



AITD EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2019

The winners of the annual AITD Excellence Awards were announced on Thursday 17 October 2019 at a dazzling gala dinner at the Showtime Events Centre in Melbourne. Thank you to everyone who came for making it such a fantastic celebration of learning and development; we were especially honoured to have two of our life members – Lewis Hughes and Geoff Richards – join us on the night.

Congratulations once again to all our winners and finalists. The judging process for the AITD Excellence Awards is incredibly rigorous – not all entries make it to finalist stage – so everyone who was in the running should be extremely proud of their achievement.





AITD EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2019



BEST USE OF GAMIFICATION/ SIMULATION FOR LEARNING

Coles
Retail Simulation

As a major Australian retailer, Coles stocks over 25,000 unique products and has a team of 77 category managers (CMs) who are responsible for partnering with suppliers to deliver the best range and availability of products to customers. Following a series of listening sessions and surveys in 2018, it was discovered that there was varied level of understanding as to how CMs' decisions impacted the full spectrum of the supply chain, which in turn had a significant impact on many commercial aspects of the business. To ensure CMs were consistently making the best business decisions, regardless of time and resource constraints, the Coles L&D team deployed a bespoke retail simulation program that went beyond acquiring generic commercial acumen.

Emulating a two-year cycle within a retail business, participants were provided with a category case study and then required to make commercial decisions as to how to run the category over 8 rounds. To simulate the pressures of real life, a crucial aspect of the initiative was creating realistic scenarios underpinned by algorithms that weighted the decisions made, meaning actions taken in earlier rounds could impact time and scoring in later rounds. The competitive nature of the retail simulation kept engagement levels high and encouraged insightful debriefs. This gave the facilitators several opportunities to align to business strategy, drive good discussions and make inferences.

The program has allowed the business to progressively groom inexperienced CMs without taking any business risk in category management and the positive feedback received has exceeded all expectations, leading to demand for the training in other business areas such as finance and marketing.



JUDGES' FEEDBACK: A well-designed, well-prepared and professionally-resourced training program. It definitely gave the appearance of the real-life situation which is important to credibility in the eyes of the participants.



BEST BLENDED LEARNING PROGRAM

Blackmores Institute
Blackmores Institute
Complementary Medicine
Education (CMEd) Program

Blackmores Institute is committed to raising the standard of the recommendation of complementary medicines with conventional medicine globally. With the integration of complementary medicine and western medical approaches still in its infancy in Malaysia, Blackmores Institute identified a need for its unique expertise to develop the competency of Malaysian pharmacists in providing good quality and consistent information about key ingredients found in complementary medicines; their uses, interactions with conventional drugs, their safety and efficacy.

To address this gap, Blackmores Institute, in collaboration with the Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society, developed the *Complementary Medicine Education (CMEd) Program* – an innovative, research-based program educating pharmacists about commonly used vitamins, minerals, nutritional oils and herbal medicines.

The CMEd program represents a truly blended learning program, incorporating best practice learning approaches in physical and virtual spaces which align with both business needs and with the needs of pharmacists in the target market in Malaysia. Taking a learner-centred approach, the program included seven online learning modules, featuring well-known Australian subject matter experts, which delivered the key content, followed by a three-hour face-to-face masterclass focusing on skill development and knowledge application. This was further supported by a closed Facebook group, where pharmacists could share their experiences, and job aids for easy reference in the pharmacy.

The program has surpassed all expectations with over 800 pharmacists registering, significantly exceeding the goal of 500 registrations, increased product sales in Malaysia and requests for the program to be launched in Australia, New Zealand and Thailand.



JUDGES' FEEDBACK: The program illustrates high-level thinking, analysis and engagement from planning through to evaluation. The benefits to all stakeholders are clear.

WINNERS



BEST DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAM

Department of Human Services
SES Changing Mindsets: Direct Experience Program

The Department of Human Services *SES Changing Mindsets: Direct Experience Program* was designed to provide Senior Executive Service (SES) staff with an authentic and experiential overview of the experiences of employees with a disability in the workplace. The objective of the program is to strengthen the knowledge and understanding of the department's SES staff about the employment experiences of staff with a disability and build participants' capability to think differently about the recruitment, career progression and overall work experience of people with a disability.

