How BetterWork helps people work better, enabled by Assurity Cloud.

CASE STUDY

WorkSafe Innovation team discussing the requirements of the BetterWork platform

WorkSafe New Zealand is our country's primary workplace health and safety regulator, employing over 600 staff to ensure that all New Zealanders have access to healthy work, safe work, and equitable outcomes in the workplace.

When WorkSafe set out to explore how crowdsourcing could be used as a way of improving work and worker participation, they wanted to develop a platform to go straight to the experts – the workers themselves. The new BetterWork NZ platform breaks down traditional barriers to sourcing ideas and information from workers across every level, business, and industry, allowing instant entry of ideas, solutions, or unique approaches to problem solving on daily tasks. Once an idea has been posted, you can add to it with comments and polls, expanding and stretching those ideas in a way that is transparent and open. The value of this platform is in capturing the ingenuity of workers on the front line, equipping them with a tool to record and share methods, approaches and techniques which get the job done faster and more efficiently. It also provides managers and leaders with more ideas to improve the way work is organised and designed.

assur†ity

WORKSAFE
NEW ZEALAND | MAHI HAUMARU AOTEAROA

The concept was sound, and initial testing showed promise but moving the platform from experimental to production presented an unusual challenge: the prototype that had been developed experimentally needed to be deployed onto a platform approved for use by Government entities, which has higher security, privacy and accessibility standards.

WorkSafe NZ found a ready answer from Assurity Consulting, which seamlessly moved the app into its Assurity Cloud in a matter of weeks. As a result, the BetterWork platform quickly went from concept to beta to production and is already delivering invaluable insights.

WorkSafe Innovation team reviewing the BetterWork platform online

Situation

Accessibility is one of the great advantages of publicly accessible cloud platforms. For the inconsequential cost, an organisation like WorkSafe can spin up a cloud tenancy and experiment or explore ideas under the 'fail fast' mantra.

One such idea, explains Richmond Johnston, Innovation Manager at WorkSafe, was a better way of connecting workers with management on the crucial topic of how they actually get things done. "In the past, this was achieved with macro level, centralised and time-intensive tools to explore problems or challenges people might face in doing their work – things like workshops or clipboard surveys. These tools limit participation, cannot validate differing conditions across organisations and contexts, are inaccessible, and can't provide transparent information flow."

As a result, Richmond says solving business problems is unnecessarily difficult. "Workers don't have the right tools to share and explore their problems and find innovative solutions that work for them."

While mulling the issue over, the Innovation team came up with the idea for a crowdsourcing platform that equips workers to log activities and ideas and connect them directly with management. This platform was fully funded via the Digital Government Innovation Fund. The team went straight to sandboxing, quickly establishing viability and building a candidate app.

It soon became obvious WorkSafe was on to a good thing, and it set about transitioning the platform for production. That's when the problem became apparent. "While cloud services are cheap and easy to access, you can't roll out a state-backed platform without an approved platform which offers the security, stability and performance expected by the Government. That's why it has pre-approved platforms available so that the general public can have confidence in any government service."

Solution

Assurity Cloud is a secure Platform-as-a-Service for experimentation, collaboration and co-design. Offering portable assets and full functionality including user access control, developers can build, deploy and run applications, benefiting from real-time metrics and built-in quality assurance. This is beyond valuable to the development of a new crowdsourcing application like BetterWork NZ, but what WorkSafe's Innovation team was really excited about was the partnership they had with Assurity. "You don't know what you don't know, but what we did know was a safe pair of hands was necessary," said Richmond, "We approached Assurity Consulting for a solution; as it happens, AWS is a government-approved platform, and their Assurity Cloud is built on AWS - things were looking up."

Richmond says that even from their initial meeting, Assurity demonstrated an insightful ability to understand requirements, challenges and recommend solutions. "We don't have AWS expertise ourselves and quite frankly, focusing on the infrastructure is not where we add value. When Assurity Consulting got involved, they quickly provided the platform, expertise, and experience necessary to take crowdsourcing off the drawing board and put it in the hands of workers."

Generally used as a platform housing test assets for the likes of Government entities, including Inland Revenue, Assurity Cloud meets the Government's stringent security standards and other certifications. The platform was set up to provide WorkSafe with a 'prototype' view, with consulting support available to guide the 'lift and shift' from the previous cloud to the new one. As is typical with Assurity Consulting, a 'lean in' approach saw the company become part of the WorkSafe project team, participating in and contributing to standups and delivery teams while sharing knowledge and guiding towards the final solution architecture.

With Assurity Cloud based on AWS Pivotal Cloud Foundry Platform as a Service, a service broker model was adopted, exposing AWS standard features and making them accessible to WorkSafe developers. This includes database services, object storage, and Identity Management - essentially easing the work of the developers in creating a production-ready app.

WorkSafe Innovation team listening intently to the solution overview of Assurity Cloud

Results

Richmond says there's a simple way of explaining what Assurity Consulting achieved for WorkSafe.

"Assurity saved our bacon. It would be expensive and painful if we had to do audits and train up on a new platform. We didn't have to do that. With a pragmatic approach and a fair price, we got where we needed to be without any fuss. I can safely say we wouldn't have been in production now without their help."

Richmond Johnston
Innovation Manager
WorkSafe New Zealand

What that means in practice is that the Crowdsourcing platform is in the hands of those who can benefit from it – Aotearoa NZ's frontline workers.

Richmond is proud to be part of innovation by Kiwis for Kiwis and is making the application available across multiple industries and government departments for free.

For example, it is being used in forestry, where it is a crowdsourcing innovative technical solution to improve the working environment. In Construction, Fulton Hogan, Downer and Fletchers are collaborating in search of solutions to common problems, beginning with physical and verbal abuse directed towards roadside workers.

In both examples, the businesses have made commitments to trial and/or prototype a selection of the most viable and desirable ideas. Richmond says already more than 60 ideas have come through for consideration and analysis.

"Crowdsourcing goes beyond health and safety. It's about improving work by engaging those who do it; if we can do that, outcomes will be better, and people will be happier in their jobs. Thanks to Assurity Consulting, we've moved a great idea into the workforce with minimal fuss. And best of all, thanks to their work, I don't look any older, either," he concludes.

At a glance

Company:
WorkSafe New Zealand

Industry:
Government

Requirements:

When WorkSafe set out to explore how crowdsourcing could be used to improve work and worker participation, they wanted to develop a platform to go straight to the experts – the workers themselves.

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Solution:

WorkSafe approached Assurity Consulting for a solution; as it happens, AWS is a government-approved platform, and their Assurity Cloud is built on AWS.

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Outcomes Achieved:

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As a result, the BetterWork platform quickly went from concept to beta to production. It has already delivered invaluable insights in the weeks since it launched.