

Kaitiakitanga in action



The brief

Wright Communications has been working with Moana New Zealand for four years. Our work with the country's largest Iwi-owned seafood company began with helping them with issues and telling their stories, and has extended to guiding their reporting to highlight their ethos and integrate their focus on sustainability.

The Wright approach

Along with the fishing industry in general, Moana New Zealand's reputation suffered has suffered through increased activity by interest groups highlighting what they considered bad practice. Wright Communications embarked on a programme to help rebuild Moana's reputation through being transparent, providing comment from the top on all issues, highlighting its sustainability efforts, and ensuring its unique ethos was better understood.

As part of an overall programme towards this, based on making the most of opportunities presented by the company's milestones, Wright Communications worked with Moana's in-house team to guide internal and external messaging of Moana's re-brand from Aotearoa Fisheries. This provided the opportunity to engage with internal stakeholders and add to their feeling of shared values and pride in Moana, as well as give external stakeholders and shareholders confidence in the business going forward.

Wright Communications also helped Moana 'front foot' challenges that contributed to the erosion of trust in the company, and the fishing industry as a whole. Strong position papers and timely media releases were drafted on key issues such as the New Marine Protected Areas Act consultation document, NABU's call to boycott NZ fish internationally because of bycatch, local research suggesting a disproportionate amount of fish dumping and misreporting of catch, and the protection of Māui dolphins.

In order to inform business strategy and commit even further to transparency, Wright Communications proposed that Moana undertake its first materiality assessment and Integrated Annual Report in 2016. Consequently, an extensive materiality process was undertaken with a wide range of stakeholders to identify which issues were most relevant and had the greatest potential to impact the business. In the year's since Wright Communications has again driven the materiality process, guided Moana through the <IR> framework, proposed the content and drafted the copy Integrated Annual Report.

Not only did this strategic initiative provide valuable information from internal and external stakeholders to help guide the business, it established a level of insight from which further strategic communications plans can be formulated, including an Iwi engagement project.

Outcomes

Media coverage has highlighted key messages in relation to Moana's ethos as kaitiaki or guardians of the realm of Tangaroa to ensure there is plenty left for future generations. Its strong position on the New Marine Protected Areas Act consultation document – particularly how it encroaches on customary rights and whether it is a valid sustainability tool – reinforced this and also helped Government to re-open dialogue on this with Māori in general. Moana's reputation with all its stakeholders – internal and external – and their confidence in its practices have improved.