

# THE GREAT NEW ZEALAND EMPLOYMENT SURVEY<sup>20 13</sup>



The Great New Zealand Employment Survey  
2013

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# Contents

About the Survey .....	5
Executive Summary .....	7
Business and Economic Context.....	13
Leadership.....	19
Communication .....	23
Change and Performance.....	27
Diversity .....	31
Special Topic: Information Technology .....	33
Culture, Leadership and Results; the new survey construct.....	37
TGNZES Conclusions .....	49
Appendices .....	51
1. Survey demographics.....	52
2. Methodological approach .....	54
3. TGNZES Study Model 2013 .....	57
4. Overall Study Model.....	58
Bios of contributors.....	59
References.....	61
Acknowledgements .....	61

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# About the Survey

The annual *Great New Zealand Employment Survey (TGNZES)* began in 2009. It responded to a need to examine the employment relationship from both the manager and employee points of view in the New Zealand context. It also came from a desire to explore developments in key areas of practice to identify emerging trends over time. This approach is maintained in the 2013 survey, but both the research instrument and the presentation of the results have been refreshed, notably through the addition of new areas of focus.

This year we explore important areas such as organisational resilience and the influence of leadership style on job-related outcomes. We focus on the relationship between three important areas: leadership, organisational climates and employment-related outcomes. Leadership is explored in terms of participative, supportive and instrumental leadership styles. Organisational climate refers to the perceived culture of an organisation, which we examine in terms of resilience, communication and fun. Employment-related outcomes are actions and behaviours such as work engagement, job satisfaction, job performance, and turnover intentions.

Three other important issues are also specifically explored as part of this year's survey:

- employee happiness as a well-being outcome;
- the impact of technology on the changing face of the workplace; and
- perceptions of how important diversity management is in the workplace following a great response to this subject in last year's survey.

Individual businesses can and have undertaken the survey in house in a separate and tailored exercise as a way to understand their employment environment in a wider context than just engagement. Their results can be benchmarked against the national data or stand alone and can be completed at any time. Clients who have used it as their survey tool have reported useful insights to key areas of focus that support achievement of their strategic goals.

**Please note:** throughout the report, the responses collected from employers and managers are referred to as responses from **employers**. In addition, you will see components of the Study Model inserted and referred to throughout the report as they relate to findings and suggestions; see Figures 12 and 13 for the full models including their relativities. The model refers to organisational climates that form part of the culture of an organisation; such climates are communication, organisational resilience and fun workplace: and employment outcomes that are the results experienced from employee behaviour and activities; such outcomes are job performance, intention to leave, work engagement and job satisfaction.

# THE GREAT NEW ZEALAND EMPLOYMENT SURVEY<sup>2013</sup>

# Executive Summary

Reports of increased buoyancy in the business sector would lead one to assume that similar signs would emerge from this survey. And whilst some indicators show confidence in business and its ability to ride the wave, there are still signs that suggest lower confidence levels in the employment relationship among employees.

As one might anticipate, employers report significantly higher job outcomes<sup>1</sup> than employees across all outcomes (and lower turnover intentions), as shown by Table 1. Interestingly, job performance is most highly rated by employers and employees – despite mixed feelings overall about organisational performance in the current economic environment. Turnover intention is ranked lowest by employers and close to lowest among all the job outcomes by employees. This is good news and could be driven by a large number of factors such as a greater sense of engagement by employees with their current environment, employers having more challenging and fulfilling work, an increased capability of managers and leaders to get the most from their teams, the current climate not enticing people away or employers are driving the right behaviours, rewards and culture, enabling such results.

Our evidence shows that both groups report higher levels of work engagement and job satisfaction than indicated in previous years' surveys; and the results from our respondents also indicate that work engagement is likely to enhance job satisfaction and, in turn, that job satisfaction is the dominant predictor of turnover intentions.

**Table 1: Comparison, Job Outcomes by Employers and Employees**

Job Outcomes	Employers	Employees
Work Engagement	3.9	3.3
Turnover Intentions	2.3	2.9
Job Satisfaction	4.0	3.4
Job Performance	4.1	3.7
Happiness	3.9	3.6

Throughout this report, you will find evidence that employers still perceive the environment more favourably than employees overall. For example, 31% of employers and only 17% of employees suggested that their organisation will definitely replace staff if they leave in the coming six month period. A total of

<sup>1</sup> Job outcomes surveyed in TGNZES are: job performance, turnover intentions, work engagement, job satisfaction and happiness and are demonstrated in Figure 13

44% of employee respondents indicated that performance reviews are somewhat to fully utilised while 72% of employer respondents indicated the same. While some of this can be expected because of the role the employer undertakes, the significance of some of the gaps leads to some concern that there could be ignorance on the part of the employer in understanding the impact of their behaviour, actions and demands.

Because organisations are equipping themselves to weather the storm (in terms of market pressures, customer demands and increasing demand for higher value for lower cost), it seems from the survey data that they are building resilience from within that is supporting employees. We have found that a resilient organisation, and one that equips its employees with the tools to develop their own resilient capabilities, is able to benefit from a culture that allows for fun. This, in turn, influences the levels of work engagement, job satisfaction and overall happiness.

The core themes coming through from the results of the survey include:

### Cautious optimism

A sense of optimism is growing in relation to the business and economic context though employers are more positive than employees on various counts, including perceptions of organisational performance, and organisations appearing to behave cautiously in the context of a budding economic recovery;

### Performance is king

As might be expected, more employers than employees are positive about how well managers demonstrate an understanding of what is required of them though nearly three-quarters of employers and just over half of employees support overall leadership styles in their workplace. For employers, improvement is needed in the area of providing clarity of expectations, while for employees it concerns a need for inclusion, support and clarity as well as rewarding for performance;

While performance reviews were generally found to be important, many (particularly employees) do not believe that the information retrieved from the process is well used. This raises questions for employers (e.g. are managers well equipped to manage the performance review and management the process effectively?; how might employers encourage greater employee engagement with and expectations of the outcomes of this potentially valuable business tool?);

Key barriers to performance were found to include excess workload, ineffective leadership and internal conflict – as in 2012, factors that testify to heightened work demands, skills shortages and caution over recruitment. The identification of incentives and rewards for performance being absent from the workplace as a



barrier to performance shows a 'disconnect' between employer and employee views (see above) and that without due recognition for their contribution, employees' inclination to perform will be reduced;

### Communication is improving

Organisational communication appears to have improved from previous years, with employers and employees now more aligned in their thinking. However, there is still a need for more organisations to consider employees' ideas and to engage them more in decision-making, particularly in a context of increased reliance on innovation;

It emerged that an organisation's communications climate is a key contributor to an employee's intention to leave, level of work engagement and job performance. Therefore, achieving the right balance across these items is critical. Linked to this, trusted and credible leaders and support for employees are vital for encouraging their participation and capacity to meaningfully inform organisational decision-making;

### Development focus

With change management often touted as part-and-parcel of contemporary organisational life, it is encouraging to note the emphasis of the respondents on leadership and management development as likely priority areas in the coming year. Fitting with the cautiously optimistic approach outlined above, a widespread perception that reward and remuneration were considered least likely to receive attention suggests that organisations need to be sure of the intrinsic factors that are likely to motivate, engage, encourage best performance from and retain their staff;

### Lip Service

Diversity in the workplace is important because it can add value in various ways so, an apparent decline since last year's survey in respondents' awareness of diversity management in their organisation is of concern. As in 2012, most respondents believed that their organisation could do more in this area, with only 20% thinking that their business manages diversity well or extremely well. With workplace diversity continuing to increase in New Zealand workplaces, this is an area in need of much greater strategic management and integration – a challenge about which respondents seemed to be well aware;

### Technology is enabling

A new set of questions on information technology (IT) found that nearly two-thirds of respondents felt that it had led to more time on the job, and this was more likely if they hailed from Auckland and were a manager. Similarly, those who suggested they often work outside of the normal office environment and answered favourably to this question are also likely to be managers from

Auckland. This may have interesting implications for the nature of work and working in different parts of the country;

Interestingly, 32% of respondents felt that IT used in their work does not affect their personal life while 43% felt that it is beneficial, with the majority of those who felt that technology has impacted positively on their personal life being managers. However, this means that a significant minority – one quarter – felt that it is detrimental, highlighting a key area for employers to address to help arrest decline in job satisfaction, engagement, churn and so on due to the impacts of workplace IT;

Positively, survey data and anecdotal evidence suggest that the increase in IT availability, particularly around smartphone and tablet technology, allows respondents greater flexibility, communication, access to their peers, team members and superiors in a way that keeps them in the flow of information and decision making in a manner that hasn't been available to them before. Importantly, some indicated that there was a 'learning curve' and/or discipline involved in having work-related IT work more in their favour. For some, the downsides were all too apparent, while for still others, the pros and cons were more nuanced, suggesting that this is an area ripe for further exploration;

Fifty-three per cent of respondents identified excess workload as the greatest barrier to better performance in their business, and 63% confirmed that technology resulted in them doing more work than they used to. While the anecdotal feedback suggested technology allowed for more choice, freedom and flexibility, it could be suggested from other comments made, that there is a fine line to balance;

### The new survey model

As part of the development of the survey this year, we developed a model against which to test our findings (see Figure 12). The findings relating to this model have been relayed throughout this report but specifically, they have significantly informed the parts of this report that relate to the climates and employment outcomes. It has helped to bring together and provide confidence in the data collated. Figure 13 provides an overview of how the data supported the conclusions drawn out in this report.

### Getting the climate right

Analysis of a new TGNZES data field indicates that Organisational climates (i.e. Communication, Organisational Resilience and Fun Workplace) influence job and well-being outcomes. And where the first two climates are strong, they influence a Fun Workplace Climate, as does organisational support of employees via clear communications and efforts to build their resilience. The significant need to get leadership 'right' also re-emerges, as it provides a strong influence on the Communication and Organisational Resilience climates. Organisational

resilience is a topic that has been discussed widely in recent times including the HRINZ/MPOWER OR Symposium, October 2013.

Also, each of the three climates exerts a significant influence on job and well-being related 'employment outcomes' (e.g. work engagement, job satisfaction, job performance, turnover intentions, happiness), with a Fun Workplace Climate most likely to enhance happiness amongst employees. Further, our findings support the literature in showing that work engagement enhances job satisfaction which, in turn, is the dominant predictor of turnover intentions. Stressing the interrelated character of all these factors, it thus emerges that the outcomes you experience are as a direct result of the climates you create through demonstration of your preferred leadership style. If you want an alternative outcome, then you must alter the leadership style appropriately;

The three climates, particularly the Fun Workplace Climate, were found to be the main influences on levels of engagement at work. Thus, in an environment that provides employees with open and honest communication, an opportunity to contribute, an understanding of how to manage their stress levels and workloads, confidence that the organisation is well-equipped to face market challenges, and allows them to enjoy their work environment, employees will be more inclined to give discretionary effort which in turn provides a business with a greater financial return;

### Are we all engaged?

A notable 'disconnect' between employees and employers was shown in terms of their work engagement. This may reflect their respective broad energy levels, the level of positive challenge and inspiration that their respective jobs are perceived to provide and so forth. Yet, both groups indicate a similar, high level of perseverance (even in the face of adversity) while at work. This might suggest that, presented with 'better' work (situations), employees could feel as positively and engaged as employers. Again, this emphasises the need for managers to closely understand their employees' personal drivers and engagement factors.

