THE BALANCING ACT
CREATING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

Research and insights for an impact on your world of work 2015.

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A diverse workforce is one inclusive of people of various genders, ages, cultural backgrounds and people with physical and mental disabilities.

But how many organisations in New Zealand can claim to truly have a diverse workforce? Many may meet the diversity criteria for one area, such as age, but fall short when it comes to another, such as gender representation.

In this white paper we explore the current situation in New Zealand workplaces in terms of gender, age, multiculturalism and disability representation. We look at the barriers preventing real diversity. Finally we share six practical steps you can implement in order to create a totally inclusive organisation and retain it by successfully managing individual differences. Supporting our suggestions are the findings from a survey of 303 New Zealand employers and candidates, conducted in late 2014.

As a results-orientated company, we hope the strategies detailed herein will help you achieve a lasting and positive impact in your world of work.

Jason Walker,
Managing Director, Hays New Zealand
1. THE BUSINESS CASE FOR DIVERSITY

The business case for diversity has been corroborated through both research and experience, with the consensus being that it leads to:

**Improved attraction and retention:** When you proactively seek to attract a diverse pool of candidates for your vacancies, you are more likely to identify the most suitable skills and experience. In contrast, employers that limit diversity parameters effectively limit the number of candidates they can consider and therefore their ability to fill roles with the very best person for the job.

A fully diverse workforce also sends a strong message to employees and candidates that your organisation is accepting of all, and is therefore an employer of choice. In addition, existing and potential new employees will recognise that you value them, which impacts positively on retention. As a recruiting expert, we have seen this in action countless times.

In our survey of New Zealand employees, 58 per cent would like to see more diversity in their workplace, while 33 per cent are happy with efforts made to date and 9 per cent feel there are more important issues to deal with.

**Reflective of your customer base:** Diversity makes sure a company reflects the communities in which it operates and the diverse customer base it serves, which ensures it remains relevant to its customers. For many companies diversity is about creating a high performance, inclusive culture that attracts and retains the best people and responds more quickly and effectively to customers’ needs.

“To us, diversity equals innovation,” says Martin King, general manager of HR at Coca-Cola Amatil New Zealand. “If we have a group of people in our organisation that don’t make up all of society, then that won’t bring the best ideas to the fore. One of our core strategies in HR is having a highly-engaged workforce. Engagement drives productivity and innovation and therefore profitability.”

This view is supported by Vodafone New Zealand on its company website where it states “We recognise that the diversity of our customers must be reflected in the diversity of our people, and we believe that our inherent open-mindedness fuels our ability to create and innovate.”

**Improved productivity:** An Ernst & Young study showed that women working flexibly waste just 11.1 per cent of working hours, compared to 14.5 per cent of their full-time counterparts.

In addition Scott E. Page, a professor of complex systems, political science and economics at the University of Michigan, believes that organisations made up of different types of people are more productive than homogenous ones. In an interview he said, “Diverse groups of people bring to organizations more and different ways of seeing a problem and, thus, faster/better ways of solving it... There’s a lot of empirical data to show that diverse cities are more productive, diverse boards of directors make better decisions, the most innovative companies are diverse.”

**Innovation:** “Diverse teams drive more innovation,” according to GE CMO Beth Comstock. “Hiring people with different styles, backgrounds and experience increases the success of teams.”

This view is further supported by a Forbes study in 2011. Of 321 large global enterprises surveyed (companies with at least $500 million in annual revenue), 85 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that diversity is crucial to fostering innovation in the workplace.
“For global companies, diversity is no longer simply a matter of creating a heterogeneous workforce, but using that workforce to innovate and give it a competitive advantage in the marketplace,” the report states. “Competition for talent is fierce in today’s global economy, so companies need to have plans in place to recruit, develop, and retain a diverse workforce.”

And Tracey Burton, former director of diversity at Target Corporation said, “I think the greatest benefit we have found is that diversity drives innovation. People from different backgrounds engaged in thoughtful debate leads to groundbreaking solutions. When you have a team that is engaged and reflective of your consumer base, you can better understand, anticipate and meet the needs of your guests.”

**New approaches:** Katherine Phillips writing in Forbes magazine notes that, “The mere presence of social diversity makes people with independent points of view more willing to voice those points of view, and others more willing to listen... We are more thoughtful, and we recognize and utilize more of the information that we have at our disposal, when diversity is present.”

**Improved financial performance:** In the mid-1990’s in the US, the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission concluded that “organizations which excel at leveraging diversity (including the hiring and advancement of women and non-white men into senior management jobs, and providing a climate conducive to contributions from people of diverse backgrounds) will experience better financial performance in the long run than organizations which are not effective in managing diversity.”

The Commission cited a study by Covenant Investment Management, which concluded that “the stock market performance of the firms that were high performers on the glass ceiling-related goals was 2.5 times higher than that of the firms that invested little in glass ceiling-related issues.”

Then in 2010 McKinsey & Company found that companies with the highest share of women outperform companies with no women by 56 per cent in terms of operating results.

And Sallie Krawcheck, past head of Merrill Lynch and Smith Barney, wrote in one of her LinkedIn Influencer posts, “Greater diversity of thought, perspective and background has been shown to lead to greater innovation and superior financial results.”

One of the most cited examples of diversity in action occurred at IBM. After Lou Gerstner took over IBM in 1993 he made it a point to infuse diversity into the hiring process. In two years the number of female executives increased by 370 per cent and the number of ethnic minority executives increased by 233 per cent. “We made diversity a market based issue,” Gerstner later said. “It’s about understanding our markets, which are diverse and multicultural.”

Part of the process was to create several task forces broken down by race, gender, disability and sexual orientation, and the work of these task forces led to significant bottom-line results. For example, one task force established a ‘Market Development organization’ which focused on niche minority and female customers. Revenue grew from $10 million in 1998 to over $300 million in three years.

Finally, as Deloitte noted in a 2011 report, “When an authentic, inclusive culture is at work, a diverse workforce is capable of producing a range of original and engaging ideas that is simply not possible among homogenous employee populations. At the top of the organization, this can translate into more apt and financially rewarding decision-making.”
2. MAPPING NEW ZEALAND’S DIVERSITY: THE CURRENT SITUATION

While many organisations strive for a diverse workforce inclusive of people of various genders, ages and cultural backgrounds, and people with physical and mental disabilities, an examination of the current situation shows us that reality falls short of lofty ambitions.

