Michelle Ockers:
In the spirit of reconciliation, I'd like to acknowledge traditional custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community and to pay respect to elders past, present and emerging. And I would like to welcome to this episode of Learning Uncut, Catherine Sharpe from Blackmores. Welcome, Catherine.

Catherine Sharpe:
Thank you. Nice to be here.

Michelle Ockers:
And from your partner organization in the learning solution we're going to talk about, Mark Eggers from Yarno. Welcome, Mark.

Mark Eggers:
Thank you. Thanks for having me.

Michelle Ockers:
And thank you both for agreeing to share this story about an award-winning learning solution. We met at the AITD 2024 Excellence Awards, where you won the awards together for best use of technology for learning and best use of gamification or simulation. Congratulations.

Mark Eggers:
Thank you.

Michelle Ockers:
So let's start, Catherine, with Blackmores. Would you like to introduce Blackmores to us and in particular, the part of the organization you work for and the workforce that you support?

Catherine Sharpe:
Absolutely. So I think Blackmores is well known to many in Australia or maybe even beyond Australia. So Blackmores is a leading natural health company. We have a long heritage in Australia. We were founded in 1932 by Morris Blackmore. We are the number one health brand in Australia, but in the last number of years, we've expanded into 13 markets across Asia-Pacific and greater China as well. I work in the capability team, so I'm part of our capability team of two. I am the capability specialist of Blackmores, and we support basically the functional learning across the Blackmore's business units. So we support, for example, the sales capability team. That's actually where this award and this relationship with Yarno came out of. So that is the Blackmore's Commercial Academy. We have other capability initiatives across the business functions of Blackmore's as well.

Michelle Ockers:
And what size workforce do you support, Catherine?

Catherine Sharpe:
We support a workforce of 1,200 people approximately. With an L&D team of two.

Michelle Ockers:
Yes. Which is where you need great partners, right? Which is where Yarno comes in, Mark. Can you tell us a little bit about Yarno?

Mark Eggers:
We're a much smaller workforce. I'm just a team of 12 and we're a team based micro learning platform. And we use learning science as well as things like gamification, leaderboards, badges and things like streaks to help increase participation and completion rates in learning.

Michelle Ockers:
Thanks so much. And was this the first initiative that Blackmores and Yarno had done together or was there a longer history, Mark?

Mark Eggers:
No, this is the first time we've worked together.

Michelle Ockers:
Okay. And Catherine, what attracted you to work with Yarno?

Catherine Sharpe:
Basically, we realised that there was a need to improve the engagement with our teams, especially in a dry subject area like revenue management. So we had to think of ways that were a move away from our traditional initiatives, which were teach initiatives, PowerPoint decks, which did not have exceptional results. So we were looking for a company which were innovative, which would appeal to our user base, which we could also utilize across all the markets as well. So we were really looking for something cutting edge, and we found Yarno, which was brilliant.
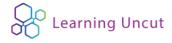
Michelle Ockers:
So there'd been a little bit of shift in the business more broadly leading up to this solution being developed. Can you tell us a little bit more about some of those shifts, which may have been pertinent to the challenge you were trying to address?

Catherine Sharpe:
Yes, I mean, this was happening before, I guess, the big business shift you're probably referring to, which is that, you know, since 2023, Blackmore's has become a wholly owned subsidiary of Kirin Holdings. So we are now the cornerstone of their health science businesses across that Asia-Pacific region and China region. So there's a huge emphasis on, you know, growing the business there, obviously, there's huge opportunity there considering the size of the population. So I would say that was a big part of the thinking behind engaging R&O, because the challenge is to reach those markets, you know, in a way that we can also deliver equality across all the groups, we can deliver the line in different languages, we can you know, get measurable results that we can use then to further develop. So Yarno did offer all those solutions to us.

Michelle Ockers:
Yeah, fantastic. So, Catherine, by the time you engaged, I know you'd already done some analysis of the business need, right? I think you did a commercial needs analysis, which took multiple forms to actually pull some analysis together. Can you tell us a little bit about how you did your research and analysis of the business challenge and what the goal was from a business perspective? That what were you trying to impact?

