



Best&Less

Best and Less

A Taste of Harmony brings 'Besties' together

As one of Australia's major clothing retailers employing over 4,300 staff (Besties) from a range of different backgrounds, Best and Less has a firm commitment to cultural diversity, involving each of its 196 stores, Support Centre and Distribution Centre in over 400 A Taste of Harmony events.

Tracy Tuman, People and Culture Lead, said the campaign forms part of the organisation's annual business calendar and is one of the major highlights for staff every year.

"As a business, we place a huge emphasis on celebrating all walks of life. That's what being a Bestie is all about! Our customers come from all different backgrounds, so why would our workplace be any different? A Taste of Harmony is the best way to celebrate, understand and appreciate all our cultural backgrounds in a fun and down to earth way," said Tracy.

Working alongside Tracy is Megan Tulley, People and Culture Specialist, Queensland and Northern NSW, who plays a big role in communicating the initiative to stores across the country.

"A Taste of Harmony provides our Besties at every store the chance to stop, come together as a team and get to know each other on a different level. I'm always so impressed by the efforts our Besties make in creating home-cooked meals, sharing not only their food but also their story. It's a really special occasion for us."

One of the challenges large retailers face when implementing initiatives like A Taste of Harmony is that staff have limited access to computers which makes communication and registration a little

more difficult. But with some clever marketing and forward planning, Best and Less has shown how these challenges can be overcome.

Here are some of Megan's 'top tips' for success:

Get started early

Ensure store managers receive instructions and relevant promotional materials at least four weeks' ahead of the event so they have plenty of time to prepare.

Enable all staff to be involved

Remind stores they can hold their event at any point over a set week (we tie it in with Harmony Day) and that events can be held over a series of days or hours so that all can be involved, including school casuals and those who work part-time.

Empower and inspire

Rather than telling staff what you want them to do, let them decide!

Provide ideas and inspiration to get them thinking about how to frame their event e.g. choose one country as your theme for the day or bring a dish from your favourite cuisine.

If staff don't want to talk about their own cultural background that's okay - they can celebrate a culture they have a personal interest in or that of their husband, wife or partner. Last year, one staff member brought home-made croissants because her dream was to go to France.

Some clever comms makes all the difference

Making a concerted effort with communications for the event will pay off!

We identified every possible communication method and used it.

All staff log on to our intranet portal at least once a week, managers more frequently, so we made this our central point of communications with regular updates and reminders.

Last year we created and distributed a short video titled, 'What does this event mean to me?' where we included messages from team members, store managers, regional managers and senior leaders across the business about their personal connection with A Taste of Harmony – we made it a bit of fun & our teams loved it!

Each store also has its own closed Instagram account where stories and photos are shared – we encouraged them to share photos of their event.

A Taste of Harmony was also a key discussion point on our weekly conference calls among the managers so they could share ideas and foster a bit of healthy competition.

Use the tools on the A Taste of Harmony website

We provided each location with the materials from the website. If it's easier, send them a pack they can use - we loved the dish cards and quiz.

Some of our Besties gave feedback that they were worried about all bringing the same kind of food, but the menu planner on the website takes care of that!

Manage registrations on their behalf

One of the requirements for A Taste of Harmony is that organisations register each event they hold via the website (so that participation can be counted and evaluated). Our Support Centre takes on the role of registering events on behalf of the stores so they don't have to think about it.