63 per cent of employers we surveyed said their company is taking steps to create a diverse workforce.

Is your company taking steps to create a diverse workforce (ie of people of various genders, ages and cultural backgrounds, and people with physical and mental disabilities)?

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Here we present the current situation in New Zealand for diversity across the various target groups.

Gender

According to our survey of New Zealand employees, 67 per cent say their organisation is gender diverse.

In our survey of employers, 45 per cent said women are equally represented in leadership positions in their organisation. 56 per cent said women are developed into leadership roles and 75 per cent said women are supported and encouraged to reach their career goals. 64 per cent said a clear maternity leave policy is available.

As these results show, most organisations in New Zealand have invested time and effort into creating a gender diverse workforce, but have failed to achieve their desired outcome. While the NZ Stock Exchange rule requiring listed companies to disclose the gender make up of their boards has only been in place since December 2012, the latest figures show that only 12 per cent of listed directors are female.15

The 25 Percent Group is an organisation involved in promoting diversity at senior management and board levels in New Zealand companies. According to the Group, at the rate of progress for women in corporate governance over the past decade, it will be another 35 years before boardroom equality is achieved.16

Despite New Zealand’s population consisting of slightly more women than men17, women continue to be under-represented in the labour market. According to Statistics New Zealand, as at March 2014 New Zealand’s labour force participation rate for men was 75.1 per cent. Yet New Zealand’s female labour force participation rate was 63.7 per cent.18

In a recent report Ernst & Young note that female participation rates decline once women hit their mid-20s and this lasts for two decades as they move from full-time to part-time employment to accommodate the needs of their families.19

A survey by Kronos found that many organisations perceive mothers want to leave the workforce, when in reality they seek to maintain a working pattern; it just may need to be flexible.20

That goes a long way to explain why women continue to be under-represented at the senior management level. Though
women now make up 47 per cent of the New Zealand workforce, women are significantly underrepresented in leadership positions. Currently, women hold only 9 per cent of private sector directorships.20 The majority of NZX 100 companies have no female directors, while women account for 21 per cent of management positions reporting directly to chief executives.22

According to a 2013 report by accountancy firm Grant Thornton, New Zealand businesses are not making progress in terms of the number of women who are appointed to senior management roles.23 Their findings show that over the past 10 years the average proportion of women in senior roles in New Zealand businesses has been unchanged at 31 per cent, although this is still above the global average, which over the same timeframe has increased from 19 per cent to 24 per cent.

However, compared to the world’s gender diversity leaders New Zealand has fallen behind over the past 10 years. In 2004, New Zealand was ranked fourth in the world of the countries surveyed, whereas now it is 15th. Grant Thornton’s figures show that the proportion of New Zealand businesses that have no women in senior management roles has increased from 26 per cent in 2012 to 32 per cent today. This goes against the global trend, where there had been a slight decrease from 34 per cent to 33 per cent.

In 2013 just 7 per cent of New Zealand businesses said they were looking to hire or promote women into senior management over the next 12 months. The outlook for women in senior roles is not encouraging as this was nearly half of 2012’s already low figure of 13 per cent.

According to the 25 Percent Group, women are being short-changed by those setting targets on their behalf. They suggest that the New Zealand Government reviews the targets, goals and time frames set for the advancement of women in decision-making positions to ensure that they sufficiently enhance progress in women’s representation.

“No New Zealand is making slow, incremental but unspectacular progress for women in many areas,” say the 25 Percent Group. “For example, while women on boards of the top 100 companies listed on the New Zealand Stock Exchange have climbed over 10 per cent for the first time, they still have a long way to go to achieve equality.”24

In our survey of New Zealand employees (both men and women), 53 per cent said they are satisfied with the career path available to women at their organisation. But 29 per cent are not aware what career path is available and the final 18 per cent are not satisfied with the career path available to women.

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<th>Are you satisfied with the career path available to women at your organisation?</th>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>I’m not aware what career path is available</td>
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Furthermore 54 per cent said there is not a balance of male and female representation at the senior executive level in their organisation.

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<th>Is there a balance of male and female representation at the senior executive levels in your organisation?</th>
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Many industries continue to be dominated by men. According to Statistics New Zealand, less than 12 per cent of the construction industry is female. Recent figures suggest that increasing women’s employment rates could boost New Zealand’s GDP by 10 per cent.

Meanwhile in New Zealand’s ICT industry there are similar levels of gender imbalance that can be found in other countries. For example, according to social media giant Twitter’s latest figures released in July 2014, women are still underrepresented in its global workforce. “Men make up 70 per cent of the overall staff and women just 30 per cent,” said Janet Van Huysse, the company’s vice president for diversity and inclusion. Furthermore, within technical jobs only one in ten of employees are women.

Across the Tasman Sea in Australia similar findings are evident. No position surveyed in the Australian Computer Society’s 2013 Employment Survey showed a higher than a 30 per cent female participation rate. In New Zealand current statistics are strikingly similar, and with women comprising around 20 per cent of computing students throughout the country, this trend is set to continue.

According to our survey of New Zealand employees, 37 per cent do not think traditional male industries such as construction and mining do enough to recruit more women. 44 per cent are unsure, while 19 per cent say such industries do enough to recruit women into their workforce.

As if the glass ceiling hanging over such industries wasn’t enough, the salary differential between men and women also remains. The gender pay gap is 13 per cent according to the latest Statistics New Zealand income survey, despite legislation against discrimination on the basis of gender.

The Quarterly Employment Survey, which is based on total wage bill figures supplied by employers, shows that in March 2013 a man’s average total hourly earnings were $29.28, compared with a woman’s of $25.37. It has hovered at around this level for the past few years.

Furthermore, the Human Rights Commission’s (HRC) 2012 Census of Women’s Participation report shows an average gender pay gap of 14.3 per cent in the public service, with the Ministry of Defence having the biggest gap at 42 per cent, and the Department of Corrections having the smallest at 2.77 per cent.

Finally it seems we cannot escape the inexplicable fact that as a society we have different expectations for our male and female executives. Marissa Mayer, CEO of Yahoo, was profiled in Vogue’s September 2013 edition and despite many male CEOs appearing in men’s magazines, her appearance sparked debate about the representation of female executives. At the time media reported both that the photo shoot was inappropriate for a female CEO, and that there is a double standard for how female and male CEOs can be represented.

