

Ministry of Agriculture

Tō'ou reo, kia 'akarongo' ia, ei puapinga nō'ou

Your Voice Should be Heard, Your Voice is Important

Health & Wellbeing Survey of the Public Sector

2022

The *Tō'ou reo, kia 'akarongo' ia, ei puapinga nō'ou, Your Voice Should be Heard, Your Voice is important* survey is the 2022 Cook Islands Public Sector's employee engagement survey focusing on the Health & Wellbeing of Public Sector employees and was launched on Tuesday 7th June. The survey was open to all employees from 28 Public Sector Agencies for two weeks, closing at 12am on Monday 20th June. The survey was conducted through Survey Monkey and was made available to all Public Sector employees through an email link.

It is envisioned that the individual Agency results and information provided from this survey can be used to drive policy change, make improvements to workplace culture and give Public Sector leaders a better understanding of the health & wellbeing of their employees. The survey results provide agencies with a snapshot of how employees see their workplaces, including views on: Employee engagement and job satisfaction, Public Sector ethics and culture, Communication, Inclusion, Workload and Motivation, Fairness and respect and Job demands, Resources and support.

This is a 'new look' survey and was redeveloped to be more user friendly, more focused, shorter and to encourage participation across the sector. Participation rates in previous years in the Employee Engagement Survey have been consistently low compared to the number of employees. After some research, and in consultation with a statistician it was determined that there were a number of changes that could be made to help increase participation numbers and provide the sector with a more concentrated set of data and reporting mechanism. The first change was eliminating a large number of questions required to be answered and focus on one area, and for this survey "Health & Wellbeing" was selected, unlike the previous survey that had a number of areas that it covered. This shortened the survey significantly and in turn the time it took to complete. Another change was to improve the level of confidentiality in the survey, so many of the 'identifier' questions were removed, leaving only the Agency an employee worked for, which improved the level of privacy and confidentiality significantly. Finally, another consideration was the reporting of the data collected. With the previous surveys, reports were downloaded straight from the survey platform website, Survey Monkey, and were very large and not very user friendly due to the amount of questions and the limited formatting options available. It was very time consuming to provide any kind of analytical report but with a more focused approach it allows for a report to be produced that is more succinct and should assist management to easily identify issues.

The lack of 'identifiers' means that demographic information is not able to be produced for this report. It is recognised that it is important for agencies to understand the demographics of their employees and this information will be available in the individual agency survey reports and under development is a sector wide demographic dashboard that will be launched on the OPSC website in August and updated at regular intervals.

A total of 412 employees participated in the survey. Of those who participated, 41 did not select which Agency they were employed with. The 412 respondents number does not include the 59 employees from the Pa Enea who participated in a shorter, mobile friendly version of the survey in an effort to make the survey more accessible. A separate report will be produced for the Pa Enea results. Work is underway at OPSC to develop a second survey which will seek feedback from employees on the management and leadership of the Public Sector. This is due to be launched in October 2022 and will contribute towards the Mid Year Review process for the 14 Government Ministry's. The response rates were too low overall to infer the result to the entire Public Sector population and is a snapshot of the opinions of the 412 that responded. In order to get a more accurate picture of the realities of working in the Public Sector and be able to track trends over time a higher participation rate is needed for future surveys.

In our endeavours to be more transparent for the purposes of improving performance, accountability and the service delivery to the public this report will be made available to all Public Sector employees .

About the Report

The *Tō'ou reo, kia 'akarongo' ia, ei puapinga nō'ou, Your Voice Should be Heard, Your Voice is important* survey has been designed to support Public Sector agencies to build positive workplace cultures with integrity and that reflect the Public Sector values of Honesty, Impartiality, Service, Transparency, Accountability, Respect, Effectiveness and Efficiency.

