

Michelle Ockers:

Welcome listeners to another episode of Learning Uncut. I'd like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community, including the beautiful coastal area of the Brinja Yuin people on whose lands I sit today. And I would like to welcome Amy Vig from KPMG Australia. Welcome, Amy.

Amy Vig:

Thank you. Nice to be here.

Michelle Ockers:

It's lovely to have you here. And listeners, I have mentioned a particular person who has been wonderful in referring guests to the podcast before, Amanda Ashby. So big shout out to Amanda. Amy was another recommendation from Amanda. Were you guys colleagues at one stage, Amy?

Amy Vig:

We were. We worked together for, I think, almost a year. It was fantastic. Amanda's brilliant.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, she is. And she's a really good connector in the Australian L&D community. So thank you, Amanda, for suggesting another fabulous guest. And we're going to talk about your AI Learning Academy today, Amy. But let's kick off with a brief introduction to KPMG Australia. I think most of us understand it's a global professional services firm. We are talking about KPMG Australia. So if you can tell us a little bit about what the firm does here in Australia and who is in your workforce?

Amy Vig:

Yeah, great. So, you know, KPMG Australia, we provide services such as audit, tax and consulting to a wide range of industries, governments and also sectors. We have roughly 10,000 employees, including 600 partners who are immensely talented and provide deep expertise to our clients. And I guess, you know, like a lot of other organisations, we have a multi-generational workforce with a large percentage of our workforce being 30 and under. So, that helps us around looking at, from a learning perspective, where we need to focus on. My role, I head up the internal learning team here at KPMG Australia, and I'm responsible for strengthening our learning culture in the firm and helping our people build the skills that they need to be future fit, to deliver the best service to our clients and to meet our regulatory and compliance commitments as well. You know, I really love what I do and nothing gives me more pride than seeing people develop and grow.

Michelle Ockers:

It's really interesting that question of what gets you out of bed in the morning and what attracts you to learning and development. That sense of joy at seeing others learn and grow, Amy, is what I'm hearing coming through there. I've just jotted down three things you mentioned as part of your role, building learning culture. I love that that was the first thing you mentioned. And we might circle back to that as we talk about the AI Learning Academy. Skills to be future fit and skills have been hot for a while now. And I guess underlying some of what we're talking about today, that's partly just the ongoing pace of change right now. Traditional approaches, maybe that we've used, we don't have the time to use them because things are accelerating and there's this continuous changing. And then, of course,

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the all important table stakes of regulatory and compliance. So it's a fairly broad scope. Tell me about the AI Learning Academy. What is the AI Learning Academy?

Amy Vig:

So, our AI Learning Academy enables all of our people, no matter their skill level or role, to upskill or reskill in the critical skills needed in AI. It forms part of our broader Eclipse Academy, which is our internal offerings to all of our people to build their skills critical for the future, as I said before. We really call our AI Academy the one-stop shop for all AI learning in the firm. And we knew that we needed to make it easier from speaking to our people, for our people to find the learning that is best suited for them, but whilst also providing some flexibility of choice around what learning that they can go and access. But we have access to thousands of pieces of learning through our learning providers. But we know that we needed to be able to funnel that a little bit and make it easier for our people to find the learning that they do need to help them in their role, but also to help KPMG be able to achieve their business strategy and, you know, make sure that we're focusing on the right areas as well. So, yeah, that's what that's overarching what the Academy is.

Michelle Ockers:

So the Academy is like it's a shopfront rather than a separate team, right? It's a way of people going to a specific place for a certain group of skills. It's conceptual as much as anything, this Academy idea?

