

Positive Inclusion Entrant: Publicis Loyalty

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/141145727>

A new approach to diversity creates a force for good. The rights of the New Zealand LGBTI Community have come a long way in the last decade. New Zealand is one of the only 18 countries in the world where same-sex partners have equal rights and was the first country in the world to have an openly transsexual mayor and Member of Parliament.

Despite this, there are still many scenarios where members of the LGBTI community feel unsafe or insecure in the workplace. International research has shown that there is still work to be done when it comes to creating a truly inclusive workplace, revealing that many organisations' processes of recruitment, retention, training, and advancement opportunities unfairly discriminate against the LGBTI community.

This is why the work that has been undertaken by Publicis Loyalty's New Zealand Office so important.

This relatively young organisation in New Zealand, which manages the loyalty programme of a large well known Australian company, only recently opened their doors in October 2014. They have already become a trailblazer for diversity and inclusion for small to medium size businesses.

The management team at the new Auckland Office saw the opportunity to create an inclusive and accepting workplace using innovative methods rather than recycling or updating decade old equality and inclusion policies. They jumped at the opportunity to create something new, innovative, and effective. From there, the idea was put into motion: the Auckland Office went on to work tirelessly with the aim of creating diversity and inclusion from the ground up. From the beginning, they made it very clear that a safe and inclusive workplace was of the utmost importance.

Their priorities were full heartedly supported by Publicis' Managing Partner Richard Switzky who, after hearing about the Auckland Office's plans, immediately asked how he could contribute. "It totally aligns with our values of respect for the individual and spirit of inclusion for all..." Switzky exclaimed. He committed a large proportion of the operating budget for the Auckland Office to diversity and inclusion programmes, a move that illustrated his outlook that company culture and the wellbeing of their employees was as integral, equally so, to a company's success as their marketing, capital, and revenue budgets.

The first step in Publicis' journey was the implementation of a recruitment process that embedded their company ethos to help them find the best applicants from a diverse range of backgrounds. Not only did they say that they embraced diversity,, they actually lived this in everything they did. They wanted to ensure that their goal of inclusivity and acceptance translated from their senior leadership team all the way to the customer service

consultants and that the core belief of the organisation was apparent in every facet of the organisations structure..

It was their commitment to diversity and open-mindedness that led Publicis Loyalty to become one of the first businesses in New Zealand to utilise an innovative recruitment application “Weirdly” This application, created by a local Auckland based company, allows recruiters to focus on the culture and merit of an applicant and their ‘fit’ in an organisation regardless of their lifestyle, literacy skills or personal beliefs.

The results were immediately apparent: through their own combination of culture-focused screening techniques and using Weirdly, the Auckland Offices’ of Publicis Loyalty soon became home to a wide range of employees coming from a diverse range of backgrounds, cultures, and ethnicities.

Their efforts did not go unnoticed and within their first year of operation, Publicis Loyalty became the first small to medium size business in New Zealand to receive the Rainbow Tick Certification. The endorsement of Rainbow Tick is only awarded to those organisations who truly understand and value sexual and gender diversity in the workplace. It is a huge honour for any organisation, not to mention one that is so young.

Alongside their Rainbow Tick Certification, Publicis Loyalty also became the first organisation in the world to achieve the required level for the NZS 8200:2015 – Rainbow Inclusive Workplaces Standard, the world’s first standard aimed at assisting organisations to achieve a truly inclusive workplace. Under the Standard, workplaces are encouraged to enable staff to be authentic and bring the whole of themselves to work. By being the first organisation to meet these standards, Publicis Loyalty illustrated their full commitment to the wellbeing of their employees regardless of background.

In all of this, there is a sense that Publicis Loyalty has managed to become a pioneer of diversity and inclusivity in New Zealand, breaking down barriers and creating a truly safe haven for all of their employees. . Their “from the ground up” approach to diversity initiatives has propelled them to exceed national and international standards. But at the end of the day, when the Awards are put in their cabinets and the certificate of achievements are hung proudly on the company wall, it is that welcoming feeling that you get the moment that you step into Publicis Loyalty offices that reaffirms why these initiatives are so important to them. When organisations truly accept people, regardless of background, sexual preference, religion, or ethnicity, they create something more than just a business; they create a force for good in the world.