The survey results provide agencies with a snap-shot of how employees see their workplaces, including views on:

- Employee engagement and job satisfaction
- Employee wellbeing
- Public Sector ethics and culture
- Communication
- Diversity and inclusion
- Workload and Motivation
- Fairness and respect

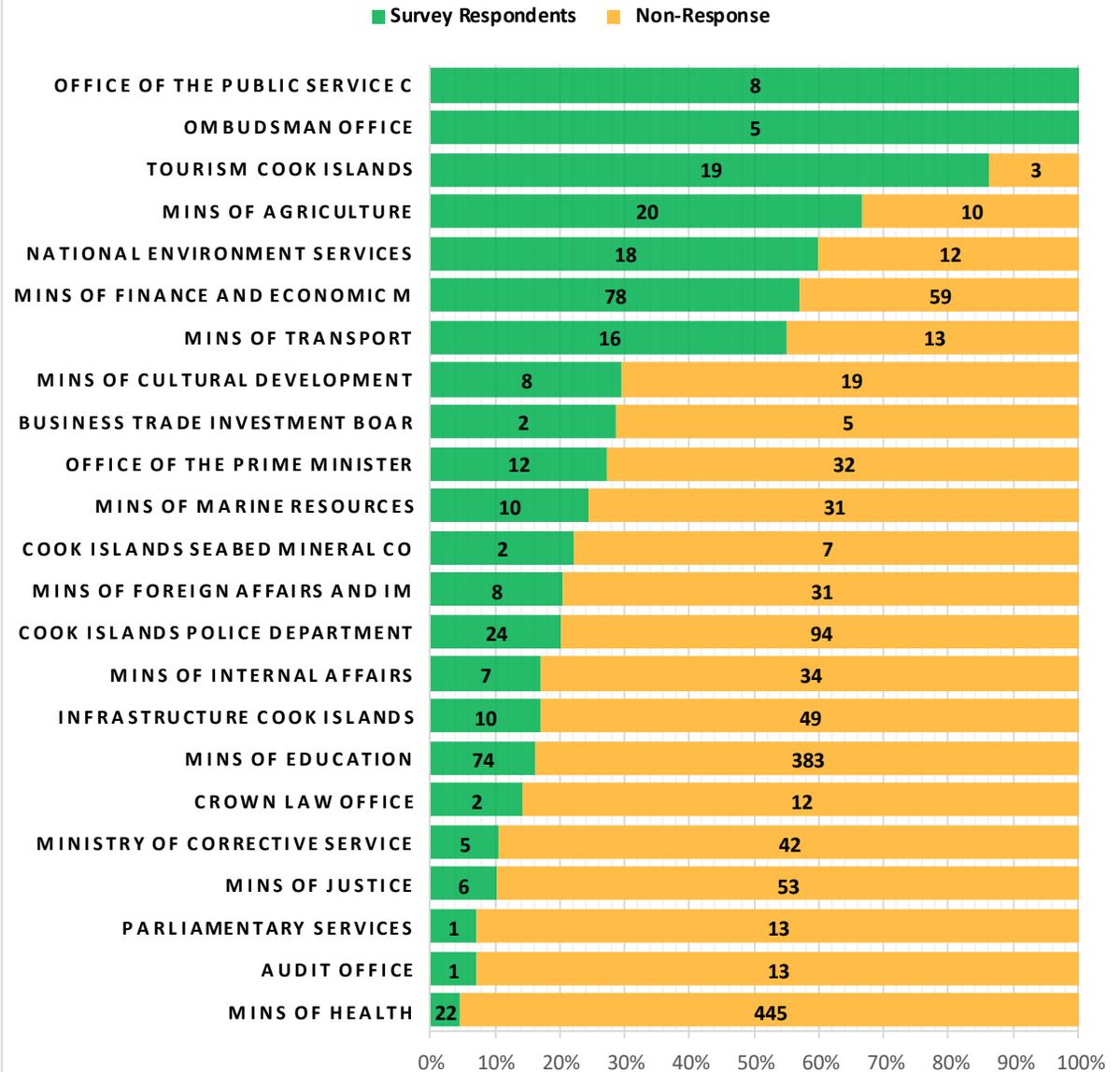
Agencies can use the results to determine how to improve the workplace for their employees.

Each report contains a summary of the data results and a summary of the participants comments. If the report contains no summary of comments it is because no comments were given.

This year you will also see:

- Public release of the 'Survey Snapshot Report', which provides data results from all of the agency employees who participated.
- Demographic and survey information made available on the OPSC website, and
- A second employment engagement survey launched in October focusing on leadership and management.

PROPORTION OF AGENCY RESPONDENTS



In my workplace all people are treated fairly

Summary of Results and Recommendations

A good result, with 65% of employees feeling that people are treated fairly in the workplace. There is still 35% who selected Occasionally or Rarely and it is that result management should be concerned with. Research conducted by UNC/Kenan Flagler Business School 2019 showed that a lack of fairness in the workplace created implications far beyond the emotional well-being of employees. Studies showed that when employees feel unfairly treated, they are less productive, more likely to engage in deceptive behavior and less likely to stay with the organisation long term.

