

# TESTIMONIAL



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Management Consulting, specialising in Procurement, Asset management, and Shared Services design and implementation. ( Grant Thornton ) Previously Director. of Shared Services New Zealand Defence Force, where he held the rank of Air Commodore, following from being Director Logistics New Zealand Airforce. Stewart has a diploma in advanced Military Logistics (US Army Logistics Management College)

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**“it is not necessary to change . Survival is not mandatory”**

*-W. EDWARDS DEMMING*

John Wilkinson and I first met whilst transitioning New Zealand’s largest defence hospitality operation from an in-house service to a contractor. It was reassuring to know that John had undertaken similar changes for the UK defence force successfully.

From the beginning John and I were able to engage sensibly on what was both a logistical challenge as well as a cultural challenge for the Royal New Zealand Airforce.

The undertaking was split into:

- Managing transit accommodation for up to 300 military personnel, the base was the transport hub for the NZDF,
- The management of food service in five messes, including for the first time cooking in the officers mess, and Flight Kitchen for in flight meals.
- Cleaning throughout the base.

John and his team had built a sophisticated transition plan, but it was up to both of us to manage bottlenecks, whether caused by the facilities or by individuals resisting what was a large change to work methods service delivery and personnel.

From the beginning we ensured we had the key stakeholders involved both from the John’s team and the RNZAF, John demonstrated an ability to communicate with different levels of people from senior staff to front line diners and those who served them.

John never saw a person as difficult but focussed more on the difficult situations, supporting key players who were able to take a leadership role. John’s enthusiasm, our careful measurement of progress and willingness to make the change happen provided the framework of success. He managed his team with care and skill.

Key to the change was flexibility to ensure that the chosen methodology worked or was changed to ensure the outcomes met the needs of the RNZAF. John was always personally available to review progress and support both his and my staff 24/7.

Finally the transition was very successful and within three months the daily cost savings we accrued from the contract were significantly higher than our budgeting envisaged.

