



CHANGING UP
PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL COACH
UPPING YOUR GAME

NZ BUSINESS AND WORK CULTURE INTEGRATION

A quick reference guide to help build
confidence and success within the
Kiwi business and work culture.

Tracy Cousins – Director

M: 027 313 8352 | E: tracy@changingup.co.nz
[linkedin.com/company/changing-up-limited](https://www.linkedin.com/company/changing-up-limited)

changingup.co.nz

Like adding new colours to an existing palette, embracing another culture can only enrich what we already have. It broadens our perspective, strengthens our understanding, and enhances the value we bring. This helpful guide outlines how to start putting this into practice, both at work and in your community.

Professional and Workplace Integration

1. LEARN THE KIWI COMMUNICATION STYLE

- Be direct but polite. Kiwis value clear, respectful communication, not overly formal, yet not aggressive either.
- Avoid hierarchical language like “Sir” or “Madam.” Use first names, even for senior leaders.
- Ask clarifying questions; this shows engagement, not incompetence.

2. EMBRACE ACTIVE LISTENING AND COLLABORATION

- Meetings are usually collaborative; everyone is encouraged to share ideas.
- Silence is okay, don’t rush to fill gaps; Kiwis may be thinking.
- Learn to give and receive feedback tactfully and constructively.

3. UNDERSTAND KIWI WORK EXPECTATIONS

- Punctuality and self-direction are highly valued.
- Work-life balance matters; working long hours doesn’t necessarily equal success.
- Initiative and accountability are appreciated; own your tasks and be proactive.

4. OBSERVE AND ADAPT TO LOCAL WORK ETIQUETTE

- Dress codes vary but tend to be smart-casual unless corporate (e.g., banking/law).
- Don’t boast, humility is a strong Kiwi trait.
- Participate in team events like morning tea, shared lunches, or birthdays – it builds rapport.

5. UPSKILL IN LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

- Learn about NZ-specific regulations, standards, or frameworks relevant to your field (e.g., Health & Safety, Privacy Act, Te Tiriti o Waitangi awareness).
- Take a short course (e.g., from LinkedIn Learning, MBIE, or local libraries) to align with Kiwi ways of working.
- Consider joining professional bodies or industry associations.



UNDERSTANDING NZ COMPLIANCE & GOVERNANCE

- New Zealand’s work culture places strong emphasis on legal compliance, transparency, and personal responsibility. While some countries may be more relaxed in areas like health and safety or data use, NZ workplaces are governed by strict laws that all employees and employers must follow.
- **Key areas of focus include:**
 - **WorkSafe NZ** – Ensures every worker returns home healthy and safe. Understand your rights and responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. Visit WorkSafe NZ: <https://www.worksafe.govt.nz>
 - **Privacy Act 2020** – Governs how organisations must handle personal information, including collection, storage, use, and disclosure. Visit Privacy.org.nz: <https://www.privacy.org.nz>
- Compliance is not optional – it’s a cornerstone of how trust, fairness, and accountability are maintained in New Zealand workplaces.



Personal & Social Integration

6. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH KIWIS

- Say yes to invitations, even casual BBQs, local sports, or weekend hikes.
- Volunteer for local charities or community events (great for connections and understanding values).
- Join social groups (e.g., Meetup.com, sports clubs, parenting groups, Rotary, BNI, etc.)

7. IMPROVE EVERYDAY ENGLISH USE

- Kiwis use a lot of slang and idioms (“chocka”, “sweet as”, “no worries”) – try to learn and adapt.
- Watch Kiwi / English shows or listen to NZ podcasts/radio to become familiar with accents and expressions.
- Use English as your main language all day, even during breaks. This encourages thinking directly in English, reducing the habit of translating from your first language and improving fluency over time.

8. LEARN ABOUT MĀORI CULTURE AND TE REO

- Understand basic Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles – many employers expect at least an awareness.
- Learn simple greetings and tikanga (customs) – in government some like starting meetings with a mihi.

- Understanding the importance of whānau (family) and manaakitanga. (Hospitality, kindness, generosity, support, and care for others. It’s about showing respect, humility, and empathy, and making people feel welcome, valued, and safe, whether they are guests, whānau, or strangers.

9. EXPLORE YOUR LOCAL AREA

- Visit the local library, council events, or community centres – many offer free resources or workshops.
- Attend local festivals.

BONUS: CREATE A PERSONAL INTEGRATION PLAN

AREA	ACTION	FREQUENCY
Networking	Attend one industry event per month	Monthly
Community	Volunteer for a local group	Monthly
Communication	Practise local slang or small talk	Weekly
Cultural Learning	Read/watch something NZ-based	Weekly
Mentorship	Connect with a coach or career guide	Once-off or ongoing

Led by **Tracy Cousins** – an experienced career coach, mentor, and recruiter with over 35 years of commercial experience across multiple industries – *Changing Up* is here to help grow your success.

Whether it’s guidance through a career change, navigating a business restructure, or helping with recruitment, *Changing Up* has the experience and expertise to help you thrive.

Call or email us today to find out more.

Tracy Cousins – Director
M: 027 313 8352 | E: tracy@changingup.co.nz
[linkedin.com/company/changing-up-limited](https://www.linkedin.com/company/changing-up-limited)

changingup.co.nz