

Michelle Ockers:

Welcome to another episode of Learning Uncut. In the spirit of reconciliation, I'd like to acknowledge traditional custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea, and culture, and to pay respect to elders past, present, and emerging. Welcome to Learning Uncut, Lozanne Pretorius. It's lovely to have you here.

Lozanne Pretorius:

Well, thanks for having me. I'm really looking forward to our chat today.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, it was nice to get to know you a little bit during the recent Australian Institute of Training and Development Conference. And although I didn't get to your session, lots of people were telling me I should have made it to your session. And I think this is going to make a great story for our listeners. So thanks for coming along to share it. You do, of course, work at Mitsubishi Motors Australia. Would you like to introduce us to the organization? Tell us a bit about the people, the business model, anything you think might be relevant to today's topic.

Lozanne Pretorius:

Yeah, of course. So Mitsubishi Motors, so we, Australia, we call it MMAL. It is part of Mitsubishi Motors Corporation, which is based in Japan. Mitsubishi Motors Corporation is a global brand manufacturing and selling vehicles. But here in Australia, our head office is in Adelaide and we have around 200 employees across the country. We also have a fantastic dealer network with a very large footprint actually across the country with more than 200 dealers across the country, and they employ more than 4,000 staff members to not only sell vehicles to our customers, but also service and support them.

Michelle Ockers:

So what's the relationship? I've never really worked with the dealer network, so I don't understand from a business model perspective what the relationship is between MMAL and the dealer network. Are they like franchises? Is that how it works?

Lozanne Pretorius:

Yeah, that's correct. So they are franchises, yes.

Michelle Ockers:

Okay. And in the other direction, your relationship with the global brand, what does that look like from an L&D or HR slash people and culture perspective?

Lozanne Pretorius:

So we are a subsidiary of MMC, but we do have sort of localised HR, people, culture, learning and development. So it's pretty localised for our organisation. There is, of course, a strong partnership between us and our parent company, but the localization is here, particularly with learning and development.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. And we're really talking about a localized organizational transformation and the role of L&D in that, that's good for context setting. Introduce us to your role on your team, Loz.

Lozanne Pretorius:

Yeah, sure. So my role's actually changed recently into more the project management work. So that's quite new as of four months ago. Before that, I was in learning and development at Mitsubishi for two and a half years. And we had a team of learning and development professionals who there were some e-learning developers. We also had, of course, our facilitators across the country that would facilitate training or create content as well. So that was a team that was across the country. And we also partnered, of course, with some other providers to help develop some of our content. So that is what the team consisted of in the learning and development space. It's just I'm no longer there.

Michelle Ockers:

Yes, I understand. But of course, the body of work we're talking about was done very squarely where you were in the L&D leader role. And we're really talking about L&D as a key pillar to enable organisational change. So let's talk firstly about the organisational change you were there to enable. The organisation's gone through a transformation journey looking to create shift in the culture over the past few years. Can you talk to us about the shift that the organization wanted to make and why that shift was necessary?

Lozanne Pretorius:

Yeah, absolutely. So I guess the automotive industry, similar to pretty most industries, is really operating in this VUCA world of work, right? It's volatile, it's uncertain, it's ambiguous, it's complex. And that's really driven by changes in technology, globalization, we've got increase in competition, there's changes in legislation. Our customer needs are shifting. So there's a lot of change happening in the industry. And, you know, most organizations are required to adapt to those changes in industry, because ultimately, if you don't, you know, you're going to become another Kodak, you know, you're going to become irrelevant. So a number of years ago, MMAL recognized the need for change to respond to this change in the automotive landscape. And as a result, we embarked on quite a significant change and transformation journey, which involved transforming our 40-year-old organizational culture from quite a traditional manufacturing culture, because we actually used to manufacture vehicles here in Australia, which was more KPI process and transaction driven, to a customer-centric culture, which is underpinned by innovation, learning, purpose, and values. That was really the need for change that we recognized.

Michelle Ockers:

OK, you talked broadly about the kinds of forces driving change in the world of work today. Were there any specific kinds of changes underway with automotive that you felt the organization needed to respond to and that this more traditional manufacturing culture was no longer fit for purpose to achieve?