International comparison

In China the proportion of women in senior management has climbed to 51 per cent this year, up from 25 per cent in 2012 and outpacing the global average of 21 per cent. Results from the survey of 200 businesses in China revealed that 94 per cent of them employed women in senior roles. The survey’s remarkable findings would seem to represent great news for women in China.
Age

According to our survey of New Zealand employees, 68 per cent say their organisation has a diverse workforce of various ages. And 56 per cent said their organisation values mature-age workers.

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In our survey of employers, 32 per cent have plans in place to retain mature-aged staff.

Age discrimination is one of the biggest issues on the employment landscape but few employers want to admit to it. A survey by the Australian Human Rights Commission revealed one in 10 bosses won’t hire a worker older than 50.54 The survey also found half of Australia’s employers believe older workers are at higher risk of being made redundant. A third of the business leaders surveyed reportedly also said older workers did “not like being told what to do” by a younger person, and were more forgetful. Business leaders also felt older workers had difficulty learning new things and did not want to work long hours. One in five would not encourage job applications from older workers.

New Zealand’s “Employment of the Older Worker” study meanwhile found that a majority of both employers and older workers held negative stereotypes about ‘adaptability’ factors such as computer technology and resistance to change and positive stereotypes about ‘dependability’ factors such as reliability, loyalty and commitment.55

Stereotypes about older workers are just as pronounced in New Zealand’s workplace culture as they are in Australia. They are held in common by both employers and older workers themselves and are influenced by individual and organisational characteristics, but run counter to the Government’s policy commitments to stop age discrimination at work and to promote positive ageing.

Many surveys have shown that mature-age workers are more reliable than their younger colleagues. The Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin for example asked over 200 workers, aged 20 to 31 and 65 to 80, to perform 12 tasks to test perceptual speed, episodic memory and working memory. They found that older workers are more reliable and “have fewer bad days at the office”.36 The Institute put the results down to older workers having a consistently higher level of motivation, a balanced routine and a stable mood.

International comparison

In Sweden, the employment rate for residents aged 55 to 64 in 2012 was an impressive 73 per cent, far above the EU average of 48.9 per cent.37 The country also ranks near the top when it comes to employment in the OECD Better Life Index.38 Kronoberg County Council is one example of an organisation in Sweden that has improved “the ability of employees aged over 55 years to stay at work” and created “a positive attitude among management in relation to its own and other employees’ ageing” through measures such as training for managers, career planning at 55 years of age, mentorships, and enhancing workers’ employability through keeping skills up-to-date.39

Youth

Age discrimination is not restricted to mature-age workers. Many studies have been conducted on the attitudes of Generation Y, or Millennials, most of which emphasise the negative stereotypes. One such example is a recent Los Angeles Times article with the glaring headline, ‘Employers have negative view of Gen Y workers’.40

Yes Generation Y value work/life balance, want interesting work and are unwilling to make their work lives an exclusive priority.41 And yes their tenure in jobs is lower than the remainder of the working population.42 But they are also more excited by their work, satisfied with the recognition they receive and see more opportunity for growth than their Generation X and Baby Boomer colleagues, and the
salary expectations of all three generations are similar. Meanwhile Generation Y has ‘a big desire’ for mentoring, but few actually receive it from their manager.

A study by Kenexa shows that many of the negative stereotypes attributed to Generation Y are age related, and not unique generational issues.

In New Zealand youth account for more than one-third of total unemployment. In the last quarter of 2014 the unemployment rate for those aged 15 to 24 was 19 per cent, almost four times what it was for those aged 25 to 65.

According to the New Zealand Treasury, during an economic downturn such as the GFC, most employers will hire a more experienced older worker, rather than an inexperienced young person, especially if paying the same or a similar wage.

Evidence of this effect can be seen from the fall in employment for 15-19 year olds following the GFC, while employment of 20-24 year olds remained relatively constant. There is also evidence of additional older people working since the GFC, with the employment rate for those 65 and over rising from 14 per cent to 20 per cent since 2007.

As both younger and older workers tend to be more concentrated in part-time employment, this suggests that firms may have substituted towards the 65-plus group in addition to 20-24 year olds.

But if we are to achieve real age diversity, we must not only focus on improving employment rates for mature-age workers, but also for our nation’s youth.

Deloitte’s reverse mentoring program is one example of how benefits can be gained from a diverse workforce that includes young people. According to Katherine Milesi, a partner at Deloitte, “We identified people who were digital natives and digital dinosaurs. We asked our digital natives to mentor the dinosaurs. The one-on-one private sessions enabled senior executives to ask questions they were too scared of asking in public”.

**International comparison**

Germany boasts the lowest rate of youth unemployment in Europe, at below 8 per cent, and its success has been put down to its system of dual vocational training, where students go to school and work simultaneously rather than consecutively. Employers are therefore able to employ entry level candidates with both theoretical knowledge and practical experience. But despite this, the city of Cologne in Germany experienced a significant drop in the number of applications from young people, and especially young people “with a migrant background”. Their program to increase youth recruitment saw the number of trainees with a migrant background increase over five years to 34.5 per cent of all new staff, through targeted, individual supervision, the elimination of language deficits and an initial assessment of training needs.

**Multi-cultural**

According to our survey of New Zealand employees, 72 per cent say their organisation has a workforce of various cultural backgrounds.

Meanwhile 77 per cent of employers surveyed said they are committed to recruiting a multi-cultural workforce.

New Zealand is one of the highest migrant receiving countries in the world. The 2001 Census revealed that 10 per cent of the population is comprised of ethnic minority people other than Māori and Pacific peoples. This figure is projected by Statistics New Zealand to be 18 per cent by 2021.

New Zealand’s multicultural roots extend back to the first half of the nineteenth century, when established Māori communities saw the arrival of many new settlers from around the globe. Apart from British and Irish migrants there were also French, Chinese and Dutch settlers. In more recent decades many Pacific Islanders have settled in the country. Today there is a new wave of migrants from India, China and Thailand.

According to the OECD, New Zealand is the fifth most ethnically diverse country in the OECD (based on figures for foreign-born population). 97 per cent of all New Zealand business are small and medium-sized enterprises (with fewer than 20 employees) and many of these are ethnic
businesses. This means that the country’s small and medium-sized enterprise sector has enormous potential for leveraging its diversity to help grow the New Zealand economy.

New Zealand’s growing ethnic diversity has also fundamentally altered the make-up of its workforce. This demographic trend is set to continue into the future. For example, 25 per cent of New Zealand’s workforce are migrants and between 2001 and 2006, 60 per cent of New Zealand’s workforce growth came from people born overseas.54

According to our survey of employees, 62 per cent said immigrants face discrimination when it comes to accessing or gaining employment in New Zealand.

