New Zealand Lotteries Commission (Lotto NZ)

RESPECTFUL CULTURE

MEDIUM-LARGE ORGANISATION FINALIST

THE STORY

Maximising the funds it returns to the community while minimising the potential for harm from its products can create business tension for the team at New Zealand Lotteries Commission (Lotto NZ).

It's this dual purpose that makes diversity, equity and inclusion – and having a respectful workplace – an essential part of the organisation's culture.

Lotto NZ is a Crown Entity with a statutory mandate to provide safe games that allow New Zealanders to play and win while contributing money back to New Zealand communities.

Organisational Development Manager Roshanna Ebbett says that the nature of gambling harm is that it is not experienced evenly across the community. "Certain groups, such as Māori, Pacific Peoples, some Asian communities, migrants, and young people, are disproportionately affected, and Lotto has a specific focus on minimising harm from our products amongst these groups."

A critical part of this work is building Lotto NZ's internal cultural capability to deeply understand the communities it engages with, co-create approaches to minimise gambling harm, and ensuring it

has strong representation from different communities within its workforce.

"We know conversations about maximising our community contributions while minimising harm can be difficult, and our people will not always agree. We need a culture where our 220 employees at every level feel comfortable speaking up if they have concerns."

Roshanna says Lotto NZ's people say they enjoy working for the organisation. But prior to 2022 the business had not defined its culture, clearly articulated the values that underpinned it, nor built (or refreshed) the structures and processes required to support these values.

"We realised we needed to be deliberate about reinforcing our strengths, identifying areas for development, and mapping out pathways to build on and maintain our respectful culture."

To do this work, the team focused on three main areas: defining culture, promoting feedback and transparent communication and encouraging social learning and collaboration.

The first step in the defining culture piece was to co-create an employee value proposition (EVP) using insights from focus groups and engagement surveys. Called winning@work, it sets out Lotto NZ's unique employee experience, including benefits and expectations. The leadership team then ran workshops to co-create guiding behaviours and values. This work was integrated into key employee lifecycle touchpoints such as onboarding modules, leadership development initiatives and performance and development conversations.

Transparent communication and feedback are promoted by giving staff access to weekly engagement surveys, a speak up programme where they can raise their concerns, a monthly diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) survey, onboarding and exit surveys, employee-led network groups, active Slack channels and leader forums.

The employee-led networks also play a key role in facilitating events to raise awareness and foster collaboration and connection, and Lotto NZ regularly invites grant recipients to talk about their community mahi to keep its people connected to the organisation's purpose.

By actively leveraging social learning as a tool, raising awareness through exposure to different ideas, Lotto NZ can mitigate bias and shift perspectives, Roshanna says.

Since starting this work, the organisation has seen improvements in onboarding and general engagement scores and its monthly DEIB survey scores. Staff retention has increased, with turnover reducing from 32 per cent in FY22 to 17 per cent in FY23.

Roshanna says having a healthy culture has enabled Lotto NZ to successfully navigate significant organisational change, including technology rollouts and leadership transitions, and their people are sharing their feedback through the Workleap Officevibe platform.

"We needed to be deliberate about reinforcing our strengths, identifying areas for development, and mapping out pathways to build on."

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Business Analysis Manager Varun Prasad says, "Respect has always been here at Lotto NZ, but this added a bit of reinforcement to it. What stood out was that everyone could contribute to what winning@work and our values look like. Having that opportunity to contribute means we were more connected to the result."

Art Director Gina Rich says, "Defining our culture gave my team and I a great understanding of 'what we do around here', and which behaviours we ought to emulate. I felt like as a business we really started to row together towards a common destination."

THE CHALLENGE

Lotto NZ needed to build on and maintain its respectful culture to underpin its work maximising the funds it returns to the community while minimising the potential for gambling harm.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

- Define the workplace culture through:
  - A co-created winning@work employee value proposition
  - Co-created values and behaviours, including Elevate Others, which underscores a commitment to treating each other with respect
- Create opportunities for feedback and communication through a range of different channels
- Encourage social learning to mitigate bias and shift perspectives through:
  - Events and activities organised by employee-led networks to raise awareness and foster collaboration
  - Inviting grant recipients to talk to teams about their community mahi

RESULTS AND BENEFITS

- An engagement score of 7.7 out of 10 (very good when benchmarked externally)
- Relationship with managers (8.2) and relationship with peers (8.1) scores reflect a high-trust team
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging is tracking at 8 out of 10 in monthly surveys
- Increased staff retention
- High levels of staff participation in surveys and feedback tools

KEY LEARNING

Building a culture where its safe to speak up is pivotal in creating a platform for an organisation to operate responsibly while meeting its performance targets.

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