Just over half (53%) of the respondents believe that employees in their organisation are engaged, suggesting considerable ambivalence about employee engagement, as well as a significant view (19%) that employees are more or less disengaged. This is very concerning, given academic and business evidence of a direct correlation between employee engagement levels and organisational financial success. It also highlights employee diversity as a key challenge and one whose effective management can affect engagement levels;

Fitting with the employee engagement results, job satisfaction is higher among employers than employees, with survey figures suggesting significant ambivalence or dissatisfaction among nearly half of the employees with regard to their job. It may be the case that managerial work is inherently more

satisfying than that performed by employees, reflecting their greater levels of job autonomy, task range, strategic input, salary and other worth factors. This could suggest that more organisations seriously consider work (re)design changes and development to help retain staff and augment their engagement levels.

There is a considerable level of commitment to their work and workplace by both employers and employees that extends beyond contractual obligations. Employers need to ensure that this discretionary effort is sustained by maintaining climates that are conducive to increased engagement, particularly in the context of an imminent economic upturn where staff may be able to realise attractive opportunities in other workplaces.

# Business and Economic Context

This section examines the effect of the economic climate experienced by businesses in New Zealand.

*Reported in the NZ Herald: 2 October 2013*

*“...ANZ's monthly business outlook survey found 56 per cent of respondents expected the general business situation to improve in the next 12 months while only 2 per cent expected it to get worse.*

*The net 54 per cent optimistic, up from a net 48 per cent in August, is the highest that indicator has been for 13 years.*

*Firms are also extremely upbeat about their own prospects, a net 45 per cent expecting a lift in activity, up two points on August.*

*Expectations of improved profitability have jumped to a net 33 per cent, from a net 25 per cent in the previous survey, underpinning gains in investment and hiring intentions.*

*A net 19 per cent of firms expect to increase staff numbers over the coming year, up from a net 18 per cent a month ago.*

*But Westpac economist Michael Gordon said the Westpac McDermott Miller employment confidence index, also released yesterday, showed workers were not seeing those intentions translate into action yet...”*

*Brian Fallow*

A lot has been said in recent times about the buoyancy of the ‘market’ and how business owners, leaders and employees feel about prospects for the economy.

Even as we complete this report, however, there are concerns that the US economy may significantly impact on the global economy once again, which may throw the following results into complete disarray.

As part of the overall understanding of the environment within which our respondents operate, we ask them to reflect on how they perceive the business and economic setting.

Compared with the 2012 survey, employers are more positive about the economy overall (see Table 2). While 31% see it as deflated, this compares with 43% in the previous year. Twenty-one per cent (compared with 16% last year) also see it as ‘buoyant’ while the remainder see the market in middling terms. Employees are less impressed. Nearly half (48%) believe that, for their organisation, the economy is ‘deflated’ and just 20% regard it as ‘buoyant’.

Data shown in Table 3 reveals that, while almost half (47%) of all respondents think their firms are performing as expected, a sizeable 30% believe they are exceeding expectations. However, nearly one quarter (23%) thus perceive that the performance of their organisation does not meet expectations, suggesting that the business context is proving tough for a number of workplaces. This fits with official assessments to 2012 of a fragile and uneven economic recovery (NZ Treasury, 2012).

And while the Canterbury rebuild is expected to provide a key impetus for economic growth over the next five to 10 years (gaining momentum in the first half of 2013), its pace is uncertain due in part to capacity constraints (NZ Treasury, 2013). Again, employees were less likely than employers to perceive that their organisation is operating well in the current economic environment,

with 31% appraising it to be under-performing (compared with 14% of managers).

**Table 2: For their organisations, the respondents feel the economy is currently...**

	All respondents	Employers	Employees
Extremely Deflated	4%	3%	5%
Deflated	35%	28%	43%
Neutral	41%	47%	33%
Buoyant	18%	20%	16%
Extremely Buoyant	3%	2%	4%

**Table 3: How well respondents rate their organisation's performance in the current economy**

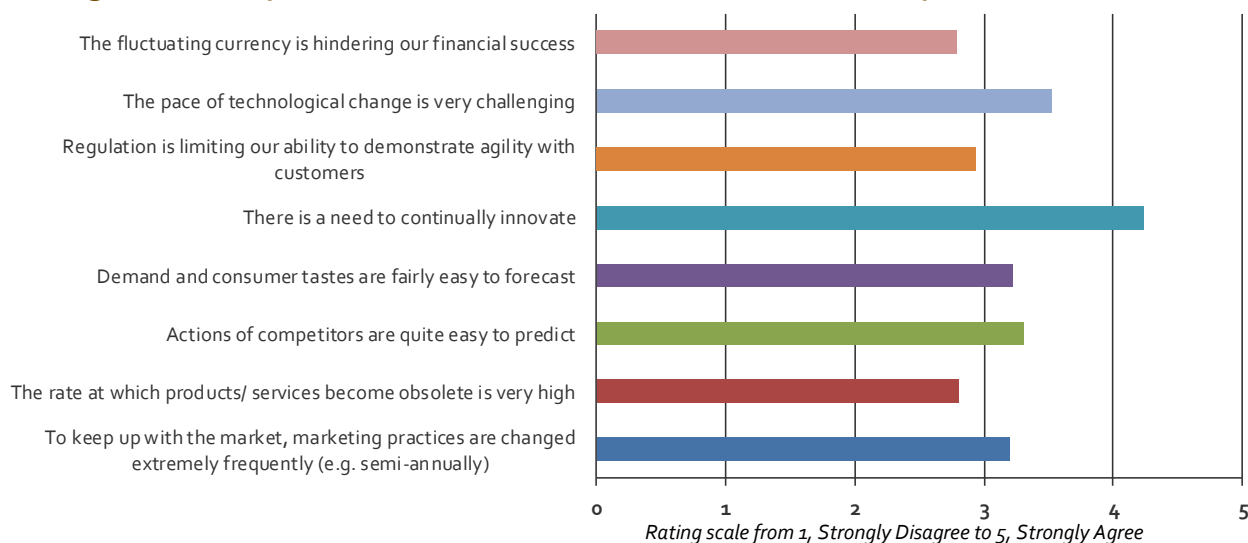
	All respondents	Employers	Employees
Poorly	3%	1%	5%
Somewhat poorly	20%	13%	26%
Meeting expectations	47%	54%	40%
Somewhat exceeding expectations	26%	30%	22%
Exceeding all expectations	4%	1%	7%

### *Success is in the eye of the beholder...*

As a whole, respondents strongly felt that there is a continual need to innovate (their overall rating exceeded 4 out of 5, with 0 the lowest and 5 the highest score). The importance of, and pressure to do this, is highlighted given a general view that the pace of technological change is very challenging, though competitors' actions and the nature of consumer demand were seen to be fairly easy to predict (see Figure 1). Interestingly, regulation, as a constraint on an organisations ability to demonstrate agility with customers, was not rated as highly as a number of other factors. It could be said that there have been a number of enabling regulations put in place post the GFC (Global Financial Crisis) by the government that is increasing the ability of organisations to more readily meet the needs of their customers. Another way to consider this is that their level of innovation has increased, allowing them to work around any perceived restrictions in the past.

**Employees are 17% less  
confident of their organisation's  
performance in the current  
economy than employers**

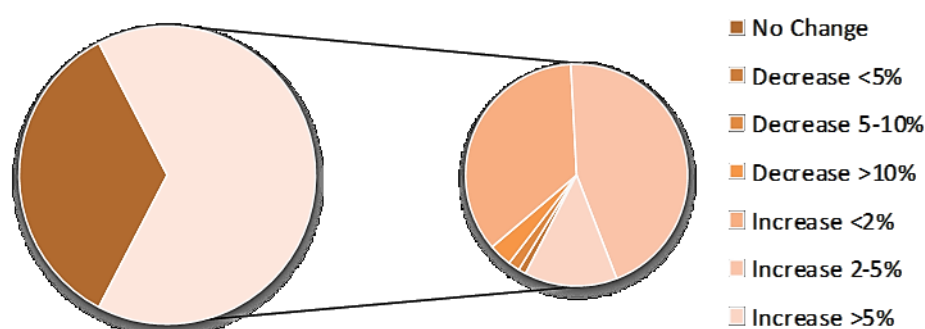
**Figure 1: Perceptions on the Business Environment from all respondents**



## *Good news on the home front*

Overall, respondents reported that 61% received an increase in salary within the last 12 months with the majority of this group (48%) receiving between a 2-5% increase, and 14% receiving over an increase of more than 5%. However, while only a small proportion (4% of respondents) received a pay cut, it was typically greater than 5% (55% of this group) (see Figure 2). This suggests a cautious approach by employers with regard to improving staff pay in challenging economic times.

**Figure 2: Remuneration changes in the last 12 months**





## *Indefinite leave?*

Table 4 shows the level of employee turnover in respondents' organisations over the past 12 months. Turnover rates range from three to 19 per cent, in part this is likely to reflect sector/industry differences. Respondents reported an average turnover rate of between 11 and 20%. In 2013, a total of 57% employer respondents reported that the labour turnover rate had been 10% or less (compared with 72% in last year's survey), with 19% indicating that it had been less than 5% (compared with 26% in 2012). Indeed, for many organisations, the flip side of a tough trading environment is that it is somewhat easier to recruit and retain staff.

In the coming year, the majority of respondents (58%) anticipate that their organisation's turnover rate will stay the same, although a substantial 29% believe it may increase (i.e. employees are more likely to leave their organisation) (see Table 4 for more detail). This has clear implications for employers in terms of addressing issues concerning employee engagement, communication, involvement and development to help prevent the departure of key talent, particularly when the market becomes more buoyant.

**Table 4: Employee Turnover in the Past 12 Months and Anticipated Turnover in the Coming 12 Months**

Average	11-20%		
Less than 5%	19%	Substantially Decrease	1%
Between 5-10%	38%	Decrease	12%
Between 11-20%	22%	Stay the same	58%
Between 21-30%	12%	Increase	26%
Between 31-40%	3%	Substantially Increase	3%
Between 41-50%	3%		
Above 50%	3%		

Just over half of the respondents (53%) felt it likely, if not definite, that their organisation will replace staff who leave. However, a significant minority (18%) perceived that staff replacements were unlikely or would not occur (see Table 5), with implications for workload intensification for, and the morale of, those who stay in 'static' or non-recruiting organisations if productivity levels do not alter. A total of 71% of respondents indicated the replacement would be due to voluntary leavers, while 66% suggested their business is growing or there would be newly identified roles to fill. With the ageing population intensifying our need to review our strategies and policies, 23% suggested turnover would come from retirement, highlighting the significance of succession planning.