As New Zealand’s population ages, the traditional and permanent workforce will contract, making it essential to strategically train, attract and retain skilled employees. Current figures show that 50 per cent of current working-age Aucklanders were born outside of New Zealand,55 and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment projects that net migration will contribute another 200,400 people to the population of the Auckland region by 2031.56

While Auckland is New Zealand’s most diverse region, similar trends are visible across the country. These figures point to the importance of proactively managing ethnic diversity in the workplace. As mentioned earlier, when managed well within an organisation, ethnic diversity offers many potential benefits.

Avoiding discrimination

Apart from skilled migrants, the expertise of refugees and asylum seekers can also be used to create a diverse workforce. UK think tank the Industrial Society says that refugees and asylum seekers have, in the main, a strong work ethic and a high level of skills. They are often bilingual and can become vital contributors to their new homeland. For example the UK’s Home Office reported that for the year 1999-2000, migrants contributed $77 billion in taxes and consumed $71 billion in benefits and services – thus contributing $6 billion to Britain’s GDP.57

Disabilities

According to our survey of New Zealand employees, 29 per cent say their organisation’s workforce includes people with a disability.

According to The New Zealand Disability Survey conducted in 2013, an estimated 24 per cent of people living in New Zealand were identified as disabled. A total of 1,062,000 people were limited in their ability to carry out everyday activities by at least one impairment type.58

Both the number of disabled people and the disability rate are higher than in earlier surveys. The proportion of the New Zealand population in older age groups is growing, and people in these age groups are more likely to be disabled than younger adults or children.

However according to our survey of employers, just 26 per cent say their standard induction procedures are accessible to a person with a disability. And 47 per cent said their workspaces can be modified to accommodate a person with a disability.

The majority of disabled people are as productive as anyone else and do not take more sick leave. Neither does having a disability make an employee a health and safety risk. In New Zealand research shows the safety rate for disabled people in the workplace was 99.78% and most disabled people do not require physical accommodations or adjustments.59
In a tight labour market every employer knows the importance of recruiting from the widest talent pool possible. Most disabled people in New Zealand want the opportunity to contribute their skills.

Employers who have an understanding of disability issues in the workplace, or who are ‘disability confident’, see clear benefits across the business of employing disabled people. An inclusive, flexible culture enables employers to attract the best people and get the best from them. Employers of disabled people also see improved organisational performance.

Also, retaining employees who become disabled will help to ensure that you retain valued and skilled employees who know your business.

The economic argument for more participation by workers with disabilities is sound. If the gap between the participation rate and unemployment rate for people with and without disabilities was reduced by one-third over the next decade, the cumulative impact on gross domestic product would be significant, according to Deloitte Access Economics.60

But according to our survey of New Zealand employees, only 29 per cent of organisations can accommodate staff with a physical or mental disability. 44 per cent were unsure and 27 per cent cannot accommodate disabled staff.

### Can your organisation accommodate staff with a physical and mental disability?

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International comparison

According to a 2012 survey by our office network in Japan, more than two thirds of businesses in Japan employ staff with disabilities, and this figure is rising in response to government regulations whereby employers with fifty or more staff must have those with disabilities represent at least 2 per cent of the total.61 It is positive to see businesses in Japan working towards a fully diverse workforce and staffing strategy.
Over recent years there has been a notable increase in the number of diversity initiatives within both private and public sector organisations. Yet those efforts do not seem to be achieving the changes advocates want to see.

As Deloitte noted in a 2011 research paper, “Truth be told – there appears to be more head nodding about the business case (for diversity) than a rolling up of the sleeves to take action.”

There are numerous reasons why organisations fail to deliver on their diversity strategies. For some the challenge is about hiring or promotion mechanisms. For others, it is due to branding the diversity plan in a certain way, not securing a commitment from executives, or using ineffective training techniques.

We asked New Zealand employees why they think organisations fall short on diversity. Here are some of their comments:

“In a business sense, diversity does not necessarily equal profitability or efficiency. Businesses don’t exist to cater for the workers, they exist to make money for the owners/shareholders.”

“You can’t easily legislate for diversity because you need people with skills regardless of religion, gender, race or creed. Business is about sustainable profits, not social equality.”

“Legislating will not help diversity, it is a mindset that must be held throughout the company.”

“Businesses want to employ the best people for the position first and foremost. If that happens to create diversity then that’s a bonus.”

“There’s a lack of education in the definition of ‘diversity’.”

“There’s not enough leadership commitment and understanding.”

“Generally there’s a lack of education as to why we need a diverse workforce – employers need to recognise the benefits and how we can support that, and ensure it doesn’t just fall in the ‘too hard basket’.”

“There’s not enough understanding and discussion about it. The subject needs a higher profile.”

“Most workplace facilities are not designed for people with physical disabilities and there is very rarely actual commitment from the senior/executive team to accommodate disabled employees.”

“I think there are still certain positions that people generally feel are gender specific.”

“There is often uncertainty when recruiting people from overseas as cultural fit is very important and it’s often perceived as more risky.”

“Technical disciplines still have an historical gender imbalance.”

“Sometimes the overall productivity goal can override the need to create a diverse workforce. People who may need more time and attention can end up costing time and effort, which I believe some companies try to avoid.”

3. WHY WE FALL SHORT ON DIVERSITY
“Organisations take the route of least resistance to meet their needs. Most are not anti-X, Y or Z diversity - they allow the market to provide the skills they need and are not convinced of the benefits of diversity which can lead to conflict with the uniform ‘normal’.”

By combining existing research with our survey of employers and employees, the following appear to be the main barriers preventing real diversity in New Zealand workplaces.

**Failure to promote the business benefits**
In part 1, we presented the business case for diversity. But many managers, executives and even HR teams fail to understand and promote these benefits within their organisation. This is the first barrier to creating a diverse workforce since, as two of our survey respondents noted:

“Employers may not appreciate all the advantages various skills can bring to the business via diversification.”

And

“Businesses are sometimes so focused on the work at hand they fail to see the benefits a diverse workforce can have on their business.”

**Personal prejudice**
Another factor is the personal (either conscious or unconscious) prejudice that can exist in those making hiring decisions. A difficult topic to explore, from big companies to small the people who make hiring decisions may not have received training in diversity hiring. Or if they have, there is no monitoring of the steps they then proactively take to ensure a diverse workforce.

