



Xero - people are healthier and more productive when they are given flexibility

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Xero is a New Zealand domiciled public technology company, offering a cloud-based accounting software platform for small and medium-sized businesses. It was started in 2006, employs 3,500 people worldwide, with 1,700 based in New Zealand.

Xero proactively recruits for diversity, and has targets in place to make sure that they have at least 30 percent women at board level, and 40 percent at leadership level and across the whole company. As a company who hires lots of engineers, they know there is a gender gap in this sector, and so always aim for 50 percent of their graduate recruits to be female, to do their part to create change. When recruiting, they also pay for what the role is worth rather than leaving it open to what people ask for, use salary bands, regularly assess their remuneration, and run unconscious bias and other training to avoid discrimination across the company.

Xero also recognises that people are healthier and more productive when they are given flexibility, especially women as they currently do more caregiving and other unpaid work. Part time work is offered, technology is used as an enabler for remote working, teams decide together when they need to be face-to-face, people can start and end their workdays when they want, they have a variety of different work stations to choose from when in the office, and are supported to bring their authentic selves to work. “We create an environment where there’s no personal self and work self” says Ryan Ghisi, their General Manager of Global People Programs, “and we base what we do on trust, and create guidelines for the 19 out of 20 people who will do the right thing, rather than on the 1 person who might not”.

Another part of flexibility at Xero is being really supportive when people become parents or grow their families. Xero supports people while they are pregnant, while they are on parental leave, and to return to work the way that works for them. They also promote fathers to take parental leave, and offer any parent 26 weeks full pay while on leave, and 6 weeks full pay partner leave, which can be taken anytime within the first year. They also make sure that everyone has pay reviews when on leave and they are regularly kept in touch with (if they want to be). They also send out baby hampers and meal deliveries, provide childcare discounts, encourage children to come into the office during school holidays and receive all these benefits no matter how long they’ve been at Xero. ‘The success of our business is built on the foundation of a world class employee experience’ says Ryan. ‘Supporting our employees during parental leave and providing a smooth transition back into the workforce for them is an important part of this experience.’