In the workplace, “justice behaviour” relates to managers’ specific actions or behaviors such as:

- Making decision-making transparent
- Providing employees with opportunities to provide input/ feedback
- Acknowledging employees’ contributions
- Making time for employees to provide input on decisions when possible
- Treating employees with respect and dignity

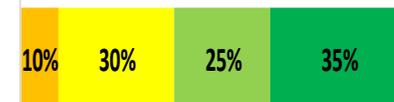
When managers engage in such “justice behaviors,” employees are more likely to evaluate them as fair. While it is acknowledged that these tasks take significant time and resources to accomplish – time and resources that are often in short supply for managers with heavy workload companies like Google are recognising that by prioritising “justice behaviors” they can decrease turnover, increase productivity, and reap an array of other benefits. Management may want to look at the “justice behaviours” outlined above and assess if they highlight areas that could be improved on with the Ministry.

In addition, observing workplace dynamics can provide valuable insights in to the different employee interactions and how people are being treated. One-to-one meetings with employees where they can express or communicate any concerns or issues they may be experiencing can also help management identify issues and how to resolve them.

ETHICS AND CULTURE

■ Never ■ Rarely ■ Occasionally ■ Frequently ■ Always

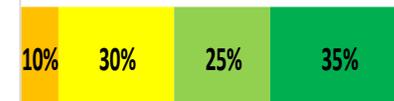
AS A PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT I WOULD RECOMMEND MY WORKPLACE TO CLOSE FRIENDS OR FAMILY.



IN MY WORKPLACE ALL PEOPLE ARE TREATED FAIRLY.



THE CULTURE OF MY WORKPLACE IS POSITIVE AND MOTIVATING.



MY AGENCY'S ACTIONS ALIGN WITH THE PUBLIC SECTOR VALUES OF HONESTY, ACCOUNTABILITY, IMPARTIALITY, RESPECT, SERVICE, TRANSPARENCY,...



As a place of employment I would recommend my workplace to close friends or family

Summary of Results and Recommendations

60% of respondents selected Always or Frequently. Whether an employee will give recommendations to friends and family to apply for a role in an organisation is a good gauge of organisational, team, and work engagement levels. MOA would be recommended to look at the other indicators from this survey for where improvements could be made to increase this number for this statement.

The culture of my workplace is positive and motivating

Summary of Results and Recommendations

Combined 60% of respondents selected Always or Frequently with 40% selecting either Occasionally or Rarely. Positivity and motivation are key indicators of employee engagement. Engagement is a sense of purpose, belonging, and commitment to an organization, whereas **motivation is the willpower and drive to act on those feelings**. Employee engagement serves as a foundation for your employees to do their best work, while motivation is the fuel or energy required to actually do it. Looking further into why some employees are feeling the culture of MOA is not always positive or motivating would be recommended. Management plays a big part in the culture of a work environment so discussing this with the management team and how improvements could be made would be a positive start.

Some tips for motivating staff are:

- Say "Thank You"
- Communicate the big picture
- Show trust in your staff
- Give staff a voice
- Upskill
- Offer a clear progression path
- Create a welcoming work environment
- Be aware of your management style
- Refresh your performance reviews
- Ask employees for feedback

For further information go to <https://www.hays.net.nz/employer-insights/management-issues/how-to-motivate-employees>

My Agency's actions align with the Public Sector values of honesty, accountability, impartiality, respect, service, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency

Summary of Results and Recommendations

Similar to results for the previous statements in this section with 60% selecting Always or Frequently. These results are good, but there is room for improvement. If employees are feeling they are not always treated fairly or working in a positive and motivated environment they are much less likely to recommend their workplace as a place of employment or feel that their employer or Agency reflects the values that it promotes.

Again like other recommendations, management staff could consider ways to mitigate these results and work as a team to implement initiatives to further engage their staff.

I feel that my achievements at work are acknowledged

Summary of Results and Recommendations

Again a similar result to the previous statements with 65% selecting Always or Frequently and again that same proportion of employees selecting Occasionally and Rarely. Acknowledgement is driven by management, or who the employee directly reports to, and who they look to for recognition of a 'job well done', so this could be another area to for management to discuss.