Prejudice in the hiring community halts an organisation’s ability to achieve diversity. HR can present the business case for diversity, but unless hiring managers truly embrace it with a positive attitude no edict from on high will lead to true change.

Employers said in our survey:

“Hiring decisions are based on the best person for the role, I don’t think whether they are female or male comes into it, but I do think there is some prejudice about some cultural and aging candidates.”

“New Zealand doesn’t have an option with it being a multi-cultural and diverse country, so organisations are forced to hire with diversity in mind. What they need to keep in mind is the underlining racial discrimination.”

“Some people carry their personal prejudice into recruitment - we just try to hire the best skills regardless of race, ethnicity or gender. Many small businesses cannot afford the time or cost of specific training or policy development.”

**Unconscious bias**
Another barrier is unconscious bias. Unconscious biases can be defined as ‘our implicit people preferences, formed by our socialisation, our experiences, and by our exposure to others’ views about other groups of people’.63

Genderworks elaborates further: “Our unconscious capacities play a significant role in our practical decision making, ensuring that it is far from being the deliberative, systematic and analytical process we believe it to be.

“Thinking and judgement are already well under way before they enter the picture as conscious processes. There is a wide range of heuristics and biases that we use to make sense of the world that aid our decision making. While they are positive in helping us make sense of the world, they are also powerful contributors to misjudgement.”64

According to Symmetra Consulting’s Heather Price, unconscious bias is the reason why we are witnessing so little traction in the advancement of women in the workplace, despite the large number of initiatives that organisations have put in place, locally and globally, to assist the advancement of women.
Unconscious bias “fundamentally disputes the idea that patterns of discrimination or exclusion in organisations are practiced consciously by those who are biased and that people who are not biased know better, and do the right thing,” she says.\textsuperscript{65}

The latest research from Harvard, Yale and Massachusetts Institute of Technology tells us that unconscious bias and other implicit processes have a significant effect on our everyday decision-making abilities in the workplace and, in particular, in our interactions with diverse groups.\textsuperscript{66}

In our survey of employers several noted that unconscious bias, particularly in the form of recruiting people like themselves, is the key factor preventing diversity. Comments included:

- “People subconsciously wish to choose others like themselves and do not understand the value that can be accomplished with having a diverse workforce.”

- “People generally (at a subconscious level) like to employ people that look, sound and are like them. As most hiring managers would be male, European in ethnic make-up and from a “Western” cultural background, this excludes many diverse candidates.”

- “Management have biased selection based on personal preferences rather than assessing candidates based on merit.”

- “Most managers are too busy hiring people like themselves.”

- “There is an ingrained culture to recruit similar people to ourselves.”

**The ‘merit’ argument**

A common argument against diversity holds that if you focus on recruiting a diverse workforce you do not recruit the candidate with the very best skills or experience. Those who hold this belief say they create an interview shortlist from applicants who possess the most suitable skills and experience, and from that shortlist they then hire the best person.

Indeed a sizeable portion of employers in our survey held this opinion, with comments including:

- “Actively creating a diverse workforce is discrimination within a workplace. People should earn their positions based on skills, experience and ability, and not be granted roles due to factors such as their race or gender.”

- “Forced diversity could mean you don’t get the best person for the job.”

- “Building a diverse workforce should be organic and natural, rather than forced and monitored, particularly by an external body.”

- “Staff need to be recruited based on their ability to do the job, not on their gender, age etc. If you do this you will end up with a range of different people who should fit into all the groups.”

- “Recruiting is about finding the right person for the role, working with that person to ensure they feel valued and ensuring both the organisation and the employee are getting a fair deal. That in itself should create diversity without quotas or “guidelines”.

- “Employers should hire on merit to find the best person for the job. It doesn’t matter if it is a man or a woman, or whether they have a disability, our company wants the best person for the role and the right fit.”
Of course the final recruitment decision should always be based on who possesses the most suitable skills and experience, but if there is not diversity in your application pool how do you know you have the very best shortlist from which to select from?

If we are to recruit the top talent based on merit, then we need to ensure we reach a diverse range of candidates and encourage them to apply for the role initially. Diversity in an applicant pool will ensure you select the very best shortlist, which will naturally then be diverse. In turn you can build the very best workforce, which again will naturally be diverse if all candidates are considered equally.

Thus organisations need to approach people directly and be far more proactive in compiling diverse shortlists, since to recruit based on 'merit' means we must select from a diverse candidate pool initially. Otherwise, even at this initial stage of sourcing applicants, unconscious bias can exist.

As Deloitte's CEO, Giam Swiegers, says, “Deloitte is, and will always remain, a meritocracy...the cultural diversity program is about creating a fair environment for all Deloitte people, regardless of background or religion.”

**Diversity fatigue**

Diversity fatigue refers to disinterest or even dislike of diversity activities that are taking place at an organisation. It occurs after the launch of a diversity initiative followed by months or years of diversity programs.

Causes of diversity fatigue include the lack of senior executive endorsement or involvement, lack of a diversity plan, failing to connect diversity activities to the business case, sporadic activities, a lack of communication and a lack of manager and executive accountability.

**Failure to integrate differences**

Diversity goes beyond attracting, recruiting and retaining certain target groups. If true diversity is to be achieved, it also involves recognising and valuing the varied skills, knowledge, backgrounds and perspectives that people bring to their work. Rather than merely accepting people from different target groups, diversity also means managing and integrating their varied lifestyles, beliefs and needs to your business.

Failure to do this means true diversity can not be achieved, even if set diversity employment targets are achieved.

**Business culture**

Many organisations have inbuilt and often hidden elements in their business culture that do not support diversity, such as the perception in IT that women can't code. In such cases HR with the support of the CEO needs to drive cultural change in support of diversity. This is no quick or easy task, but unless the business culture is supportive of attracting, recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce, reality will fall short of HR’s diversity ambitions.

Such change however needs to be communicated in a way that promotes and recognises the benefits of diversity, otherwise employees may misinterpret change as mere politically correct lip service.
While there is no one-size fits all magic solution to diversity, the following strategies can be considered and adapted to fit your organisation’s unique business, sector and workforce. We group the below strategies under three key themes: culture, learning & development, and environment.

**Culture**

1. **Lead from the front**

According to our survey of New Zealand employees, 55 per cent say their organisation’s public face and the way they portray themselves on issues like diversity isn’t a true representation of the real culture.