Lozanne Pretorius:

Yeah, I think changes in technology and digitization is quite a big shift. Also that change in customer expectations, you know, they're expecting amazing customer experience, competition is increasing with globalization and more competitors coming into the market. Customer experience becomes your competitive edge. So that shift to customer centricity is really important to us. And of course, digitization as well, you know, the way that the customer interacts with you is also changing. So that obviously requires an organization to change to adapt to their needs.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, that makes a lot of sense, particularly for an organization that is now more sales focused than manufacturing focused. When this transformation journey started around about three years ago, that we're talking about this kicked off. How did you and your team position L&D as a key pillar to support this change?

Lozanne Pretorius:

Yeah, sure. When we look at the change, so the change incorporates, of course, many change projects that needed to and still needs to be delivered within quite a short period of time. And as you probably know, change in an organisation doesn't happen unless the people within the organisation changes. Part of this change, what we recognised is that we needed to support our people by growing and fostering that purposeful, resilient and innovative organisational culture who can really lean into this constantly evolving VUCA landscape. And I guess to drive organisational change, usually consideration is given to people, process and performance. And one of the things that we are doing in the people in performance space is leveraging learning and development as that vehicle for culture change. So there's a statistics, I love statistics and benchmarks and I-

Michelle Ockers:

Hit us with some data, Loz, we love it too.

Lozanne Pretorius:

I love it, I know. And I use it quite a lot, particularly in conversations with leaders or decision makers to influence decisions. But there's a statistic by Emerald World that says 94% of high impact organizations say that their learning and development is fully aligned with the strategic goals of the organization. We leaned into that, but we went one step further. Rather than just aligning L&D with the strategic goals, we actually made L&D a strategic pillar in our strategic and transformational plans. So what we did is we clearly defined what our learning and development purpose statement and strategy is for the organization. And then we worked with our leaders to ensure that, of course, that strategy aligns with the organizational strategy and goals. And then we repositioned the importance of L&D in the organization by making it one of the key pillars in our strategic plan. Because we understand that

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people are our biggest asset and we understand that for an organization to change, our people needs to go through some change. And L&D is one of our vehicles that we can use to help our people to make them able and capable to be able to make that shift and that change. So that was a really important piece for us to reposition it. And what was powerful about repositioning it as a key pillar to change is that it means that learning and development was at MMAL was not just a sideshow, it actually became one of the main events. And that has been one of the key factors in our success as an L&D team.

Michelle Ockers:

So Loz, you're speaking to the believers here with the Learning Uncut listeners who are all by and large working in people and culture or L&D roles. In terms of your senior leadership team buying into L&D being one of the key pillars in the strategic change plan, were they just on board from the start? Did they get it from the start or did you have to put in some effort to kind of get their buy-in and get L&D included as a key pillar.

Lozanne Pretorius:

Our CEO is a big ambassador for learning and development. So that, of course, helped. It is the first time that we really introduced large scale learning and development projects, the ones that we introduced into the organisation. So we still had to do a fair bit of influencing. And we were requesting resources to be able to actually build these programs and draw them out. So I guess from that perspective, the way that we went about it is some of the key guiding principles we used in working with our senior leaders to influence is, it's really understanding the decision makers and understanding what they need in order for us to influence their decision. So it's understanding, you know, do they need the numbers? Do they need to understand the process and exactly how this is going to work? They need to understand how it's going to impact people. Do they need to understand the big picture? So it's really understanding your audience and your decision, and then telling your story by using information that speaks to what they need to make a decision. Really important for us when we positioned a plan. Of course, data and benchmarks were very valuable and powerful for us. So we definitely leveraged some of those. And I guess the other one is around, almost have a bit of a triangle in my head, but you know, you have your organization and the goals and strategies and objective it wants to meet. In order to meet those goals and strategies, usually you need people to do that. And you need capable and able people to do that. And learning and development helps provide capable and able people to help the organization achieve its goals and objectives. So it's really demonstrating that to your leaders and decision makers as well, because as learning and development professionals, we get it. Like we've drank the Kool-Aid, we're on board. But not everybody's had the exposure or the knowledge or the experience to understand that sort of triangle. And our role is to explain the triangle and to really make the linkage between the goals, the people and learning development.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. And it's useful to have a consistent narrative that you can build around every time you're talking about a new initiative or investment or getting support, whatever that support looks like from particularly your senior leaders for something. So I want

to dig into one of the specific large scale L&D projects that you introduced, and that is the MiCareerTrak program. Tell us a little about the objectives of this program and how it was designed to support this cultural shift you were looking for.