Catherine Sharpe:
What we were trying to impact was basically, as we expanded into new markets, how we could improve, lift the whole organization's ability to sell effectively. Also, that we could all probably sing from the same hymn sheet. You do need to be able to speak with other markets about the same topic areas. So the main business need was to deliver this improvement across all of our markets to what the learning needs analysis identified specifically. And we conducted those, as you said, it was quite in depth, we had a commercial needs analysis, we did some surveys, some focus groups, some one to one interviews, and we also did a full commercial strategy review. So we identified that there was inconsistent understanding of financial terms, and also inadequate support to help learners to develop and that. I think I've mentioned that basically what we've done in the past wasn't working, it wasn't delivering the outcomes we needed. So that did inform our objectives. So if you wanted to sum it up, our objective was basically to create an engaging way of embedding financial acumen across a cohort of individuals with different skill levels, different languages and different cultures, which would lead to better efficiency overall in our revenue management for the teams.

Michelle Ockers:
Great. Thank you. And you mentioned that you had been using a PowerPoint based approach specifically for this to try to develop this skill, financial literacy and revenue management. How did you know that that wasn't working?

Catherine Sharpe:
Because of those focus groups and interviews that we did across the business. Also, you know, feedback from those sessions was generally mediocre. I wouldn't say poor, I wouldn't say great, just mediocre. And we could see a huge gap and also a huge opportunity to bring in something more innovative, more modern, more engaging, more cutting edge.

Michelle Ockers:
So Catherine, you knew what you didn't want. When you went out to look for an external partner, how clear were you on what you were looking for? How specific was your brief when you went out to market? Or how did you go about doing that market research and figuring out who you wanted to partner with?

Catherine Sharpe:
At this stage, I think I should give some credit to our previous head of capability, Tom Bailey, who was the brainchild of this whole idea. He is a very innovative thinker himself. We did have a very clear idea of what we didn't want, and we also had a very clear idea of the results that we needed to achieve. And based on the experience of Tom, we knew that we needed a solution that was going to be a lot more gamified and a lot more user-friendly. But as soon as we discovered what Yarno did, it just clicked, you know, sometimes things just click and it just felt like this could be a great solution for us to try based on what we could see they had done already.

Michelle Ockers:
OK, so let's go there next. Let's talk about the solution. And perhaps we start with you, Mark, on this one. Can you describe the solution that was developed with a specific perspective of the participant experience? So if I was a participant, what was I going to experience as part of this solution?

Mark Eggers:
Sure, yeah. So from a learner's perspective, it's a very simple three minute a day quiz that gets delivered to any device. So it could be a mobile phone, it could be a laptop or tablet. So it's done very, very quickly. It's a micro learning approach. So you do your three questions

for the day, you earn points and you progress up and down the leaderboard and you get your badges and there's things like streaks. So there's gamified elements to help engage. So from a learner perspective, the system's really simple. It's by design, very simple. We wanted people to have, we wanted the solution to have a low impact on their day, especially for salespeople. They're out on the road, they're in their car, they're visiting customers. So from a learner perspective, extremely quick, extremely simple and engaging. How that's built and designed has a little bit more complexity behind it.

Michelle Ockers:
You actually ran this over a series of micro learning campaigns, right? Five campaigns in total. Would one of you like to just talk to us about the structure, like just walk us through these five campaigns and why five campaigns and why nine months? I think it was nine months, wasn't it?

Catherine Sharpe:
Yeah, well, I'll jump in first and I'll say what the structure of the campaigns was. We started with a very broad revenue management, general uplift of financial literacy. And the great thing about these campaigns is as soon as you finish one, you identify where are we, where are we lower in, where are we higher in, where are the opportunities, what areas or what parts of maybe the regions are, you know, higher or lower. So it's just a very natural and iterative process. So out of the first, you automatically, you understand what should come next. So, you know, we took it from, we need to upskill on. So we started general, then we upskilled more on margin and markup, which was specific to something that the field sales team really need to know about. And from there, we realized that actually category insights reports is an area that you need to inform about in order to understand these areas. So basically, it's very much based on the outcomes of the campaigns where we identify the gaps that need to be addressed on the following campaign. And it doesn't just end at five campaigns. It's actually ongoing. Even right now we're running one at present as well with the team.

