

Learning Uncut Episode 139
Appropriate Workplace Behaviour in Construction– Karina
Moon and Annaleigh McKay
Hosted by Michelle Ockers



Michelle Ockers:

Welcome to today's episode of Learning Uncut. I'm delighted to be joined by two guests today from Multiplex. The first is Karina Moon. Welcome, Karina.

Karina Moon:

Hi, Michelle. How are you? Thanks for having us.

Michelle Ockers:

It's lovely to see you again. And Annaleigh McKay. Welcome, Annaleigh.

Annaleigh McKay:

Hi, Michelle, and hi, everybody. Lovely to be here.

Michelle Ockers:

I'm going to kick off by asking you each to introduce yourselves and your role at Multiplex and on the program, which we're going to be talking about today, which is about appropriate workplace behaviours. Annaleigh, would you like to introduce yourself first.

Annaleigh McKay:

Sure. So I'm Annaleigh McKay and I look after the learning and culture function at Multiplex globally. I've been part of the Multiplex family for 19 years actually, which seems a long time, but it's gone very fast. It's a wonderful organization to be a part of and I became addicted to it very quickly. My background is actually not in learning and development. It's in documentary filmmaking and multimedia. And I mentioned that because I've been quite passionate about bringing my skills in those domains to the learning experiences that we create and that has definitely formed a part of the appropriate workplace behaviours program in terms of us filming real people on real construction sites in scenarios. So with AWB I'd rather not take a lot of credit for it because it was a key priority for the team and I didn't have my hands on it a lot. I was more guiding the vision and supporting the process along the way with input and review. So, it was one that I needed to take a bit of a step back for and let the team thrive, which they clearly did.

Michelle Ockers:

So, Karina, then, you were hands-on on the program. Would you like to introduce your role at Multiplex and your role on the program?

Karina Moon:

Yeah, thanks, Michelle. So, I joined Multiplex in the Learning and Culture team about 18 months ago. and the Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Program was my first project to work on here. I was involved in leading the virtual workshop design and also facilitation along with the program launch and rollout. Previously, I have worked in the construction industry and also manufacturing as well, so I was familiar with some of the culture changes and behaviours that we were looking to shift. And I also have a background in marketing and innovation, so these skills came in handy for the development of our learning materials, our workshop design and interaction with our participants. and also using a campaign-based approach for our program launch.

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Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, and it's great to see skills from other disciplines being brought to your team and to this body of work. And how exciting, Karina, that the first program you work on at Multiplex was an Excellence Award winner at the Australian Institute of Training and Development Awards this year, 2023, for Best Blended Learning Program. Congratulations to both of you on that.

Karina Moon:

Oh, thank you. Yeah, it was great to recognize the partnership across our team and the business. Almost 40 people involved in the development, design and also the filming of this program. So, yeah, it's great to get the recognition for the team and great to be there and see you in person as well and a lot of other people from the learning industry as well. So, thank you.

Michelle Ockers:

It was, it was. Let's talk about multiplex and the construction industry to kick this off then. Could one of you tell me a little bit more about multiplex beyond the fact that you work in construction? Tell us a bit more about what sort of work you do and a little about the workforce.

Annaleigh McKay:

Yeah, awesome. I'll do that, Michelle. So, Multiplex is a premier construction company. So, I see us referred to in the press quite often as a construction giant, but we build large-scale, complex, quite iconic projects. We started in Western Australia in 1962, and we've now got a footprint all over Australia and in the UK and Canada as well. So I guess we have a bit over 2,600 people around the globe. One of the things that I think is really important about Multiplex that relates to this project in particular and the change that we're trying to create through it is that our purpose is to construct a better future. So that might be through our buildings or the impact that we have on the communities in which we build. or it might be through the way we care for our people and give them fulfilling careers. But one of the things we've really been working on lately is trying to shape the culture of construction in positive ways. And that's where Appropriate Workplace Behaviour, or AWB as we like to call it, has come in. So construction has had historically a reputation for being a very tough industry. And things like long hours, constant stress and pressure that our people work under, even dealing with high risk work activities and typically in the past having quite low flexibility to do their work. Those kinds of things don't make us historically an employer of choice if we're really trying to conquer the war on talent and make sure we can draw from a diverse workforce. And that is what we need to do because construction is the third largest industry and the pipeline of work is growing rapidly and is enormous. to deliver that and to be sustainable as an industry, and for Multiplex to be sustainable as an organisation, we need to attract a more diverse workforce, particularly women, because we're a male-dominated industry, and Multiplex is still male-dominated, so we want to get more women and more diverse representation into our organisation. To do that, the culture has to be welcoming, it has to enable those people with diverse backgrounds to thrive, and I guess we've had behaviours in construction that have been a bit preventative to that in the past. Things like a macho culture, foul language on site, offensive graffiti, and bullying and harassment and behaviours like that that we've been stamping out for a long time and that are now a lot better. So now we're really focused on, you know, making sure those things don't happen, but really looking at the more subtle behaviours that can cause people not to feel included or the things that we can all, you know, lack judgment in sometimes, like when we really value a fun culture as well as an inclusive, respectful culture. But, you know, you can make a joke at an inappropriate time or not judging your audience. And it's those subtle things that we're really trying to shift now to make sure our workplace does feel safe, respectful and inclusive.

