

WINNER

AUSTRALIAN LEARNING INNOVATION

HEALTHY THINKING GROUP

COUNTRY PLANNING LEARNING EXPERIENCE



(L-R): Peter Nelms, AITD Board Director; Elizabeth Dreyer, Healthy Thinking Group and James Mayor, Baxter.

In 2013 Baxter, a global, diversified healthcare company, conducted a review of the brand planning process across the major product portfolios and key markets in which it operates. Baxter recognised that its approach to training and development and the entire brand planning process needed to be reconsidered, simplified and aligned with the business.

The *Country Planning Learning Experience* was created by the Healthy Thinking Group to support Baxter's brand planning process and deliver business objectives. Key to the experience was Baxtopia, a fictional learning environment that simulates real-world challenges and prepares marketers to build world-class business plans.

Throughout the journey each team is immersed in a series of custom-built modules that pose life-like business challenges and require decision-making. The program includes a simulation accessed from a specially designed platform, which includes five tailor-made applications which provide participants with access to instructional videos, libraries, assessment tools and social communication channels to help bring

the simulation to life.

Baxtopia is a fictitious country that simulates real-world brand planning challenges and takes experiential learning to an unprecedented level. With its own government, healthcare system, hospitals and medical schools, Baxtopia has 83 doctors and 3002 patients each with unique profiles stored in a master database.

The program includes five applications which provide participants with access to instructional videos, comprehensive libraries, assessment tools and social communication channels to help bring the learning experience to life.

In 2014 two, three-day modules were conducted in eight countries. For consistency in evaluation, the presentations were conducted by and the same presenters and the same criteria was used for the simulation. Baxtopia is enhanced with business school lectures from a top thought leaders in marketing, paving the way to real-world application.

In order to effectively design a brand plan, a team must be able to evaluate their market, undertake research, map and interpret the patient journey and funding flows, segment customer behaviour. The

simulation provides the experiential learning needed to practice the planning process, with this learning being reinforced through the presentation of the teams plan to a Review Board, where real time feedback is provided.

Daily reports were produced for each team, comparing their scores with their country's averages, franchise's averages and the averages of all the plans presented to date. Qualitative comments from the two assessors are also added to these reports. A progress report is sent fortnightly to all the employees so that they have update of the plans presented to date, the proposed incremental value from the plans, the top country and franchise plans.

Following the completion of the formal training component of the program, staff completed an online evaluation survey. Baxtopia was rated higher than any other global training program in the history of the company, with 991% of Baxter marketing professionals stating that the simulation uniquely met their learning needs, improved their business skills and helped them work more collaboratively.