

# New Zealand Post Management Excellence Awards

*“New Zealand Post People Management Award”*  
‘t3 (triple T)’



### *t3– Third Thursday Thinkers*

## **The need for and expected benefits of the project and how it furthers the council’s vision and strategic direction (15 points)**

### **The project:**

You may be forgiven for thinking that ‘t3 or triple T’ is an alcoholic beverage – t3 has in fact nothing to do with consumption of alcohol, although the heart warming feelings one receives as a result of t3 activities could be likened to those experienced when sipping a good malt whiskey!

### **Need for the project:**

t3 stands for ‘Third Thursday Thinkers’. Established 4 years ago, t3 is a gregarious group of staff members who take it upon themselves to inject fun into the Manawatu District Council. t3 members meet on every third Thursday of the month to brainstorm ideas and plan fun events for the organisation and, on occasion, review operational matters. It is a wonderfully simple concept that enhances the Council’s working environment and enables employees to develop their full potential in the following ways:

<b><i>Need</i></b>	<b><i>Actions</i></b>
Fun in the workplace	Provision of events and activities that are enjoyable and fun and allow staff to participate at their own levels.
To proactively maintain an organisational culture that enhances the staff’s sense of wellbeing and work life balance	Provide opportunities for staff to enjoy, interact and participate in a range of fun informal events and activities.
Plan and organise events and activities and review operational matters	t3 members meet on a regular basis and events are supported by Management Team. Successful reviews of reception area, staff cafeteria and corporate uniform.
Informal interaction across the entire organisation	The majority of staff participate in and enjoy events.
Demonstrate to MDC customers that the Council actively participates in the community	t3 events tie in with those being held in the community i.e. Lions Rugby Tour, Garden Festival, Rural Day etc.

**Effective project management techniques (15 points)**

Technique	Description
Sharing the vision	t3 members have a clear understanding of the role of t3 which is effectively demonstrated through discussion, decisions and actions.
Creating the environment	Planning meetings are fun and friendly yet focused and effective.
Cross divisional membership	Not necessarily representative. Divisions may have more than one member belonging to t3, broadening the opportunity to be involved.
Gain buy-in from Management Team	The t3 forum and events are supported and endorsed by the Senior Management Team (see Appendix 1).
Appoint one key point of liaison	Janine Hawthorn volunteered to be t3 facilitator. She is committed and enthusiastic and effectively keeps the t3 group 'on track'.
Evaluation	Evaluations are conducted organisation-wide after t3 events to provide members with feedback.
Effective participation	The structure of t3 is flat; members are considered and contribute as equals.
Effective communication	Events are well communicated through the organisation.

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**A participatory approach to communicating with and getting ‘buy in’ from stakeholders associated with the project (15 points)**

Stakeholder	Buy-in	Communication
t3 members	The structure of t3 is flat; members are considered and contribute as equals. Job titles do not exist.	Decisions from meetings are distributed to staff. t3 has an open membership, staff are welcome to join.
Management Team	Management Team actively supports t3 events and encourages and provides its members to attend events.	t3 representatives attend Management Team meetings to communicate ideas for events and activities and gain endorsement. Management Team draws upon the skills of t3 to gain feedback from other staff when reviewing operational matters.
Staff	Questionnaires are circulated asking staff to indicate which events they prefer. Evaluations are completed after t3 events. t3 ensures that staff perspective is gathered and included in the review of operational policy.	Event surveys, evaluation and policy review results are communicated amongst staff members.

**Innovation and originality in the specific award category areas (25 points)**

t3 is a forum that adds value to the organisation by providing:

- a forum where staff can freely exercise innovation and wild creativity and put these skills into action through planning and organising events and activities for the organisation

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- a forum that reviews operational policy i.e. Corporate Uniform, Upgrade of Reception Area and Staff Café
- interaction with each other in fun, informal opportunities. This further enhances interpersonal and communication skills across divisions leading to a more cohesive, optimistic organisation. It also enhances the degree of job satisfaction and sense of belonging for individual staff members.
- linkages between t3 events and community occasions. This demonstrates to the public that the Council is very much a part of the community.