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Michelle Ockers:

And of course, it is an industry-wide challenge, not just a multiplex challenge. And I know the construction industry, I think here in Australia, put out a standard, a culture standard for the construction industry. To what extent was that drawn upon when you looked at what's the change we're trying to create here in multiplex?

Annaleigh McKay:

Yeah, so that was definitely a factor we're a leading member of the ACA or the Australian Construction Association. And so we're signed up to trying to support that culture standard and get the required shifts. And it's one of the factors so there's those industry influences and trying to be at the front of them but there's also just the care that we have for our people internally and wanting to do the right thing and I guess be best in class whether or not we have those regulatory requirements or outside forces also driving those shifts. So you know our people are I mean they're incredibly talented, they're incredibly hard working and they want to lead the industry as well so there's this mindset about performance that we have as an organisation that we're always trying to bring to our work so I think they want this kind of thing to change, the culture of the industry to change. But it just, as you say, is a broad issue and we still have work to do.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, yeah. So you've talked a little bit about behaviours and I know we'll talk a little bit more. I'm keen in a moment to get your take on some of the things you heard about in the virtual workshops, Karina. But in terms of business outcomes, what did you actually expect to shift or what indicators were you looking for that not only were behaviours changing, but it was having a business impact and there were business outcomes that were improving as a result of this, the AWB program?

Annaleigh McKay:

I guess we really wanted to equip our people to understand what appropriate versus inappropriate behaviours looks like, what that constitutes. And that's right down to not just the explicit obvious things, but those more subtle, blurry behaviours that we've spoken about. They've almost become more important because that's when you can get a little more sophisticated with really shifting culture and dynamics. So we wanted people to feel more equipped, more confident to call out inappropriate behaviours when they would see it. We'll talk later about the kinds of models used in the program, but not be bystanders, not be standing by while they feel and see something wrong is happening in front of them and have the confidence to do something about it, but also to notice their own behaviours and I guess monitor and manage their own behaviours to make sure that they're exemplifying our values. So, you know, our values are about caring for people, collaborating, not just internally, but with our team. We're a subcontracting organization, so we impact a huge amount of people on our project sites every day and want them to feel like one team. And also, you know, having grit, persevering through challenges, and keeping it real, being very direct and authentic. So sometimes, because we're trying to avoid something that feels tricky because we're not wanting to upset or offend. We aren't having the conversations we need to have to address things like inappropriate behaviours in the moment. And that's the kind of behaviours we really wanted to get, to have people come away saying, I feel much more confident that not only can I see the behaviours, but I can do something about it, whether that's with myself or someone else.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, it's, as you say, it's very subtle and it's easy not to see the behaviours. Karina, were there any moments you can recall when you're running the virtual workshops where

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participants kind of had that sense of, oh, now I get it, or, oh, this thing I did, now I see why that was not okay. Can you recall any examples?

Karina Moon:

Yeah, countless actually. We ran over 60 workshops with our groups and there were some really open and vulnerable sharing of stories that happened in those virtual workshops. We designed those as small groups in order to build that psychological safety amongst the group and feel that people could be open and honest with what they were sharing. But yes, some very significant examples of either people being a victim in that situation or by individuals putting their hand up and say, actually, I might have I think I might have been a perpetrator in that situation or I was a bystander. I saw X situation happen and I stood back and didn't do anything about it. And so the purpose of that virtual workshop was really to bring those stories to life that they saw through the online course, to bring the frameworks and the models and yes, also the legal aspects into a discussion, but it was really more about the how in the virtual workshop. So we'd given them the why and the context and things throughout the online course. But it was really about shifting that behaviours and giving people the tools to be able to speak up. And as Annalise said, build that confidence in the behaviours change.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, well, we're going to hear in a moment from some of the participants themselves about some of the things they saw. You've very generously offered to share some extracts from a video that you actually put together, which features some of the participants. talking about their insights and experiences and recognition of what is and is not appropriate. Where did the snippet of the video we're about to play, where did that come from? How was that put together?

Karina Moon:

Yeah, so these were from some of our virtual workshops that we ran with our participants. We did seek their approval to be able to use some of their comments and examples through our showcase program and also to be able to demonstrate to others the impact that this training program can have and the benefit of hearing those real-life stories. So we can do as much compliance-based training and talk through all the legal jargon, but really hearing it from the horse's mouth or from people who have that lived experience. For people who were in the workshop and perhaps hadn't experienced those situations before, you really did see those lightbulb aha moments of, wow, that situation has really impacted that person. and really hopefully makes them think twice if they're in that situation again and encourage them to be an upstander and not just let those situations slide by.

Michelle Ockers:

So let's take a listen. It's about a minute and 30 seconds of participants sharing their experiences and insights.

Showcase Video:

Coming up in the old days, the construction was the boys club, the innuendo, the sexist remarks and it was just common practice.

One of the worst things was when you walked into a lift and everyone was laughing and having a joke and it would instantly stop. That was probably one of the ones that I thought maybe I was the one that was being talked about or laughed at.

Shaming people for leaving the office early. When I say early, I mean after a 12 hour day.

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Two of the tools I used were intimidation and bullying.

I'd seen some graffiti in toilet walls and something I'm not proud of, but I thought it was humorous and shared it with work colleagues.

