

Everyone works in the same way don't they?

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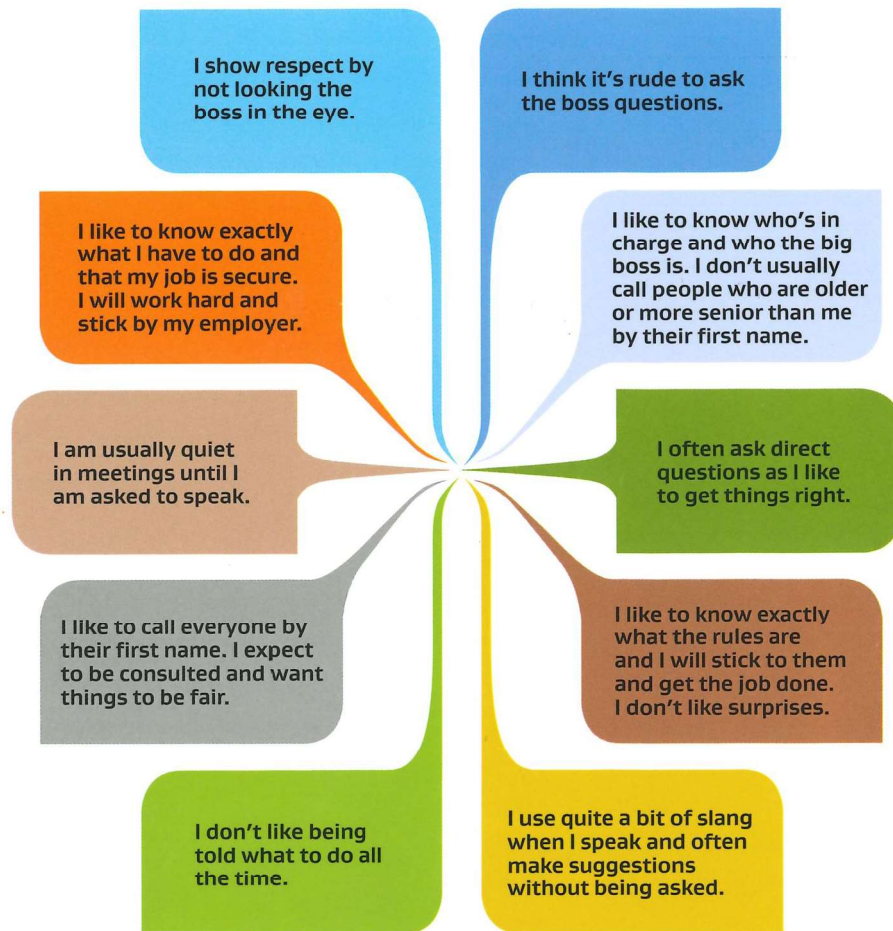
But why didn't he tell us that at the meeting?



Because he thinks he has to be asked before he can speak in a meeting.

Ever wondered why some of your migrant employees work differently from you?

Things employees from different cultures say about the way they work



What would you say about how you work?

Do you know what makes your migrant employees tick?

2

Carlos never looks that happy but clams up when I ask him if he's OK.