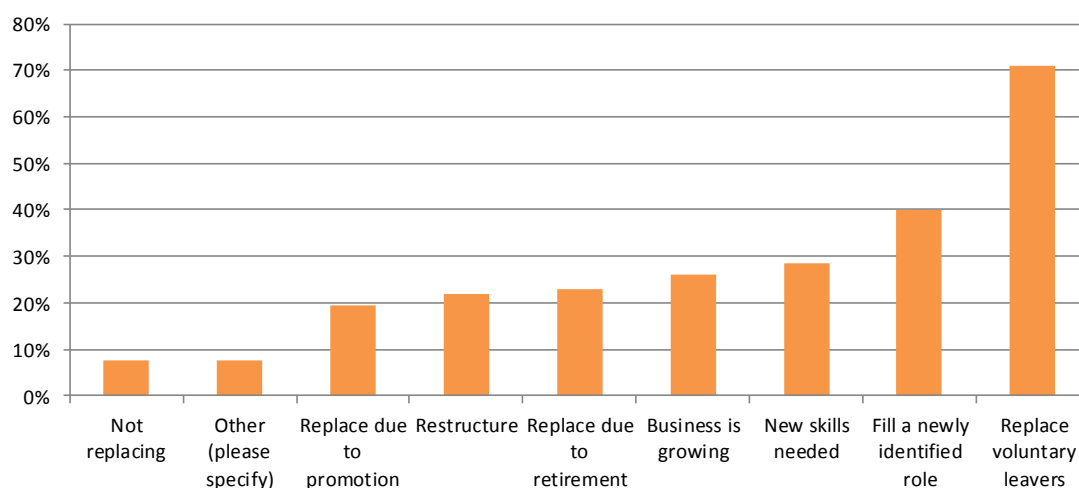


**Table 5: Likelihood of Replacing Staff Who Leave in the Next 6 Months**

Not at all	4%
Unlikely	14%
Possibly	29%
Likely	30%
Yes Definitely	23%

Compared to 2012 figures, there seems to be more movement anticipated as 47% of respondents previously indicated they had plans to hire due to voluntary leavers and only 13% reported retirement was a reason for replacement in 2012 (see Figure 3). This could indicate a response to business development in a context of recovery.

**Figure 3: Rating the Top Four Reasons for Replacing Staff in the Next 6 Months**



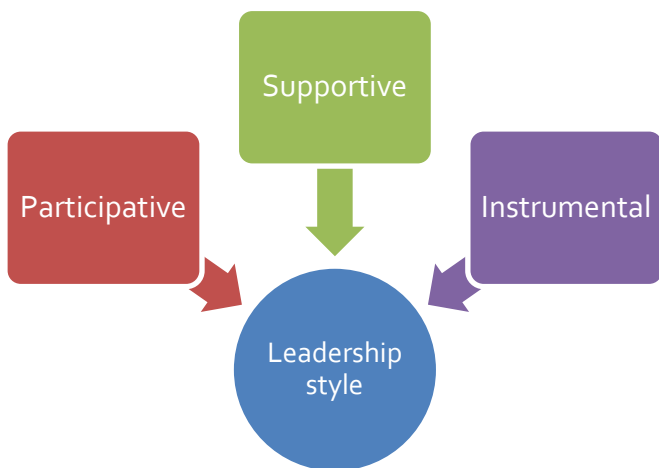
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# Leadership

Unlike the 2012 survey, the TGNZES 2013 concentrated on uncovering the contribution of the senior leaders to the business culture and employment outcomes experienced by employees such as work engagement, job satisfaction and intention to leave.

This year, perceptions of our respondents were centred on three dimensions of leadership:



*Participative Leadership* which relates to the way the CEO/leader is non-directive and allows subordinates to influence decisions by requesting input and contribution;

*Supportive Leadership* which concerns the degree to which the behaviour of a leader can be viewed as sympathetic, amicable, and considerate of subordinate needs; and

*Instrumental Leadership* which measures the extent to which leaders specify expectations, establish procedures and allocate tasks.

While 84% of employer respondents reported that they understand what is required of them, only 61% of employees reported their managers demonstrated an understanding of what was required of them. That being said, 74% of employers and 54% of employees demonstrated support for the overall leadership styles demonstrated by their senior leaders across a number of items including:

- Before making decisions, they consider what their subordinates have to say;
- Before taking action, they consult with subordinates;
- When faced with a problem, they consult with subordinates;
- They help people to make working on their tasks more pleasant;
- They look out for the personal well-being of group members;
- They treat all group members as equals;
- They explain why tasks should be carried out;
- They maintain definite standards of performance; and

- They reward according to performance.

On average, 50% of all respondents suggested their senior leaders are getting it right; that means of course, that 50% are suggesting a level of improvement is required. Employers report that this improvement is needed in the area of providing clarity of expectations while employees indicate that their improvement needs to come from inclusion, support and clarity as well as rewarding for performance.

Leaders who employees rate as being more favourable or positive in their leadership styles, such as being open to sharing opinions, are likely to create an

**50% of respondents want to see improvement from their senior leaders in their overall leadership style**

organisational climate that experiences more positive and beneficial employee-related outcomes as well as better organisational performance.

The following areas highlight key dynamics believed to be at play in the respondents' organisations:

### *Perceptions are important*

With 68% of employers indicating that their senior leaders considered their subordinates' point of view before taking action and only 40% of employees in agreement, there is some work to do in ensuring they are the same. The importance of this is particularly highlighted when staff have ideas or have identified opportunities for improvement; and if they feel their voice may fall on deaf ears - then they may be less inclined to speak out.

### *Being privy to insight*

Employers indicate that their senior leaders look after the personal well-being of group members (64% either agree or strongly agree) while only 37% of employees express the same; perhaps being closer to the decision-making process enables employers to answer more positively in this instance. However, with less than 40% of employees feeling that their personal well-being is important to their senior leader, there is quite obviously an opportunity to increase awareness in this regard. In larger organisations, this can be difficult - note the link later between happiness as a contributor to well-being and job performance.

### *Equal footing*

Employees either disagree or strongly disagree that their senior leaders treat all group members as equals (46%). Employers, however, indicate that they agree or strongly agree (44%) with the same statement. Again, perceptions and standpoints are important. If the senior leaders are unable to demonstrate

consistency or a lack of favouritism, then this could lead to a lack of confidence in the leadership of the business (e.g. as staff observe their senior leaders favouring one type of staff member over another such as female or male, with or without children, young or old, etc.).

### *Consistency*

One area that may not come as too much of a surprise concerns reward for performance. Employers feel that their senior leaders reward consistently for performance (53% either strongly agree or agree), while 51% of employees disagree or strongly disagree with the same sentiment. This is interesting when there is less of a gap between the groups when they rate the senior leader's approach to maintaining definite standards of performance. Sixty-six per cent of managers and 47% of employees suggest that there are standards to work to and that they are clearly defined. This could indicate a lack of adequate feedback to employees on their performance against those standards; a lack of self-awareness and capability by the employer to manage it or from the employee in undertaking a task; and/or indeed that there are few or no mechanisms in place with which to reward in this way. In this regard, follow-through is as critical as setting the standards themselves so that there is a continued support by staff of the standards and that they strive to achieve and exceed them.

# THE GREAT NEW ZEALAND EMPLOYMENT SURVEY<sup>2013</sup>

# Communication

In 2013, we have found, pleasingly, that communication has improved from previous years. Last year, there was a significant divide between employers and employees, while this year, we have found they are more closely aligned in their thinking.

In the 2012 results, 43% of employees suggested that increased communication and employee involvement would lead to increased productivity in their organisation. The results also suggested that effective communication skills were required by both parties.

The construct we have used this year focused more specifically on three key areas within communication:

- **openness and trust**; referring to communication being shared by management and co-workers that is true
- **supportiveness**; relating to employees feeling they are taken seriously; and
- **decision making participation**; concerning employees' perception that they have a voice in their organisation

The need for effective communication is often referred to when discussing employee and organisational effectiveness. The results of research in this regard often indicate that communication is an area to focus on by organisations to improve employee engagement and increase productivity.

## *Openness and trust*

Our findings suggest that 81% of all respondents (86% of employers and 75% of employees) trust that their colleagues are speaking the truth when they are sharing something with them; and similarly, 69% of all respondents (83% of employers and 54% of employees) trust that their general management is also truthful in their communication. With trust being identified as a contributor to co-operation, perception of credibility, being able to rely on someone and taking thoughtful risk (Tway, 1993), this is something to strive for in all organisations.

81% of respondents trust that their colleagues are speaking the truth

A total of 50% of respondents (37% of employers and 66% of employees) suggested that they hear more about the organisation, its activities, goals and achievements through discussion with colleagues than from

management, and 32% of respondents felt that the sharing of the true goals of the business is limited to those who develop them (see Table 6).

**Table 6: Trust as a Contributor to the Communication Climate**

	Employer Disagree	Employer Agree	Employee Disagree	Employee Agree
When my colleagues tell me something, I trust them to tell me the truth	7%	86%	15%	75%
If the general management of my organisation tells us something (about how we are doing our job), I trust them to tell us the truth	5%	83%	27%	54%
In conversations with colleagues you often hear more about our organisation than you do from the management	26%	37%	15%	66%
The objectives of my organisation are probably only known by those who formulate them	58%	23%	40%	41%

## *Supportiveness*

Encouragingly, only a small number of respondents (21%) suggest that they are not supported in their organisation. However, employees feel they are less supported than employers, with 35% of employees suggesting they are not taken seriously and that the general management are less welcoming than their direct manager when suggestions are put to them (See Table 7). With an increased reliance on innovation across all organisations (see earlier), this is worrying. Surely all ideas should be considered even if they are not supported through to implementation? It would be in the best interest of all businesses to engage in activities that involve all employees to solve problems to which they are more than likely the 'solution providers'.

**Table 7: Supportiveness as a Contributor to the Communication Climate**

	Employer Disagree	Employer Agree	Employee Disagree	Employee Agree
If you say something here, you are taken seriously	8%	72%	35%	39%
Our general management is open to suggestions we put to them	11%	70%	35%	44%
My direct boss is open to suggestions I put to him/her	9%	82%	30%	56%

## *Decision making participation*

Not surprisingly, managers believe that they have ample opportunity to have their say (72% of employers suggested this is the case) while 67% of employees want more opportunity to be part of the decision-making activities (see Table 8).



**Table 8: Decision Making Participation as a Contributor to the Communication Climate**

	Employer Disagree	Employer Agree	Employee Disagree	Employee Agree
At my organisation, I have ample opportunity to have my say	11%	72%	37%	46%
Employees at my organisation should be involved more in the decision-making	13%	43%	10%	67%

### *How to communicate*

Reviewing the impact of information technology (outlined in more detail later) as part of the overall employment experience, methods of communication have shown to have a significant impact on the ability to communicate effectively. With the increasing influence of diversity on our workforce makeup, the need to respond to the growing impact of social media and the virtual nature of our resources, methods of communication we use are no longer traditional. While some would like to see a return to the face-to-face meeting and telephone as the primary modes of communication; this is probably unrealistic. We now have a workforce made up of technology savvy people (of all ages), and with the impact of the tablet and smartphone technologies, immediacy and flexibility are key words of which to take note.