Amy Vig:

Yeah. So I guess that that's also the way that we've structured the Academy as well. So, you know, when we when we have developed our Academy, we're really focusing on, what are the different learning modalities that our people have, you know, can go and access. So, when we have developed it, we've got access to bite-size online learning. We provide access to more experiential learning where people can go in and, you know, actually workshop together to solve problems, to be able to learn from each other. We provide access to instructor-led learning throughout our academy. Certifications, accreditations, you know, as I said, it's all in sort of the one-stop shop that we do provide access for our people. And I guess that was also the reason that we did develop it was also off the back of our focus over the past few years on really building digital and data skills across the firm. And particularly then in response to the acceleration and the rapid pace of change in AI, you know, there was a real need for us to be able to focus in this area and accelerate that focus too. But yeah, so it's kind of conceptual, but also, there's a lot of thought that's been put behind the academy to bring it all to life for our people as well.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. Do you have a separate part of your team who just is focused on the AI learning academy or does your team cover a whole range of academies? You know, if I'm a member of your team, am I likely to be, well, I'm working in the AI learning academy or could I work across a range of academies. How does that work?

Amy Vig:

Yeah. So I guess the way that I have my team set up is that we do have different portfolios of work that my team are dedicated to. And I do have a manager that's dedicated to being able to build out our AI or digital and data skill offering. But also we do bring in, you know, because this is a big priority and a need, I do bring in a lot of other people to come in to support the build of our academy. But we do have an academy for our growth skills like sales and ESG as well. So it's a concept that we have definitely bought into the firm. So then that way our people know where to go to build those skills. Yeah, I encourage a lot of learning from each other and collaboration across the team. So that way, if we built an ESG

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academy and how we built that, how did that work? Is that something that we can actually bring into our AI academy, but also vice versa? Yeah, but I do have someone that's dedicated to digital and data skills because of the obviously immense focus in this space as well.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, great. So the back-end portfolios at the front-end academies, and it's not necessarily a one-to-one match.

Amy Vig:

Yeah, exactly.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. Got my head around it. Thank you very much. When did you set up the AI Learning Academy? And it's almost obvious the business need, but when did you set it up and what triggered the setting it up at that point in time?

Amy Vig:

Yeah, so we started building the academy probably about 12 months ago, that's when we started to scope out, you know, what could this academy concept look like.

Michelle Ockers:

Early to mid 2024? March 2024?

Amy Vig:

Yeah. And we started to do this because our financial year starts in July and we knew that our business strategy, AI's front and centre in our business strategy. And we know that, and we knew that was going to be further enhanced as we went into our new financial year in July. So we started to think about, what do we want to, and as you know, scoping to be able to deliver a new sort of learning initiative does take time. So that's when we started to really look to build it. It did take us awhile, particularly as we built out, how would we even structure the academy? What's the best way to actually build this one-stop shop front way in for our AI skills as well? So, you know, we had to do a fair bit of work. to then launch it. So it was ready to go as we went into our new financial year, and our CEO, fantastically enough, he launched it as part of his roadshows in August. So that was absolutely brilliant. We had great senior leader backing for our, for our new academy. But yeah, that, that sort of initial part, that's when we started to look at, what is the need? We met with a number of stakeholders, really senior stakeholders, but also stakeholders that are experts in the AI space to really start to gather and scope how we were going to approach the build of the academy.

Michelle Ockers:

In terms of business need and what you needed to equip the business, people in the business to do with AI, what did you discover? Because it's like, it's still, I know it's not brand new, but we're still figuring out how to use it for work. And when I say we, I mean the royal we, like our businesses, our organizations, it's a rapidly moving target, right? So how did you go about figuring out what do people in the business actually need to be able to do with AI?

Amy Vig:

Yeah, that was the tricky part, right? So the business need, we engaged with our stakeholders, as I said before, and our chief digital officer, our head of AI enablement, to look at what was the need. Because we knew from a learning perspective, we need to turn the dial and accelerate the skills that we have in the firm for AI. But we wanted to align that definitely to the strategy. So, you know, we have embraced AI within our firm, so much so