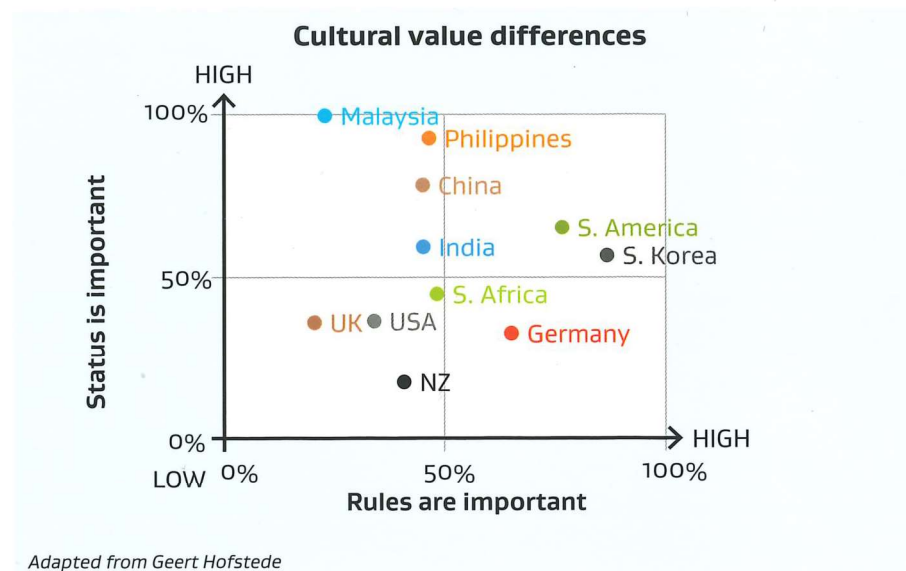


He'll talk to me. Do you want me to ask him?

Migrant employees come to New Zealand bringing different cultures with them.

Do these different cultures have an impact on your workplace?

Different people value different things. These values affect how people think and act in the workplace. Everyone in the workplace can benefit from knowing a little about these differences so they can work better together.



Kiwis place the lowest value on status, compared to people from the top 10 countries that provide migrants to New Zealand. What are the implications of this for your workplace?

Important: the chart is based on generalisations so please remember that people from the same culture can be different from each other.

Are you the right kind of boss for your new migrant employees?

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I'm part of the team



Adapted from Yang Lin

I expect to be obeyed



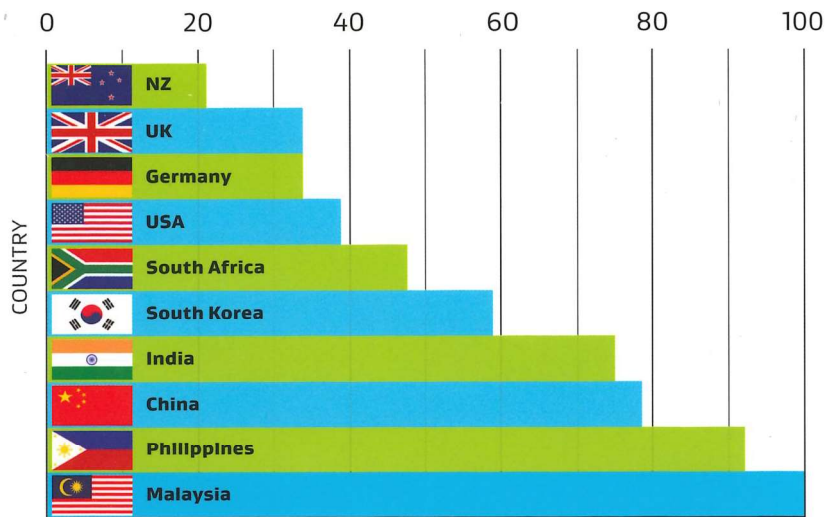
Work styles and management styles

Knowing about the work styles of different cultures can help you to better understand and supervise your migrant employees when they first arrive.

Cultural difference in management-style preferences

0 = LIKE TO BE LEFT TO GET ON WITH THE JOB

100 = LIKE TO BE TOLD EXACTLY WHAT TO DO



Adapted from Geert Hofstede



My new guys like to be told exactly what to do but I can't be there all the time. So, I wrote a detailed job description, with a list of tasks, so they knew what they had to do and could just get on with it.

Do your new migrant employees take ages to get the message?

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Kiwis have a strange accent and they speak so fast. It took me a few weeks to 'tune in'!

His accent was so strong when he first arrived. We thought his English wasn't up to the job, but we soon found out how wrong we were!



Is it because they can't understand what you're saying?

What about English language skills?

Kiwis use lots of informal language and slang at work. This makes it difficult for those new migrants who have learnt very formal English.

Just because someone has a strong accent it doesn't mean they have poor English skills or can't do the job.

Migrants want to do well and are keen to improve their performance. If their English language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) do need enhancing there are several ways that can be done.