When you see something and you're thinking, what do I do? How do I respond to this?

I got pulled up by one of my superintendents at the time. And he pulled me aside and he said, look, it's great that you get the results that we want, but mate, you're an a**hole. Excuse the French, but yeah, that's how he described it. And he was right. He really was. He was right. No one wanted to work for me.

It's the future of construction. It's the way it should be going. We can't just continue with the accepting, kind of the old school behaviour. If we don't address it, we will lose, or the industry as a whole will suffer because we won't attract the talent needed to continue multiplying the construction industry. I think that's why it's important. Yeah, it needs to happen.

Michelle Ockers:

So they're pretty powerful insights listeners that we've just heard from some of the participants. Let's take a look at the work that went into this solution and how it was that these kind of insights and shifts could come about. So let's start with design considerations. As you sat here shaping the solution and thinking about what might this design look like, what sort of factors did you have to take into account?

Annaleigh McKay:

I might start with the design considerations we have for any of our learning experiences, Michelle, so a little bit more broad, and then Karina can narrow the focus to AWB in particular. But we have a vision to create world-class learning experiences. That sounds highfalutin, but really that means we want to push the envelope and not do tick-the-box learning. So if something is important, like shifting behaviours in the construction industry, then we're going to try and do that in a way that is really meaningful and memorable for our people. And so that world-class kind of principle or this other principle that I kind of coined, which is a bit naughty given we're talking about appropriate workplace behaviours, but this idea of learning that shifts people rather than learning that shifts people. Because learning like appropriate workplace behaviours, it's a topic that people typically get dragged into and have to get through and do, not something that they want to do. And we want to change that. We want to make sure that with this experience, people were actually learning something, number one. And then the learning that they were getting was actually going to impact their behaviours when they went back to site. That principle informed the approach, as did our other really important principle of making sure that learning is real and relevant to our operational context, so people can relate to it. It doesn't feel like it's come off the shelf from somewhere else and has nothing to do with what they do day to day. And so Karina will probably talk more about that later, how we actually brought that to life. But that's really key for us, making sure that learning is real and relevant so that it feels very connected to people's experience day to day in the workplace.

Michelle Ockers:

Great. And what would you add to that, Karina?

Karina Moon:

I think probably the build there would be around the fact that specific to ADV, we do have quite a lot of millennials within our workforce, so the solution really did need to be fresh and

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modern and visually engaging. We also have a geographically dispersed group across Australia, mainly based on our construction sites, so an online course element was really important to be able to complete that flexibly, and also the virtual workshop component, being able to do that across national groups. The other build there is that we also predominantly have a male workforce and so many of them have been in industry for quite some time. The majority of those are committed to helping change the industry and it was really refreshing to hear participants say how much positive change they have seen in the construction industry over the last few years. But there are a few still there that, you know, maybe not as open to that change because that is just the construction industry and it's how it's always been. So we did really need to set up that psychological safety through our program design. We had some people in our workshops that were sharing some particularly tough stories and really raw and relevant situations. That was a key focus of our design, particularly with the virtual workshop piece. And the other consideration is whilst this initial phase has been within our employee base, within Multiplex, we are also committed to extending this to our workforce on site, which includes our construction workers and also our subcontractors. So we are looking to extend that to our construction workers and our subcontractors, and we're looking at ways of exploring how we can adapt our online course component to that audience. and currently in a pilot phase of gathering feedback with that as well.

Michelle Ockers:

OK, so does that mean the participants in the program so far have not been the actual people working on construction site or have some of those gone through the program as well? Can you clarify that for me?

Karina Moon:

So our employees are based predominantly on construction sites across Australia. So that could be ranging from our cadets and our graduates right through site supervisors to project managers and construction managers. So our multiplex employees have gone through our program. We also have a subcontractor workforce who are contracted to us to help, I guess, build and deliver our construction-based projects. And it's that next layer of workers within our construction sites who are not direct employees of multiplex. They're contracted to us to deliver a particular job. But Annaleigh can also probably talk to that in more detail.

Michelle Ockers:

So I understand. So it's your employees who've been through it. Now you're looking to amplify the effect through the subcontract workforce, right? That's correct. Exactly.

Annaleigh McKay:

Yeah. So the opportunity is for us to, Michelle, if we think like all of our people are impacting all of our trades every day, or our subcontractors, And that can be literally thousands of people on a single job. But if we can then also get our subcontractors when they come through induction or at a point as they get onboarded into the project itself to do the training, then there's that baseline of understanding built in them. It's not just our people fighting uphill battles. They've got some understanding of what the standards of behaviours that we expect are on our sites. And then our people can call it out and they have the same language in their vernacular around the frameworks that we've built, bystander, upstander, that's blurred line, that's below the line, et cetera. So we think that if we can do that, it'll enable our people even more to call out inappropriate behaviours when they see it.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, shall we talk about those two frameworks now, the upstander bystander and the above the line blurred line behaviours?