Lozanne Pretorius:

Yeah, sure. I'm going to take a bit of a step back just in terms of how did we identify, what do we do to identify the skills that we needed to build on? And then I'll sort of talk about a little bit more in detail of what the program looks like. I'll pull out some stats again. This has probably become one of my favourite stats, but according to the University of Queensland, they say that the average career lasts about 45 years. But due to our constantly changing working world, IBM has come up with a stat that says general skills only remain relevant and of value to the organisation for an average of five years. So if you do the math on that, it means that we need to re-skill at least nine times throughout our career just to stay relevant. And another piece of research we considered is around research conducted on leadership in learning organisations, which found that what made leaders successful in learning organizations, it's not necessarily the skill set they possess or their leadership style they apply, but instead it's their mindset and the mindset that they bring to work every day. So when we designed our learning programs, particularly MiCareerTrak, We thought less about sort of technical skills that people need to do their job day to day. And we thought more about those skill set that is focused on helping them build adaptive capacity and helping them develop that right mindset to navigate this VUCA world of work. We also identified resilience as an important skill set to foster to really thrive in this VUCA world of work. And there's some research that was done by Professor Richard Davidson from the University of Wisconsin Center for a Healthy Mind said that well-being is a skill and it's a skill that can be learned and taught. So we really leaned into that as well to incorporate well-being training into our curriculum to really support our people to find emotional balance in a work. So those are some of the guiding principles we followed with the MiCareerTrak. Talking particular around my career track, it's a vertical learning and development program.

Michelle Ockers:

So Loz, I love that you've leaned into so much reputable research to inform kind of the way you thought about what skills do we need, how are we going to support this transformation? And for listeners, we'll see about grabbing links to some of that research. If we can from you Loz and pop that into the show notes so they can have a look for themselves. So you talk there about adaptive capacity and mindset as one of the key things you were trying to build. What does adaptive capacity mean?

Lozanne Pretorius:

It relates to the capacity of systems, institutions, and humans to really adjust to the environment, respond to consequences, take advantage of opportunities. So it is in my mind, and maybe I'm putting a bit of creative license to it, but it's about being able to adapt to your environment and to learn new things quickly and to respond to your environment, whether it's not that great or whether it's good or it's an opportunity or whether it's potential, you know, something that's not great. So that's adaptive capacity. Maybe I've put a little bit of creative license in there, but that's how I see it.

Michelle Ockers:

If that's the way you were approaching it, that's fine. And what strikes me, if I think about the work I've done in the past with Dr. Nigel Payne on learning culture, The key thing he talks about as to, you know, what a learning culture is, is it's the ability to respond and adapt to changes in your environment is in effect sort of learning cultural learning agility in its essence. So really, this is what you were trying to create. So let's move on then to the MiCareerTrak program and how it was designed to support this shift and build adaptive capacity then.

Lozanne Pretorius:

Sure. So the MiCareerTrak program really focused on vertical learning and development rather than your horizontal style learning and we wanted to help our people develop those core skills to help them thrive, lead and influence in this VUCA world of work and quite a fast paced, fast changing, constantly changing organization that we were in, or that we are in. And we also wanted this program to really set the foundational standards for our people. So it's really become the basic requirements for all our people to ensure that they're able to deliver on our organisation's goals and ambitions, but also that they are set up for success as well and that their wellbeing is considered. So when you look at the kind of topics that we covered, we had sort of structured it in three key areas. So we looked at the area of self, we looked at a team and then we looked at organization. So the category of self, we looked at things like, you know, self-awareness, building the capability to lead oneself, to achieve one's own personal and professional goals, but also to help MMAL achieve its goals as well. In the team category, we looked at, you know, the capability to communicate with your audience in order to influence them. We looked at teams and how they work together. How do you have difficult conversations? How do you create psychological safety? So that sort of all sits in that team category. And then we looked at organization, which was sort of our final series, which is really around change management. So either if you're a leader, it's like, how do you lead change? If you are an individual contributor, how are you an effective change agent? So those are sort of our categories or our series. So we call them series, and then we looked at and we ran this program over a 12 month period and every series had a structure of some pre-learning and the pre-learning is done through online learning. So I had a blended learning approach for this program. Started with some pre-learning and that just was to help prime their minds and give them some basic information before they come into the workshops. So workshops were either a half day, full day, some series had two workshops, some series had just one workshop, depending on the content. And they were facilitated face-to-face or virtually, depending on the length of the session and the locations of the learners. We also then had, we asked learners to, at the very start of the program, select a learning partner. And this is someone that they were able to check in with along their learning journey. There was a set sort of agenda for them to talk through so that we could go for coffees together or just have casual conversations. It's just to sort of keep the learning alive between sessions. We then had coaching circles. So that was an opportunity a few weeks after the workshops happened. It was an opportunity for everyone to get back together with the facilitator and actually then talk about sort of case studies. What have they tried? What have they applied? What's stuck? What hasn't worked? And it's like, it really is a great peer-to-peer learning experience, but with the facilitator there, of course, to answer any questions or support. And then