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that we created our own GPT tool, which is fantastic, called Kim. And so KimChat, you know, that was something that we were really keen to make sure that we were enabling increased usage of Kim, because that helps us to build productivity, save an incredible amount of time for our people. So then it frees them up to do the work that we really need them to do to succeed, right? So that was our biggest priority was how do we, how do we equip our people to use AI and obviously generative AI day to day to help them in their roles and to create, you know, better productivity efficiencies. But then also the other piece was we know that our clients and the organisations that we work with, like us, they're seeing a rapid increase in the need to be able to implement AI solutions and embrace AI for their workforce as well. So on the other side, we also needed to, we need to increase the skills of our people that they can go and engage with our clients and deliver for our clients. So that was our key pieces around, you know, how do we make sure that we drive that need internally, but also for us to go out with our clients as well.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. So from a business perspective, it's fantastic that there'd been enough thinking done in the business. You've even got a head of AI enablement. So they're an obvious partner for you to be able to work with. In terms of the business goals then for using AI, you talked about productivity and efficiency, innovation. What's happening in that space with AI? It didn't wasn't mentioned explicitly, but it's got to be part of the picture, right?

Amy Vig:

Definitely. Our Eclipse AI Learning Academy is to help to drive innovation. And one thing that we when I mentioned before, we have KimChat, which is our internal GPT tool that we use. We also have been lucky enough to then have different personas that people, anyone across the whole firm can build their own Kim persona to help them either build a chat bot for themselves or an assistant for themselves or across the whole workforce. And that, again, to be able to enable that, all the learning that we have around building those personas has come through our academy. And that's then the connection around really driving innovation across the firm. But also we're always looking for innovation externally as well that we can speak to clients about. That's a really important part for us. Another piece that I do want to mention, too, is that when the new ISO 42001 standard came out, KPMG were committed to being one of the first organisations in the world to be able to achieve that standard. And I'm really pleased to say that KPMG Australia were the first organisation in the world to achieve that standard. And part of that standard for us to be able to achieve that was to demonstrate that our people had the training and did the training that was required around AI to meet the standard. And so our, our academy really was a driver for us to be able to do that. We were able to then use the academy and the engagement that we have. to be able to get that certification, which is amazing.

Michelle Ockers:

What is the standard, sorry?

Amy Vig:

Yeah, so, you know, the new ISO 42001 standard is a new international standard around AI that specifies requirements for establishing, implementing, maintaining and continually improving an artificial intelligence management system within organizations. So, you know, essentially this is a great thing for us to go out to our clients internally as well to say that we have been able to prove that we meet this standard and the requirements to be able to do that.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, fabulous from a competitive positioning perspective.

Amy Vig:

Yeah, and that we're being safe and responsible with AI, which is really important for us.

Michelle Ockers:

Absolutely. So you talked a little about reaching out to a number of different stakeholders as part of understanding the business need and getting clear on that. It's obviously a big initiative, which you stood up in a relatively small period of time. It was a matter of several months by the sound of it that you were able to launch this in. How did you engage beyond just understanding business need? Who were the key stakeholders you engaged with and how did you engage with those stakeholders and subject matter experts in shaping the academy?

Amy Vig:

Yeah, so key stakeholders for us is we do have an AI enablement forum that stood up across our firm with key partners and employees that are included in that, that do work deeply in the AI space. So firstly, that was our way of being able to identify some key SMEs, but also speaking to those people to say, this is what we're planning to build out. We want to increase the understanding of AI, the use of generative AI, you know, working with our clients who are the best people to be able to bring in into this piece. So we looked for when we were building it around sort of, and the way that we did end up building it is that it is structured around sort of capability areas. So, and I mentioned a couple there that, you know, some include understanding AI, using generative AI, trusted AI, AI supporting our clients. So, when we were looking to sort of overarching where we wanted to go, that was a bit easier for us to then say, this is what we're looking to build, who are the best SMEs to bring in here? And then what was great with that is actually when we had some SMEs brought in, some of them even said, you know what, I'm not sure about this, but actually this person might actually know a little bit more. So, we were able to work with them really closely and that was fantastic. And those SMEs were our early adopters, our testers, helped us to go and advocate across the firm of our new academy, which has been absolutely brilliant. And they've continued to be brilliant, supporting us as we continuously improve as well.

Michelle Ockers:

You mentioned that you structured the Academy around capability areas. Did you actually have a capability framework? Like, did you go to the extent of building that or was there one that already existed? What did that look like?

