

## Emerging Diversity and Inclusion: DSM Nutritional Products New Zealand Limited



A combined lunchroom has become a symbol for inclusion at an Auckland-based health product supply business.

DSM Nutritional Products New Zealand Limited is part of a global company that supplies vitamins, carotenoids and other nutritional solutions, with three market-facing entities: Animal Nutrition & Health, Human Nutrition & Health and Personal Care & Aroma Ingredients. Locally, the company bought out Unitech Industries and operates with 75 staff.

Before being taken over by DSM, Unitech Industries operated as two separate businesses, with the General Manager controlling the commercial side of the business and the Operations Manager overseeing the operational side.

The business was very segregated, with staff using one of three separate lunchrooms depending which department they worked in. The quality of food differed between the lunchrooms, with sales and administration staff having access to better options than production and warehouse staff.

DSM worked hard to remove these silos and the first step was to create one large lunchroom that all staff on site can share.

Breaking down the silos also included having one full-site Christmas party, and making all DSM events open and inclusive rather than having multiple smaller events for individual departments and teams.

The company also introduced cross function groups in order to represent the needs and views of all staff, including a S.H.E. (Safety, Health and Environment) Committee, a Health and Wellbeing Committee and other project teams.

The new approach was announced at one of the newly implemented monthly Townhall Meetings so that all staff received the same information from the same source at the same time. The monthly

Townhall Meetings have continued as they are a great way to communicate and encourage interaction throughout the site, says Training Co-Ordinator Claire Madden.

The Senior Leadership Team has given its support to breaking down the silos by opening lines of communication throughout the site that were not there when the company operated as Unitech Industries.

“Having site-wide events means that all staff are treated equally with no hierarchy or belief that one department is more important to the company than any others,” Claire says.

“By eating together we have gotten to know all the staff by name, and some of their background, but, most importantly, we have earned the respect and trust of the other employees in the company.”

Getting to know employees better has given DSM an insight into their needs and a greater understanding of issues such as low base levels of literacy and numeracy in the operational area of the business. It has since implemented a training programme to lift these levels, giving staff more opportunities for future development.

“Through opening up communication we have seen an increase in confidence in our employees, who now feel they can raise concerns and issues. We also have employees asking what training they can do to improve their performance at work and increase their future possibilities within the company,” says Claire.