

2015 Toyota Work Inspiration Pilot – Case Study

Pilot background

Work Inspiration is an interactive work exploration model for school students and employers. The model aims to make young peoples' first experience in the workplace more meaningful and inspirational in order to raise their ambitions and aspirations. Work Inspiration is an employer-led initiative, offering an opportunity for students to learn about employment in a way that is unique from other, more traditional, work placement opportunities.

In 2015, Careers New Zealand (CNZ) acquired the licence to deliver the Work Inspiration programme in New Zealand. In preparation for rolling out the programme across the country, CNZ successfully trialled the approach with businesses in Christchurch and Wellington. For the final pilot of the programme, CNZ worked with Toyota New Zealand Motors Head Office to deliver Work Inspiration in Auckland. Toyota Manukau was approached and agreed to take part in the pilot. Papatoetoe High School agreed for their students to participate in the pilot, with fourteen of their students participating. Through the pilot programme, Toyota Manukau provided opportunities for the young people to learn about different employment opportunities in the Toyota Dealership and in the Parts and Services department.

The programme

Students interested in participating were asked to complete an application form, explaining their reasons for wanting to be a part of the programme and some information such as their hobbies, sports and other interests. All of those students who applied were accepted.

The Toyota Work Inspiration pilot took place over three days and included various activities and resources. All students received the Work Inspiration toolkit¹, a collection of workbooks which provided guidance for the placement as a whole as well as exercises for students to complete. The delivery was led by Toyota staff, with support from CNZ. As part of the programme, the students interviewed various staff members from across the organisation to learn about their individual career journeys. The Chief Executive took part by providing additional interactive sessions for the students on developing CVs and interview skills. At the end of the project, each student gave a presentation to the other participants, their families, the participating CNZ staff, as well as their school careers advisor and employers. Toyota gave the topic for the presentation focus on how purchasing cars in the future may be different from how people purchase cars today.

¹ The workbooks were: Insight 1, Insight 2, Insight 3, and a student placement book

Key Successes of the Toyota Work Inspiration Pilot

Allen + Clarke² were contracted to undertake an evaluation of the pilot to identify what worked well in the Toyota Work Inspiration Pilot to inform and support the nationwide rollout of the programme. Key successes of the pilot were:

Students developed confidence

The participating students developed more confidence by being exposed to the real world of work, interacting with Toyota staff including the Chief Executive, and delivering their presentations to adults at the end of the Work Inspiration placement. The confidence they built supported them to engage in a group environment, to discover their strengths and improve their understanding of self. Employees, parents and careers advisors also noticed students' confidence develop over the Work Inspiration experience.

"In the end I was proud of myself as I was able to present in front of people and I could tell I was more confident as I was able to ask questions and suggest ideas." – Participating student

Students learned about working in an organisation

By being in the work environment, rotating in groups around the different departments and being exposed to different roles the students gained a deeper understanding about working in a varied organisation. They learned the roles and responsibilities of different staff, from sales and accounting to motor services and management. They were able to ask questions of Toyota staff to further their understanding.

"I learnt about the different roles as we were touring around the different departments, like fixing the cars and the finance accounting people. This opened my eyes and that they are the people that make the business grow successfully. It gave me a clear understanding of what the different roles are and how they contribute overall." – Participating student

Students learned about themselves enabling meaningful career-related choices

Students' engagement with the Work Inspiration Pilot supported their understanding of careers, including specific roles within the business, such as accounting. For some young people the pilot helped fuel their existing interest in the motor industry, all participants gained a better understanding of the industry. The programme helped students learn about themselves, becoming more aware of professional work preferences and understanding how these preferences could be reflected in their career choices. Interviewing staff at Toyota supported students' understanding and acceptance of the various pathways to success.

² Allen and Clarke Policy and Regulatory Specialists Limited, trading as *Allen + Clarke*

Employers and teachers recognised the value in exposing students to different roles as a learning experience, which is particularly important when choosing subjects for their future.

“I felt like a different person because I got the opportunity to identify the real me.” – Participating student

Local business created meaningful engagement with local young people

Over the course of the programme, the students’ engagement with Work Inspiration increased. They started the programme a bit nervous and apprehensive, but by the end of the programme they were actively asking questions of staff, involved in the activities and growing as a result. The students were very interested in exploring the Parts and Services department and being led in a discussion about car engines while looking under the bonnet of a hybrid car. Because of the high levels of engagement of the young people it was easy for the participating staff at Toyota to develop an appreciation for their role in the pilot. The employees also gained an appreciation of their part in the wider organization, in seeing how their work links with the wider success of the company.

“[The CEO] closed the bonnet and then there was just this high level of talk and hype around this that to me that it is a very good indication that it has been taken to the next level.” – Participating teacher

The organisation better understands future needs

The Work Inspiration programme supported Toyota to better understand future need, by enabling them to select a presentation topic specific to the company. Toyota recognised that understanding future needs is key to business success. Both Toyota staff and school staff saw the Work Inspiration experience as a good way to provide Toyota with a greater understanding of how their future buyers may like to purchase cars. Some students also identified specific roles within the organisation that they wanted to pursue; these students may represent Toyota’s future staff, highlighting the potential attributes of future employees.