Of these, 34 per cent said diversity is not a genuine concern for the organisation, 29 per cent said the public face is a goal not reality, while 24 per cent said line managers fail to genuinely embrace policies such as diversity when they recruit.

How your business is viewed as a workplace has a huge impact on the number of quality skilled professionals applying for roles. As a consequence of a culture and values that support inclusion and diversity, an organisation is likely to be known – or be working towards being known – as an organisation that supports diversity.

**Business culture**

So let’s look first at business culture. The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania studied diversity and found that certain environments and business strategies enhance the effectiveness of diverse teams. They found that “diverse groups are more likely to have higher levels of performance in environments that emphasize a people-oriented culture (cultures that emphasize cooperation, sociability, empathy, good interpersonal relationships).”70

By comparison, those organisations with cultures that avoid risk-taking and seek to maintain the status quo do not embrace diversity.

This suggests that in certain organisations cultural change may be required to enable real diversity. This is not a simple process, and it takes time, expertise and executive support to become reality. However a people-oriented culture can have many benefits besides diversity; it is also an essential ingredient in becoming an employer of choice and enabling you to attract and retain the top talent.

**Inclusion**

According to our survey of New Zealand employees, 57 per cent say a feeling of ‘belonging’ to their employer’s company culture makes them feel more positive about the company they work for.

And 82 per cent said their colleagues are open to working within a diverse workforce.

According to Deloitte, diversity is leveraged through inclusion, or the “extent to which individuals feel valued and included by an organisation.”71 Inclusive leadership, they argue, will ensure that all employees can fulfil their potential.

So in this sense, a diverse workforce without an inclusive culture will not achieve the desired outcomes. In isolation a diverse workforce is just that – but with an inclusive culture an organisation will value differences, support and encourage individuals to thrive, and thus benefit from improved outcomes.72
So if you can create an inclusive culture in your workplace, where employees feel valued and included, and which is based on “openness, merit and rational decision-making”, then your diverse workforce will be able to utilise its “richer knowledge bank” to achieve “better business outcomes”.

In its own words employer of choice Google “strive to cultivate a wholly inclusive workplace everywhere we operate in the world. We want all Googlers to love coming to work every day, not just for their projects and the great perks, but for the inclusive culture where they can feel free to be themselves and thrive.”

To create an inclusive workforce we suggest:

• You foster a culture that values inclusion;
• Senior leaders and middle managers commit to an inclusive, collaborative, respectful, fair and equal opportunity management style;
• They ‘champion’ inclusion;
• Leaders are held accountable for an inclusive team culture;
• You clearly communicate to all staff the importance of and business case for inclusion;
• You provide opportunities for staff to work in teams on projects and utilise their differences; and
• You encourage employees to be inquisitive and consider various opinions.

CEO support
But a truly diverse workforce can only be created with the support of leadership at the top. With real commitment, encouragement and leading by example, an organisation’s top executive can enable progress to take place by supporting all programs to encourage diversity.

Diversity should also be on the strategic agenda; your CEO should visibly champion diversity.

Without such drive from above, even the most supportive manager of diversity can struggle to create real change.

One example of leading from the front comes from the organisations who have committed to increasing gender equality in the workplace by signing up to the United Nations Women’s Empowerment Principles. So far 30 New Zealand companies have signed up to the Principles, which offer guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community.

Towers Watson meanwhile aim to develop a diverse workforce and part of their strategy is to lead by example: “Our senior leaders are expected to model appropriate behaviours, and have set specific objectives related to diversity and inclusion.”

And Microsoft CEO Steven A. Ballmer has said, “Diversity and inclusion are not just words on paper for us; they are core values and business imperatives. We promote diversity at every level within our organization and strive for inclusiveness in everything we do.”

Steve Jobs, the late cofounder and CEO of Apple, was passionate about diversity and bringing more minorities into engineering. He even hired a “Senior Engineering Diversity Manager to recruit a more diverse workforce, and today there are dozens of engineers from underrepresented groups working at Apple.”

Harvard Business Review interviewed 24 CEOs who have made diversity a strategic priority. They concluded that diversity made its way to the top of a CEO’s agenda for two reasons: the first was the belief it was a business imperative in order to stay competitive; the second was the belief that diversity is a moral imperative, which usually resulted from their own personal experiences and values. As noted in the article, “A CEO’s commitment often arises from his or her own understanding of what it means to be an outsider.”

But what if diversity is not top of your CEO’s agenda? Then clearly demonstrate the link between diversity and business success. By making the business case, your CEO can see the value diversity will bring, whether it be greater understanding of the customer base, increased innovation within internal teams, or talent attraction. The evidence alone should be persuasive.

2. Voluntary targets

Targets are not a new concept. All organisations have various operational targets in place at any given time, from financial to customer service. Thus in theory it should be an easy process to extend targets to workplace diversity. However as we know, theory does not always smoothly lead into practice.
Shortlist targets

Just six per cent of employers surveyed have targets in place to ensure they create a diverse shortlist.

Voluntary organisation-specific gender, mature-age, disability, multi-cultural and Indigenous representation targets for each shortlist is our next suggestion. The value of these targets is dependent on your own unique situation. For some large multinational organisations the value may be set at two candidates for each diverse group; for other smaller domestic organisations it may be one candidate from just one of the diverse groups identified. But regardless of an organisation’s size the goal is the same: a candidate pool of diverse composition.

Some organisations choose this strategy over set workforce targets since shortlist targets force hiring managers to interview and consider a diverse range of candidates, from which they can then make hiring decisions based on who has the best skills and experience.

Without set workforce quotas the ultimate hiring of a diverse workforce is still at the hiring manager’s discretion, but this strategy does at least ensure candidates from diverse groups are interviewed and considered.

Citigroup is one example of an organisation that ensures a diverse shortlist. The organisation ensures that “diverse candidates are included on candidate slates for new opportunities” and “strive to present a diverse pool of highly qualified candidates for management and professional opportunities.”

With such targets in place, you ensure your organisation recruits from a diverse pool of candidates, essential if we consider that true diversity begins with recruitment.

Workforce targets

Intel “make sure women, minorities, people with disabilities, veterans, and other diverse groups are appropriately represented” in its workforce.

Just 9 per cent of employers surveyed have targets for gender representation. That figure drops to 3 per cent for multi-cultural representation and 2 per cent for people with a disability and mature-age workers.