Michelle Ockers:
It's a bit like a Netflix series, right? Sometimes you watch these series and I sit there and I think like, oh, this is nine seasons long. Did they sit down and map the whole thing out ahead of time? Or was there some way it kind of iteratively got built? So how does that work, Mark? Do you map the whole thing out or is it literally kind of one campaign to the next?

Mark Eggers:
For the first engagement, we did map it out. So it was the five campaign plan. We did look at it across the board, and we do try to work with our customers with a learning plan across the 12-month period of the contract, if it's a one-year deal. And yeah, so the interesting part about this one, and it was an amazing outcome in the fact that we used that first campaign to really understand what the baseline looked like, and it was designed for learners of all. competence and you know regardless of prior knowledge and then into the segmentation approach and then we actually looked at for the fourth and fifth campaigns actually looked at the learner feedback so within the app itself there's a button that the learner can press and give feedback on questions or they could even give suggestions on future topic areas that they might be interested in. So we gather that data over the previous campaigns and then coupled with the low performing areas that we spoke about previously, we actually created the fourth and fifth campaigns as a combination of the learner feedback and those weaker performing topic areas which was great because it became super targeted then to the learners and I think they could also see their suggestions coming to life in questions so that was really exciting for some learners to see that they're having an impact almost crowdsourcing the learning from real life experience.

Michelle Ockers:
Yeah, I love the way you've iteratively improved that, you've adapted the solution based on what you're seeing with people's understanding, as well as the learner feedback. That's the power of analytics these days, right on the right platform.

Catherine Sharpe:
Absolutely. One other thing we did was after the first general baseline campaign, we also split into, you know, different, so account managers, field sales, because we could see that the needs were very, very different. So that was another example of that kind of iterative work that we did.

Michelle Ockers:
Making it quite relevant then, right, and targeted and specific. I understand there were two different types of campaigns, Burst and Embed. Can one of you explain the difference between those two types of campaigns? Thanks, Mark.

Mark Eggers:
I can take that one. Yeah. So the embed campaigns are our longer form campaigns. They usually go for a couple of weeks, so two to three weeks. They have three questions a day that are delivered on a daily cycle. Questions you get incorrect are sent back after three days for retry via the space repetition function. So you get to see that question repeated. The answers are randomized on the repeat. So you just can't remember that, hey, it was C last time. It's randomized each time. So those embed campaigns are better for really getting knowledge embedded into long-term memory. The burst campaigns are a shorter type of campaign, so they're delivered in one go. So rather than getting drip-fed questions on a daily basis, you get the questions in one hit. So it might be 10 or 15 questions in one go. The questions aren't repeated, so there's no space repetition function. You still get an explanation. So if you get it incorrect, you can see why. But that question won't repeat. So they're better for, I guess, a point in time learning exercise versus the embedding process that the longer form help with.

Michelle Ockers:
So for what purpose might you use a burst campaign rather than an embed campaign? And how do you kind of link the two, if at all?

Mark Eggers:
So what we try and do is around three or four embed campaigns per year, so one a quarter. Because they're longer form, around three weeks at a time, there's much more, I guess, buzz around them. So there's a comms plan, there's a bit of a marketing push explaining to the learner, you know, what's in it for me. Then we try and sprinkle bursts in between those and the bursts tend to be around things that are things you need the learner to know right now. So we might not have three weeks to wait. So it might be a product launch or it might be something that's happened in market. It could be a safety thing. So it could be refreshing information off the back of a town hall or a workshop. So they're great use cases as well. So things where there's a little bit of a time pressure to get that information out. So that's where the burst comes into play.

Michelle Ockers:
Great, thank you. It sounds like there's lots of hooks, like lots of ways to make it engaging for participants and to motivate them and attract them to do the learning, to use the app. I understand this wasn't mandatory learning, but you had very good participation. Catherine, would you like to talk to me about the kind of participation rates you saw?