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Annaleigh McKay:

Yeah, sure. With this course, we really wanted to come up with some very simple memorable frameworks that would ground the learning and that would stay in people's minds way beyond the course and become part of their vocab, which they have, which is part of the way we know this course has had an impact because we're hearing it when we go out onto site. It's even sort of becoming humorous. Hang on, that's a bit below the line, Michelle, what you just said then when we're in a meeting. So our learning partner, Thinker, helped us settle on these two models. One of them is the bystander-upstander model, which is a really simple way of helping people think about their role in appropriate workplace behaviour. So they might be a bystander, someone who's seeing something play out in front of them, but they're not doing anything about it, essentially. And there's different types of bystanders, people who join in or people who just stand back and say nothing. That's essentially the model. Upstander, on the other hand, is someone who speaks up, does something, reports something, has the courage and the tools to do that, to call out the inappropriate workplace behaviours. Then the other framework that complements that is above the line, blurred line, and below the line behaviours. So, It's a really simple way of helping people differentiate between the more explicit behaviours that are unlawful, bullying, harassment, etc, and the more subtle behaviours that we're not quite sure in some situations they might be okay, in some situations they might not, and we really have to err on the side of caution with those kinds of behaviours because hopefully we've got people in front of us who are from all sorts of backgrounds and experiences and we can never make assumptions about what someone's going to find offensive or not. So it's a really great way of going, okay, what is this behaviour I'm about to do? Is it above the line? Because that's where it should be. And if it's in question, then let me not do it. So in conjunction, those two frameworks are really powerful. They're empowering our people to one, try and aim for being an upstander and to know what that behaviours of being an upstander looks like.

Michelle Ockers:

Yes, yes. And they're easy shorthand, right? They're really easy to remember. Really easy to understand as well, right?

Annaleigh McKay:

Yeah. Yeah. So they worked extremely well in the course and they really underpin it and the virtual workshops then deepen the insights that you get when you explore those.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. Yeah. That'd be great to play with like from a graphic design perspective. I don't know if you did posters or stickers or anything like that, but I can imagine they're really versatile, right, Karina?

Karina Moon:

Yeah, absolutely. So they were featured in graphic representation through the online course, and then also through the materials through the virtual workshop, as well as our handout guide that followed the workshop. And then we've also created posters that now feature on our construction sites as well, exactly calling out that model. And it is very top of mind. And as Annaleigh said, we are hearing people talk about that framework in the office, on our construction sites. People have shared anecdotal examples where they have heard people using that framework or calling out, hey, that's blurred or actually, you know, that's really below the line. Cut it out. Just simple language. We don't need people to talk through a whole script. You know, there are some situations where that's relevant, but the short, simple call it out in the moment was a really key message as part of that framework.

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Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, it kind of makes it OK and easy to call it out as well, right?

Karina Moon:

That's right.

Michelle Ockers:

A lot more comfort there. A lot more.

Karina Moon:

Well, to the point that you may be for psychological safety and giving people the permission, I think was important, you know, knowing that everyone in the organization could be an upstander, regardless of your role title or how long you had been here within the organization.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, absolutely. So we haven't talked about what this looks like from the learner's perspective. And you have mentioned two key components, I think the online module and then the virtual workshop. If I'm a multiplex employee, firstly, I think it was a compulsory piece of learning that all of your employees had to do it. Is that right?

Annaleigh McKay:

Yeah, it was compulsory. Very few of our learning experiences are, but this is one of them that we expected everybody to do.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, and what I love is just because it's compulsory, you haven't skimmed on the design. You haven't gotten lazy. You've actually gone, if it's compulsory, we'd better make it good, right? This is so important. If it's important enough to make it compulsory, make it great.

Karina Moon:

Absolutely.

Annaleigh McKay:

I think that's one of the key things that people should take away from this. If you're going to put every single person in your organization through a learning experience, that's a massive opportunity. You can get a huge ripple effect of change from that if you do it really well. So, invest the time, invest the money and invest the creativity.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. So, walk us through the learner experience in Karina. What's my experience as a multiplex person going through this program?

Karina Moon:

Yeah, and it is actually an experience. It is a learning experience. It wasn't just a one-off piece and we did want people to be talking about it as an experience and have, as Anna said, that ripple effect across the industry and also our organisation. So we designed four key elements as part of the program. We did choose a blended learning approach so that we could have the online course component but also have the opportunity for our participants to debrief that and discuss and learn and share with each other. The next component after the virtual workshop was a knowledge quiz to re-embed that learning and reinforce some of those key messages. And we also had an evaluation as well for us to gather feedback understand what learners and participants thought about the course, and then we can help

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build that into our future designs as well. So, those four key elements are featured as part of that blended approach.

Michelle Ockers:

Okay. Shall we talk about, let's talk about the online program. One of the things you talked about before, Annaleigh, was relevance. So, Karina or Annaleigh, one of the ways you tried to bring that to life was using real-life scenarios. Can one of you talk to us about how you use real life scenarios, how you created them, you know, what it took to create really good quality real life scenarios to share on video?

Karina Moon:

Yeah, absolutely. We do like to use real people and our own multiplex employees in our learning experiences that rather than actors or stock images, it really helps tap into one of our core values, which is keeping it real. That does bring about some challenges though. Filming on live construction sites creates a lot of noise and activity, some challenging schedules. Shutting down a portion of a construction site in order to film a learning experience can be quite challenging and we're so thankful to all of our construction workers on site who helped facilitate those opportunities. It really has made a difference in how those videos have been brought to life. but also getting our own employees to act out in those scenarios. It's quite a challenge to get someone to put their hand up to play the role of a sexual harasser in one of our videos, but our employees really took to that. They took on the challenge. We had some experiences with stage fright and stumbling of lines and things, but we did try to keep those scenarios real and relatable, but also simple to film and produce as well. All of those examples that are used within the course are either examples that have happened here at Multiplex or within the broader construction industry.