One conversation Clarian HR consultants regularly have with employers and employees is the overuse of email including people emailing their neighbours rather than speaking with them. Many report this behaviour assumes a:

- perception of speed (not having to get into a conversation);
- perception of clarity (being able to express oneself more fully);
- perception of completion (having delegated the next part of the job to someone else); and
- a capacity to reach more people

However, the downsides of this behaviour are evident in that it can encourage a:

- lack of interpersonal capabilities;
- lack of opportunity to discuss, create, resolve and engage;
- lack of accountable behaviours; and
- a tendency to not reach the right people.

Results from our technology questions indicate that employees enjoy the ability to access information as they need it without constraint. They have choices on how much or little they engage with, but they feel that they can sift through this information both at will and in their own time.

So, the question remains, how best to communicate, engage and inform? A mixture of methods seems to be the key, with the intent to resolve the issues raised above while ensuring that the needs of the changing workforce and stakeholders, as well as the changing working environment are all met.

## *Overall comment*

With the communication climate such an important contributor to an employee's intention to leave, how engaged they are at work and their job performance, achieving the right balance across these items is critical. Our survey shows that with a weak communication climate, employees will be more likely to leave, will have less engagement in their work, and they will be less likely to go over and above the basic expectations of their job description.

As part of the overall communication construct, there is a particularly strong message for leaders around building trust. This is influenced significantly by strong role models and comes from the top. If employees feel they cannot trust their leaders, managers and specialists, then there is a perceived lack of credibility and an impact on the level of participation. Without support, employees will undoubtedly feel 'lost at sea', and without the ability to contribute to the decision making activities across a business, suitable to their level of course, then they will also become disenfranchised as they continue to suffer from the decisions made without input from the reality of the circumstances that deliver the problem requiring resolution.

# Change and Performance

There are a number of areas reviewed as part of the survey that relate to how employees and employers perceive the experience of being employed in NZ in 2013. This section provides insight to what attracts employees to new organisations, intentions to leave current employment and the factors employers need to consider to retain their employees.

## *Change is the new black*

When asked to comment on their understanding of how the organisation might change in the next 12 months, all respondents suggested that reward and remuneration were the last thing that would get any focus whereas leadership and management development were rated as the highest priority. Separating out the employee and employer data, there are differences between the highest and lowest ranking from no change to significant change, (see Table 9).

**Table 9: Perceptions on the Level of Change in the Next 12 Months**

*NB: Level of change rates from 1: no change to 5: complete change*

All respondents	Level of change	Employee	Level of change	Employer	Level of change
<b>Lowest level of change expected</b>					
Remuneration & Rewards	1.99	Career Development	1.85	HR Policy	2.11
Well-Being	2.02	Remuneration & Rewards	1.87	Remuneration & Rewards	2.12
Career Development	2.04	Well-Being	1.88	Well-Being	2.17
<b>Highest level of change expected</b>					
Learning across the organisation	2.45	Employee/Management Relations	2.31	Performance management	2.69
Performance management	2.58	Leadership Development & Management Capability	2.46	Learning across the organisation	2.69
Leadership Development & Management Capability	2.65	Performance management	2.50	Leadership Development & Management Capability	2.81

## *To review or not to review...?*

In the majority of organisations, the performance review is a pivotal element of the performance management process (Arrowsmith et al., 2012). Indeed, just 17% of respondents felt performance reviews were not important (see Table 10).

However, as in 2012, many employers and employees do not believe that the information retrieved from the process is well used. Just eight per cent of respondents felt that performance reviews are fully utilised, 42% noting they are either not performed but not utilised. Further, as with earlier years' results, employees are less convinced than employers of the importance and relevance of the review process in their organisation, raising some key points for employers. For example are managers well equipped to manage the performance review and manage the process effectively?; how might employers encourage greater employee engagement with and expectations of the outcomes of this potentially valuable business tool?.

**Table 10: Perceived Importance and Utility of Performance Reviews**

IMPORTANCE	All respondents	Employers	Employees
Not important	17	10	24
Somewhat important	22	22	23
Quite important	19	18	20
Important	24	28	20
Extremely important	18	22	14

UTILITY	All respondents	Employers	Employees
No review performed	10	6	13
Not utilised	32	22	43
Somewhat utilised	50	59	41
Fully utilised	8	13	3

## *Barriers to better performance*

Table 11 shows the barriers to performance as identified by all respondents. In 2013, as in 2012, the top four reflect factors that might be perceived as out of the control of the respondents such as excess workload, ineffective leadership and internal conflict. The identification of incentives and rewards for performance being absent from the workplace as a barrier to performance shows that there is a desire for recognition of their contribution and without it, their inclination to perform will be reduced.

These results parallel those for the 2012 TGNZES where key barriers to better performance included excess workload, internal conflict and a lack of capability – factors which testify to the heightened work demands, skills shortages and caution over recruitment at that time. Furthermore, all of these issues in 2012 were seen as much more acute by employees than employers, especially factors such as whether they have the capacity (i.e. the right tools and managers) for the job.

**Table 11: Barriers to Performance**

	Employer Strongly Agree	Employee Strongly Agree	Employer Strongly Disagree	Employee Strongly Disagree
Excess workload	74%	50%	11%	8%
Lack of feedback	63%	49%	29%	4%
Internal conflict	45%	52%	41%	7%
Constantly accessible for work	45%	48%	45%	5%
Lack of information	45%	41%	15%	24%
Lack of capability	42%	42%	26%	18%
Ineffective leadership	41%	52%	44%	7%
Lack of incentives or rewards for performance	41%	50%	41%	9%
Lack of motivation	38%	44%	45%	10%
Lack of work/life balance	35%	38%	25%	25%
Lack of cooperation	35%	47%	58%	4%
Unclear expectations	35%	46%	35%	17%
Lack of or wrong/old tools for the job	34%	28%	38%	20%
Existing working-time patterns	23%	35%	46%	20%
No barriers	6%	4%	46%	46%

# THE GREAT NEW ZEALAND EMPLOYMENT SURVEY<sup>2013</sup>

# Diversity

Following a positive response to our 2012 questions on Diversity Management, it was once again explored in The Great New Zealand Employment Survey in 2013. Diversity in the workplace is important because it can add value in terms of better understanding the needs and preferences of a wide variety of customers, as well as enriching the work experience of staff.

The topic of Diversity Management was introduced into TGNZES in 2012, underscoring the need for management to respond to the increasing diversity of employees. As in 2012, this year's survey elicited a high level of response to the relevant survey questions as well as a considerable body of qualitative comments, often involving personal anecdotes – important given a relative dearth of in-depth data on the subject. This is despite the considerable need for New Zealand managers to be able to effectively respond to and manage employee diversity which is amongst the highest in the world – and increasing (Sayers and Ang, 2013).

It is of concern, therefore, that there was a decline since the 2012 survey in respondents' awareness of diversity management in their organisation. This year, just 49% of respondents were aware of this, whilst 51% indicated a lack of or limited awareness. In 2012, nearly a third of respondents were aware of diversity management initiatives in their organisation while 43% said they were not.

Only 20% of respondents suggest their organization is managing diversity well

Even more of a concern is the fact that only 32% of employers feel informed of the work being undertaken in their organisation in this regard and 44% of employees are not aware of anything relating to diversity.

Furthermore, as in 2012, most respondents believed that their organisation could do more in this area, with only 20% thinking that their business manages diversity well or extremely well. A total of 34% (compared with 35% in 2012) rated performance as merely adequate and 22% as poor or extremely poor (compared with 15% and 10% respectively in 2012) (see Table 12 overleaf).

Of further interest is the sentiment behind the anecdotal responses by employers, summed up in the following<sup>2</sup>:

*"It isn't a topic of high importance. We employ people based on skills and attitudes; we don't have a diversity policy, as such."*

Employee respondents' overall sentiments were similar and focused on ethnicity in their understanding and relationship with diversity whilst employers suggested a more broad understanding of diversity which included gender, beliefs, health status and so forth.

**Table 12: Ability to Manage Diversity and its Importance**

Ability to manage	
Not aware	24%
Extremely poorly	7%
Poorly	15%
Adequately	34%
Well	16%
Importance	
Very Unimportant	5%
Unimportant	8%
Ambivalent	39%
Important	33%
Very Important	15%

Respondents seemed to be aware of the challenges. Only 13% said that diversity management was unimportant or very unimportant to their organisation (compared with 11% in 2012). However, 39% felt ambivalent about the significance of diversity management in their workplace while it was important for only 48% of respondents' organisations. This suggests that employers consider channelling more energy into raising awareness among staff about the challenges of diversity management and the benefits to employees and organisations when they are effectively addressed.

<sup>2</sup> Note the 2012 survey also reported a number of anecdotal comments from respondents in this regard



# Special Topic: Information Technology

With the increase in technology as a work tool, we considered the use of technology at work and its' impact on employees to be a topic worth exploring. We're glad we did as we uncovered some interesting findings.

A new batch of questions in the 2013 TGNZES related to the use of Information Technology (IT) and working time. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of respondents felt that technology had led to more time on the job. While nothing of material note was found by region or gender, it did emerge that those who responded positively to 'Has information technology meant you now spend more time working?' are likely to hail from Auckland and be managers. Similarly, those who suggested they often work outside of the normal office environment and answered favourably to this question are also likely to be managers from Auckland.

**43% of respondents felt access to IT (smartphones, tablets etc) was beneficial to their personal life**

Interestingly, we found no link between this response and that which referred to excess workload being a barrier to performance. Our respondents did not report that technology contributes to increases in workload however they do report that it contributes to more time on the job.

Respondents also commented on the impact of IT on their personal life. Nearly one-third (32%) felt that IT used in their work does not affect their personal life, and a significant minority (43%) felt that it is beneficial. Further, the majority of those who felt that technology has impacted positively on their personal life are managers. However, this means that a significant minority – one quarter of respondents – felt that it is detrimental, highlighting a key area for employers to address to help arrest decline in job satisfaction, engagement, turnover and so forth due to the impact of workplace IT permeating employees' private life.