Learning Uncut Episode 162
Driving Engagement with Microlearning and Gamification – Catherine Sharpe and Mark Eggers

Catherine Sharpe:

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, honestly, when I tell you the participation rates, I think most people will be blown away who work in learning because participation rates across all of those five campaigns was an average of about 90%, with the highest being at 94, not just participation, but completion at 94%. I mean, up to, I think, generally, we in the L&D world are pretty happy often with about 70%, 75%. That would be considered a good average for a lot of LMS type programs that are run. So it was absolutely phenomenal. And it was down to this engaging format, this ease of access, even things, you know, to think of like we had the SSO login. So it was so quick for people. There was no you know, there was not a lot of clicks to get to where you needed to go. You got an email, you completed and you saw leaderboards. So yeah, that was absolutely brilliant. And we haven't seen any drop off. That's the most amazing thing, the completion. has remained high across the board.

Michelle Ockers:

Can you talk to us a little about what is it about the approach that makes it so engaging? How do you ensure that you get that kind of not only initial participation rate, but you're not getting drop offs and maybe link it into some of the learning science underlying that for us?

Mark Eggers:

Okay, well I think I'd break it into three phases. The first phase being the sort of human-centered design phase. So we start all of our engagements with a workshop and we use a really fantastic mind mapping tool called Mindnode. It's a Mac-only tool. I'm not sure if any of the listeners, we can put a link in the notes, I'm sure, but it's a really fantastic tool. I get asked about it all the time, like, what is this tool? And like, it's not our tool, it's just a fantastic tool. It's just a beautiful mind mapping program. And that really helps us to understand, you know, who the learners are, identify, you know, what they need to do, so what behaviour they need to change. And that's really key in that design phase to understand sort of what that looks like. The way we do that is by involving two levels, subject matter experts and process matter experts. The difference being the subject matter experts are usually from the learning department, so they're experts in the learning side, and the process matter experts are experts in what the actual job looks like. A field rep or an account manager who's really great at their job, they're helping within the workshop phase because we want to understand what it actually looks like boots on ground. What does it feel like when you're talking to a customer? What kind of questions are they asking? How are you dealing with X, Y and Z? So that really helps for us to get the content really specific. And then, of course, we had to then translate that into different languages as well. So there were nuances there in terms of the different teams and how things would actually translate across locations.

Michelle Ockers:

So you've done those workshops and what did you learn through those workshops about the people that this was for that might have shaped how you approach the solution design?

Catherine Sharpe:

Yeah. So what we learned about this from this needs analysis that we did, this mind mapping was that we were dealing with a large cohort of commercial salespeople who had very different skill levels and also different language abilities, etc. But the one thing we found out was that across the region and across all our markets, this was considered a fairly dry topic that they wouldn't have sort of patience to sit down for a one hour PowerPoint explanation of the topic. It didn't really embed. It didn't really sit with them. They're very on the go people. They're very results driven, KPI driven. They love a leaderboard. And what we found out was that we had to appeal to those things. They also don't have a lot of time. I mean, they are busy people on the go. making them come and sit, either whether it's live or whether it's a webinar for a one-hour or a two-hour workshop, it's very, very hard to achieve. So, what we learned was that we needed a much more adaptable and accessible solution.

Michelle Ockers:
Thank you, Catherine. So, Mark, you were walking us through the design approach. So, you've had these workshops, you've used a mind mapping approach, you've gotten close to the learners, the behaviours. What next?

Mark Eggers:
We actually use the recordings of those virtual trainings, which is very, very helpful. So my instructional design team actually use those recordings from other sessions to then craft the content. So it's a great way to look at how can we use workshop material to then help expand that and scale that learning out to a much greater audience because it's always something that I think about when someone's recording a workshop, you think, where's this going to be used? So that's a great use case of this was definitely used and my content creators took those virtual recordings and use them to create the content.

Michelle Ockers:
So was the content all quiz based? Like, was it literally the content is here's a question, answer a question rather than here's a piece of content and there's a question. And if so, talk to us a bit about how and why that works.