Employers who invest in language training for their employees usually see noticeable improvements in productivity.



Visit www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/learnEnglish



TIPS

- › Slow down! Pause more.
- › Be very clear when giving instructions
- › Use simple direct language and explain workplace jargon
- › Provide important instructions in written form as well as spoken
- › Check understanding of instructions by asking your employee to repeat what they have to do: I ask them, "So, what are you going to do first?"
- › Get expert help if necessary – it really pays off

Workplace communication tips

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Getting things done: Requests and instructions at work

Why do some new migrants have problems with requests and instructions?

Many new migrant employees are used to a hierarchical workplace structure and managers who speak very directly. New Zealand managers, however, usually speak in a more respectful manner and make their instructions sound like requests rather than orders. It is common for New Zealand employers to use softeners such as:

Do you think you could bring me that file – rather than – ***Bring me that file***

It would be a good idea to add this section – rather than – ***Add this section***

Many migrants find these softened or tentative requests and instructions confusing and they are not exactly sure what is expected of them.

How can you make sure that a migrant employee has understood your instruction?

- › Avoid giving more than one instruction at a time.
- › Be clear about who is to do the task. Use “you” rather than “we” or “I” ***Could you find that file*** – rather than – ***We will need that file.***
- › Repeat or summarise the key points. Give the message at least twice and emphasise the most important details.
- › Avoid saying “Do you understand?” A new migrant employee might say “yes” to appear willing, capable and respectful but may not understand completely. Instead, check understanding by asking:

What will you do first?

What will you do if you have questions or problems?

Can you take me through things you have to do?

Fitting in: Being part of the team

Being able to communicate and interact with colleagues is one of the key aspects of fitting into a new team. Most new employees need to learn the style of inter-acting and communicating that is common in their new workplace.

This can be even more challenging for your new migrant employees who are trying to adapt to communication styles in a language that is not their mother tongue. Also, in some cultures small talk and developing personal relationships with workmates is not the norm.

How can you help new migrant employees to fit in?

- › Greet your new migrant employees in the morning, even if they do not respond at first. Remember even simple greetings and farewells may not be the norm for some migrants. They do not mean to be unfriendly they may just not be used to talking to superiors in an informal way.
- › Encourage your new migrants to join in the small talk at tea breaks and lunch breaks. Show an interest in their background and find out what they see as normal workplace behaviour.
- › If there is a lot of joking around in your workplace, include them in this. Again, this may not be something they are used to, but it is an important part of friendly behaviour in many New Zealand workplace teams.
- › Give new migrants time to adapt. For some new migrants even ways of showing interest such as nodding and saying “mm, yes,” when listening to someone are not usual. An attentive silence is considered respectful in many cultures.

Also, speaking up when making a contribution in a meeting is not the norm in some cultures. In China, for instance, you must always use a quiet voice when talking to a superior. Encourage your new migrant employees to speak up, like their workmates do, if they are very softly spoken.

Workplace communication tips

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Difficult talk at work: Refusing, disagreeing and complaining

In many cultures it is difficult to refuse your boss even if the request is beyond what is normally expected. Sometimes employees need to refuse, disagree or complain. Sometimes you want and expect other opinions and you need to know when there are potential problems.

Making refusals and disagreement possible:

When asking for something beyond what is normally expected, for example asking your new migrant employee to stay late, make sure they have no other commitments first eg ***What are your plans for this evening?***

If you do not prepare in this way for your request, they may not tell you that they have a family commitment or a ticket for a concert or movie.

When asking for feedback make it clear that you want to hear about any problems as well as about things that will work or that are going well. Ask: ***What changes would you suggest?***

What problems can you see?

Expressing refusals and disagreement:

New Zealanders tend to be very indirect and polite when they refuse, disagree and complain. While some new migrants find it difficult to speak out, others struggle to express refusals, disagreements and complaints in a suitably polite way.

Try not to react too negatively if disagreement is expressed directly or bluntly. Understand that learning to disagree less bluntly and to refuse and complain politely can take some time. Suggesting your new migrant employees read the other side of this card might help them with this.