Mandatory for all SES staff, the program uses cultural, social and emotional learning approaches. The centrepiece of the program is a two-hour immersive 'meet and learn' experience for participants to engage with employees with a disability. In a safe learning space, employees with a disability courageously share their story about their experience of working in the department – openly, candidly and unscripted. The learning is interactive; participants are encouraged to ask questions and nothing is considered 'off-limits'. The experiences conveyed through storytelling create a sense of connection and help SES participants better understand individual perspectives and explore culturally significant issues, enabling them to reflect on their conscious and unconscious biases. Participants describe these stories as powerful, confronting and motivating.

The program has been impactful. It has empowered SES staff with disabilities to speak openly about their disability, report their disability information and serve as positive role models for other employees with a disability, in turn empowering others. The program is achieving its objective of motivating positive action to enhance employment-related participation, eliminate workplace barriers and promote disability inclusiveness.



JUDGES' FEEDBACK: An impressive submission with clear alignment, goals, planning, approaches and outcomes. There is evidence of a clear shift in learning and attitudes and leans toward a solid growth in holistic employment mindsets.



BEST USE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR LEARNING

Volkswagen Group Australia and MAXART
Volkswagen In-Vehicle VR Driving Simulator

After receiving feedback from their dealer network that both staff and customers were unable to understand how some of their key vehicle features operated, Volkswagen Group Australia knew they needed a new approach to ensure these selling points were being communicated. Features such as city emergency braking, pedestrian monitoring, adaptive cruise control and park assist were difficult to explain – and high risk or potentially unsafe to demonstrate on a test drive.

Working in collaboration with MAXART, Volkswagen decided to develop a to-scale virtual reality (VR) driving simulator that would safely allow staff and customers to experience vehicle safety features inside a real car. The project was delivered over a period of 12 months and 4 design iterations, culminating in a global 'world-first technology' launch in May 2019.

The final training product was the first driver training simulator in the world to be installed in a car, using all of the original car parts and without any damage to the vehicle. With equipment that could be installed and uninstalled within 8 hours, the technology included custom motion hardware for the seat which allowed the user to feel braking and acceleration and electronics so that they could use the car's own steering wheel, gear stick and pedals in sync with the VR simulation.

Not only did this approach achieve the aim of educating both staff and customers in the use of key features, it also aligned to the organisation's overarching strategy of delivering a 'wow' experience which engages participants in order to drive better product knowledge and sales.



JUDGES' FEEDBACK: Excellent application of design thinking principles through iterative development, testing and involvement of learners.

AITD EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2019



BEST TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
Learning Ventures and Bega Cheese Limited
The Bega ASPIRE Program

Over the last 5 years, Bega has been transforming from a humble dairy and cheese business to a top 200 ASX-listed food services business. To manage the expansion, Bega had recruited additional leadership and management resources externally; however, as they were completing their human resource strategy in 2016, they realised that their succession plan had significant gaps. Their average hiring age was 47 years old, meanwhile they also started to notice a high turnover at the 25-29 year age bracket which would have been their leaders of the future.

To address this, Bega began working with Learning Ventures in 2017 to develop the Bega ASPIRE program, an innovative accelerated talent program to stretch and deliver 'ready-now' executive managers into the leadership pipeline. With over 100 participant touchpoints across 18 months, the program has been designed to improve and ensure the consistency of the organisation's leadership culture, both now and into the future.

Using a blended approach, including face-to-face and virtual workshops, peer-led coaching circles, mentoring, e-learning, hackathons and on-the-job experiences, the program has already created a pool of future leaders that have the skills needed to drive the growth of the business and a second phase of the program was commissioned before the first cohort had completed the program. Now into its third iteration, the program has received impressive feedback with 100% of participants agreeing that it had a positive impact on their teams.



JUDGES' FEEDBACK: A great initiative, not only addressing the specific business need that led to development but having a positive impact on culture.



BEST ONBOARDING/ INDUCTION PROGRAM
Queensland Rail and easyA
All Aboard Induction and Annual Refresher

Recognising that their induction and annual refresher process was complicated and inefficient, Queensland Rail saw the opportunity to review, streamline and future-proof their programs, creating a new product called *All Aboard* and supporting their vision to become a modern and world-class organisation.

