

Results that 'exceed expectations'

CASE STUDY - VILLAGE AT THE PARK

When Village at the Park's General Manager talks about the many improvements that working with Aspire2 Business | Workplace Communication has made to the business and its staff, she has the stats to back it up.

Village at the Park, a retirement village and care centre for older citizens, has worked with Aspire2 Business | Workplace Communication for three years. General Manager Mary Leighton says results have "exceeded expectations."

Tackling the language barrier

The state-of-the-art care centre in central Wellington offers independent living options as well as a high-level care facility and dementia unit for its residents. Eighty percent of staff come from overseas (encompassing 19 different ethnic groups) so many have English as a second language.

To help address the literacy, numeracy and communication challenges they were experiencing, Mary turned to Aspire2 Business | Workplace Communication.

When Aspire2 Business | Workplace Communication first came on board, says Mary, they assessed both the needs of the company and those of the staff in each area – nursing, house-keeping and laundry.

Mary says Aspire2 Business | Workplace Communication's training started by focusing on staff not fully understanding policies, vision and values.

"Aspire2 Business | Workplace Communication addressed these issues through their training programme, writing policies that helped embed understanding of key practices, like health and safety requirements, into the behaviour of our people."

Building stronger connections through communication

In the second year of working with Village at the Park, Aspire2 Business | Workplace Communication provided a more tailored education package for staff and assigned a Key Account Manager to ensure the changing needs of the business were met. The outcomes have been impressive, with Mary citing greater confidence amongst staff across the board.

"Before the training, many of our staff were an invisible presence at meetings and in the workplace as a whole. Now they talk more confidently with each other and their leaders, and they've learnt to become more reflective in how they react to situations," she says.

"Plus, perhaps most importantly, they've learnt the language skills that allow them to build a stronger connection with residents."

Mary says, along with verbal communication skills, staff have learnt how to be conscious listeners and to read non-verbal clues when interacting with residents.

"Many of our staff come from the more technology-focused generations, so the training has helped teach them how to really engage with someone face-to-face, which is so important."

Positive outcomes

Mary lists a number of positive changes from their three years working with Aspire2 Business | Workplace Communication, including:

- An improvement in completion of tasks in a more timely manner and to a higher standard
- A drop in staff exits from 56% three years ago to 18% this year
- 50% increase in hazard reporting through increased awareness
- 25% reduction in incidents in the workplace
- 30% increase in staff attendance at staff meetings
- 95-97% compliance with internal quality audits
- Higher staff satisfaction rates and more positive interaction in break times
- Higher percentage of staff involved in voluntary education opportunities, and
- A reduction in the number of both formal and informal staff issues.

Mary says this year; there have been no performance management issues.

“We’ve also had high resident satisfaction noted and increasingly positive feedback from both the residents themselves and their families. Overall, it is a much safer and tidier environment, with a very high standard of presentation.”

Taking ownership

Mary says it’s also been pleasing to see staff take ownership of their respective areas and embrace cultural diversity, by organising special activities and celebrating days of cultural significance amongst themselves and with the residents.

This increased confidence amongst the staff, and their ability and desire to lead and plan to a greater degree within their areas, has allowed Mary to step back from the day-to-day management that was previously taking up a lot of her time, and focus on growing the centre.

“In the last three years, thanks to initiatives like Aspire2 Business | Workplace Communication’s training programme, we’ve seen many significant and positive changes take place across the business, from our productivity to education, right through to marketing.”

“They’ve really helped to take us to the next level.”

Developing career pathways

Thanks to the success of the training programmes and resulting staff development, Village at the Park has implemented a career-development pathway for staff, which includes a graduation ceremony.

“Implementing the training was a big commitment from our business, but the results have exceeded my expectations this year and our directors are very pleased.”

Benefits to Village at the Park so far:

- ✓ No performance management issues this year
- ✓ Increasingly positive feedback from residents and their families
- ✓ Staff are safer and happier and stay with the company longer
- ✓ Staff are keen to be involved in voluntary educational opportunities
- ✓ A decrease in the number of incidents in the workplace
- ✓ Greater understanding of health and safety requirements
- ✓ Staff more confident in team meetings and with residents and their families
- ✓ Staff taking ownership and extra pride in their work areas
- ✓ Building stronger connections with residents and their families