Maybe we could: Suggestions and advice at work

In some cultures you only give your opinion or make suggestions when invited. In other cultures advice is expected and given at times when New Zealanders would not give advice. New migrants can be unsure when it is appropriate to give advice and opinions in New Zealand workplaces.

New Zealanders also often soften suggestions or opinions at work to avoid imposing their views too strongly on others and risking a relationship breakdown.

Some people use the same words when they are making a suggestion or expressing their opinion as when they are making a request or giving an instruction, eg ***I wonder if we could...***

New migrants may have difficulty understanding whether they have been given a suggestion rather than an instruction. They can also find it difficult to soften suggestions.

How can you help?

1. Directly ask new migrants for their opinions or suggestions if they do not contribute when you feel they have knowledge or expertise that is appropriate. Start with their name eg ***Cheung, do you have any suggestions about how we can do this?***
2. Understand that if they give advice too strongly or bluntly, they may just be having difficulty understanding what is appropriate. English courses often teach the use of "you should" for giving advice for example, but New Zealanders tend to avoid saying this as it is too strong and direct.
3. Make it clear when it is just a suggestion and not an instruction. Use phrases such as: ***this is just a suggestion, what do you think? or... can you think of another way we could do this?***

Have your migrant employees gone off the boil?

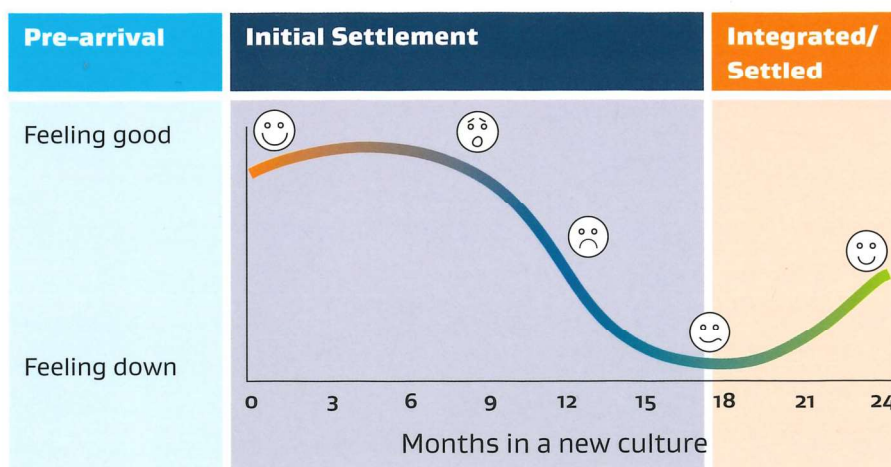
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Does it affect their work and your business?



Maybe it's because
they're having second thoughts.

It's quite common to feel like that – it's one of the settlement stages



All new migrants go through these settlement stages and some settle more quickly than others:

- ☺ Arriving in New Zealand, they feel excitement. Everything is so different and new. It's **FUN!**
- 😞 Then a bad experience may give them a **FRIGHT**. Living in another country is not as easy as they thought.
- ☹ They may **FEEL DOWN** (in a low mood) and feel very homesick. They may want to leave, or actually leave.
- ☺ Most will **FACE UP** to the challenges of a new country and you can provide support to help them achieve their goals.
- ☺ They can adjust and **FIT** into living here.

It will be easier if, before they come, they **PREPARE** for living and working in New Zealand. You can assist them with their research and make sure their hopes and plans are realistic!

