could be traumatic."

In response to these findings a project was initiated to reduce complexity and inconsistency in name changes processes.

This project began with a two-day event bringing together representatives of the relevant GCSB and NZSIS teams and the Rainbow network to unpack the process and design a human-centered process to allow anyone to change their name easily.

The project team initiated a 'test and learn' first run of the process, working alongside a candidate who wanted to change their legal name, to gain a thorough understanding of the experience and identify the support required from people, artefacts and systems for the process to be successful. The leads kept in regular contact with the candidate, providing support and escalating issues when the process stalled. The process was then reviewed, and a second 'test and learn' was run incorporating the learnings and refinements from the first.

NZIC says, "The deliberate approach to implementing the new process allowed the team to test our assumptions, theories, people and organisational systems to ensure they could respond to our intent to create a humancentric approach to this process. It also enabled rethinking and refinement in response to the employee's experience of the process."

The refined process to support and effectively direct employee requests or enquiries about a name change has been centralised into a toolkit to establish consistent ways of responding. This provides a range of tools including quick guides, relevant documentation, templates, full guidelines showing exactly how the process works, and an employee journey map that captures the end-to-end experience. It was important to incorporate ongoing support across the employee life cycle, and easy access to relevant support such as employee-led networks, along with information on what to expect, what employees need to do and how the name change will be actioned to make the process as simple as possible.

"Our goal was to apply a human-centered perspective to what was largely considered 'just a process'. Building understanding of the experience of those undergoing a name change is helping to build a more considerate and inclusive work environment. We are prioritising our people's ability to be known by the identity that allows others to truly 'see' them for how they want to be seen."

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THE CHALLENGE

The New Zealand Intelligence Community wanted to reduce complexity and inconsistency in how staff undertake name changes and improve employee's experience of the process.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

- 'Test and learn' trial run with a candidate to gain thorough understanding of the process and where improvements can be made.
- Centralising resources into a toolkit that can be easily accessed, and the experience is the same no matter where the query originates from.
- Employees seeking any type of name change are supported by a dedicated resource within the People & Capability function. They are a central point of contact and escalation point.
- Senior leaders serve as sponsors, key decision makers and lead the formal communication of changes to the process to all employees.

RESULTS AND BENEFITS

- The resulting name change process is 95% self-service and requires only three points of contact to enable the most critical changes.
- Quick guides and email templates have been developed to make it as simple as possible for both employees and processors to complete a name change.
- Sharing learnings and processes with international counterpart agencies also grappling with the name change process.

KEY LEARNING

Walking alongside employees undertaking complex and inconsistent processes allows project teams to apply a more human-centric approach, gain better understanding of the experience and changes that could be implemented, and provide wrap-around support for the employee.

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