

Applied Research



Work and Income provides financial assistance and employment services throughout New Zealand. We offer a single point of contact for New Zealanders needing job search support, financial assistance and in-work support. Work and Income helps people into work and pays income support on behalf of the Government.

THE CHALLENGE

The NZ Employment Service and the then Department of Work and Income required an assessment procedure for job seekers. Their aim was to confirm the risk factors associated with being long-term unemployed. Further to this, the organisation wanted to use the risk model to better allocate in-house resources according to the greatest area of need. This assignment was New Zealand's response to an O.E.C.D. initiative on predicting long-term unemployment.

OPRA'S SOLUTION

Over a four-year period, OPRA took a lead role in developing a risk assessment model solution for New Zealand's public employment agency.

The solution included:

- Development of a theoretical model to explain unemployment
- Conducting one of the largest predictive validity studies within New Zealand's public employment arena (over 5,000 respondents participated in this study)
- Development of a feedback model for giving feedback to the job seeker
- The building of a resource allocation framework for the NZ Employment Service.

The work delivered by OPRA culminated into the building of a self-assessment tool that could be completed by job seekers throughout New Zealand. This fully computerised solution utilised cutting edge technology from Intergen, whose software allowed for complex predictive validity equations to be incorporated into the final solution.

RESULTS

- The assessment procedure developed by OPRA was termed Needs Based Assessment (NBA) and has formed the backbone of job seeker assessment at Work and Income New Zealand since 1997.
- OPRA have been commissioned by both the British Columbia local government and the New Zealand government to provide on-going technical advice on assessment modelling of job seekers.

"OPRA were prepared to work with the uncertainty and scope-creep that R&D projects inevitably have, yet still produce quality work to very tight deadlines. They are great at managing organisational tensions which arise when piloting new developments, because of their relationship management skills and the quality of their thinking. "

Marianne Dozci
Project Manager