Mark Eggers:
Yeah, I mean, that was the model of Yarno from the very beginning was that we looked at the way people were doing e-learning and a lot of online learning was, you know, clicking next as fast as possible to get to the quiz. And then you'd be asked something and you go back and then you read and take note of the content. So we thought, why don't we just ask the question up front? If you know, great you can get it correct, you can progress to the next question. If you get it incorrect, you have to read the explanation and that's where you're going to be primed to want to know why you got it incorrect and then go through it that way. So that's the model that Yarno has taken and it's a bit of a flipped model of how learning is generally presented. So Yeah with the spaced repetition component the idea being that if you do get it incorrect you do get another go at it so even though you have got it incorrect that's great you will get another shot so the learning occurs when you read the explanation and then reapply that in three days time and of course the stats will show that at an individual level but they'll also see that at an admin level so we can see across the board you know are people taking on the knowledge are they ingesting what they're reading and can they reapply that in a number of days time and even for correct answers you will get the question back another time so the question will be repeated after a week and if you get it correct twice the system will retire that question for you as a learner so it starts to focus on things that you don't know or things you haven't yet been served. So there's a little bit of, I guess, personalization for each learner as well as they answer their questions.

Michelle Ockers:
So how do you write really good quality questions that truly test people's understanding?

Mark Eggers:
The approach we take, we've got a few sort of best practice, I guess, the approach we take has a few sort of key areas that we focus on. The end result being you want the learner to critically think as they're reading the question and then trying to understand, you know, which is the correct answer. And that involves not writing answer choices that are super easy to spot like you know you get the classic one there's you know four times the amount of writing for the correct answer than the incorrect we don't allow all of the above or none of the above so they've got to be three plausible but incorrect answers rather than you know, one that potentially could be knocked out straight away. So that's, again, making it harder for the learner to guess it by sort of knocking off ones that they definitely know aren't the right ones.

Making a scenario based as much as possible. It's nice to have a balance. If you ask too many very heavy scenario based questions, we actually see learners drop off engagement when you do that. So you like to have a mix of sort of different levels of complexity in the questions.

Michelle Ockers:

Thank you for sharing that. I think that's really valuable just to get people thinking about how they're framing questions. And it feels to me like there's something deeply respectful about asking people first and figuring out what they do and don't know, rather than throwing a whole lot of stuff at them that they don't need. Catherine, how different was this to approaches you'd seen used before?

Catherine Sharpe:

Yes, it was a very different approach. And as Mark was talking there, you know, it made me recall one of the other, I think, reasons why the questions were so successful was that collaboration we had between Yarno's instructional design skills and they have an amazing instructional design team, probably actually their instructional design team almost feel like part of our company. You know, we have such a great working relationship, but they also worked with SMEs from our sales teams to build the questions. So it was a real collaboration. And it was a very flexible type of collaboration that worked super. It was super effective in bringing questions to life that had the right mix of science and had the right mix of knowledge.

Michelle Ockers:

It sounds like a great approach involving the experts with you and collaborating so closely. So in terms of getting that engagement up and keeping it up, what do you think was most critical to successfully engaging participants and having them return time and again to these campaigns. We might start with you, Catherine, from a practical business perspective, and then we'll get you to add something, Mark.

Catherine Sharpe:

I mean, from a practical business perspective, what I would say that was the key to success was, first of all, setting it up for success, which took quite a while. I'll admit that was getting our single sign on for learners to be able to log in. So there's a whole process that a company needs to go through to ensure that happens, and you need to allow enough time for it. That was the first part, ensuring our learners would find it very easy to access the learning. And the second part was this buy-in from our senior leaders, from our sales teams, and also from all of the sales leaders, as well as work with the comms plan, to ensure that we gave our learners, and before we ever launched the campaign, we created a really engaging, Yarno did it for us, a learning video with avatars of our sales directors for Australia and for greater China. Even before people ever logged on, they were quite excited by this new, exciting development that we were just about to launch. So we did create, we built excitement. Then once we launched, we had a mixture of comms going from sales leaders plus also Yarno's comms to learners that are engaged. So everybody completing a campaign gets the launch email, they get daily reminders, not reminders, but they log in from their email, it's so easy, it couldn't be easier. So it's a combination, you do really need buy in from your, whichever part of the business you're trying to launch it in. So it happened to be capability and sales, that team really needs to buy in and promote it as well. We had one, one of our sales directors actually admitted and he replied to a reply all email and he said, you know, I like to start my day with this Yarno, it's almost like a meditation, I get three minutes or five minutes to myself where I answer these questions. I highly recommend all of you take three to five minutes out of your day to invest in your own development. And that's how it was perceived then across the teams.