In my workplace, I can voice my opinion even if my ideas are different from others

Summary of Results and Recommendations

A much stronger result here with 80% selecting Always or Frequently. It is an interesting result when compared with the other results so far. Employees are comfortable to voice their opinion but a lesser number feel they are listened to. From a management perspective you would be looking at who are they voicing their opinions to, management or colleagues and are those opinions positive or negative? And why are they not feeling listened to?

COMMUNICATIONS

■ Never ■ Rarely ■ Occasionally ■ Frequently ■ Always

I FEEL THAT MY ACHIEVEMENTS AT WORK ARE ACKNOWLEDGED.



IN MY WORKPLACE, I CAN VOICE MY OPINION EVEN IF MY IDEAS ARE DIFFERENT FROM OTHERS.



IN MY WORKPLACE MY IDEAS ARE LISTENED TO.



In my workplace my ideas are listened to

Summary of Results and Recommendations:

This result contrasts with the previous statement regarding voicing an opinion in that much less, 50%, responded that they Always or Frequently felt their ideas where listened to. As management you would be considering what is causing this discrepancy and how to increase the number of employees who feel listened to. Staff meetings are always a good forum for sharing ideas, as well as one-to-one meeting with employees and their manager. Not all ideas are able to be implemented and management should be open to the sharing of ideas but also to explaining and providing feedback to an employee/s as to why the idea has not been adopted.

I am able to carry out my role while maintaining a healthy work/life balance

Summary of Results and Recommendations

70% selected Always or Frequently, which is a good proportion of employees. Once again though it seems that 30% of employees, that are reflected throughout the data results, only Occasionally agree with this statement.

I look forward to coming into work each day

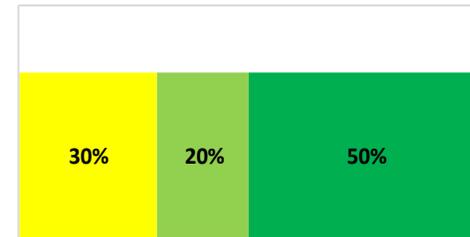
Summary of Results and Recommendations

Responses for this statement are very positive with 80% selecting either Always or Frequently. The remaining 20% who selected Occasionally or Rarely are where management should focus on to improve.

WORKLOAD AND MOTIVATION

■ Never ■ Rarely ■ Occasionally ■ Frequently ■ Always

I AM ABLE TO CARRY OUT MY ROLE WHILE MAINTAINING A HEALTHY WORK/LIFE BALANCE.



I LOOK FORWARD TO COMING INTO WORK EACH DAY.