Michelle Ockers:

And to what extent did you script them? So, you've got somebody who's bravely stuck their hand up and said, yes, I'll take part in this. You've shut down a construction site or part of a construction site so it's quiet enough to do the filming and there's no hazards with equipment moving around, people moving around, and so on. To what extent was it scripted, or how did you then kind of coach or guide someone through? I'm assuming you guys did it, or did you have someone else who handled this part of the creation for you?

Annaleigh McKay:

We did that, and we worked with Thinker and also our other partner, DH Media, who are I would put they're filmmakers. They're not corporate video makers. So they really know what they're doing in terms of, you know, a lot of it's handheld and action focused rather than being locked off on a tripod. So you can really get that feeling of motion. And as if you are, you know, cinema verite style, you're a fly on the wall watching this unfold. But we do script the, would you believe we've actually got people at Multiplex who are actually Very, very damn good at acting. So we do script the scenarios. They have to learn their lines. However, we also adjust as we're directing them the lines to make sure that they can deliver them seamlessly. So we can change and adapt the script to their own vocabulary, but it's within that script framework, I suppose. So they're learning, they're rehearsing, and then they're going in and getting shot. live on camera, and then those sequences are edited together. So sometimes we have take after take after take, Michelle, to get it right. And the filming can take a very long time for that reason as well, so we can get the best performances out of them. But the key to directing them is making them feel very relaxed. making sure there's a sense of fun as we go through and supporting them along the way. So it's something that I've always been very surprised that they don't need a whole lot of support with because they're kind of naturals in front of the camera when you choose people who are willing to put themselves out there in that way.

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Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. Yeah. And you mentioned you work with two partners, Thinker and DH Media. Do you want to talk about the roles of those two partners and how you worked with them?

Karina Moon:

Yeah, sure. So Thinker are our learning partner. We work with Thinker and the team there across a variety of our different programs. And they really do know our business. They're basically an extension of the learning and culture team. And we've put together some wonderful programs in designing and delivering those. Their focus was predominantly on the online course design, as Annaleigh talked through around the frameworks, designing that e-learning module. It is a modular-based program which really works well with our audience being able to work through that at their own pace, and also utilising graphics and imagery that's really relevant to our business and our organisation. So they have really taken the time to get to know Multiplex and what works and is relevant for our audience. DH Media, as Annaleigh said, we're involved in the filming of those online course scenarios. They are a wonderful production team as they've filmed cinematography, videography and outside of the box thinking in regards to bringing a scenario to life. It does feel like you are really there walking with the actors or in that individual shoes in that situation.

Michelle Ockers:

It kind of sounds like a fun thing to do as well from your perspective in an L&D team, right?

Karina Moon:

It is kind of cool. It does feel like you're pulling together, I guess, some movie-based elements. We understand that not all of our audience necessarily has the ability to do that, but probably one of our key, I guess, learnings would be if you can't bring videography into it, utilizing at least imagery of your workplace, of your people, rather than some of those Stock images that you often see in those relatively dry and boring online courses, your participants know that that's not relevant to them and so you sort of lose that engagement automatically once you start to see those stock images and the click-through component. It is about creating an experience and so have your people involved in that. Have them help you design it and be a part of that process.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, to your point before about keeping it real, it does make it a lot more real. And people are looking at something that you've gotten from an off the shelf library, which may be technically accurate in terms of the legislation in your in your region, but doesn't look or feel anything like them or their organization or their workplace.

Karina Moon:

Right. We also had our leaders involved in some of those videos as well. so particularly our segments around Know Your Impact, so sharing the values of our organisation, what's the culture that we expect from everyone here at Multiplex, and also talking through empowerment as well, empowering our people to be upstanders and to be the change that we want to see in the industry. So having our leaders feature as well, right through senior leaders, also through to some of our construction workers, It was a really great mix in being able to share that story and what we were wanting to achieve.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. Yeah. Psychological safety. That's a term that I think you used early in the conversation, Anna. It was obviously important in this program. Let's look at maybe the

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workshops and dive a bit deeper into that. They were 90-minute workshops. How did you build psychological safety in the workshop environment?

Annaleigh McKay:

Yeah, psychological safety is crucial in all of our learning. And with the workshops in particular, there were some key elements that we focused on, one of them being group size. So for this kind of initiative where you are trying to get large numbers of people through, it could be very easy to put 20 or even, I cringe at this, 50 people into a workshop of that style. And that just doesn't work when it comes to psychological safety. So we kept the group size low. Typically, I think we had about 12 people in each session. I think we had a max of 16. But one of the learnings we'll share later is that there are constant dropouts and cancellations. So I think typically, Karina we had about 12 people in each workshop, and that's from a group dynamics perspective a really nice number. You don't want the numbers to get too low and you don't want them to get too high to enable people to feel safe to share their experiences and speak about even things that they've encountered that have been difficult. So that's one element. The other element is making sure we've got several facilitators. So we use the two facilitator model for the virtual workshops, which is obviously more expensive, but it allows that variation in style, which creates a great experience. And it also allows facilitators to support small group breakouts in different ways. Speaking of breakouts, that's another really crucial element in the design of a virtual workshop. Pushing people into small groups so they can share their experiences in the small group first before coming back and debriefing as a larger group. And of course, you don't put everyone in the spot, you ask for examples or for volunteers or for someone to summarize the essence of what was talked about in the small session. We also used a great piece of technology that Karina bought in for us called Jamboard, which allowed people to populate post-its with their key learning insights, their commitment to change, as a couple of examples. And they do that without the post that's being identified to them. So from a site safety perspective, you can share something, this is what I've found most difficult and no one knows that you've written it and it just populates on a board for everybody to see. So that's another little safety technique. And the other thing we do always upfront is just a reinforcement of confidentiality. So everyone kind of signs in blood with a little confidentiality poll agreeing that anything that they hear from the session is going to be kept confidential. They're not going to go out and share someone else's story outside of the session. So those are a few things. There's other things too, like how we get leaders in there and look at the group mix to make sure that our leaders are demonstrating some vulnerability and making that okay. But yeah, I could go on forever, Michelle. It's really key to our design.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, the confidentiality poll is interesting because often in virtual sessions, we'll set the ground rules and talk about the ground rules. And I've seen some facilitators say, you know, if you're not comfortable with that, then now is the time to leave. But this is taking it that step further to get people to consciously acknowledge the confidentiality requirements.

Annaleigh McKay:

And that makes a big difference. We've seen some research on that, that actually just the action of signing up to saying something, yes, I will, makes you more likely to follow through on that commitment than just speaking about it. And that comes into the design later when we actually get people to share their commitments to change beyond the program. So making the commitment public, writing it down, kind of orients them to action in a little more powerful way than just saying it out loud.

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Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. Yeah. Karina, is there anything else you want to add either about psychological safety or any other aspects about how you facilitated the workshops? Maybe anything that you shifted along the way because you ran a lot of these, right? You know, as you continue to refine, you know, that worked well, but it would be better if what were some of those? It would be better if what were some of the ways you continue to refine and improve and what worked best with facilitating these sessions?

Karina Moon:

I think probably one change that we made was rethinking about our framing at the start of the virtual workshop to include a bit more of the why. People thought, okay, I've done the online course, why have I been invited to a virtual workshop? The course is great, but what's this next piece? What's the virtual workshop going to bring in for me. So that was a key piece after a few workshops that we did modify and change a bit of the early upfront design there, really setting that scene around the behavioural elements. There was a great quote that we shared with our participants, which was, tell me and I forget, teach me and I remember, involve me and I learn. So we told them and taught them through the online course and the virtual workshop was all about involving them and having those relationships and discussions with their peers. Group mix and diversity was probably also a key piece that we had kept in mind through our design, but really ensuring that our operations team who support us amazingly behind the scenes in bringing all of our participants to our workshops making sure that we didn't have someone's manager in the same workshop as them, or we were creating diversity in our groups, having people from different project sites and different teams to help have more of those discussions, particularly if they were talking about something that might have been happening live on site at the time.

Michelle Ockers:

Okay. And another interesting thing you did with the virtual sessions, you talked about using Jamboard, which sadly Google are closing down. I don't know if you saw sometime next year, Google are taking Jamboard away from us. It's probably one of the easiest to use online boards that I've ever come across. But anyway, you had people answering some questions on post-it notes. Do you want to talk to us about what you asked them at what points in the program? and how you've actually used the insights from the post-it notes subsequently.

Karina Moon:

Yes, I did see that announcement. I'm pretty sad about that as well because it was a great tool. As you said, not everybody is with technology and we have varying different levels of experience with technology across the organization. So it was a very simple way, very easy to explain to our participants and did create that psychological safety because they were anonymous post-it notes and they could share openly and honestly. We utilized those for people to firstly share what's challenging about being an upstander. Why is it difficult to speak up? What are some of those challenges that you experience? And we got responses such as, I don't want to rock the boat. No one else is speaking up. I'm just a young individual within the organization. I don't feel like I can speak up to a senior person. We had other examples of maybe no one else is speaking up in my team. It really created that sense of vulnerability and openness early on in the workshop. We also used the post-it notes for people to talk through what their commitments were and also the how. So what sorts of things could you say if you do see yourself in a situation where you need to be an upstander in the future and having some practice there around sharing what you would actually say in that moment. We know that our brains go into a bit of panic in a moment like that and even though we know it's the right thing to speak up, we haven't prepared what to say and so we let that moment slide by. And so actually having our participants write out a statement that

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they could say in the moment gave them something to have in their back pocket so that they could draw on that moment and draw on that experience from the workshop. And then the third element there was around What ideas did they have for being able to implement appropriate workplace behaviour in our workplace? And we had loads and loads of ideas come through which we have since put into an action plan as part of our appropriate workplace behaviour approach for the next year or so. Really great ideas there around how we can engage our construction workers and our subcontractor workforce, how we can be leaders in the industry, The posters, for example, was a key suggestion there, so having that reinforcement and those messages of the above-the-line, below-the-line framework visible on site. And we've collected over 3,000 post-it notes. which our team helped me put together into an action plan and some really useful insights there.