Amy Vig:

Yeah. I mean, I think that overarching, we had to build our own new capability framework and it was really a skills framework that we looked to build, but obviously we looked at other frameworks as well to help us to do that. So, initially, because this was quite new for us to do, we did work with a few of our learning providers to first help us go, you know, have you structured how you deliver learning? And then we also used generative AI ourselves to ask Kim and ask ChatGPT to go, we're building an AI skills framework, how would you structure it? So, we actually used AI within it. But we did a lot of modelling and testing around what's the best way to set it up. So, the solution that we ended up with, as I said, was sort of around sort of capability topic areas. But then underneath that, it is anchored to our skills framework. And that is a skills framework that we do use for all of our academies and a lot of our learning within the firm. So, you know, structured around proficiency levels. This is the capability. These are the topics that sit underneath that capability area. This is the, now we need to map out what is the skill and proficiency level as someone moves through that, depending on what, what their needs are. So whether or not it's foundational, intermediate or

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advanced, what are those differing skills that help us? And, we use, you know, very, very similar skills. There's a lot of different skills frameworks out there, but around actually looking at like the descriptors, you know, what does this skill actually mean? What would we like to see off the back of that skill? That then helped us to map in the learning that we wanted to anchor into our academy.

Michelle Ockers:

You talked about testing that as you went. How did you test that to see whether it was landing, whether you had it right? How did you go about doing that?

Amy Vig:

So, we definitely used our SMEs that we have. We also tested this across my broader learning team, a broader capability team as well. So, we did a fair bit of testing and particularly user testing. So, we did sort of a mock-up, a demo. If this was how it was structured, please go in and use it. Did you find it really easy, intuitive? Did you understand how to use it? That was our main testing that we did. And that really helped us to be able to build it. We also then obviously kept looking externally. We always look externally around what else exists and does it seem, is it quite similar to something else that's been successful as well? But yeah mainly our SMEs again and our learning community.

Michelle Ockers:

So a bit of bringing the outside in and then anchoring that against something you already had with the existing skills framework and the way you go about structuring that and then testing and iterating. I love that approach, Amy. So, you've got your skills framework, you've figured out your topic areas. What's the design? Like in terms of if I'm someone in KPMG, you know, what's my experience engaging with the academy? How have you structured the offering? How do I make sense of it and engage with it?

Amy Vig:

Yeah, great. So, when we were designing it from a usability perspective is we always try to do the three-click approach. So, first off, how hard is it for people to actually go and find the information that they need and the learning that they need? If there's 10 clicks to go and find it, we're just going to find a massive drop off with people using the actual Academy. So the way it is structured is go into the Academy. There is those capability areas that you can click on. So for example, using AI, click into that, then there's topics that sit underneath those. And the way that it's laid out is around those topics and foundational intermediate advanced with the learning all deep linked within the academy. That way, by the time that they then click into the learning, that's them going into either online learning, going into register for a program that's running across the firm, click in to go and see a certification that might be applicable to them. So that's really how we have structured it. And we also wanted it to be that we were pretty ruthless around we can't have everything in the academy. So, you know, if we do have a topic and it's around understanding AI and it's to build that sort of foundational level of understanding, we would probably only have three, four max pieces of learning that's anchored to that. We then, obviously, from all of our trackability and all that sort of stuff, we do monitor then what are people using. So that's our sort of continuous improvement too. are people actually clicking into that? If no one is clicking into that, is that an option for us to go, well, do we move it out? Do we need to put something in?

Michelle Ockers:

How do you know why they're not clicking into it? Are they just not ready for it yet? Or how do you make those judgment calls?

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Amy Vig:

Yeah, so for us, again, leaning into our SMEs, leaning into potentially even some of our people advisory boards to go and test that as well. So, before, we wouldn't, from a learning team perspective, we wouldn't just remove something because we've assumed no one's clicking into it. We test that first. So, if we did remove it, it could be that we just go, do you know what? Our people are now past that awareness stage and they're really moving more into the, you know, actually applying what they're learning. And then we might actually go, well, we still need it there because we need it for our new people joining the firm. So, we do put quite a lot behind it. But it could also be that, you know, the topic is just not, it's pretty standard. People have been able to find that elsewhere, right. And so they don't really need something.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. So as a user, as a KPMG associate or workforce member, employee, whatever the terminology you use is, I come to the academy. How do I decide? How do I figure out what I most need to learn? Is there any support provided for that?