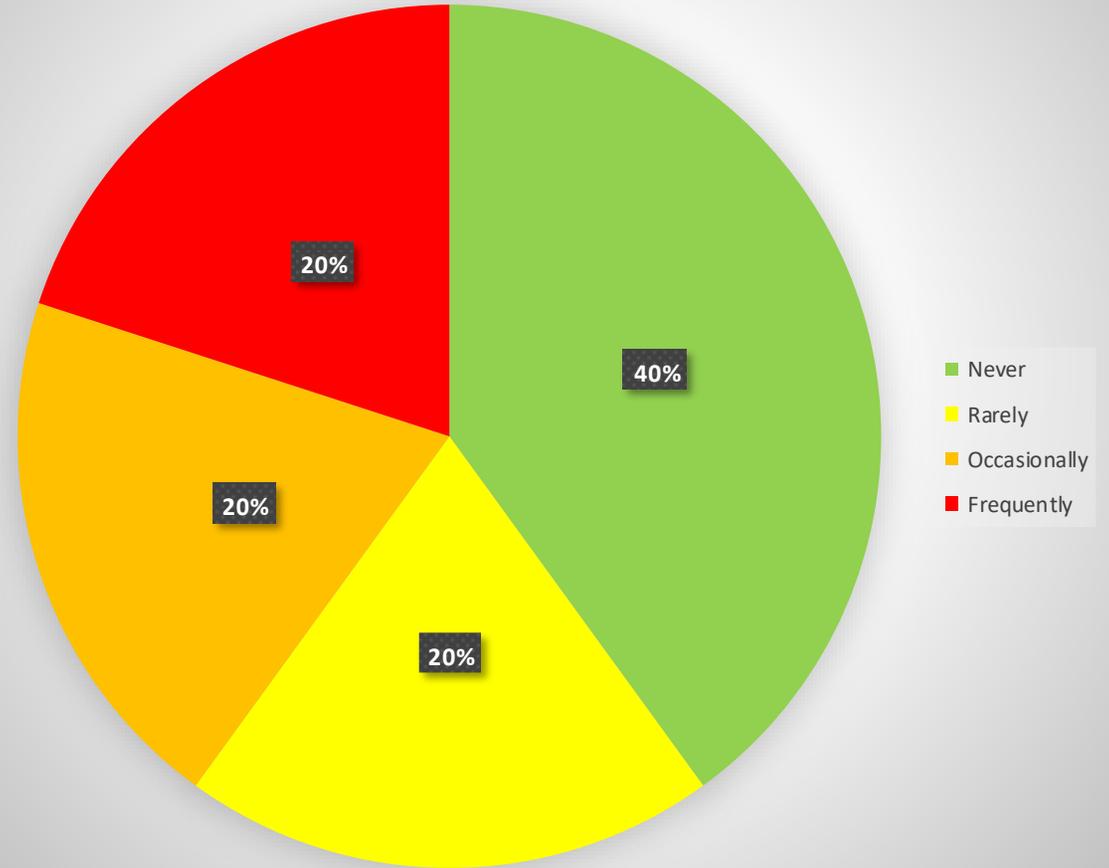


In the last 12 months I have thought about leaving

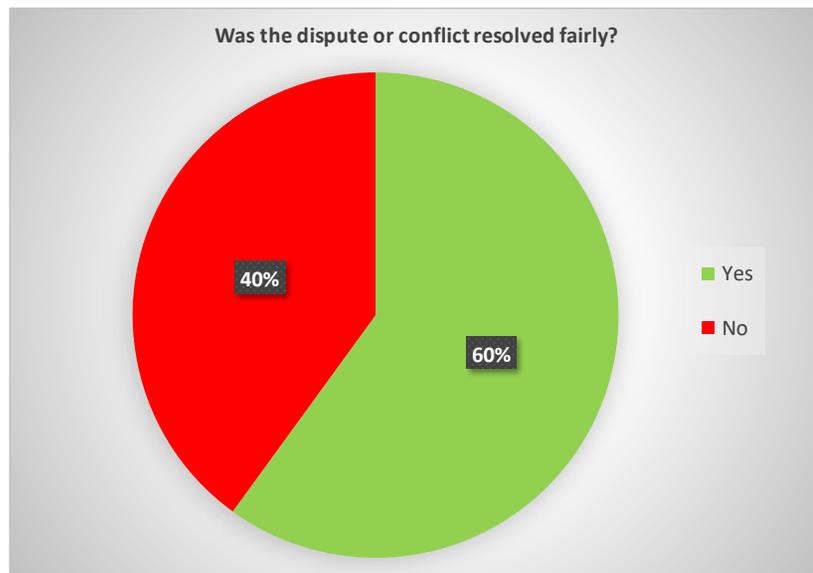
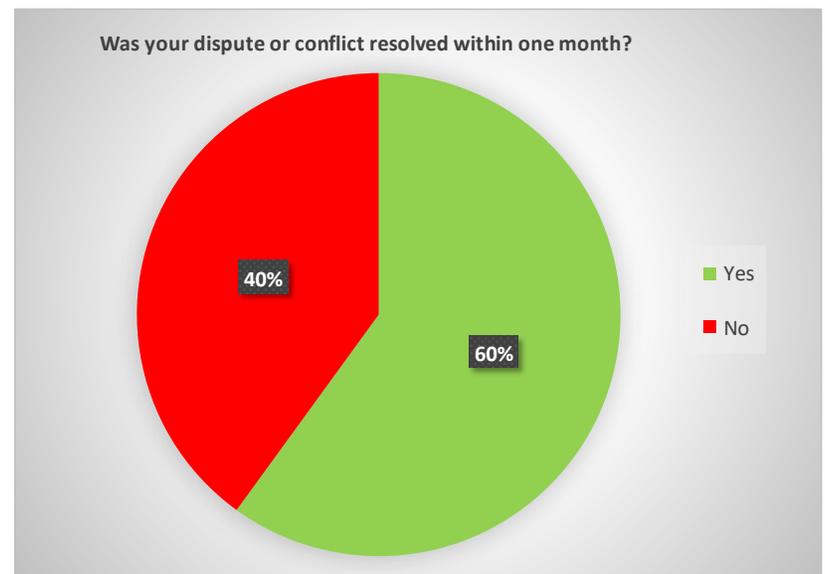
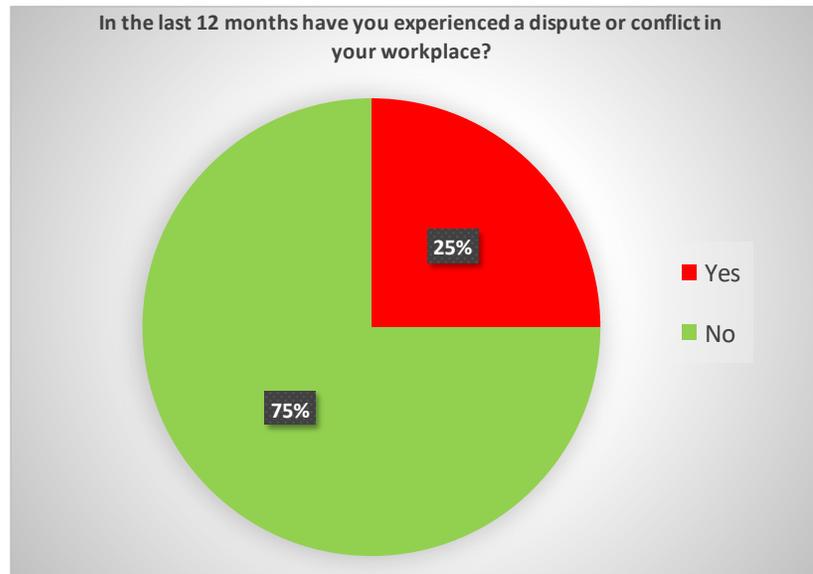
A positive result for this statement. Combined 80% selected Never, Rarely or Occasionally, with 20% selecting Frequently. And it is the last group that should be the focus here.

