



**He aha te mea nui o te ao?**  
**What is the most important thing in the world?**  
**He tangata, he tangata, he tangata.**  
**It is people, it is people, it is people.** (Maori proverb)

Any organisation relies on people to ensure things get done as planned and to the standard required. There can often be a mix of paid staff and volunteers with many organisations relying on both to function. There are many similarities in managing paid and unpaid staff, but there are also many important differences.

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## Good people practice, is a combination of:

1. **Policy** – What you will do.
2. **Processes** – The systems to meet your policy.
3. **Practices** – How you implement the processes, how you interact everyday (Leadership).

The combination of policy, process and practice will result in a unique culture for your organisation. Every organisation will have a culture - creating a good culture is not an accident, it is the result of careful alignment of values with organisational practice.

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## 1. Policy

Included in your organisational policies should be a minimum of the following people-related policies:

1. **Recruitment and Induction.**
2. **Learning and personal development.**
3. **Health and safety.**
4. **Communication.**
5. **Code of conduct (values, moral and legal responsibility)**

Staff and volunteers need to know how you view these aspects of the employment relationship. It is important that your policy reflects what you are actually going to do, and not a generic “feel good” policy that you then ignore. Think about what you stand for as an organisation, how you want your staff and volunteers to feel about working for you, and what you want to be held accountable for.

## 2. Processes

Processes and systems are important in an organisation as they provide consistency and clarity about how things are done. Processes will also ensure that you comply with legislation.

You must have an employment agreement for paid employees which complies with legislation. It is a good idea to seek advice about your employment agreements, and to review them regularly to ensure they are current with legislation. The New Zealand at Work website does have an employment agreement builder that will help with mandatory clauses, however, your agreement must also accurately reflect your workplace and your practices. Expert advice from an employment lawyer or HR advisor will help you to get it right.

### You should document systems to cover:

- Recruitment processes, including orientation
- All types of leave
- Training and development
- Performance review
- Processes that occur on resignation
- Processes related to conduct (privacy, confidentiality, social media, computer use, dress code).

## 3. Practices

How you do things in your organisation is the critical aspect of developing a good culture. The practices are how you interact with your staff, your clients, and your stakeholders every day. They are the visible demonstration of your values and therefore your culture. When assessing the practices of your organisation it is truly the little things that count.

Staff and volunteers notice how you talk to each other, how you talk to them. They know when their opinions are valued, and when they are not. They understand integrity, trust, openness and honesty when they see it (or when they don't). Every action of the leadership team will be open for interpretation. What you do and how you do it is important.

### When determining how you do things consider the following:

- Values
- Communication
- Valuing the staff and volunteers
- Leadership accessibility
- Decision-making.

## Culture

Every organisation has a culture. Strong cultures are very powerful in determining how an organisation proceeds. Not all strong cultures are "good" cultures. A culture is developed from values, the policy and structures that are in place, the systems that control how work occurs, the stories that are told, the rituals that are observed and the values that are visibly demonstrated. Developing the culture that works best for an organisation is a long process.

## Managing volunteers

To develop a team of loyal volunteers it is important that they are valued and treated in the same way you treat your staff.

### It is a good idea to have:

- A role description with expectations for attendance and performance
- Orientation process covering Health and Safety
- Regular communication, including opportunity to get feedback from volunteers
- Oversight and supervision of their activities
- Recognition and reward for work well done
- Training opportunities as appropriate
- Clear pathway, for them to talk to someone if required.

### MORE INFO



CommunityNet Aotearoa

[community.net.nz](http://community.net.nz)

New Zealand at work

[employment.govt.nz](http://employment.govt.nz)

Volunteering NZ

[volunteeringnz.org.nz](http://volunteeringnz.org.nz)