Michelle Ockers:

I love how you use it not only to help people to prepare for the moment when it was their turn to be an upstander, but also to harvest input and ideas for how do we keep this going and build upon it. That's fabulous. Is there anything we haven't talked about in terms of the learning experience, participation in learning experience, any other aspects you wanted to highlight before we do a little bit of reflection on what worked well on the project and just tips for others?

Karina Moon:

There's a component within the online course that we maybe haven't talked too much about, which was around once those scenario videos had been watched by our participants, they then had to answer some questions and actually map those responses to the scenario. So, for example, if there was a scenario that they had just watched, they would then need to identify who was the upstander, who was the bystander in that particular scenario. And this really helped reinforce the learning If they got that answer wrong, we then prompted them with some further information on how they might be able to choose a different response in that scenario next time, really getting them to think about that situation that they had just watched, not just, you know, click next, which is what we often see on those compliance training videos.

Annaleigh McKay:

And just to add to that, Karina, because that's a great build. Some of those exercises to actually identify, is this behaviours above the line? Is it a blurred line or is it below the line? I got wrong. I say that because they're not designed to be really easy. They're designed to make you think. And the feedback that you get then teaches you if you do get it wrong, what the right answer was. And you go, ah, okay, yeah, I can see that in that situation, that would have been fine. In this other situation, it wasn't. So I think that's really important that we don't make our kind of assessment components of courses too basic and too easy because then they just become a tick and flick. It's got to actually challenge and shift the person's thinking.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, particularly when you're talking about those kind of blind spots and subtleties that you've talked about there. Yeah. Did you work the program out across the UK and Canada as well as Australia or was it just Australia?

Annaleigh McKay:

So that's next year's task, Michelle, and we're actually having a look at the moment at what we need to adapt, particularly with the online course. So our hunch is that because it's a lot about the standards of behaviour we expect and the key principles that we want people to operate with, that we should be able to make it global, but there's obviously some local legislation that we need to tailor for as well. So that's on the strategy for 2024.

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Michelle Ockers:

Do you think culturally that you need to reshoot any videos with people with different accents, people in their own country?

Annaleigh McKay:

Definitely. So a number of our learning experiences include video content and we've been wanting to put those experiences into the UK and Canada and thinking about, you know, if you're making something real and relevant, you've got to be able to recognise and see people who are like you. So if you have a bunch of Aussie accents in there solely, then that's not going to resonate that well in Canada and the UK. But we also don't want to be, you know, silly and unreasonable about that. There's a lot of Aussie accents in the UK. There's Canadians over here. So just trying to make sure that when we're selecting our talent for videos in particular, that we've got a real diverse representation there.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. Didn't Neighbours run for decades in the UK?

Annaleigh McKay:

That's right. So I think the message is think about these cross-cultural things if you're taking something global, but perhaps do a little bit of testing and don't feel constrained that you can't use something. Don't make assumptions about what will or won't work. With Karina's piece of work that she's doing to pilot the online course with our construction workers and subcontractors, we're doing that because we want to see what their feedback is on the current online course. We don't want to say, OK, we need to you know, we need to totally adapt the scenarios when that may not be what's required. So test and pilot and check your assumptions on those things.

Michelle Ockers:

Great. So how do you know that the programs had the impact you wanted it to have?

Annaleigh McKay:

This is something that I think is a good tip for people listening in the learning space, that when you're evaluating a program, we have both our formal feedback through the evaluation process, but we also collect what we call unsolicited feedback. So if I receive an email or Karina does from someone that says, I was just out on site and I encountered X scenario and I had the courage to speak up for the first time, thanks so much for that course. Then we save those and include those in our evaluation. And also anecdotal stories that other people are hearing, our HR teams are hearing, we collect and collate that information as well. So we get this formal and informal feedback mix because some of those stories are more powerful than the formal answers to questions in an online survey. So we know through the formal feedback on, you know, people rating their confidence before and after the workshop, before and after the course and seeing a shift, a quantitative shift there. I think we got to 100% confidence by the end of the virtual workshops. Karina, you know the figures better than me, but they were very, very rewarding stats to get back. But we also know through stories our people are telling and through the examples they're sharing of even increased instances of reporting of inappropriate behaviour is one factor that has shown us this has been successful. That sounds strange, but it doesn't often.

Michelle Ockers:

Sometimes we target the wrong things, right? With things like safety training, we go, well, if it's successful, the number of incidents will go down. Whereas sometimes if it's successful,

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you want to say things being made visible. So you want to say reporting going up, which is what you're saying.

Annaleigh McKay:

We've seen that and we've had people share that that came from the confidence that they got from the virtual workshop that, yeah, now I'm able to see that this is wrong and I'm going to report it because I don't like being treated this way. So there's a bunch of things that we've been monitoring and evaluating, but we've also, there might be a chance, Michelle, for you to play a quote from the back of the showcase video that we shared, where Global Legal Council Meg Redwyn talks about an experience she had out on site.

Meg Redwin (Showcase Video):

I did a site walk today and I heard two of our people talking about this difficult interaction with the stakeholder and one of them said to the other, now there's some blurred line behaviour. And I really thought to myself, we are changing the lexicon. Our training is changing our actual language and behaviour and signs.

Michelle Ockers:

So what about some of the harder indicators around diversity and inclusion, for instance? Are you seeing any flow through around, I don't know, whether you've looked at recruitment figures or attrition, or if there's any other indicators, not just of behaviour change, but of the knock-on impact for the business?

