

WINNER

BEST TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

DOWNER

DOWNER PROJECT MANAGER CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT



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Downer's challenge was to build a unified approach to leading projects and to establish a minimum benchmark for defining and developing project talent. Downer aimed to strengthen the core capabilities of its 2000 project managers to deliver projects safely, on time, and on budget. Downer engaged senior leaders to sponsor development of a comprehensive framework of project management capability, with a focus on technical and behavioural skills of project managers.

Downer delivered a customised learning and development frameworks that align with the Downer Project Management Methodology (PMM).

The first step was determining the capability requirements of project managers, this was achieved with defined capabilities and learning pathways, resulting in the *Downer Project Management Capability Framework*. The capabilities were leveraged to identify gaps in current operating capacity for project managers and then the targeted design and development of learning initiatives to respond to current and emerging needs.

Downer recognised the importance

of embedding foundational project management skills and knowledge then building on these with specialist modules. Delivery challenges included: the business had a low tolerance for time off of the job; project managers had varied literacy levels and ability to interact with technology; and, many project managers were fly-in fly-out or located in rural and remote locations.

An eLearning module was developed for induction that included video of Downer's most senior leaders, and helped highlight the key role and people of the Project Management Office as well as key features of the PMM.

Phase two was designed to develop leaders performance in the project management space. Technical and practical skills alone would not deliver organisational sustained success. The development methodology had a multi-layered approach of addressing leadership skill, knowledge and behaviours for the identified three levels of leadership at Downer.

Face-to-face delivery was selected because this has the greatest engagement with the Downer workforce. In all instances, experiential learning

opportunities are used throughout each program.

This initiative had a significant impact on: awareness and skilled usage of the Downer PMM; project leadership and governance; the ability to lead project teams with increased safety and productivity; staff morale, retention and satisfaction; delivery on customer requirements; career and talent management; and quality of outcomes and results on projects.

Review and evaluation data has informed improvements and addition of further components to the learning pathway. Data sources included: completion tracking; reference groups; feedback from managers; individual action plans and post-course tracking data.

One of the key lessons for success has been the overt support and endorsement from the most senior leaders across the business.