



# KiaOraMai. Welcome to Our Place

By Grant Woolliams

## Great business service wins hearts - and the wallets attached to them.

An avenue leading to these wallets has a simple signpost: "Service St."

Over the past couple of years more than 100 Kiwi's have won an Awesome Service Award for using this avenue to their customer's hearts.

Working in a wide variety of businesses spread across an array of industry sectors they have been nominated for an Awesome Service Award by impressed clients and customers, and then selected by Auckland Chamber of Commerce chief executive Michael Barnett as winners.

As can be seen below the awards are supported by a number of iconic businesses.

NewstalkZB is worthy of special mention. More than 90 percent of those who make successful nominations say they heard about the Awesome Service Awards while listening to NewstalkZB. It is a powerful marketing tool.

In an exciting development the awards have become the KiaOraMai Awesome Service Awards.

Sponsorship of the Awesome Service Awards by KiaOraMai completes a virtuous circle: KiaOraMai equips staff to provide inspirational customer service. The Awesome Service Awards reward them for doing so.

KiaOraMai (loosely translated as "Giddy and welcome to our place") is not your usual customer service programme. Its essence is a focus on lifting service skills at all levels of business through delivery of uniquely Kiwi service.

The development and delivery of KiaOraMai is a partnership between the Tourism Industry Association (TIA) and six service-related industry training organisations, led by the Aviation, Tourism and Travel Training Organisation (ATTTO).

Launched by Prime Minister and Minister for Tourism, John Key, in 2009 it has been rolled out across New Zealand - endorsed by mayors, Regional Tourism Organisations and Chambers of Commerce, and those who have participated in the programme.

ATTTO's chief executive, Elizabeth Valentine, says its name "speaks volumes. 'Kia ora mai' conveys a strong sense of bringing the very best of Kiwi attitude to every level of customer contact."

KiaOraMai is targeted at enhancing the service performance of frontline staff across all levels of seniority.

"It's also about providing awesome service across a wide range of service businesses. Whether a golf course South of Auckland, a hairdresser in Hokitika or a bus driver in Blenheim, there's always an opportunity to better engage with visitors and customers and to help them have a memorable customer experience."

The programme, which hinges around a one day workshop, impresses participants.

The HR manager at Aoraki, Mount Cook Alpine Village, Leonie Rasmussen, recently had 11 of her staff complete the workbook and workshop-based programme. They were each required to do a simple project designed to increase their knowledge of local and regional services and attractions. They then learned how to apply their new-found knowledge to assisting their customers and expanding the service experience at Aoraki Mount Cook.

She says KiaOraMai encouraged staff to sell the whole region. "They really enjoyed doing it and learnt how to talk to a wide range of people without being pushy, yet to add value to their visitor experiences."

Auckland International Airport operations officer, Papaterai William, says his KiaOraMai workshop was "amazing."

"It was way beyond expectation...each session was very informative and helpful in so many ways. It helped me realise how important customers are and has given me an ability to create empathy statements to ease passengers/customers in ways that will make them feel wanted and welcome to this Airport."

Elizabeth Valentine says with the Rugby World Cup now less than a year away it is critical for employers to get their teams trained to the KiaOraMai standard so their businesses are able to take full advantage of the business opportunities for the event and beyond.

"KiaOraMai represents a fresh approach to service education and delivery that empowers and motivates, helps secure jobs, and improves profitability."

"The cost of the one-day workshop is just \$110.00. The return? Exactly what your customers do when they get awesome service. They come back."

For more information and to enrol your team go to [www.kiaoramai.co.nz](http://www.kiaoramai.co.nz).

In another positive development for the KiaOraMai Awesome Service Awards FairGo doyen Kevin Milne has graciously lent his voice to the NewstalkZB promotion of the awards.

Voted New Zealand's second most trusted Kiwi in a Readers Digest survey this year, Kevin completes another virtuous circle. For 25 years he has (necessarily) helped highlight bad service. The KiaOraMai Awesome Service Awards reward the good guys.

And when one of them gives you awesome service go to [www.awesome-service.co.nz](http://www.awesome-service.co.nz) and nominate them for a KiaOraMai Awesome Service Award.