Annaleigh McKay:

Yeah, so one of the things that sort of formed up our business case for appropriate workplace behaviour were our exit interviews, particularly about women leaving and the indicators that, you know, the culture was a barrier to them staying or the reason for them leaving. So we're measuring all of those things through our employee experience survey, through our exit surveys. through the numbers of women in particular that we have on site, but we're also trying to get a better understanding of the broader demographics of our organisation beyond just gender. So we're working on those things, but those measures will take a much longer term. We're measuring all of them, but we won't have seen immediate shifts that we can attribute to the appropriate.

Michelle Ockers:

Change does take a little time, right?

Annaleigh McKay:

Yeah, that's right.

Michelle Ockers:

So at a personal level, I don't mind which of you jumps in first. Is there anything that you or your team had to either embrace or let go of as you worked on the project?

Karina Moon:

I'd probably say one piece was letting go of trying to get absolutely everyone through the offering as much as we're all high achievers of the team and we wanted to get 100% of the organisation through, we did need to stop somewhere and allow the business to be accountable for those that weren't able to participate through the program. We also understand there's so much going on on our sites and so cancellations of being able to attend a virtual workshop, for example, whilst that's frustrating from a scheduling perspective, our priority is for our workers and our site safety and our projects to also be progressing. So we had to take that into consideration around our achievement scores in

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getting 100% through the organization. In saying that though, getting over 800 people through our online course and our workshops is a massive achievement.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, it's certainly enough to achieve a tipping point, right, in terms of behaviours change. Annaleigh, anything from your perspective that you or the team had to either embrace or let go of on the project?

Annaleigh McKay:

Probably leading on from the point you just made, Michelle, that getting used to the fact that you can't necessarily get every single person through the course, but if they are in the course or the virtual workshop, you also sometimes can't reach them. So we did have some instances of people who were saying, I think Karina mentioned earlier, that's just the industry. Let's not be too PC. These kinds of examples of people who obviously their thinking hadn't shifted and we hadn't quite gotten them to think differently about appropriate workplace behaviours, and you have to just be okay with that because you can't get to every single person. But that's always a challenge because we do want to. But knowing that you've gotten enough to that tipping point that that person will go back out on site and be surrounded by people who we have reached. And that pressure on shifting their behaviours will come in another way.

Michelle Ockers:

Yep. So a little bit of trust that you've built up enough of a shift that the workplace and their colleagues will take care of the rest.

Annaleigh McKay:

That's right. Yeah, exactly.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. So quick round of tips for others who would like to get started to do more with building appropriate workplace behaviours as L&D professionals. Who'd like to start with that?

Karina Moon:

I can jump in here. So I think taking the time to get it done well, you know, this was a long term project for our team to deliver over 11 months of pulling together scenarios, videos. You know, we had some delays there with COVID and delaying the project a little bit, but I think taking the time to get it right and also ensuring that it was relevant for our organisation was important. We could have bought an off-the-shelf compliance piece, got it over and done with and ticked the box and moved on. but we really did invest the time from our team and also our participants across the organization in giving their time to commit to a workshop. And it was about creating a learning experience, not just a compliance exercise.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, thank you. Annaleigh, any tips you'd like to share as well?

Annaleigh McKay:

Another one would be iterate the learning. So as Karina explained, it was a blended learning experience over time rather than a one-off isolated event. And we fight hard against the pressure to just do a quick tick and flick or a one-stop shop workshop because we know that if someone has a couple of doses and the opportunity to later consolidate their learning, come back with, oh yeah, this has happened since I did the online course. then that's a much richer and more memorable learning experience that sticks.

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Michelle Ockers:

Absolutely. Thank you so much, Karina Moon and Annaleigh McKay for joining me today to talk about this award winning program. I will include a link to your LinkedIn profile. So if anyone would like to get in touch with you, they'll be in the show notes along with some of the other resources we've mentioned in the program. Thank you so much for sharing your work and insights with us. Really valuable.

Annaleigh McKay:

Been a complete pleasure. Thank you, Michelle.

Karina Moon:

Yeah, you're welcome, Michelle. Thanks so much for having us.



Learning Uncut are learning and development consultants that help Learning and Development leaders and their teams become a strategic enabler so that their businesses can thrive. We work in evidence-informed ways to drive tangible outcomes and business impact and are strong believers in the power of collaboration and community. We specialise in helping to build or refresh organisational learning strategy, update their L&D Operating Model, enable skills development, and conduct learning evaluation. We also offer workshops to shift learning mindset and practices for both L&D teams and the broader workforce – as well as speaking at public and internal events.

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About your host, Michelle Ockers



Michelle is the co-founder and Chief Learning Strategy at Learning Uncut. She is an experience, pragmatic organisational learning strategist, L&D capability builder and modern workplace learning practitioner. She also delivers keynotes, workshops and webinars for learning and broader professional or workforce groups at both public and in-house events.

Michelle received the following prestigious industry awards in 2019:

- Australian Institute of Training and Development Dr Alastair Rylatt Award for L&D *Professional of the Year – for outstanding contribution to the practice of learning and development*
- *Internet Time Alliance Jay Cross Memorial Award – for outstanding contribution to the field of informal learning*



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