The quotes in Figure 4 are indicative of the wide range of considerations (often positive and less so around the same perceived IT impact) that 75 respondents covered with regard to their use of workplace IT and their working time. Note that the impacts pertain largely to the individual respondents but some note the impact of IT for their workplace:

## Figure 4: IT and Respondents' Working Time - "Has information technology meant you now spend more time working?"

*"Able to do a wider range of work remotely, better utilise downtime (e.g. airports and other waiting time)"*

*"Always accessible so tend to complete tasks rather than waiting until tomorrow" and "Always switched on"*

*"Because I can do just that 'little bit extra from home'"*

*"... also makes me more efficient as a part timer and gives me more flexibility to keep on top of what is happening" and "I work part-time 30hrs, but always take calls on my day off"*

*"Constantly accessible. People expect faster responses. Too easy to keep checking in on emails at home and on leave"*

*Email accessibility out of hours - able to provide better service to customers with instant responses to their queries*

*"Higher standards to be maintained"*

*"... I feel like other managers have a lesser view of my work ethic if I don't take their calls outside work hours"*

*"I work a 50 hour week in the office, but am now also available 24/7 on my phone and iPad"*

*"I'm not complaining. I like to have access to what is happening and requires my attention"*

*"I've made a conscious effort to not respond to emails outside of the office unless they are extremely urgent. I try to draw a line between work and home/personal" but poor discipline at turning phone off in evenings and answering email"*

*"We deal with many overseas suppliers and it is expected that we will continue to communicate with them after hours and to communicate with customers"*

*"Yes in terms of total hours in which work is done but with much less intensity (and stress) as no backlogs build up anymore"*

Positively, survey data and anecdotal evidence suggest that the increase in IT availability, particularly around smartphone and tablet technology, allows respondents greater flexibility, communication, access to their peers, team members and superiors in a way that keeps them in the flow of information and decision making in a manner that hasn't been available to them before.

Figure 5 contains a number of quotes from a total of 78 comments from respondents that illustrates perceived benefits of work-related IT (e.g. smartphones) in terms of respondents' personal lives, a number of which can be seen to relate to the above question about IT and working time:

## Figure 5: Perceived Benefits of Work-Related IT

*"Able to keep on top of workload", "Able to provide better customer service", "Allows to keep in touch with work at all times [intranet, Skype, e-mail]" and "Always contactable"*

---

*"Can deal with minor issues immediately and remove them from the task list sooner"*

---

*"Get paid more and supply more value to the company by being able to work remotely"*

---

*"I enjoy the 'freedom' and flexibility that likes of smartphones give me from being 'tied to the desk' ... am able to stay aware of anything that needs urgent attention but don't have to sit in the office for hours unnecessarily"*

---

*"I have kept up to date with technology and expanded my knowledge. Having been able to develop my career during work time. I can work at home/hospital/another city in an emergency"*

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*"I value being able to work at home some days, saving the commute time (and fuel cost), I prefer my physical work environment at home to that of my work office and for tasks requiring sustained concentration, there are less distractions at home so I am more productive. I also value the flexibility; I don't necessarily have inspired ideas 'on demand' at 9.05 am in the office"*

---

*"I work longer hours but it also creates greater freedom" and "enables flexible working"*

---

*"Just a little more accessible to staff and them to me - works both ways"*

---

*"Maintaining easy contact and dialogue with stakeholders, support people, whanau"*

Some respondents indicated that there was a 'learning curve' and/or discipline involved in having work-related IT work more in their favour, for instance:

## Figure 6: Personal Approach to Managing Access

*"Have to manage it carefully - I choose to ignore it when at home with family; and was clear with this approach with my manager before accepting a smartphone"*

---

*"I chose not to read my work emails once I left the office, unless travelling for business"*

---

*"I have learned to turn it off!"*

---

*"I won't have my work emails sent to my mobile"*

---

*"initially detrimental, but have now managed to control it through a change in role"*

---

*"Just need to ensure that it does not rule"*

However, others commented on the downsides (see Figure 7).

## Figure 7: Some Downsides of Work-Related IT

*"Can't disconnect from work. Always connected", "It is always tempting to carry on" and "Mostly psychological - never quite switching off the engine"*

---

*"Reduced family time" and "Wife has commented my smartphone is a distraction to family life...she is right!"*

*"Despite staff been provided with smart phones and ipads they are not connected to work email systems and intended for their personal productivity instead. There are some that can't follow the rules though and insist on being connected to the business :)"*

*"Good for career, bad for personal life!"*

*"Having that compulsion to check to ensure there is nothing urgent/critical does take away from your personal time, interactions with others and rest and relaxation - you never feel 'off the clock' for lack of a better phrase"*

*"I spend way too much time keeping up with emails/communications, and being accessible to students"*

*"I work at home as well as at work therefore quality of family time has been compromised" and "Sometimes when things crop up I have to take calls when trying to spend time with my family"*

*"I'm expected to use my personal phone to be accessible which is not acceptable in my opinion"*

*"Less time for engagement with family, not being able to fully unwind from work. Especially on Friday nights and weekends. Feel like if my employer wants to give me this technology, and expects me to be contactable more often, then I should be paid more for being available outside work hours"*

*"Lessening opportunity to pursue hobbies and having time for self"*

*"No impact because it's been like this for years!"*

Still others offered nuanced views of the pros and cons with a general feel that it must now be an accepted part of the way we work:

## Figure 8: Pros and Cons of Work-Related IT

*"On the one hand, I can work from home sometimes with whanau around. On the other, the texts and calls keep coming unless we turn the mobile off"*

*"There are personal benefits to mobile technology provided for work purposes. I also am more relaxed being in touch with work than being disconnected from it"*

*"well, I am in IT..."*

*"Whereas I may have gone into work outside usual office hours I can now do a lot of that 'extra' work from home - so just swapped location as opposed to doing any more or less work"*

# Culture, Leadership and Results; the new survey construct

This year, we have been able to go deeper into the data and start to pull together outcomes at a level beyond the basic statistics that we have reported on previously. This has led to the identification of a number of components that contribute to the day-to-day employment experiences that we have in our organisations and how they influence each other as well as the overall culture of the business. Finally, we pick up on leadership again and demonstrate how it influences all that we experience at work.

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## *Key constructs and relationships*

Organisational culture relates to an organisation's values, visions, norms, working language, systems, symbols, beliefs and habits. It is also the pattern of collective behaviours and assumptions that are taught to new employees as a way of perceiving and even thinking and feeling, so as to help progress organisational strategy. Importantly, organisational culture affects the way in which employees and team members interact with one another, clients, customers and other stakeholders.

Organisational climates help to quantify the culture of an organisation through identifying the influences on the outcomes that we experience such as employee turnover, fun in the workplace and so on. Climates are a set of properties of the work environment, perceived by employees as having a significant influence on their behaviour.

TGNZES 2013 explored three different types of climate, and their influence on employment related outcomes and each other:

- Communication Climate;
- Organisational Resilience Climate; and
- Fun Workplace Climate.

Each climate is likely to function somewhat independently of the others. However, they are also likely to share similarities and overlap at times. From the data we collected, it emerged that while all three climates influence job and well-being outcomes, and interestingly, two of the climates also help build the third.

Organisations that demonstrate strong Organisational Resilience and Communication climates will find that these influence a Fun Workplace Climate. Further, the Fun Workplace Climate is positively influenced in those organisations that support their employees through clear communications and building resilient employees.

We can't move onto the climates without first re-emphasising the impact, as discussed earlier, of the leadership style on the overall dynamics of the culture of an organisation and the eventual employment outcomes experienced such as job performance, intention to leave and job satisfaction. The construct of leadership explored here relates to the level of participation, support and direction provided; and the results demonstrate a strong influence on Communication and Organisational Resilience climates. Each climate then demonstrated a significant influence on employment outcomes as outlined in Figure 13.

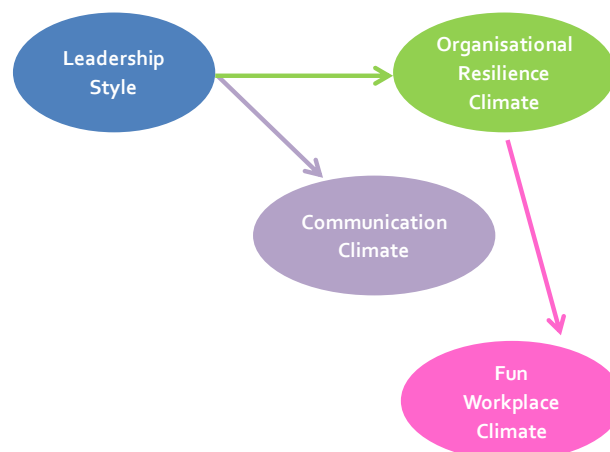
Accordingly, get the leadership style wrong, and the whole pack of cards comes tumbling down!

## *Communication Climate*

In relation to the communicative elements of a work environment, such as judgments of management's receptiveness to employee communication or the trustworthiness of disseminated information, we measured three sub-dimensions:

- **Openness and Trust** which refers to communication being shared by management and co-workers that is true;
- **Supportiveness** which relates to employees feeling they are taken seriously; and
- **Decision Making Participation** which concerns employees' perception that they have a voice in their organisation.

**Figure 9: The three organisational Climates and their relativity to each other, and the influence of the Leadership style<sup>3</sup>**



From the data collected, we can suggest that, overall; organisations with stronger climates towards

communication are associated with more positive outcomes because of the level of influence this particular climate has demonstrated on job performance and work engagement (See Figure 13) as well as intention to leave. Organisations that demonstrate openness and honesty, inclusivity and support will experience employees less likely to leave, increased levels of work engagement and job performance.

### *Organisational Resilience Climate*

This construct explores employees' 'psychological resilience' or their ability to bounce back from negative events and crises. This is a process whereby employees exhibit positive adaptation after exposure to adversity, trauma, threats, stress or conflict.

With this measure, we tested an organisation's ability to create a climate that fosters and builds psychological resilience in its employees, which should ultimately create 'better functioning' employees. Employees with greater psychological resilience are more likely to experience positive employment outcomes<sup>4</sup>, our study suggests that employees who rate their organisational climate as fostering greater resilience will similarly benefit from building it.

The results demonstrated that the organisational resilience climate developed has a significant influence on the ability of the organisation to have fun which in turn creates work engagement. In addition, the organisational resilience climate has a strong influence on job satisfaction and work engagement in its own right. The conclusion drawn here is that if the employees feel confident in their own ability to manage their workload effectively and contribute to the success of the business through demonstration of their capabilities, as well as feel confident

<sup>3</sup> These relationships were demonstrated in this manner in the data collected; the influences can be seen in Figure 13 more fully

<sup>4</sup> J. Shin, M. Taylor and M.Seo (2012).



that their business is able to manage the external environment including customer and market demands; then they will relax into the environment, be open to having more fun, be more satisfied on the job and have an increased engagement with the business.

## *Fun Workplace Climate*

A Fun Workplace Climate refers to employees' perceptions around how much fun their workplace is. While fun can mean different things to different people, employees who rate their organisational climates as being fun report greater benefits.

We identified fun as a significant contributor to attracting employees to organisations in the 2012 TGNZES and this influenced our interest in delving further into the construct this year.

Prior research shows that a fun climate can benefit both employees and customers, and this builds on popular press which suggests that fun workplaces are likely to benefit employees and organisations (*Sunday Star Times*, 30 September 2012). This study builds on emerging research on a fun workplace climate and we expect such a climate to benefit employees and their workplace experience.