Michelle Ockers:
And Mark, what would you like to add about engagement?

Mark Eggers:
I think to echo Catherine's sentiment around the line manager buy-in, that's one area we really focus on with our customers is trying to get the sort of middle management level to be across what's happening, because, you know, these decisions around, you know, strategy and learning come from, I guess, a more of a senior level, and then they roll down through an organization. And when you've got a field sales team who are out on the road, you know, that line manager is the absolute, they're just the, you know, the hub of getting that information out to those field salespeople and getting them across, you know, why they're doing it and why it's important and getting them excited about, hey, there's this competition and because it's a team versus team challenge with Yarno, because we're a team-based learning product, that's really important because that's their team and you want them to make sure that hey you know there's going to be visibility on you know where their team sits I think there was 28 teams in this in this particular rollout so there was a lot of teams and that was exciting because you know there was people vying for their place on the leaderboard and their team's place as well. So that's one of the things around our product that we've really tried to foster over the years is understanding that even if you're not at the top of the leaderboard individually, when you're part of a team, you still want to pull your socks up and perform to lift your team score. And it's something that we've found I guess somewhat by accident, and we heard this feedback directly from learners in another organization where they said they often stand around together and do their Yarno questions as a group, and they sort of workshop the answers. So they're talking through it, and we think, oh, that's not how we designed it, but you know what? It's a great learning outcome because suddenly you've got this peer learning happening where people are talking about it. they're discussing the answers, there's all this knowledge being shared. I'll say accidentally, I'll take it as a win for the product, but it definitely wasn't something we thought would happen. But it turned out that people often will talk over the partition even within offices and say, hey, what do you get for this? Because the way that Yarno's questions are delivered is you don't get the same question each per day. So, you know, I might be on question, say there's a 25 question campaign. I might be on question 1 and 10 and Catherine's on question 9 and 17. So, we'll get the same questions over the period of three weeks, but not on the same days. So, it's all being delivered differently. And we designed it that way thinking that that would help stop people from being able just to say, hey, everyone, today's answer is B, and then suddenly everyone gets the right thing. But as it turned out, it actually encouraged that peer learning to occur, which is fantastic and definitely a big reason why we see that engagement continuous because even if you aren't in the top three, you still want to get up and do your best.

Catherine Sharpe:
One thing I'd like to add to that, though, as well, is that actually once people have engaged for the first time, it isn't a challenge to keep them there because everything else in Yarno, the gamification, the, you know, the micro learning, the humour, there's a lot of gis and things like that included with answers. So once people are on, actually keeping them there, I find is less, is not as much of a challenge. But what you want to do is ensure at the beginning you get them on. And that was the part where This, you know, buy-in from the leaders, etc. was super important, but actually keeping them there has never been a challenge once they're there.

Mark Eggers:
Yeah.

Learning Uncut Episode 162
Driving Engagement with Microlearning and Gamification – Catherine Sharpe and Mark Eggers

Michelle Ockers:
I can understand the initial engagement and that it's like, this is novel. It's fun. My leaders are supporting it. But even when you've got all of those things, if it's not helping people in some way, if it's actually not supporting them in a way they find useful and relevant, you're still going to get drop off, which you didn't get. So if I were to go out and talk to some of your people in your, in your field sales teams and ask them, how has this actually helped you? What might I hear? Catherine?

Catherine Sharpe:
Well, I would definitely think you'd hear that they feel more confident to discuss financial literacy. What we have seen is approximately at the end of each campaign that there is a 20% to 22% uplift in knowledge from the beginning to the end. So I would say that, you know, when it comes to our engagement survey, which we do with the whole company annually, We have seen on the teams who have completed Yarno a 12 to 18% increase in the score where they measure how they feel invested for their growth and development in that year. Teams who have completed Yarno generally have scored higher. They obviously are probably scoring on more than just Yarno, but it's been a dramatic uplift for learners. And I think once they feel they're being invested in a topic that's really relevant and makes an impact in their day-to-day job how they come across as sales professionals speaking to their leaders or speaking to directors, they can see the impact. I mean, it's very difficult to get a financial measure. Has this impacted us financially? But what we can see is that leaders are able to reuse questions. They're able to workshop with their own teams, campaign results. That's a really big part of the ongoing learning that happens. I think it's just a general, the rising tide has lifted the conversation that we have across all markets in financial literacy and the confidence people feel to discuss it.