## **Successful results, in both financial and non-financial terms (15 points)**

### **Financial**

- Minimal cost involved – only the time spent by staff and minimal materials required for events (most materials donated).

### **Non-Financial**

For t3 members:

- t3 members are excited and feel positive about being involved with the planning and organisation of events.
- The structure of t3 is flat; members are considered and contribute as equals. Employees are empowered to organise fun events for their fellow colleagues.
- The t3 forum is an opportunity for members to exercise skills and strengths not necessarily required in their day-to-day positions.
- t3 members are considered as role models responsible for demonstrating fun and participation in extra curricular activities in the workplace.

For the organisation:

- The t3 forum enables the organisation to demonstrate that skills other than those necessarily required for positions held are recognised, valued and fostered.
- A real strength is involving all staff members including those that physically work outside of the main Council building i.e. District Library, Makino Aquatic Centre and Sewerage Treatment Plant.
- Cross divisional membership enables relationships to be built across the organisation, reducing the potential of creating silos.
- Effective forum for the sharing of good ideas.
- Interacting with each in fun, informal opportunities further enhances interpersonal and communication skills across divisions leading to a more cohesive, optimistic organisation.
- Increased productivity.
- Higher levels of job satisfaction.

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- Enhanced sense of belonging and well-being.
- Effectively contributes toward achieving the work-life balance.
- The concept is transferable to other local authorities.

For Manawatu District Council Customers:

- Positive culture
- Fun reception area
- Getting behind community activities eg welcoming British and Irish Lions Rugby Team supporters to town

### **That the project was a ‘good, sensible and right thing to do’ (15 points)**

See **Appendix 1** for letter of support from Rod Titcombe, Chief Executive.

“Of those three adjectives, good and right are part of the Triple T philosophy – but sensible??.... never!!!”

*Lorraine Vincent, Community Services Manager*

“Thoroughly enjoy the activities – it’s a good way to interact/team build with the other colleagues that you usually don’t have much to do with.”

*Sarah Anderton, Administration Officer*

“It’s a great forum to be involved in – it’s an opportunity to get the creative juices flowing and organise some fun times for our fellow colleagues.”

*Tracey Hunt, Community Development Officer*

“One thing that I’ve noticed about the success of t3 is the innovation of our Staff members. What other Council Chamber in New Zealand would be able to transform into an Equestrian arena on “Olympics Day” not to mention a rugby changing shed to the front reception area. We also have brought Staff’s hidden talent to the fore with cakes that look like a road construction site, scones that would have food critics wondering what the secret ingredient is and then we have the saucer competition. In general, we’re not only there to bring fun and humour into the workplace but to find those hidden talents.”

*Janine Hawthorn, Committee Secretary*

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**APPENDIX 1**



15 July 2005

**TO THE MANAWATU DISTRICT COUNCIL TRIPLE T TEAM**

One of most satisfying aspects of my job as Chief Executive of Manawatu District Council has been that over the past few years staff have motivated themselves to have fun, whilst maintaining a responsible and professional approach to their respective positions.

The Triple T team is an good example of this. The team regularly comes up with interesting and appropriate schemes to help staff get to know each other, work as one organisational team and, most importantly, enjoy themselves. There have been a number of occasions where I have been surprised at the lateral thinking of the group and, despite doubts sometimes, the way the team has made things work.

My thanks and support go to you for the way in which you brighten the organisation.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rod Titcombe".

Rod Titcombe  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**LIST OF ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY T3 IN PAST TWO YEARS:**

- Sand Saucer Competition
- MDC 15<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations
- Rugby World Cup
- British and Irish Lions Tour
- Orienteering Team Building Exercise
- Cake Making Competition
- Olympics Day
- Rural Day
- Daffodil Day
- Storytelling Evening
- Scone Bake Out