The Fun Workplace climate is influenced by the Organisational Resilience climate and has influence on work engagement, happiness and job satisfaction. The outcome of which leads ultimately to lower intention to leave and (as research outside of this survey shows), increased bottom line results.

**A fun workplace is an engaged workplace; we can all benefit from that**

## *Implications*

The 2013 TGNZES found that the climates outlined above influence a number of employment outcomes which can be broadly categorised as:

- Job-related (such as work engagement, job satisfaction, job performance, turnover intentions) and
- Well-being related (such as happiness).

As anticipated, we found links such as (see Figure 13 for the overall study model):

- A strong Communication Climate means that employees are more likely to understand their organisation and thus enjoy greater work engagement, be more satisfied with their job and perform better, while also less likely to consider leaving; and



- A strong Organisational Resilience Climate is likely to build stronger employees who are better able to manage issues and thus enjoy work and perform better in their job; be more engaged and less likely to consider leaving. This also holds for a Fun Workplace Climate.

While all of these climates might also enhance well-being, it emerged that the Fun Workplace Climate is most likely to enhance happiness amongst employees.

## *So what...?*

Why does all this matter? In short, it's because all of the factors inter-relate and you can't choose one employment outcome or climate to focus on over another. In other words, the outcomes you experience are as a direct result of the climates you create through demonstration of your preferred leadership style. If you want an alternative outcome, then you must change the leadership style accordingly.

**Table 13: Overall Employment Outcome Ratings across all Influencing Items**

<i>Employment Outcomes</i>	<i>Employers</i>	<i>Employees</i>
Work Engagement	3.9	3.3
Turnover Intentions	2.3	2.9
Job Satisfaction	4.0	3.4
Job Performance	4.1	3.7
Happiness	3.9	3.6

*NB: This table shows the average rating on a scale of 1-5 reported by respondents across a number of items measuring the outcomes*

For example, if the dominant leadership style in an organisation is secretive, dominating and bureaucratic, the likely influence on employees would be that they might lack energy and enthusiasm, just seeing the job as a means to an end. In addition, you may experience high turnover or stagnant performance with employees 'working to rule' without demonstration of a greater level of discretionary effort. However, if the dominant leadership style is one of transparency in communication, involvement in decision-making and providing employees with mechanisms that help to balance their workload and personal goals, the experience would probably be one of highly engaged and driven employees who share their ideas widely and have fun at the same time.

As Table 13 above shows, turnover intention was ranked lowest of all the employment outcome constructs by managers, and was close to the lowest ranking for employees. This fits with reports by both groups of high levels of work engagement, job satisfaction, and existing work. Supporting the literature, it also emerged that work engagement is likely to enhance job satisfaction which, in turn, is the dominant predictor of turnover intentions.

As we might anticipate, employers report significantly higher levels of job outcomes overall in their responses than employees (and lower turnover

intentions). Similarly, employers report significantly higher perceptions/levels of engagement with organisational climates than employees (see Table 14). Interestingly, job performance is rated most highly by both employers and employees – despite mixed feelings overall about organisational performance in the current economic environment (see Table 3).

**Table 14: Comparing Organisational Climates**

Organisational Climates	Employers	Employees
Leadership Styles	3.5	3.1
Fun Workplace	3.2	2.8
Organisational Resilience	3.4	2.9
Communication Culture	3.6	3.1

*NB: This table shows the average rating on a scale of 1-5 reported by respondents across a number of items measuring the outcomes*

## Work engagement

This construct reflects the level of discretionary effort we are willing to demonstrate when all aspects of our working environment provide us with all we need to be engaged. This is generally characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption in the work employees do. Engaged employees display high levels of energy in their job, are enthusiastic about their work, and often report feeling so fully immersed in their job that time just ‘flies by’.

Research such as that undertaken by Gallup and Towers Perrin et al. shows that work engagement is linked to a number of employment outcomes (e.g. greater job satisfaction and job performance, reduced turnover intention). Organisations often undertake engagement surveys to understand levels of engagement amongst their staff. This allows for an understanding at a group level and provides high-level metrics that can inform work programmes designed to influence levels of engagement against certain criteria such as communication, reward and recognition, and autonomy.

Analysis of data from all of the respondents reveals that the three climates, particularly the Fun Workplace Climate, are the main influences on levels of engagement at work. This means that, in an environment that provides employees with open and honest communication, an opportunity to contribute, an understanding of how to manage their stress levels and workloads, confidence that the organisation is well-equipped to face market challenges, and allows them to enjoy their work environment, employees will be more inclined to give discretionary effort. This in turn provides a business with a greater financial return. We can all benefit from this type of environment.

Table 15 shows responses to a series of statements concerning engagement. Again, a notable 'disconnect' between employee and employer responses is apparent for each response set. Employers appear to look forward to going to work to a much greater degree than employees, with 73% of them agreeing with the first statement (compared with just half of the employees). This may relate to their respective energy levels, with employees seemingly less full of 'zest' than their employers. Perhaps unsurprisingly, employees are also less likely than employers to find their job challenging in a positive way; be inspired by or feel enthusiastic about their job; forget everything else around them when they are working; feel that time is 'flying' when they are at work; or 'get carried away' when they are working.

Interestingly, however, both groups indicate similar, high level of perseverance even in the face of adversity while at work. On the face of it, this could suggest that, presented with 'better' jobs or work situations, employees could feel as positively and engaged as employers. What a 'better' job or work environment might constitute for employees would of course need their manager to intimately understand their personal drivers and engagement factors rather than rely on a metric that represents a high-level view of the world.

**Table 15: Contributors to Work Engagement for Employers and Employees**

%	Employer		Employee	
	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree
When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	5	73	19	50
I feel very energetic	6	67	25	38
At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well	0	93	4	87
My job is challenging in a positive way	4	79	18	58
My job inspires me	9	62	31	40
I am enthusiastic about my job	4	77	16	49
When I am working, I forget everything else around me	18	49	38	26
Time flies when I am working	4	73	21	41
I get carried away when I am working	17	48	33	26
<b>Average rating</b>	<b>3.9</b>		<b>3.3</b>	

Overall, employees appear to be more ambivalent about their work (with an average rating of 3.3 across all parameters reviewed) than managers who demonstrate a strong level of engagement (3.9).

The vast majority of respondents believe that employee engagement matters to some extent, with 78% feeling that it matters in their organisation and over half (51%) saying that it matters a lot (see Table 16). This reflects a similar distribution of survey responses in 2012. However, breaking down the results, it emerges that a larger minority of employees (nine per cent) than employers (just two per cent) feel that employee engagement doesn't matter at all – which supports the less positive findings for employees indicated in Table 16. As noted last year, employee engagement is both more important yet more difficult in tough economic times (Arrowsmith *et al.*, 2012).

Further, the data indicate that just over half (53%) of the respondents believe that employees in their organisation are engaged, with only 4% suggesting that these employees are totally engaged. This means that there is considerable ambivalence about employee engagement, as well as a significant view (19%) that employees in the organisation are either disengaged or totally disengaged. This aligns with cross-national research findings but remains a considerable concern, given evidence from many academic and business sources that show a direct correlation between employee engagement levels and organisational financial success. It also highlights the potential significance of employee diversity as a key challenge and one that can really impact on engagement levels (e.g. Gallup, 2013).

**Table 16: Does Engagement Matter?**

	All respondents	Managers	Employees
Doesn't matter at all	5%	2%	9%
Slightly matters	6%	7%	6%
Matters somewhat	11%	10%	13%
Matters	27%	25%	29%
Matters a lot	51%	56%	44%

**Table 17: To What Degree are Employees Engaged in Your Organisation?**

	All respondents	Managers	Employees
Totally Disengaged	4%	2%	6%
Disengaged	15%	10%	21%
Ambivalent	28%	23%	34%
Engaged	49%	59%	36%
Totally Engaged	4%	7%	2%

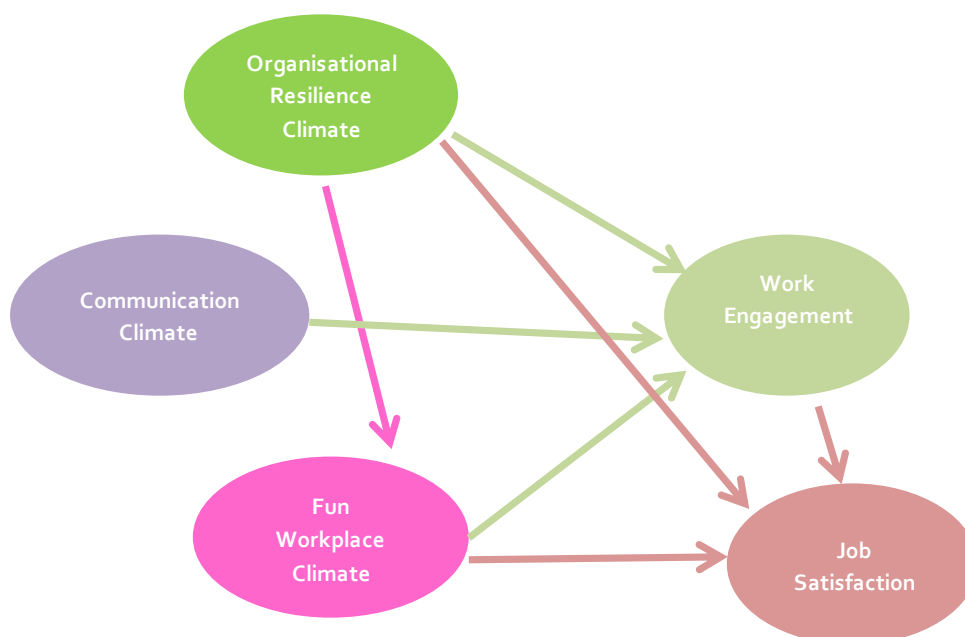
The employer-employee disconnect around employee engagement is also apparent in Table 17. Two-thirds of managers (66%) feel that the employees in their organisation are engaged, while the figure for employees is just 38%. Just 12% of managers but 27% of employees feel that employees in their organisation are disengaged or totally disengaged. Clearly, the gap in perceptions needs to be addressed if organisations are to better understand the levers that help to spark employee engagement, and when this occurs, employees' recognition that they are engaged employees.

As would be expected, those employees who show high levels of engagement with their responses are less likely to look for alternative employment while with those who are looking for a job are less likely to be engaged. While the majority of the data shows no significant trend against industry, gender or geographic status, there was a slight tendency for respondents living in Christchurch and Auckland to be less likely to be looking for work, while those in Wellington might be more inclined to look for a change.

## *Job satisfaction*

Job satisfaction is commonly defined as the extent to which the employees are satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs. It refers to a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience, and includes aspects such as enjoyment and enthusiasm about one's job.

**Figure 10: Influences on Job Satisfaction**



Overall, our respondents reported a high degree of job satisfaction, though employers showed a marked difference in their levels versus employees (see Table 18).

