



Te Kaunihera o
MANUKAU
City Council

PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Pacific Connections



**knowledge and
understanding**

Knowledge and Understanding, Achievement, Accountability



Fala Pasefika - Pacific Connections

A resource to help Council staff improve their awareness and understanding of their Pacific Island colleagues and community.

Kia orana, fakaalofa atu ki a mutolu, talofa, taloha ni, malo e lelei'

The need for and expected benefits of the project and how it furthers the council's vision and strategic direction

Fala Pasefika is a Pacific Island support network established in 2002. It aims to help Pacific staff fulfil personal and professional aspirations to become more effective and efficient employees who contribute positively to the Manukau community. Two core objectives are to provide a support network for Pacific staff within Manukau City Council and to assist the Human Resources unit and Council management with issues and initiatives affecting Pacific staff.

Pacific Peoples² is the second largest ethnic group in Manukau, making up 27% of our population. Manukau is numerically the capital of Pacific Peoples in the country with over 72,000 (over 31% of national total) of our residents identifying themselves of Pacific descent.

Manukau City Council employs 184 Pacific People as permanent staff - 11% of our total workforce. They are largely front-line employees delivering services in libraries, recreation centres, parks, customer services and general administration. Interestingly, Pacific staff holding management positions in the organisation can be counted on one hand.

These statistics highlight the need for targeted initiatives for Pacific staff's career development and promotion opportunities. Council is committed to retaining Pacific staff with proactive measures to address future retention and advancement. Effective measures to address these issues must have direct involvement of the Pacific staff whose responses, behaviour and attitudes will ultimately determine the success of any project.

Consultation is a prerequisite for good and smoothly implemented policy-making. Good consultation with Pacific Peoples (internal and external to Council) involves the creation and the maintenance of relationships. It involves an investment at the outset on the part of non-Pacific staff in understanding Pacific sensitivities and cultural norms.

Council and Fala Pasefika wish to support and strengthen these relationships between Pacific and non-Pacific staff, and between staff and the Pacific community. It was with this in mind that the "Pacific Connections" resource booklet (see appendix) was developed.

Pacific Connections is designed to be both a practical and educational tool for staff to use in the workplace. It has been a collective effort to ensure it reflects the common as well as distinct cultural values, practices and opinions of the various Pacific cultures which make up Pacific Island staff - Fala Pasefika.

"Excellent book. Very easy to use and has very valuable information. I wish there was something like this around when I was doing performance management with my Pacific Island staff"

**- Process Champion,
Environmental Services**

¹ Pacific greetings in the written languages of the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau and Tonga.

² The term "Pacific Peoples" is used by Council to encompass a diverse range of peoples from the South Pacific region. It does not refer to a single ethnicity, nationality or culture. Hence the use of "peoples" rather than "people" in this document.



Effective project management techniques

Fala Pasefika is sponsored by the Chief Executive, with reporting/operational sponsorship to the Director of City Services.

Fala Pasefika is run by a staff-elected committee with agendas and minutes. Sub-groups have been set up to plan and run initiatives in the areas of:

- ▶ strategic (the Pacific Connections project team was driven by key members in this sub-group)
- ▶ events
- ▶ human resources
- ▶ health and wellbeing
- ▶ communications.

The Committee meets on the first Wednesday of each month and holds quarterly meetings for the whole network.

Development of the tool kit occurred over 18 months using a consultative process. An external consultant was formally contracted to review literature, interview staff/management and gather information for the document.

The project outline and timelines were developed with a completion date set. Regular project monitoring meetings were held to review work in progress and compliance with budget, timelines, and quality standards. Weekly updates were provided to the staff working group by email.

The project team met regularly over an 18 month period, and reported quarterly to both the Pacific Island Advisory Committee (PIAC) and the Director of City Services. Attendance at meetings averaged 8-12 people.

A half day facilitated workshop enabled the completion of content.

The Project Team and a subcommittee of PIAC met monthly in the final three months to refine the content and images used in the document.

A participatory approach to communicating with and getting buy in from stakeholders associated with the project

Planning was undertaken to identify need and key stakeholders.