To date the use of workforce targets has, more often than not, been restricted to helping to improve female representation in businesses. In reference to the progression of women into senior leadership positions Mike Smith, the CEO of ANZ, said, “The biggest gains will occur when more businesses not only set and report on targets but also take the time to understand what is needed and take direct action to ensure more women thrive and advance in our workplaces. This is not just about addressing equality, it actually makes good business sense and those organisations that take action will reap the economic benefits of a more productive workforce.”

But most employers want to keep targets voluntary, rather than go the way of Norway with mandatory quotas.

In our survey of employers, only 11 per cent said mandatory quotas would be an effective method of ensuring diversity. 72 per cent said they would be mere tokenism.

Would mandatory quotas (gender, age, disability, Indigenous and cultural background) be an effective method of ensuring diversity?

- Yes - they would force organisations to recruit a diverse workforce
- No - they are mere tokenism
- Unsure
‘25 Percent’
An actionable diversity objective is the voluntary target set by the 25 Percent Group to have at least 25 per cent women overall on New Zealand’s boards by 2015. The Group comprises Chairs and CEOs from a selection of private, publicly-listed and multi-national companies committed to achieving diversity of thought at senior management level and in New Zealand boardrooms.

Research suggests that at least 25 per cent women on boards is required to achieve the potential benefits, and that the greatest benefits are achieved where the participation of three or more women is sustained over time.82

3. Accountability

One thing all organisations that are known for diversity have in common is their regular monitoring and reporting of diversity progress. For example Towers Watson, “monitor our progress and report on it quarterly to our Compensation Committee, and Global Diversity and Inclusion Council.”83

Meanwhile according to ANZ, “The ANZ executive level Diversity Council, chaired by our CEO, Mike Smith, sets and publishes (internally and externally) a scorecard that outlines priorities and targets with measurable outcomes. We also set specific public targets such as our target around our Given the Chance employment program which are monitored and reported against twice-yearly.”84

So once committed to diversity, it is important to create indicators to monitor progress towards hiring and retaining a diverse workforce. In this section where we began, we repeat that it is important for an organisation’s top executive to monitor progress, and perhaps even be accountable for results, and of course support all programs to encourage diversity to take place.

Learning & development

4. Education at all levels

Educate hiring managers – this is where ‘the rubber hits the road’!

Provided an organisation is committed to diversity through its culture and support from its leader, then education is our next strategy to create a diverse workforce. If not, any education programs will be mere lip service and will fail to create a truly diverse workforce.

According to our survey of employers, just 18 per cent train hiring managers to improve awareness on diversity-related topics such as age, disability and women in the workforce.

And 25 per cent of organisations provide training on how to recruit for diversity. But of these, just 31 per cent go on to measure diversity outcomes in their organisation.

If you provide training, is diversity then measured in your organisation?

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The next step is to educate hiring managers and other business leaders on the benefits that diversity and a culture supportive of diversity and inclusion will bring. This group plays a critical role in balancing the diversity of the organisation, both now and in the future, with the recruitment of the best person for the job. Starting with a diverse shortlist is the key – unconscious bias is often present before the interviews start (see below). As recruiters we take our responsibility very seriously and do our part, but better support from within will allow hiring managers and leaders to be shown how to follow the lead of the CEO in support of diversity.

One way to do this is through the use of ‘champions’. These champions could be geographically focused, or focused on a specific diversity group such as a culture, women or disabilities. These champions should become experts in their minority group, and are often a member of that minority group themselves – although this is not essential.

Training hiring managers to recruit based on set criteria is also important, as is showing them how to recognise the value of differences.

In addition, people managers should be trained on how to promote inclusiveness within their team, what is appropriate and not appropriate behaviour in various cultures, and discrimination laws.

Managers should then be held accountable, such as via performance objectives, in order to ensure their training is put into practice.

**Address unconscious bias**

Overt or systemic discrimination is a challenge to eliminate from hiring managers since it happens without a person being aware of their bias. For example, when we think of a surgeon, a nurse, a preschool teacher or an electrician, we often unwittingly picture a man or a woman. Such unconscious bias needs to be brought to the attention of hiring managers through training or additional programs since we cannot change unwitting bias unless we are first aware of it.

Such training should challenge assumptions. According to Pamela Young, author of a book on diversity, “Sustainable permanent change can only be achieved when the assumptions that drive attitudes and behaviours are revealed, challenged and aligned with your goals.”

It can also involve taking unconscious bias testing, a strategy that was recently proposed by the Business Council of Australia.

So talking about unfounded generalisations and turning the focus instead onto attributes, skills and experience, will help overcome unconscious bias. PwC is one organisation taking such steps. It is developing an internal program to address unconscious bias in its hiring process, as well as a separate initiative to challenge traditional ways of recruiting.

While unconscious bias is often spoken of in reference to the recruitment process, we should remember that it can also be a factor in promotions and in selecting (typically older) employees for redundancies.

**Treat people as individuals**

Unconscious bias or generalisations about staff members based on their gender, age, disability or cultural background can also lead to incorrect assumptions about their abilities or needs. Two-way communications with each individual staff member, such as through formal performance reviews or weekly or monthly meetings, will ensure you deal with staff as individuals and consider their unique situation.

**Train all staff**

According to our survey of employers, 21 per cent offer cultural awareness training for managers and staff.

This is a sensible strategy since training can help counteract any concerns staff may have about diversity or about potentially saying something that could be viewed as discriminatory.
Much like training for hiring managers, all staff benefit from becoming aware of unconscious bias, discriminatory conduct, cultural sensitivities and inclusion principles.

But a study by Deloitte found that workplace diversity training will only work if it includes self-efficacy components, or in other words, “the confidence that one can marshal the necessary motivation, cognitive resources and actions required to change behaviours and successfully attain diversity goals”. They argue this allows employees to apply the information and skills acquired in training in the workplace. Deloitte also suggest diversity training is audited to ensure it includes knowledge, skill and confidence based components, rather than relying solely upon knowledge transfer, which does not work on its own.88

One example of an organisation that offers regular diversity training to its staff is The Coca-Cola Company. In the organisation’s own words, “We find ongoing dialogue leads to better understanding of our colleagues, our suppliers, our customers, our stakeholders, and ultimately, to greater success in the marketplace.”89

5. Development programs

Development programs aimed specifically at minority groups is our fifth strategy for creating a diverse workforce — at all levels in an organisation. For instance, Intel in its words “focuses on leadership and development initiatives for our African American, Hispanic, and women employees. Three leadership councils comprised of experienced executives serve as role models and actively support these programs.”90

Development programs may take on a variety of forms. A company may choose to establish a diversity council and implement a diversity plan that can become a key performance measure for its executive team. It could also implement a standardised flexible working policy, change the way it is recruiting so that it is actively looking for women, or have a program of identifying up-and-coming women and putting them on succession and development plans.