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finally, we close the series off with some post-learning again, which is an online e-learning or video kind of training. That's sort of the structure of the program and how we ran it.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, it was for everyone, right? Whether you actually had a formal position of leadership or not.

Lozanne Pretorius:

So this particular program was for everybody that was not a senior leader, because senior leaders actually had their own program that was designed for them. But this was for everybody else in the organization. So I've always said it was 200 people went through the program, so everyone in the organization.

Michelle Ockers:

Okay. And can you, I just, it's really nicely laid out in terms of pre, in session and then post-session support to apply. I love that about the structure of the program. Can we go back to the priming for each of the series? Can you give us a couple of examples of what that priming looks like? You know, was it just viewing some materials? So it's more of a flip classroom. Were there some activities that people had to do or were asked or invited to do before they got to the workshop? What did that look like?

Lozanne Pretorius:

Yeah, sure. So we use LinkedIn learning to get some of our content. And so most of them were LinkedIn learning videos or training materials and some of them were TED Talks as well. Some of them we had just content to read through. So they weren't activities as such, but they were content to consume before the time, just to introduce some of the topics that might be brand new for people so that they just know, have a bit of context before they come into the training. For example, one of the topics is personal branding. So we might have in our pre-learning, it might be, you know, why is personal branding important? What is it? Just so they have a little bit of an idea when they come in, and then you can kind of get straight into the work.

Michelle Ockers:

Okay. So with the workshops, can you tell us a little bit more about the workshops, what they looked like, how they will run, who facilitated them? Just give us a little bit more there.

Lozanne Pretorius:

Yeah, sure. So we had a blend of in-house facilitators, so either myself or a general manager of people and culture. And we also had some other partners that helped us. So we had Synergy IQ from Adelaide who did some of the sessions and we had Seedling as well who did quite a bit of the sessions as well and who was a quite a significant partner for us in this program. So what the workshops look like, it was quite a blend between, of course, sharing the theory and the knowledge, but then also a lot of time for reflection, practical, you know, sort of writing, working in groups together, discussions. So it wasn't just look at a PowerPoint and click through. We

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wanted to make it quite engaging and interactive. So there was a lot of activity and interactive activity, not just theory, clicking through a PowerPoint kind of experience.

Michelle Ockers:

Yep. And how long were the workshops and, how many on average per series?

Lozanne Pretorius:

Yeah, sure. So we had, I think, maximum two per series. Sometimes it was one and the workshops were ranged from a full day to half day.

Michelle Ockers:

Yep. Then you had the learning partners and the check-ins. What did the check-ins look like? Can you give us an example of kind of like a typical agenda or the kind of things that people expected to discuss or do during the check-ins to support them?

Lozanne Pretorius:

Sure. So is this for the coaching circle you're asking about?

Michelle Ockers:

No, the learning partner check-ins. You said they were expected to do check-ins between sessions. You had an agenda for them.

Lozanne Pretorius:

Those check-ins were around, you know, discussing with one another the content that was shared during the workshop. You know, what resonated with you? What are you struggling with? Have you tried anything? How can I support you? So it was really around talking about the learnings and what you took away from it, what you might be struggling with, and then just having someone you can talk to and sort of bounce ideas off. So that was the sort of the intention of that.

Michelle Ockers:

Ok. And when you think about those people or those groups of people, be it teams or other kinds of groups of people who seem to most shift or thrive or do best with applying what they've learned in the program, do it because not everybody, you know, applies to the same extent or gets the same amount of growth out of these programs. Is there anything about the kind of the people or where they come from or what they do or anything about that, that might drive which individuals or which groups of people were more successful in growing through this program and developing that adaptive capability that you spoke about?