**Table 18: Job Satisfaction Levels**

	All respondents	Managers	Employees
Most days I am enthusiastic about my work	71%	80%	62%
I feel fairly satisfied with my present job	67%	77%	55%
I find real enjoyment in my work	65%	76%	52%

Table 18 results fit with results shown in earlier tables around employee engagement. While 80% of employers are usually enthusiastic about their work, the figure for employees is 62%. Whilst 77% of managers are fairly satisfied in their present job, this is the case for only 55% of employees, suggesting significant ambivalence or dissatisfaction among nearly half of the employees with regard to their job. Unsurprisingly, while just over half (52%) of employees find real enjoyment in their work, the figure for employers is much higher at 76%. It may be the case that managerial work is inherently more satisfying and enjoyable than that performed by employees, reflecting factors such as their greater levels of job autonomy, task range, strategic input, salary and other intrinsic and extrinsic worth factors. Serious consideration by organisations of work (re)design as well as supply-side changes (e.g. meaningful training and development) is thus emphasised to help workplaces retain staff and augment their engagement levels.

## *Performance and Happiness*

Job performance and happiness can be explored in a number of ways. TGNZES in 2013 explores 'extra role' behaviours or the actions of an employee that are over and above those normally mandated by their employment agreement for job performance. We focus specifically on behaviours towards their organisation, such as whether employees voluntarily attend work functions in order to help their organisation's image internally and externally.

The one well-being measure included in this year's TGNZES focuses on employee happiness. This is a subjective measure given the level of self-assessment required. While research is still emerging on happiness and its impact in the workplace, what has been determined is that subjective happiness is a valid construct, distinct from other well-being measures (e.g. satisfaction with life), therefore providing a useful and unique way to test well-being in this study.

Given the engagement levels perceived by respondents (53% engaged), and the direct, moderate influence of work engagement on job performance (see Figure 13); it's reasonable to assert that many respondents' organisations are experiencing a less than optimal level of job performance from their workforce.

Respondents were asked a series of questions relating to their intention to work beyond their normal responsibilities. On average, employers reported that they are more than often inclined to do so (with an average rating of 4.1 on a 5-point scale) and employees more often than sometimes likely to do this (averaging 3.7). This demonstrates a considerable level of commitment to their work and workplace by both employers and employees that extends beyond contractual obligations. Employers need to ensure that this discretionary effort or 'good will' is sustained by maintaining climates that are conducive to increased engagement. This broad approach needs to be well-embedded in the context of imminent economic upturn where staff may be able to realise (more) attractive opportunities in other workplaces.

**Figure 11: Influences on Job Performance**



In addition to the job performance construct, and as described earlier (e.g. see Table 6), the survey posed questions relating to barriers to performance in the respondents' organisation, their perceived importance and the use of a performance review process.

However, only 11% of respondents felt there are no barriers to better performance in their organisations.

### *Turnover Intentions*

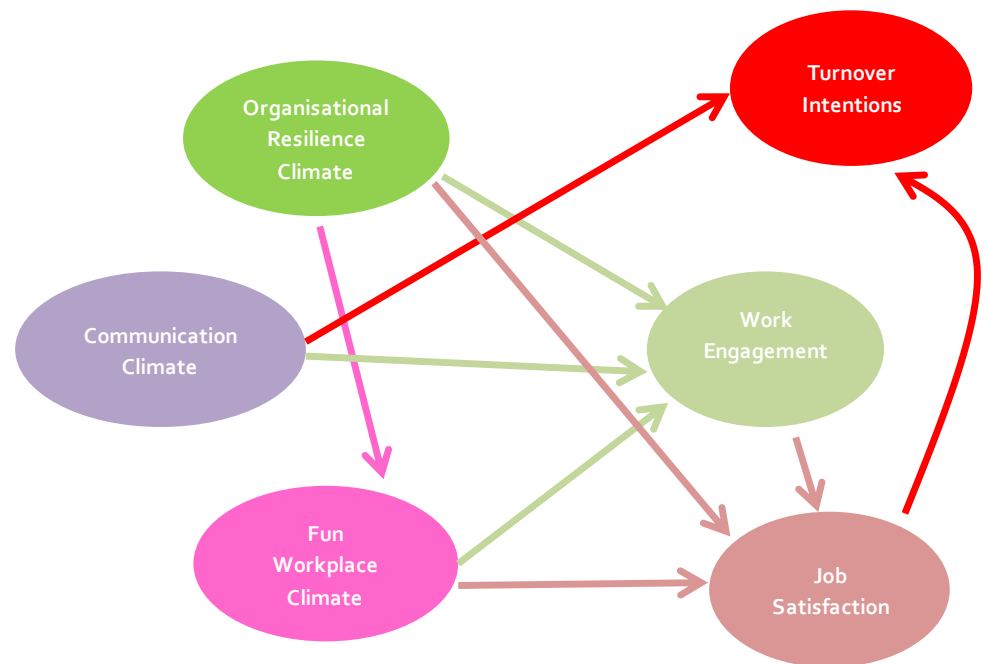
Turnover intentions were reviewed (see earlier also), with research showing that this attitude is linked to actual turnover. Turnover

intentions are an important construct because the cost of replacing staff can be high. Importantly, although it is difficult to find accurate research on the exact cost of turnover, it is commonly understood to be in the region of 35-50% of the wage/salary of the employee who leaves and some studies have indicated upto 300% of the salary. This includes costs associated with their performance waning once they decide to start looking, the cost of recruitment, time without a replacement, and training the replacement to get them up to speed.



With the Fun Workplace Climate having an indirect influence through job satisfaction on intentions to leave, having a static workplace could mean a staid and uninspiring environment for a new recruit, one that has formed cliques amongst employees so that others feel uncomfortable, or one that becomes too comfortable with the *status quo* and lacks drive, energy and passion to push the business forward.

**Figure 12: Influences on Intentions to Leave**



With respondents indicating such varying levels of experienced and anticipated turnover (see Table 4), could this be related to a perception issue given all the change organisations have experienced over the last three to five years and the restructures that have occurred? Given the impact of the distraction of this type of activity on other employees is significant and often not considered or felt to be as important as replacing those who have moved on, there is a lesson here for employers to manage departures well, including by using the right level of communication to avoid speculation. In addition, the onus is on employers to control the impact of significant change through providing employees with the ability to cope with the level of turnover that is right for their organisation in order to keep innovating and/or increase their agility to respond to likely changes – this is what we mean by creating a strong Organisational Resilience Climate.



# TGNZES Conclusions

## *Overall conclusions*

On the whole, across a range of measures, the results indicate a more positive response from managers than employees than generally emerged from the 2012 survey. This could be due to factors including managers' experience being made up of more varied or challenging work, or being privy to more detail on the success or direction of the business. Similarly, it may be indicative of employees being closer to the detail and 'feeling the heat' from different stakeholders and/or the results of poor management, or simply finding the opportunity to play 'victim'.

The 2013 results are more positive in nature than the 2012 results overall, however small pockets of concern are raised such as the decline in awareness and perceived effectiveness of activity in Diversity Management, and the perceived lack of engagement by employees overall. On the flip side, it appears that the perceived turnover has reduced significantly in the business which is good news on the cost front for businesses, and hopefully this also indicates that the significant movement, for now at least, has slowed and people are settling into their new roles?

Leaders are generally getting it more right than wrong, but inclusivity and consistency seem to be the key to continued success. Similarly, there is more alignment in thinking that communication methods, tools and styles are more closely meeting the needs of employees. Change has not appeared quite as widely in the anecdotal feedback as it did in 2012, but it is still apparent, and for some, not being managed effectively. The barriers to performance are similar to last year, and are still about 'blame', an increase in personal accountability might be the message of the day. However, with excess workload still the most significant barrier to performance and IT playing a significant part in managing workload and being accessible, there is also a role for the employer to ensure this balance doesn't tip in the wrong direction.

## *TGNZES Study Model conclusions*

Overall, the relationships across all areas surveyed were as anticipated. Unsurprisingly, leadership style helps to form 'climates' in the workplace which significantly influence the culture of a business (see Figure 13). This was strongly supported in the cases of both the Organisational Resilience Climate and the Communication Climate. In turn, only the Organisational Resilience Climate showed a strong influence on the Fun Workplace Climate. However, the extent

of the impact that the Organisational Resilience Climate had was not anticipated. That said, once the mechanics were understood, the connection between a resilient individual and a resilient organisation became clear. The employee can create and be part of the fun climate because they feel secure, supported and confident about the business, their role and the deadlines they need to meet.

Other findings of note were that:

- Organisational Resilience Climate was also positively related to Work Engagement and Job Satisfaction, although the strengths of these relationships were modest;
- Communication Climate was modestly related to Work Engagement, but had a strong negative influence on Turnover Intentions (meaning employees were less likely to consider leaving), and a strong and positive influence on Job Performance
- Fun Workplace Climate was weakly related to Job Satisfaction, although much more strongly related to Work Engagement, and moderately related to Happiness;
- Work Engagement was very strongly related to Job Satisfaction and modestly related Happiness and Job Performance; and
- Job Satisfaction had a strong, negative influence on Turnover Intentions (with employees less likely to consider leaving). However, it did not influence Job Performance as one might expect. This is because in the current study, we found that Work Engagement was the dominant influence on an employee's willingness to give their discretionary effort.

Finally, a weak but significant relationship was found between Happiness and Job Performance, supporting the notion that a happy employee is a productive one.

**Table 19: Organisational Climates ratings by employers and employees**

<i>Organisational Climates</i>	<i>Employers</i>	<i>Employees</i>
Leadership Styles	3.5	3.1
Fun Workplace	3.2	2.8
Organisational Resilience	3.4	2.9
Communication	3.6	3.1

# Appendices

# 1. Survey demographics

Respondent Demographics were as follows:

Total number of respondents: 334.

- 49.1% of respondents were managers, while 50.9% were employees.
- 56.3% of respondents were female, with 43.7% male.
- 75.6% were either married or defacto, with only 24.4% single.

Respondents ranged in age from 21 years to 70 years, with an average age of 31.5 years.

By ethnicity, the majority reported being of New Zealand European descent (81.2%). Being of 'Other ethnicity' was next highest (10.7%), followed by Maori (3.9%), Indian (2.1%), Chinese (1.2%), and Pacifica peoples (0.9%).

Hours worked ranged from 15 hours to 77 hours per week, although the average was 31 hours per week.

The majority of respondents were permanent staff (88.3%), with 7.8% contract staff, and 3.9% self-employed.