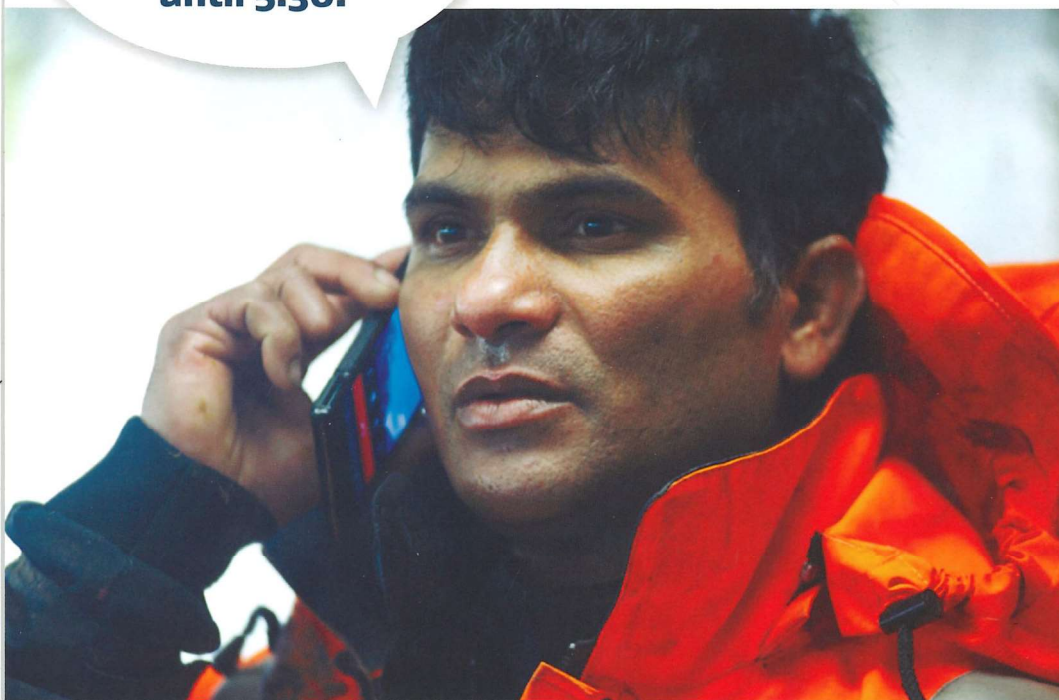
TIP

- › Offer support to your migrant employees and their families during the low period – it can make all the difference to their work.

Are your new migrant employees juggling too many things?

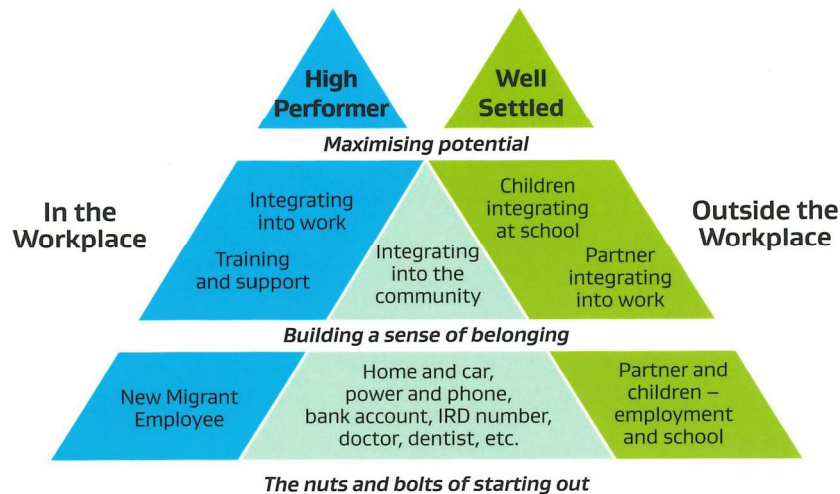
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**Do they really need
both our signatures?
I can't get away
until 5.30.**



Helping new migrants settle means they're able to perform well in your business, faster

THE WORKPLACE SETTLEMENT MODEL



Many new migrant employees have partners and families and need time at the beginning to organise the nuts and bolts of starting their new life in New Zealand.

Maintaining an interest in how a new migrant and their family are settling in will help them to perform well and help you to identify what kind of support, if any, they need along the way.



MY TIPS

- › A happy new migrant gives 100% to the business
- › A happy family means a happy new migrant
- › Organise some staff and family days to get everyone together
- › Set up a partners' network so the partners can support each other

How do other employers get the best from new migrant employees?