Lozanne Pretorius:

That's a good question. The groups of people where I've seen, so we talk about teams, the teams that I've seen really embrace and adopt the learnings are where the leaders of those teams really encourage participation and have conversations with their teams around the learnings and making space for those people to prioritize their learning. So those are definitely the teams that I've seen engage the best with the learning and also get the most out of the learning. I have seen individuals as well that might not come from those kind of teams also really embrace it and adopt a lot of the learnings. And those, I guess, are people who have that growth mindset and

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they are invested in their learning and development. So I think that growth mindset is a really important piece in what I've seen for those individuals. And they are not afraid to self reflect and to ask themselves the tough questions and seek feedback. Those are sort of what I've seen in some of the individuals.

Michelle Ockers:

Okay, so what's really interesting about this is that this program was part of a bigger cultural transformation journey. And of course, learning, application, the outcomes and impact of the work we do in learning and development is grounded in our workplace culture, our workplace context, which was shifting at the same time as well. So, you know, in what way do you think the other changes going on, either because you deliberately set it up this way or because it just evolved this way? Was there a relationship between some of the other work going on to shift the culture and the pockets or the progress that people were making through the MiCareerTrak program. There's this kind of interdependency at play here, right, from a cultural and learning perspective. Can you talk to that, that idea of that interdependency and how you saw that play out through this program?

Lozanne Pretorius:

Just on one sec, because I've got my cat has just come in here. It is International Cat Day today, by the way.

Michelle Ockers:

Oh, there you go. So perhaps in honour of International Cat Day, we might leave this little interlude in the podcast rather than remove it.

Lozanne Pretorius:

I didn't know that was a thing and it just popped up on my little Google this morning and I was like, it is International Cat Day.

Michelle Ockers:

What's your cat's name, Loz?

Lozanne Pretorius:

It's Ollie and Olive.

Michelle Ockers:

OK, so I think we might leave Ollie and Oliver's a little a little feature point in this conversation in honor of International Cat Day. OK, so back to the question at hand, which is that interplay between the broader organizational culture and the shifts underway and this particular program and successful application by individuals or teams of what they were learning about adaptive capability.

Lozanne Pretorius:

Yes. So as I mentioned, of course, this MiCareerTrak didn't happen in isolation. There were quite a few other things that, from a people culture perspective, we were working on. And so if I'm just keeping with the learning and development theme for the moment, so one of the things as well, so I spoke with MiCareer Track, which is around the people other than our senior leaders. We also had a senior leader

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training program, which is very closely aligned with the topics that our people are going through in the My Career Track program. Because we wanted our leaders to A, experience the power of learning themselves, but also go on a similar learning journey as our people so that we can have a common language in the organisation in terms of the frameworks and the tools and the referencing and the language can be more aligned. The other thing that was also helpful is that we had sort of accountability pieces included as well, where as part of our one-on-one conversations, we included talking about the learnings from the program. In their one-on-one conversations are actually included in the agenda for the one-on-ones, which has to happen once a month. And also encourage our leaders to talk about the learnings and how they experienced the training and some of the outcomes in their weekly work in progress meetings as well. So there was a couple of other things happening with the leadership side of things as well to closely link with the MiCareerTrak program. Then we've also had as our organisation, a real focus on our vision, mission, values of the organisation. And we've had some really great work done in that space by our people and culture team to bring that to life and really embed that in our organisation. So that also happened in parallel. So yeah, that's probably a couple of things in the people and culture space to align.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. So you were because everybody was going through this, you're able to create some hooks with other cultural change leavers that were being put in place in the organization is what I'm hearing there, Loz.

Lozanne Pretorius:

Yes.

Michelle Ockers:

So in terms of the participant experience, what did you hear back about what parts of the participant experience were particularly helpful for people? You know, what parts maybe you needed to adjust along the way? What was the feedback about the participant experience like?

