

Niche Consulting Limited

Niche Update

Special points of interest:

- Traci Pregnant
- New pricing 2007
- New staff Members
- Neisha's Wedding
- Safety Research
- Xmas Hours

Welcome Jayne & Krasi

We are delighted to announce the appointment of **Jayne Cobham** to the role of Intern Psychologist with Niche Consulting. This year Jayne finished her Masters in Organisational Psychology and is currently applying for the 2007 Diploma programme to register as a Psychologist. She comes with a wealth of business and consulting experience. Jayne managed the implementation and start up of the Recruitment Centre at Auckland District Health Board. Her role as the manager of the centre led a team that provided both recruitment services and human resource administration for the approximately 8500 staff within the DHB. Jayne joins us 4 days per week in 2006 and will increase to full-time in early 2007.



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Krasimira Kirova (Krasi) has also joined us recently as a part-time test administrator. She has just finished her BA in Psychology and won the Senior Prize in Psychology from University of Auckland in 2005. She intends to begin her Masters in 2007. Krasi came from Bulgaria in 2004 and is enjoying some hands-on experience in a consultancy specialising in organisational psychology.



Xmas Opening Hours at Niche Consulting



Niche Consulting will be closing for Xmas holidays from the afternoon of Friday 22nd December 2007 and re-opening on Monday 8th January 2007. **Merry Xmas and Happy Holidays to you all.**



Traci's Big News—baby girl on the way!



Traci and Danny are expecting a gorgeous bouncing girl who is due in February 2007. This bundle of joy will add to the family and Alina is looking forward to having a baby sister to play with.

Traci is taking maternity leave until October 2007 and Jayne and Krasi have big shoes to fill in her absence.

Professional Fees Review

We endeavour to provide both a quality service and one that is cost effective to our clients. In the past 9 years our assessment fees have remained the same, in spite of significant increases in the test costs and overheads. To continue absorbing these costs is not a sustainable situation and we are therefore having to pass on some of the increases to clients. For example, over this period the costs of tests alone in the standard battery of assessments has increased by over 100% and we are seeing more of our test administrator providers charging higher hourly test administration fees than ever before, some as high as Neisha's hourly rate of \$250 per hour.

We did a little exercise and took the 1998 standard price for the full assessment report \$890+GST and calculated the amount inflation would indicate this same service would cost today. The result was \$1078.25+GST, which is a cumulative 21.2% change in the base fee. It is an interesting exercise to do and is available on the following website: <http://www.rbnz.govt.nz/statistics/0135595.html>

In the early new year we will send out more specific fee change information but wanted to warn you in advance of our rationale behind it. Thank you in advance for your support and understanding.

What is \$500 in 1998 worth in today's currency once you add inflation?



Answer : \$605.76

Why do people act unsafely in the workplace?

Mullen (2004) conducted a cross industry study of the organisational and social factors which explain why individuals engage in unsafe work practices. It was found the following factors were commonly shared by individuals as influencers of unsafe work practices:

ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

Role overload – Perceptions that there simply is not enough time to perform one's role safely. Being overloaded to the degree performance is affected can be a consequence of inadequate resources, training and time to perform the role requirements.

Performance over Safety – Pressure from bosses and peers to get the job done was another factor that influenced whether individuals would engage in unsafe behaviours. If the boss is telling you to hurry up people were more likely to cut corners on safety.

Socialisation Influences – The socialisation of a worker into the job often affects their expectations of what to do and what is "normal" and acceptable behaviour more than training and induction programmes. The "way we do things around here" often has more impact on an individual than the rules or the espoused safety policies.

Safety Attitudes – The attitudes of both management and co-workers towards safety also play a role in determining whether an individual would engage in unsafe practices. For instance, if a manager shows a negative attitude when an employee raises a safety concern, then it is unlikely it will be raised again.

Perceived Risks – In some cases people underestimate the perceived risk of an activity however, in other cases people are well aware of the risks however they still continued in unsafe behaviours. For some there is a trade off between the risk and the perceived positive benefits of the risk taking.

IMAGE

Macho or tough person syndrome – Maintaining ones image in the workplace also is extremely important to individuals and as such the fear of jeopardising their image can influence whether they may engage in unsafe behaviours. The need to appear tough or macho seems to be a theme where it inhibits safety behaviours.

Job Competence – Needing to seem competent to others also may influence safety behaviours. In one case a woman would carry a heavier load than she needed to, or could safely manage, in order to prove to others she was competent and strong enough to do the job.

AVOIDING NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES

Teasing and harassment from co-workers – Some workers choose not to use safety equipment to avoid being teased by others or being made fun of. Not only was the threat of teasing a concern, harassment was a major issue as well which affected the use of safety equipment.

Fear of losing a good position – If individuals are in what is perceived to be a good position, then, for some individuals, the fear of potentially losing this position can then influence them in their safety behaviours. This fear drove some to cover up accidents to avoid the possible negative consequence that management might impose.

Summarised from : Mullen, J (2004) Investigating factors that influence individual safety behaviour at work. Journal of Safety Research 35, 275-285.

Most of above influencers will be more or less felt by people depending on their own personality preferences and attitudes. This is probably why other research has shown that those people who measure low on *Conscientiousness* factors and high on *Neuroticism* (having many anxieties and low self-esteem) are more likely to be involved in workplace incidents and accidents. Other research has found the more *Agreeable* an individual the more likely they would be accident-free. If you are concerned about reducing accident and incident rates it is recommended you implement psychometric assessments to assist in selecting individuals who are more likely to act safely and be accident-free.



Neisha & Franks' Wedding—14th October 2006

Neisha & Frank married after meeting twenty months ago. They were treated to a beautiful day in Matakana where in front of a small group of friends they tied the knot. Frank's daughter Iselin and Neisha's goddaughter Daena were the flower girls at an informal ceremony in a quaint B&B called 'The Castle'. The fantastic Dawson's Catering put on an amazing wedding breakfast and it was a special and memorable day.



Where assessment expertise is part craft and part science



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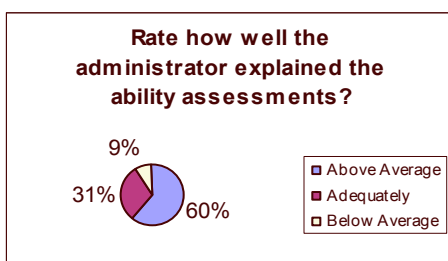
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Candidate Feedback

Earlier this year we started an initiative to get feedback from your candidates on the experience they have with Niche Consulting and our affiliated test administration consultancies around the country. It was important for us to gauge the level of care and service candidates experienced, as well as identify any areas we could improve our service to them.

So far we have had 124 people respond to our request to give us feedback. Given candidates often do not like assessment, it is nice to see that most have a positive experience with us. Over 90% rated our service as adequate or above average. Candidates are sent a link 1-2 weeks after the assessment and generally at this point they have been given feedback and know whether they are successful or not. We make the feedback anonymous unless they wish to give their name so we can respond to any specific concerns. With any negative comments we investigate the comments and go back to the individual concerned. Some of the results and comments are given below:



"Thought the service was very professional and friendly - I almost enjoyed the process!"
"The administrator was friendly and very clear & precise with her explanations." *"The woman that gave me the results was excellent."* *"Overall very polished service."* *"The verbal results I received were a very true reflection on what I would deem to be where I am currently at."* *"Highly professional and friendly service."* *"Get a slower stopwatch"* *"I have never done an assessment like this, found it very hard for a first timer. Although, after getting feedback, it was great. I now know what I need to improve on."*