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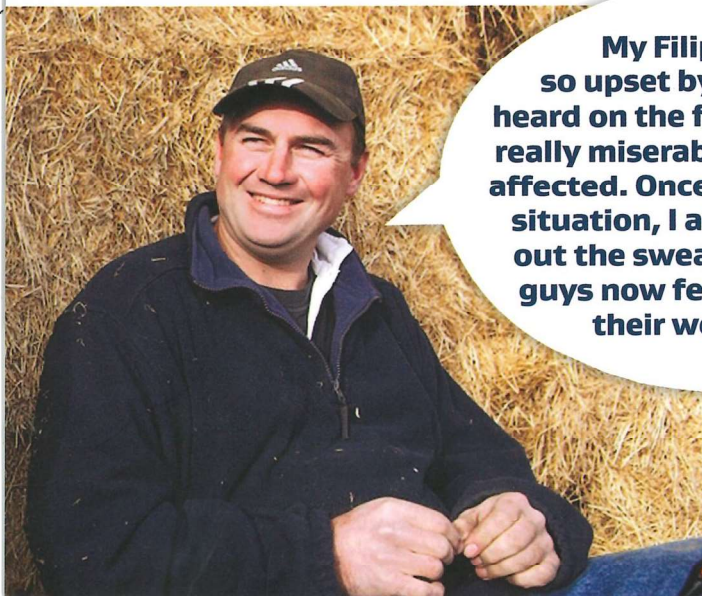
As with most of my new staff, I give migrants really clear instructions and close supervision to begin with.



TIPS

Try some of the following with your migrant employees:

- › Give them a 'buddy' to help with practical and cultural differences that come up every day.
- › Demonstrate how the task is done and then ask your employee to do it.
- › Ask about how things are done in their country.
- › Talk about the differences between NZ and their country.
- › Be open minded – there may be more than one effective way to do things.
- › Be tolerant of different styles of expression. Don't let unfamiliar body language get in the way of good work relations.
- › Allow time for both you and your migrant employee to adapt.
- › Try putting yourself in their shoes – how would you like to be treated if you worked in a different country?
- › Watch out for unexpected behaviour – it might be due to a cultural misunderstanding that you need to talk about.
- › Work out compromises or make changes where possible.



My Filipino guys were so upset by the swearing they heard on the farm that they became really miserable and their work was affected. Once I found out about the situation, I asked the Kiwis to cut out the swearing and the Filipino guys now feel much happier and their work's improved.

What's so strange about how Kiwis work?

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**In New Zealand workplaces we do things
differently from many other countries.
So what are we like?**

Kiwis at work

New migrant employees might find the Kiwi workplace very different from what they're used to. You may have to explain a few things.

Compared to workers from other parts of the world:

- › Kiwis expect everyone to be treated the same
- › Kiwis respect the boss but usually speak to him or her in an informal way
- › Kiwis like to work on their own without being closely supervised
- › Kiwis are willing to turn their hand to a range of tasks, not just those they were hired to do.



What else can you do?

- › Arrange for someone to act as a 'buddy'
- › Prepare a written job description or list of tasks and targets
- › Prepare written information about how you operate – staff structure and roles, lines of communication, hours of work, break times, use of internet etc
- › Prepare existing staff for the new migrant employee's arrival
- › Find out about the values and work styles of the new migrant employee's country
- › Find out how they prefer to be managed

Won't a buddy system for new migrant staff cost time and money?

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No. A buddy system saves time and money by getting new migrant employees up to speed faster.

It also helps iron out any small problems that come up along the way and gives new migrants someone to talk to.

What does a buddy do?

- › Explains how the business works
- › Explains the usual way of doing things in the workplace
- › Explains Kiwi slang
- › Answers questions
- › Gives moral support
- › Helps sort out any problems
- › Includes migrant in social activities
- › Learns about other cultures
- › Learns mentoring and leadership skills

How does this help?

- › Migrants understand workplace systems and culture better
- › They settle more quickly
- › They become more productive
- › They stay in your business

A good buddy is often one who has something in common with the new migrant employee – like children the same age or similar interests.