Along with formal development plans, your development program could involve less structured one-on-one mentoring, where each member of a minority group is mentored by an experienced employee to provide support and career guidance in order to help achieve real career advancement. For example, Citigroup runs a mentoring program to ensure all individuals have an opportunity to grow and excel.91

Colgate-Palmolive also focus on development. In the organisation’s own words, “We are constantly strengthening our mentoring, training and work/life balance programs in an effort to ensure that all employees have access to professional and personal development opportunities.”92

By developing minority groups within the organisation, you will not only create diversity at the top, which promotes diversity across the organisation as a whole, but you will offer diverse role models to those just starting their careers, which will help forge a culture where diversity becomes a given.

Networking groups

You could also consider employee networking groups. For example, part of Colgate-Palmolive’s commitment involves forming employee network groups in order to promote the development and advancement of diverse groups in the workforce.93

Meanwhile at The Coca-Cola Company, “Diversity is an integral part of who we are, how we operate and how we see the future”, and their diversity workplace strategy includes providing “support systems for groups with diverse backgrounds.”94

And at Towers Watson, “Associate Resource Communities build understanding of the concerns and issues of colleagues across the different segments of our workforce. Currently, we have two active communities — Women and Supporters, and Out@Towers Watson for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender associates and allies.”95

Finally at ANZ employees are provided with “mentoring programs and affinity networks to build relationships and networks amongst employees from specific or under-represented cultural backgrounds.”96

You could follow their example and consider inviting the diverse groups in your workforce to form or join a support network.

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Environment

6. Adapting your office environment

Workplace flexibility

In our survey of New Zealand employees, 32 per cent said government legislation on flexibility encourages women to consider balancing a career and family. But 49 per cent were unsure and 19 per cent said legislation does not encourage women to balance a career and a family.

Head of Yahoo! Marissa Mayer caused headlines around the world when she announced that her maternity leave would be “a few weeks long, and I’ll work throughout it.” There was concern that her decision set “a bad precedent for Yahoo’s lower-level employees, mothers and fathers, who do not have the job flexibility and cannot afford the extensive social support and backup systems that Mayer and her husband will be able to construct.”

She also stopped Yahoo!’s work from home policy yet built a nursery next to her office for her baby son and doubled maternity and paternity leave for staff.

In New Zealand, the Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Act 2007 gives employees with caring responsibilities a statutory right to request flexible work. The Act has changed the way some employees and employers make and respond to requests for flexible working arrangements.

Thus workplace flexibility is a reality you need to be able to effectively implement and manage.

Generalisations about flexibility

Working mothers, mature-age workers and those with disabilities in particular often require flexible working options to remain in the workforce. Although even here we should be careful not to generalise based on an individual’s personal circumstances.

According to our survey of New Zealand employees, 59 per cent say flexible working options that meet their individual needs make them feel more positive about the company they work for.

And 74 per cent of employers surveyed said flexible working hours are offered to any staff needing them.

Backing up years of anecdotal evidence is Ernst & Young research which found that women working in flexible roles (part-time, contract or casual) are the most productive members of our workforce. According to the research, women in flexible roles waste only 11.1 per cent of their time, compared to an average of 14.5 per cent for the rest of the working population, an important productivity bonus that few employers recognise.

As Kate Mills, founder of ProfessionalMums.net, noted in reference to this research, “If you want something done then give it to a working mother – who has to leave at 5pm on the dot to make the childcare centre so will get her work finished by 4:30. Or, if it doesn’t get done during work hours she will log on after the kids have gone to bed to get it finished.”
But a flexible working arrangement is not just about helping working mothers balance work and caring responsibilities. It is about offering working arrangements that help all employees balance their personal and professional commitments. From allowing mature-age workers to transition to retirement at their own pace, to allowing employees the opportunity to observe religious practices that fall during their working day, flexibility help an organisation retain its diverse workforce.

Many organisations have already implemented highly successful flexible working practices. Flexible work arrangements are common in many workplaces throughout New Zealand. Overall, 70% of employers report having some or all of their employees working flexibly.105

**Honest communication**
According to Ernst & Young, flexible work is about an employee and an employer making changes to when, where and how a person will work to better meet individual and business needs.106

Open and honest communication is at the heart of a successful flexible working arrangement, so sit with your employees individually and discuss the wishes and requirements of both sides to determine what works for you both.

**Create a written agreement**
Formalise this agreement in writing as this is a sensible step to clarify expectations and reduce misunderstandings.107 Given the widening of legislation to include more people who can request flexible working arrangements, a written arrangement provides clear guidelines for both employers with staff working flexibly and employees working flexibly.

Despite the presence of legislation providing eligible employees with a right to request flexible work arrangements for caring responsibilities in New Zealand, the majority of employee-reported requests made to employers were accepted without recourse to the formal process provided for under Part 6AA of Employment Relations Act.

Overall, 73.6% of employers and 75.2% of employees said that the legal right to request flexible work arrangements should be available to all employees.108

**Adapting work stations**
To accommodate a diverse workforce some employees may require their work station to be adapted to meet their individual needs. Again open and honest communication is required to assess your physical environment and plan changes to accommodate individual needs.

Microsoft is one organisation that accommodates and enables employees with disabilities to perform the necessary functions of their jobs. Microsoft “provides ergonomic hardware and assistive technology consultation so employees can be productive, comfortable, and injury-free at work”, while their Cross Disability Employee Resource Group enables “employees at Microsoft to reach their full potential through inclusion, representation, access to accommodations and in doing so, be the employer of choice for people with disabilities globally.”109

**Quiet room**
A workforce of diverse cultures has to consider many different needs, however a growing trend is to dedicate one room in the office, often called a ‘quiet room’, to the exclusive use of employees who need a quiet space during the day. This could have a range of purposes, from a place for staff to pray to a place where lactating mothers can express.

For example, Google provide Prayer Rooms and Mothers Rooms, “to provide Googlers with the benefits they need to be successful at Google and at home.” 110

In our survey of employers, only 10 per cent said they have a ‘quiet room’ available for such purposes.
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