Michelle Ockers:
Yeah, fantastic. Have you done other campaigns, Mark, around this area, around financial literacy and revenue management, and is what you're seeing here and what Catherine's described, this kind of rising tide effect, have you seen that elsewhere as well?

Mark Eggers:
Yeah, we have, as well as being paired with sales and product knowledge as well. That is usually sort of the key areas around salespeople that we do focus on. And some of the areas we focus very closely on from a results perspective is, you know, NPS score, VOC score, so Net Promoter Score and Voice of Customer. They're two huge areas that a lot of especially retail based businesses focus on. Like-for-like sales as well. We often would track that against certain campaigns and depending on the type of organization we work with, we often ask in the very beginning during that mind mapping workshop is, hey, what is the actual figure that you're looking to get off the back of this campaign? Because we want to be held accountable as a business saying, hey, you're spending money on this product, We want to see a business result off the back of it. And with sales especially, if you're focusing on a particular product, you can see those figures rise up. And we've seen increases of 60% in like for like sales over a nine week period for products we've trained on with no other changes, no other promotions, nothing else done other than the fact that the team member has been trained using Yarno on a particular product. It's what gets us out of bed as a business. You know, we are very much a behaviour change focused learning organization. And, you know, Lockheed, my business partner, and I both didn't come from learning. So when we first sort of fell into this space, we were both from the software, I guess, industry, we were building software for other people. And then we decided to build our own. And that's how Yarno was born. And then when we started we thought, oh, we sort of have to put a number against everything you do. So from the very beginning, we've been very focused on, hey, like, what is the business impact? And can we measure that? And we work closely with the organizations to say, right, you know, please hold us accountable for what we can do to

actually rise, you know, raise something in the business to, you know, so the CFO is excited as well as the learners.

Michelle Ockers:
Yeah. Was that a conversation, Catherine, that you had with some of your sales leaders and were there any specific goals or were they even able to articulate how they thought this might flow on to business impact? It's not always easy.

Catherine Sharpe:
It's not always easy, but I think our need was just so obvious because we were coming. I won't say we were coming from a low base across everywhere, but it was just that that confidence to discuss financial terminology and to understand how it applies, which is where it started. Now it's gone off on much more focused into more focused areas. But that initial where we started off, we just could see that we need to increase financial literacy and the ability to have these conversations so that our sales professionals feel like they are sales professionals across all our regions. We didn't put a number behind that because it isn't very much a number-based thing, but how we measure it is the confidence and the sense of development people have having completed these campaigns.

Michelle Ockers:
That makes sense. Thank you, Catherine. Was there anything you considered as part of the solution design at any point that just didn't make it into the final plan?

Mark Eggers:
We definitely added more video after the first campaign. We got feedback from the learners that they really liked video. So we actually shot and created some video based questions. So watching a video first, you know, 30 seconds of video before you answer a question. So that was something we did off the back of feedback, off that first campaign that sort of, yeah, it was an iteration for the, for the pro for the subsequent campaigns that we ran.

Michelle Ockers:
Great, thank you. So let's have a couple of quick rounds of reflection and advice for other L&D professionals. Let's start with reflection. And we might start with you on this one, Catherine. What do you feel was most effective or impactful on this project? What helped it to work so well?

Catherine Sharpe:
I would say what helped it to work so well was having such a great collaborative working relationship with our partner in Yarno. That was from the kind of the back side of it and from the front end of it what would have made it work so well was ensuring ease of access for our learners. So I think the make or break was ensuring that we got single sign-on to work for learners. If there had been, if it had been an app that sat outside of our systems, I don't think engagement would have been so high.

Michelle Ockers:
Great. And Catherine, what made the working relationship, what were the hallmarks of that working relationship that made it work so well, the collaboration with Yarno?

Catherine Sharpe:
Yarno basically have a great customer service. They really want to work with the customer. They listen to the customer. They adapt to the customer. They also have their expertise and their instructional designers who understand as well and can guide us to ensure that the result is the outcome that we want. So we may have ideas and want to take it off on a

different tangent, but it's great to have that collaboration and partnership and trust great trust and great customer working relationship.