Respondents came from across New Zealand, although Auckland, as expected, dominated:

**Table 20: Geographical Spread of Respondents**

Northland	0.9%	East Coast	0.9%
Coromandel	1.2%	Manawatu/Whanganui	7.2%
Bay of Plenty	3.9%	Wairarapa	0.3%
Taranaki	3.3%	Nelson/Tasman	0.6%
Hawke's Bay	0.6%	Canterbury	4.2%
Wellington/Kapiti	16.8%	Southland	1.8%
West Coast	1.2%	Waikato	7.5%
Otago	0.6%	Auckland	48.9%

Similarly, respondents came from a wide range of industries:

**Table 21: Industries/Sectors Represented by Respondents**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	2.7%
Mining	0.9%
Manufacturing	9.7%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	2.4%
Construction	1.2%
Wholesale Trade	1.2%
Retail Trade	5.5%
Accommodation and Food Services	2.4%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	1.8%
Information Media and Telecommunications	5.8%
Financial and Insurance Services	6.7%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	5.2%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	12.7%
Administrative and Support Services	1.5%
Public Administration and Safety	8.5%
Education and Training	12.4%
Health Care and Social Assistance	4.5%
Arts and Recreation Services	0.6%
Other	14.2%

Overall, respondents came from a number of professions including labourers, plant operators, sales representatives, health professionals, IT professionals, and hospitality workers. The largest numbers of respondents were:

**Table 22: Professions Represented by Respondents**

Human Resource Professionals = 23.9%	23.9%
CEO or General Manager = 11.1%	11.1%
Supervisors or Team Leaders = 8.8%	8.8%
Specialist Manager = 9.4%	9.4%
Education Professionals = 6.1%	6.1%

## 2. Methodological approach

The *Great New Zealand Employment Survey* is a nationwide online survey. In 2013, approximately 5,500 participant invitations were sent to potential respondents, of which 334 useful responses were received. Respondents for this survey came from a variety of contacts and contributed their input voluntarily. Contributors could choose whether they responded as an employee or as an employer, although the survey was identical for either group.

The survey was fielded online from mid-July to early-August 2013, and included questions on a wide range of employment topics, including:

- The current business environment
- Employee attraction and retention
- Leadership
- Organisational communication
- Fun at work
- Organisational resilience
- Managing and improving performance
- Employee engagement
- Employee attitudes and behaviours; and
- Diversity in the workplace.

### Measures

All measures used in TGNZES were established, well-validated measures except that for the Organisational Resilience Climate. This is a new construct designed for this study. All the measures used in the model were confirmed with established statistical analysis techniques that confirmed their robustness and appropriateness, including the new Organisational Resilience Climate measure. Analysis was conducted using SPSS version 20. Additional analysis showed no differences between regions.

## Results

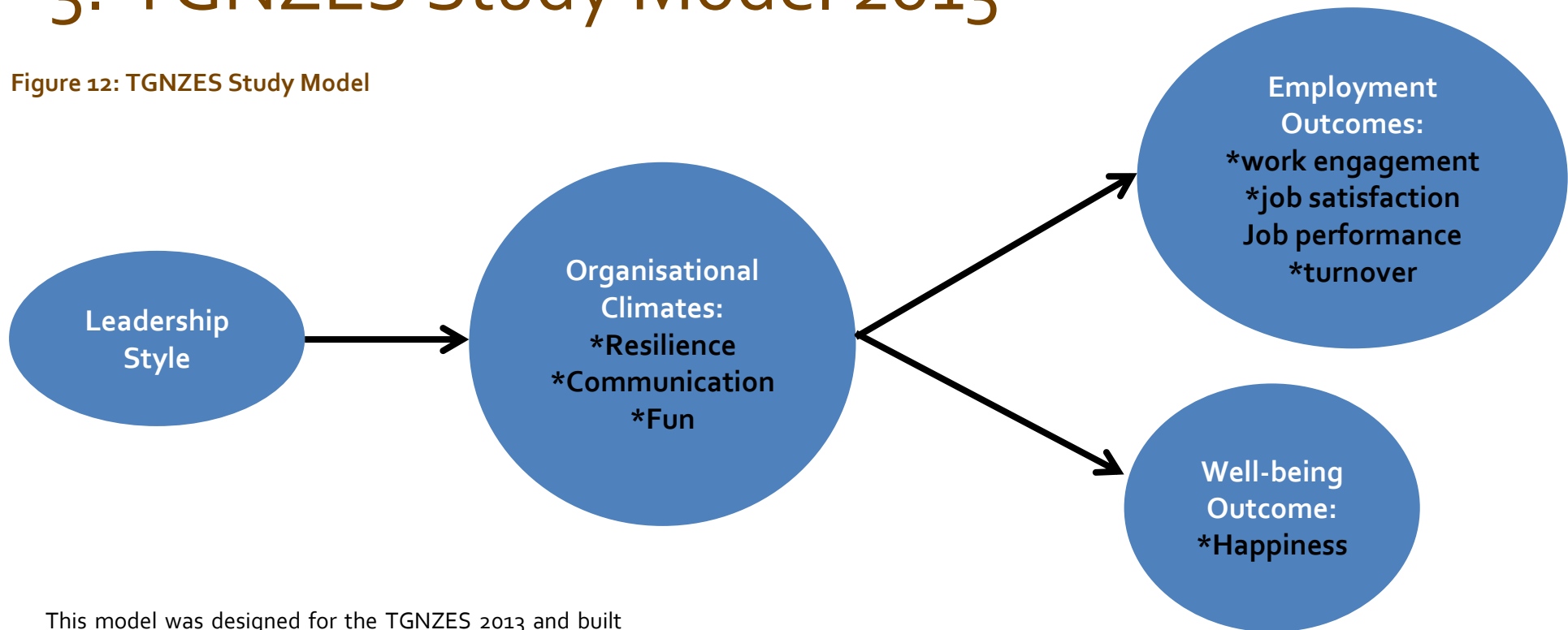
The results showed the measures were significantly related as expected. A number of regression models were run, based on the established literature, and a summary of the results is shown in Figure 13. Aligned with common practice, a number of variables were controlled for which might otherwise influence the relationships tested here. These included gender, marital status, age, ethnicity, and average hours worked and permanent staff status. The effects and relationships found between all the study variables are after these variables have been controlled for, although they did not adversely influence the relationships tested here.

# THE GREAT NEW ZEALAND EMPLOYMENT SURVEY<sup>2013</sup>



### 3. TGNZES Study Model 2013

Figure 12: TGNZES Study Model

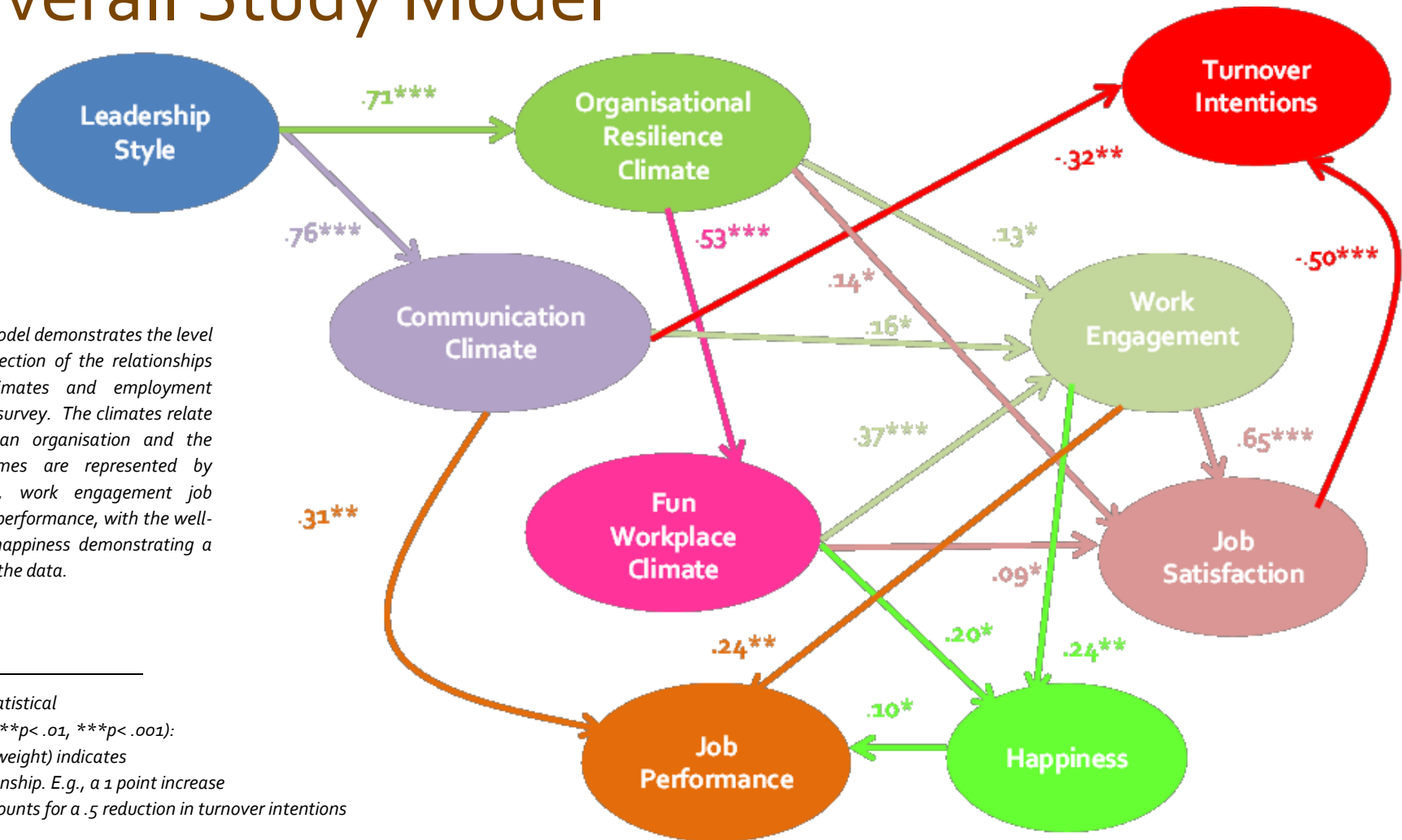


This model was designed for the TGNZES 2013 and built on the work undertaken in previous survey years to uncover the underlying relationships between leadership, culture and outcomes.

## 4. Overall Study Model

Figure 13:  
Overall Study  
Model<sup>5</sup>

The Overall Study Model demonstrates the level of influence and direction of the relationships found between climates and employment outcomes, from the survey. The climates relate to the culture of an organisation and the employment outcomes are represented by turnover intentions, work engagement, job satisfaction and job performance, with the well-being construct of happiness demonstrating a small significance in the data.



<sup>5</sup> asterisks indicate statistical significance:  $*p < .05$ ,  $**p < .01$ ,  $***p < .001$ ; number shown (beta weight) indicates strength of the relationship. E.g., a 1 point increase in job satisfaction accounts for a .5 reduction in turnover intentions

# Bios of contributors

**Clare Parkes** founded The Great New Zealand Employment Survey (TGNZES) in 2009 in an effort to seek greater insight into how the New Zealand workforce thinks, acts and reacts within their working environment. In addition to her involvement in TGNZES, Clare is the principal consultant at Clarian Human Resources, and the CEO of Beyond Learning. Both businesses specialise in outsourced HR solutions in New Zealand and the UK. A veteran HR specialist with over 20 years of experience in HR, Clare is also a member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (MCIPD) in the United Kingdom.

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