Lozanne Pretorius:

So we did do a survey after each series to really understand what our people are saying. And the feedback in general was really good. It was a mix of feedback. They really enjoyed the change management, change agent content because it's so relevant to the work that they're doing. So they really enjoyed that. I think that was the highlight of the series. There were quite a few people who found value in particular self-awareness space, understanding personal values, understanding personal purpose, the personal brand piece, which was really helpful for individuals, of course, with themselves and like how they position themselves and how they show up at work and how they work with others. So we did find quite a bit of good feedback in that space. Some really were able to use that information to really take a look at where they are in their career and with their role and to make shifts and changes to align their role with more of their purpose and their values and what they want to be doing. So that was really some quite cool feedback. I also really enjoyed the communicator influence piece which was around, I mentioned, how do you identify your audience? How do you understand what they need to make their

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decisions? How do you tell that story? People also really enjoyed that because it was also quite practical for them to apply and they could immediately apply that. So that was some of the feedback that we've received. And I think one of the other things, even though it's not feedback per se, hearing people use the language that they learned in the training is pretty awesome. And you'll sit in a meeting and they'll go, I'm just going to take a balcony perspective here or you know, my perspective is this, I understand your perspective might be different. And that's even just those kinds of things, which might not, those may not be conversations that would have happened before the training. It's just really great to hear the change in the cultural language and how people work together.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, good indicators that something is landing and being and being used. So was there anything that you changed about the program, either design or delivery as it was being rolled out? Because over 12 months, you've got an opportunity, particularly with kind of a series here where you're using some approaches across all series. You've got an opportunity to say what's working well, what maybe you can improve to increase the impact and effectiveness of what you're doing. Was there anything you changed along the way?

Lozanne Pretorius:

Yeah, we did. So some of the virtual sessions, we changed to be face-to-face sessions because there's a preference to do face-to-face, particularly for the coaching circle. So we initially had them virtually just because it was just a one hour session and we thought it might just be easier if it's online, but there was a preference to do it face-to-face. So we shifted that. I guess the other one, which if I were to do it again, I'd probably shorten it a little bit. The 12 month period is a long period of time. It's fine for the learners because, you know, they've got time to progress through the program, but it's quite a lot on the learning and development team to keep the motivation and enthusiasm and sort of keep it tracking for a year. And so I would probably have condensed it slightly. So we are taking that into consideration sort of as we roll it out for the new sites. We'll do a bit more of a condensed version.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. So let's talk, we're sort of in that space around lessons learned, adjustments. You've talked a little bit about some of the indicators of shift in the organisation with the way people are talking about things differently in their interactions in the organisation. Are there other indicators you've looked to that suggest to you that these L&D initiatives, be it MiCareerTrakor any other of the programs or initiatives you've undertaken in the last few years, have been contributing to the desired cultural change. How are you getting a gauge on that?

Lozanne Pretorius:

So a couple of things. So we can see our custom experience scores have improved, profitability has improved, our global ranking as a Mitsubishi on the global, within the Mitsubishi stable, of course, our global ranking has improved. We've also seen our engagement scores associated with learning and development really improve. So we've actually seen that, we were very happy about that and also seen a reduction in

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staff attrition. So those are some of the more quantitative sort of movements that we've seen. More on the qualitative side, we have seen that shift in behavior from change resistant and fatigue to actually a culture where our people more readily lean into change. So we can see that change it's becoming just the norm. It's just part of BAU almost, which is a shift that we've seen from when we maybe started two and a half years ago.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. Great shifts. It's interesting. I love that you're a data girl and you've told us about some of the KPIs that have improved. Sometimes some of the L&D teams I work with are a little nervous about using business metrics as indicators of the contribution of learning initiatives that they're concerned sometimes is that the, you know, the burden of proof is too high. How do you show that these KPIs have moved because of the learning initiative when there's so much else going on in the organization, just talk to us a bit about how you approach that, because obviously you've looked at these KPIs and gone, well, they're evidence that the work we're doing is making a difference. You know, how do you think about using business KPIs to measure the impact of learning and how do you use that to have conversations with people in the business?

Lozanne Pretorius:

Yeah, so I'm going to share something that we did at one of our conferences. We did a bit of a visualization activity and we asked the people in the room, which were all senior business owners or sort of the CEO comparison of the business, And we asked the room who would think that, you know, profitability is the really important, one of the key measures of a business success. You know, of course, everyone put their hands up. And then we did an activity and we said, all right, so we'd like you to close your eyes. We'd like you to envisage your business. You know, it's ready to go. All the products are out. Everything's clean. Customers are banging at the door. They want to come in. They want to buy stuff. Like everything's ready to go, but there's no one in your business. There's not one employee on the floor in the business. How much money do you think you're gonna make that day? And then we said, all right, so we imagined the same kind of experience or the same thing. And we said, okay, now you do have employees, but they're not capable or able to do their jobs. How much money do you think you're gonna make that day? Probably a little bit more than the first example. But not the maximum. So what we try to do with that visualization tool is to make a strong linkage between capable and able people to the delivering of a business metric. Because without your people, without them being capable and able, you're not going to achieve your business metric. So that's the linkage that we draw first is understanding once the link between people and metrics are made, learning and development is a way to enable your people, then the conversation becomes easier.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. How do you move from that, which is kind of like a conceptual link and it's like, it just appears so obvious that better skilled people able to do their job, it's going to lead to better business outcomes. How do you then move from that to talking about, well, what we've seen is, you know, this specific shift in customer experience ratings, be that NPS or however you measure it. And at the same time, we've been doing