Before any official meetings were organised, key stakeholders were informally approached to obtain their understanding and "buy-in" to the process and ultimately to a final product. A relationship was important at the outset to ensure the success of the project, a relationship between Manukau City Council's Pacific peoples and PIAC - our Pacific community elders and leaders. The Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs also gave consultation guidance at the beginning of the project.

A Fala Pasefika Project Team was established, made up of representatives from a wide range of Pacific staff across council. It was important to ensure all participants in the Project Team felt able to contribute. A supportive environment included using the first meetings to allow people to "tell their stories", and opening and closing meetings with different cultural protocols e.g. lotu/pur'e-prayer in different Pacific languages.

Research was undertaken to identify Pacific staff barriers to participation in Council and non-Pacific staff were asked what information/assistance they would like from such a resource. Interviews and meetings were then conducted with staff and management.


"I took six copies of Pacific Connections to my Intercultural Communications class at Manukau Institute of Technology to give out as part of a presentation I was giving on Pacific Cultures. They were blown away by it. The other ten members of my class have requested a copy of the brochure as it is a really great summary of the basic tools necessary to achieve effective inter-cultural communication."

- Communications Advisor

"Professional presentation, bright colourful theme, good layout and graphics, and interesting insight!" -

Procurement Administrator





The Project Team and PIAC endorsed the draft for staff consultation. Specific consultations included:

- ▶ Chief Executive
- ▶ Director City Services
- ▶ Specific Council Units: Environmental Services, Human Resources, Customer Services, Policy Planners, Service Delivery, Strategic Unit
- ▶ Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs
- ▶ Pacific Island Advisory Committee for liaison, input and endorsement
- ▶ Fala Pasefika Network members via a series of emails, meetings and half day workshop to finalise content
- ▶ Council's Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi) team to ensure the documents stated a relationship to honour and uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi Charter
- ▶ Te Whanau Awhina (Maori staff network) - in respect of the only other staff support network in Council
- ▶ Selected community leaders.

In total approximately 150 people have contributed to the development of Pacific Connections.

The final draft went to the Chief Executive and Council's Organisational Development Team for acceptance and launch.

The document was translated and validated by Pacific staff and members of PIAC. Three hundred copies were distributed on the day of the launch to Council libraries, Community and Leisure centres, Policy staff, Customer Service Centres, Human Resources and other units of Council.

Innovation and originality

Never before had such a resource existed in Council. The resource kit "Pacific Connections" is an easy to read guide that contains a broad overview on Pacific Island cultures and information on:

1. The 'Island Way'
 - religion
 - family
 - education
 - respect
 - food
 - hospitality
 - giving
 - dress
 - humility
 - pride
 - service.
2. Communication
 - vehicles for communication
 - language difficulties
 - communicating with customers
 - holding meetings/workshops
 - meeting protocols
 - communication etiquette - some do's and don'ts
3. Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs' Public Consultation Guidelines

An excellent document outlining "the island way", which enables communication between the diverse cultures in Manukau to become even more open. Its a very readable document and its simplicity enables it to be an easy to use.

Awesome resource for everyone and very valuable to my team who not only deal with diverse cultures on a daily basis, but are also a diverse team within themselves - so reading this document helps them know why some people work the way they do.

Once again a fantastic job done by YOU and your team - Leisa





**“Pacific Connections has been wonderful in building a bridge of understanding between New Zealand’s cultures. A step towards a truly multi-cultural Council.” - Kenneth Tuai
- Assistant Resource Management Planner**

4. In the Workplace
 - leadership
 - self-promotion
 - discipline
 - conflict management
 - team work
 - younger staff members
 - barriers
5. Pacific Diversity
 - Cook Islands
 - Fiji
 - Niue
 - Samoa
 - Tokelau
 - Tonga
 - Tuvalu
6. Pacific Salutations (written and oral, formal and informal uses)

Much of Pacific Connections would be relevant for Pacific Island staff and communities across New Zealand. It is a resource that could easily be adapted and adopted as a staff resource by councils around the country.