Comments reflected problems in leadership or management with work not being fairly distributed, and teamwork lacking.

In the last 12 months, I have thought about leaving my workplace.



Disputes and Conflicts



Summary of Results and Recommendations

25% of respondents have experienced a dispute or conflict in the last 12 months and from that 25% the average number of conflicts experienced was 2.

Disputes and Conflicts in the work environment are difficult to eliminate completely and given that 60% indicated that the dispute or conflict was resolved fairly and within a month shows that management do have skills in conflict resolution. They might, however benefit from refresher training. There is a list of free online training websites which have a wide selection of courses provided in the conclusion section of this report.

Conclusion

Out of 30 employees, 20 participated in the survey which equates to 67%. This is a high response rate and all the statements ranked between 60%, and 80% selecting Always or Frequently.

This is a set of results with definitely some successes, particularly in employees being able to voice their opinion, able to maintain a good work/life balance and looking forward to coming to work each day all rating above 70%. Thoughts of leaving the workplace showed that only 20% thought of leaving Frequently. There are some areas where work from the management team could help to improve the overall level of employee engagement. Those results already highlighted in the report should be considered as 'points of action' and where management work together to identify how and what can be done to increase the number of employees selecting Always or Frequently in the future.

Improving the wellbeing of employees leads to higher level of engagement and productivity, which again leads to better health, wellbeing and satisfaction with work.

Research suggests that employees who report high levels of wellbeing are more likely to:

- Be more creative
- Be more productive
- Provide better customer service
- Report more positive interactions with their managers
- Be more confident to speak up
- Be more satisfied with their job, career development and work-life balance
- Be more engaged.

Training Resources

Coursera is an online learning website that partners with more than 200 leading universities and companies to bring flexible, affordable, job-relevant online learning to individuals and organizations worldwide. They offer a range of learning opportunities—from hands-on projects and courses to job-ready certificates and degree programs. Coursera offers free online training courses as well as those with a fee. Coursera for Business provides courses for transformative skill development solutions for empowering teams with the high-impact skills that drive innovation, competitiveness, and growth. They also offer Coursera for Government which helps governments and organizations provide in-demand skills and learning paths to new jobs for the entire workforce, and implements national-scale learning programs. <https://www.coursera.org/>

edX Open Courses offers online learning from world-class academic institutions and corporate partners, self-paced individual courses or multi-course programs to earn a certificate and typically take 2 to 6 weeks to complete. They are low cost, so organisations can affordably provision learning for teams or the entire organisation. <https://www.edx.org/>

Cook Islands Tertiary Training Institute offer two NZ Certificates in Business and Management. www.citti.edu.ck/courses/