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this, MiCareerTrak program. How do you then have a conversation about the relationship between the work you've been doing on that program and the shifts underway in the business? And you know, to what extent is the program shifting business outcomes? and could we be doing more with the program to even, you know, push those results further? Is that a conversation you're able to have or have been having?

Lozanne Pretorius:

It's not a conversation we've necessarily had.

Michelle Ockers:

Because you haven't had to have it Loz?

Lozanne Pretorius:

No, because our leaders have been able to see the shift in behavior. And I agree with you, it's a difficult conversation, right? Because It's difficult to quantify and say, all right, well, will MiCareerTrak contribute to A 1% rise. It's hard to say, right?

Michelle Ockers:

And it's a path I don't think people should go down. I think you just look at the data you have and the feedback you've been getting on your learning initiatives. You look at what's been happening in the business and you sit down and have a conversation with the business leaders. Here's what we're doing. Here's what we're seeing. What are you seeing in your business results? What else is going on? To what extent is the learning program contributing? What else could we be doing? with the learning initiatives. It's just a way of opening up a better quality conversation is the way I kind of encourage people to think about it. And I love that visualization exercise you've done. It's a nice, quick and easy one to help get people over the line with why this matters, right?

Lozanne Pretorius:

Yes. No, absolutely. And I think sometimes also asking the question, where would we have been if we didn't do it? Because sometimes not doing something is also a choice. So when we, you know, generally, when I put something forward for decision making, I put doing nothing as a choice. I think by framing it as actually, if you don't do anything, you're actually choosing to do nothing. Therefore, the result might not be the best.

Michelle Ockers:

What's the cost of doing nothing? There's an opportunity cost to that. Right. Yeah. Very good.

Lozanne Pretorius:

And I think sometimes we forget to put that into the decision matrix.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. Good point for people. So if we move into tips for others, so if you're sitting there having a conversation with a colleague and L&D leader or a professional in another organization, and they're trying to position L&D as a key enabler of change

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in their organization, what key advice would you give them to getting started or getting and making more progress with that objective?

Lozanne Pretorius:

There might be a few things that I've already said. So I might just pull them up. I think the key, really the key one for me is around that understanding your decision makers and what drives their decision, what is important for them to make the decision. And it's not, it's not the same for everybody. So that to me is the one key thing. And then creating your narrative and your business case and your story to speak to the things that they need to make their decision. The other resource that I use a lot for my data, you will probably know about, but the LinkedIn learning workplace reports.

Michelle Ockers:

Yes, it is LinkedIn workplace learning report. I think it's definitely popped that one in the show notes.

Lozanne Pretorius:

The most recent one comes up once a year. I absolutely love it. So that's kind of my go to for stats. So I definitely leverage that quite a bit. Yeah. And then the last thing, as I've already said a few times, is really drawing that link to people and the importance of people to the organisation. And I've said a few times today, people are an organisation's biggest asset, but it really is good people are an organisation's biggest asset. So capable and able people, they are your competitive edge. So it's really drawing that link for our leaders. It might be our jam, we've, like I say, drunk the Kool-Aid, but it is around influencing our leaders to understand it in the same way we understand it.

Michelle Ockers:

I'd say to people, pop that little visualisation technique in your toolkit as well. I really like that, Loz. It's the first time I've come across that one. So thank you so much for sharing your insights and experience with positioning L&D as a key lever of cultural change in the organisation. It sounds like you've done a great job with this initiative and really appreciate you sharing that with others. We'll pop a link to your LinkedIn profile in the show notes if anyone would like to reach out to you. for any more information. Thank you so much.

Lozanne Pretorius:

It's an absolute pleasure. And thanks so much for having me. It was really fun. I really enjoyed it.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. And all the best with the relatively new role as well, Loz. And thanks for joining us.

Lozanne Pretorius:

Thank you.



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 experienced, 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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