Successful results


Pacific Connections was launched in March 2005.

The project has brought Council, staff and the Pacific Island Advisory Committee closer together, particularly in regard to PIAC’s role of supporting Pacific staff development.

Pacific employees have acknowledged that this project has demonstrated the organisation’s commitment to valuing the unique contributions Pacific staff make to the success of the organisation. Feedback from Pacific staff includes:

- ▶ “Pacific Connections is an excellent tool for sharing knowledge we each have. ...seeing through the eyes of another (PI) is how we achieve goals”....“Pacific Connections encourages achievement because we are aware of each others unique differences - an inspiring booklet which connects me with other PI’s and assists me in my journey to achieve high.....” mata ke lungu - meaning eyes to the heavens. Eddie Sofele - Call Centre Representative.
- ▶ “The value of Pacific Connections is that it reflects our community identity and acts as a visual metaphor for future partnership and success” - Itty Nikolau - Manager Nathan Homestead
- ▶ “A good start to a long journey... lets take what we know and share this with those who want to know.” Rouruina Brown - Howick Community Advisor
- ▶ “Pacific Connections can assist Team Leaders and Managers when dealing with the staff appraisal process. No more negative assumptions as to why Pacific Peoples do not promote themselves or appear confident in formal situations, Pacific Connections articulates well the reasons. I believe that the guide will be beneficial to staff and could be the start for other diverse cultures within Council to have their respective guides developed.” Waitangi Mika - Manager of Moana-Nui-a-Kiwa Leisure Centre





The project has been a proactive measure by the organisation to address future retention and advancement of Pacific staff. A key area of non financial success has been in the development of individual project team members, "it was a great opportunity for me as a Pacific staff member to be part of this work of developing a strategic resource which aims to ultimately serve Pacific staff and Pacific communities as a whole"... "I have valued the experience and skills I have developed from being involved in this project".

Opportunities have been provided for staff to celebrate their language and cultures, and to mix with other networks.

There has been an extremely high demand for the document from non-Pacific staff. Unsolicited and excellent feedback from staff and managers has been received:

- ▶ "From my perspective as a manager, as well as needing to interact with PI staff and communities, it will provide guidance and be an excellent resource." - Manager Business Performance.
- ▶ (For further examples see quote boxes).

The project has initiated meetings between the Human Resources unit and Fala Pasefika to further explore the issues raised in regard to performance reviews and barriers to participation and performance.

There has also been a high level of interest from external organisations: Porirua City Council, Manukau Institute of Technology, Pacific Heart Foundation, Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, Housing New Zealand, and ALAC.

The project was a 'good, sensible and right thing to do'

The Pacific Connections project was Council's practical response to improving communication between Pacific and non-Pacific staff.

Pacific staff make up 11% of Council employees and are under-represented in management and strategic positions. Pacific Connections aims to give guidance to managers (and staff) in ways of assisting these staff to improve their professional and personal effectiveness. It provides real examples of barriers that stop Pacific staff from participating to their fullest in the workplace, and gives suggestions on ways managers and colleagues can help address these.

While the document is first and foremost for staff, given the fact that Pacific Peoples comprise a large part of the Manukau community, its benefits will reach far beyond the walls of Council. The development of the Pacific Connections resource guide was also Council's practical response to the demographic reality of Manukau City.

Much of Council's work is in development of policy and projects that require community buy-in and consultation. For some non-Pacific Island staff, who to consult with and how are daunting questions. Therefore, the resource booklet also has an external focus, giving guidance on consulting with Pacific communities, meeting protocols, communication vehicles and etiquette.

Council staff across a wide range of service areas have been asking for a resource of this type for some time. The development of Pacific Connections now gives them a starting point in helping their understanding about our significant communities.

"Pacific Connections [is] an excellent guiding document for staff. Congratulations on producing such a high-quality and thoroughly useful document."
- Learning & Development Manager, Human Resources

"It's a guideline [to help answer] questions that even I, as a Pacific Islander, cannot answer." Elizabeth Rakoia - Management Support Administrator





APPENDIX:

01 Pacific Connections Resource Booklet