Michelle Ockers:
And from your perspective, Mark, for Yarno, what made Blackmores a good partner to work with?

Mark Eggers:
Having an open mind to trying something new and going out and looking for an innovative approach was the first thing. And secondly, just the openness to working together as a team and bouncing ideas off each other and working out what's going to look best for their learners. Every organization is different in the way things roll out. The comms plan almost changes every time we run a campaign and, I guess, yeah, I feel like just the collaboration between both teams was just amazing. And it was just a joy to work with Blackmores. And we're super excited about the relationship and how it's been progressing. I mean, the learners obviously love it. You know, we love working with the team. And yeah, the results, I guess, have come off the back of that speak for themselves in terms of some of the best results we've had with any customer have come off the back of those campaigns. So that doesn't happen by fluke. It's a lot of hard work on both sides. So yeah, we're very thankful for that.

Michelle Ockers:
Great, thank you. And is there anything you'd like to add, Mark, to that reflection around what helped this project to be so effective and impactful?

Mark Eggers:
Yeah, I think this scaffolding approach really stood out for me. We don't always get to take that approach with every customer. Some customers want to do very sort of defined campaigns over the year that don't build on each other, whereas because we had this opportunity to look at it over a 12-month period and say, right, well, you know, how are we going to best approach all these different learning needs and the ability to change as we went. So, I don't think we thought in the second and third, we'd necessarily start to segment. But as that needs analysis took place, it really was apparent that the field sales team and the account team were very different in the way they approached things. So, then we were able to really adjust the approach and sort of make that more engaging and more personalized for the role type. So that definitely stood out to me as one of the best parts of the project.
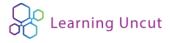
Michelle Ockers:
Thank you. And we'll move into a final question. We'll start with you on this one, Mark. What advice would you give to learning and development professionals in organizations who are aiming to build impactful evidence-based learning solutions?

Mark Eggers:
Start the conversation with IT security early. It always takes a lot longer than you think. That's probably the number one thing. And, yeah, and I guess, yeah, be open to ask questions of the provider and, yeah, look at collaborating together to get the best solution because it's not always going to roll out exactly how you think. And, you know, that flexibility to change is really what gets the best result for the learner.

Michelle Ockers:
Great, thank you. And Catherine, what advice would you give to our L&D professionals who are listening about building impactful solutions?

Catherine Sharpe:

I would say that early process where that identity, you know, your needs analysis and being very clear about the solution that you are, when you go to market, the solution that you are looking for, that is so important because once you invest in that relationship, it's very difficult after a month or two months of that investment to change your mind It's really good to understand what you want first and basically understand if that provider that you're seeking offers that or not, but also being open-minded. And I think, yes, just be willing to try some new and innovative approaches as well, things you mightn't have tried before, because at the end of the day, as Mark said, it's how are you going to change the behaviours, how are you going to get the results you want? And if you have been trying something and it's been mediocre and you know you could do better, then it's definitely time to start thinking about those innovative solutions that in this modern age where people are so used to looking at their phone and looking at, you know, quick solutions, we all have a shorter attention span now, right? So that sort of how are you going to change your learning to meet how people are changing?
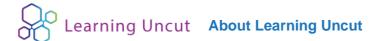
Michelle Ockers:

Absolutely. Thank you. And I love this combination of bringing that approach around what's the evidence say from learning science about what works with who are our people and what's their experience in the real world, including with contemporary approaches that there might be used to in other areas that we can explore coming from a strong evidence-based underpinning that to make behaviour change work for them and for the organization. Congratulations again on the awards and thank you for sharing what made this work so well. We'll pop a link to both of your LinkedIn profiles as well as both of your business websites in the show notes, plus anything else that we think might nicely supplement the conversation.

Mark Eggers:

Thanks so much Michelle.

Learning Uncut Episode 162
Driving Engagement with Microlearning and Gamification – Catherine Sharpe and Mark Eggers

 About Learning Uncut

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.

Learn more about us at our website.

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*

Find Michelle on LinkedIn