

Open the door from the inside - where to start

Written by Kahurangi Malcolm and Frae Cairns.

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If we had a dollar for every time a business told us they've tried knocking on a 'Buyers' door and can't get their foot in it, we'd be rolling in it. Trying to get a foot in the door with Buyers can be hard work and the doors often seem like they are absolutely bolted shut.

There are plenty of capable Māori and Pasifika businesses that cannot seem to catch a break.

The thing is, Buyer doors can only be opened from the inside so as procurers, we need to intentionally open the door.

'Opening the front door' is a term we use to describe how to break down the barriers and engage meaningfully with Māori and Pasifika businesses.

It means giving a Māori and/or Pasifika business the time of day to talk with them about their capability and capacity to deliver on works you need delivered.

It means presenting quality opportunities to suppliers you perhaps haven't used before. Quality opportunities are important. Using a hangi cooker for a one-off event during Māori language week, and not doing anything else during the year is tokenism.

Opening the front door means identifying the projects that could be used to pilot different tactics to diversify your spend.

It means trialing and testing different things to see what works to support Māori and Pasifika businesses to be successful within your organisation.

Where can you start?

1.) Understand your baseline

Collate data on your current spend with Māori and/or Pasifika businesses. Using this data, you can think about some realistic supplier diversity goals for your organisation. You can also identify which businesses you already work with, that are Māori and/or Pasifika owned.

2.) Find the low hanging fruit

Look for contract opportunities within the organisation which are low risk, and you know there is a great supply of highly capable Māori and/or Pasifika businesses.



3.) Give it a go

Start small and follow through to the end. You don't need to start with a multi-million-dollar project, it could be as small as thinking about who has the contract for providing your facilities maintenance, or event planning, or signage and business cards, or even your videography (but don't let that be a reason to stop you going for the big projects).

4.) Look at your pipeline of works

For some organisations, like those in construction for example, the pipeline of projects can be quite clear and you will have a fair idea of what subcontracting opportunities will come up. Think about these and meet with some businesses before they go out to potential subbies.

5.) Celebrate the successes

Everyone loves a good success story. Once you have some wins, talk about your good work. Show others in your organisation how it works and what it takes.

6.) Reflect on learnings to inform policy

We are big advocates for piloting before or during policy development. If you wait for the perfect policy before you take action, you could be waiting a very long time. Plus, it's always helpful to have practical experience and examples to help inform policy development.

Where will you start?

About us

Puna Awarau is a Māori consultancy firm working at the forefront of Indigenous procurement in Aotearoa. With unrivaled expertise in supplier diversity, we are your specialist support. Generating Māori (and Pasifika) socio-economic outcomes within organisations and major projects.

We work with government agencies, local body authorities, Iwi, Māori land trusts, private enterprises and charitable trusts that want to better understand what social value they can create through their spending.

We understand the power of procurement in creating change and believe a more equitable Aotearoa is possible. We offer independent expert advice and support to organisations working towards broader outcomes through social procurement, progressive procurement and/or supplier diversity.

- We are 100% Māori owned
- We are 100% wāhine owned

Puna Awarau founders have whakapapa links to Ngaati Te Ata Waiohua, Te Rarawa, Te Waiariki, Ngāti Tūtae, Ngāi Tuupoto, Ngāti Reinga, Te Hikutu, Te Aupouri, Ngāti Kahu.

Contact

Frae Cairns (Ngāti Kahu, Te Aupōuri)
Managing Director | Puna Awarau
Wāea: 0210646037
īmera: frae@punaawarau.com
Whārangī ipurangi: www.punaawarau.co.nz

Kahurangi Malcolm (Ngaati Te Ata Waiohua, Te Waiariki)
Managing Director | Puna Awarau
Wāea: 02102262613
īmera: kahurangi@punaawarau.com
Whārangī ipurangi: www.punaawarau.co.nz