Previously, new employees were required to complete four separate induction courses through a mixture of paper-based and online training over a three-month period, while existing employees were required to complete four separate refresher courses annually. This was time consuming for employees and difficult to manage from a compliance perspective as records had to be manually updated by LMS administrators upon completion. The training had also been built in an authoring tool that Queensland Rail did not have access to, meaning an external vendor had to be engaged any time updates were made.

These legacy courses have now been successfully combined into one simple online course for new employees and one shorter, scenario-based annual refresher for existing employees. The course design is fresh and new, adopting a level of gamification to keep learners engaged. It is also suitable for learners with literacy challenges, visual impairment and difficulties using computers. The instructional flow of the learning is self-directed and can be accessed anytime and anywhere. In line with organisational objectives to avoid contracting out work, the internal L&D team is now able to make updates and changes within the system.

The results of the program have been impressive, with reduced training costs, decreased learning delivery times – and in turn – decreased time to competency, ensuring that the organisation's safety culture is embedded from day one.



JUDGES' FEEDBACK: A simple but very effective solution in addressing unique business needs to deliver onboarding.

WINNERS



BEST LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Transport Accident Commission
TAC's Team Leader Development Pathway

The Transport Accident Commission (TAC) plays a vital role in the lives of thousands of Victorians who have been injured on roads and has an ambitious goal to be a world-leading social insurer. To achieve this, TAC recognised that they needed to support TAC leaders in leading these changes and that a cultural shift was required to encourage learning at work. A historical lack of investment at the frontline leadership level meant that leaders had been unsupported transitioning into senior roles and development had been limited to mostly classroom-based learning.

After conducting focus groups, TAC was able to identify the gap between what leaders understood their role to be and what the organisation needed to do to make significant changes. A contemporary leadership strategy was developed to meet this challenge, the *Team Leader Development Pathway* – an on-demand learning experience that is self-directed and within the flow of work to build essential leadership and management capabilities.

Over 200 participants have completed the program which blends microlearning, facilitated workshops, practical application, peer-reflection groups and a learning journal. All components were designed to motivate learners to take ownership of their development and to create good learning habits around applying, reflecting and sharing their learnings with peers. It accelerated development by helping individuals foster their personal strengths and collaborate across functions by intentionally mixing cohort compositions. Feedback and evaluation data have been overwhelmingly positive, with an average satisfaction rating of 4.37 out of 5.



JUDGES' FEEDBACK: A very comprehensive strategy for meeting the needs of the organisation and most especially future-proofing it.



DR ALASTAIR RYLATT AWARD FOR L&D PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

Michelle Ockers

In the past 18 months, Michelle has been at the forefront of a movement to transform the practices and impact of learning professionals. Recognising that this involves a shift in mindset, skillset and toolset, her work has spanned all three aspects. While some work has been completed commercially, she has made a significant voluntary contribution to advance the practices and capability of the profession in Australia and globally.

In 2018, Michelle led the refresh of the Learning and Performance Institute's L&D Capability Map. She managed the collaboration of over 50 leading practitioners around the globe, resulting in a contemporary framework of competencies which supports the development of L&D professionals. Since its launch, Michelle has donated time and expertise to develop a methodology and toolkit for learning team assessment using the map.

Highly collaborative, she has frequently partnered with other leading practitioners from around the world, including Laura Overton, Donald H Taylor and Nigel Paine, making their expertise and practices more accessible in Australia. The calibre of partners that Michelle attracts is testament to the regard in which she is held by eminent members of the profession.

Michelle advocates for change in the profession and shares a vision of the future for organisational learning and the role of learning professionals. This includes increased focus on business alignment and performance, a shift from controlling learning to enabling it, and building learning culture. Her advocacy and education take many forms, including blogging, magazine articles, speaking, LinkedIn posts and podcasting. Her work is truly transformative, and she has established herself as a leading light for the profession.



JUDGES' FEEDBACK: A generous contributor whose continued thought leadership and contemporary initiatives positively impact the world of adult learning.