Amy Vig:

Yeah, I mean, obviously, it's the way that it's also structured. But we do know and acknowledge that it could be tricky to know where I actually am at to be able to then click on the learning that that's required for them. Something that we did build to be innovative within the academy is, as I mentioned before, we have our Kim Chat personas that we could build. So we actually created a Kim Learner persona, and we call that our learning assistant, and that has ingested. So we've been able to pull in everything within our AI Learning Academy into this persona that then our people can go into and go, I've just joined KPMG. I'm at my early stages of learning about generative AI. Can you make a suggestion of what learning would be appropriate for me?" Kim Learner then does that work for us and for our people as well. We've got examples of, you know, a new person joining and then going, I want a three-month learning plan around AI. Please help me. And Kim has been able to produce a three-month learning plan, which is absolutely fantastic, right?

Michelle Ockers:

So powerful. It's just so powerful. And I remember, did you ever come across Jane Hart? Is that name familiar to you at all? H-A-R-T.

Amy Vig:

No.

Michelle Ockers:

I think she's retired now. She was running something called the Modern Workplace Learning Centre, which was all about building self-directed learning, building social learning. And she had this idea around creating a learning concierge service in your organisation. And at the time, because this was pre-AI, you know, someone who could help people if they had a question about how do I learn this? How do I figure out what I need? Almost like an ask me anything person at the end of an email or a phone call. But that's pretty resource intensive, right? But this is what you're offering people is a learning concierge. And they just need the skills to know how to engage with the concierge, right? It's just a fabulous example of using AI to support people to take charge of their own learning. I love it.

Amy Vig:

Yeah. Oh, I love that. I love that terminology around being a learning concierge.

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Michelle Ockers:

It's nice, isn't it?

Amy Vig:

And what we've done with Kim is we've also put that as that's the first thing that someone sees when they go into the academy. So then it's encouraging them. We do want to make it easier for them to find learning.

Michelle Ockers:

And we're very used to engaging with bots on web pages now, right? Customer service bots. It's almost like that idea, but hopefully not as frustrating as some of the ones out there are. How did you actually develop this? I know you called it a persona, but it's a different use of the term persona from what maybe we're used to in learning and development. It's not a chat bot because it's driven by a chat, but just help me get my head around from a tech perspective, what this learner assistant actually is and how you put it together.

Amy Vig:

So yeah, we worked really closely with our technology team to help us build it, but they've made it really easy for us. So the way it works is we pull in everything that we want to be in the persona. So that way, that's actually what it's limited to.

Michelle Ockers:

You're building a knowledge base, is that right, Amy?

Amy Vig:

That's it. So it's not bringing in everything that's from the internet or anything like that. It's very limited to what we want people to be able to find. But then we do some work to train it. So we pull in, you know, what type of prompts would we see from our people and help to be able to then go, well, this is the type of prompts and this is the types of answers that we would want Kim to be able to do. It's pretty intuitive. It helps us to be able to do a lot of that work for us, which is great. But that also equips us to be able to go, if someone asks for learning to understand prompting and we have our prompting digital badge that we have across the firm, we can then also train Kim to go, we want that to be included as one of the solutions for our people when they ask for prompting learning or training. So, yeah, there's a lot of stuff that happens that we have technology support for, but it is just around what do you want actually in there, what type of prompts, you know, and then also what type of answers do we want to come back to our people as well. So, we have a bit of control around that, which is absolutely brilliant. Then, obviously, they can ask more prompts. So, they can keep asking prompts. So, if something's come back to them that is too generic, they can then continue to go, please simplify this for me. Can you actually just go, what's the best one piece of learning for me? So, there's add-on prompts that we can use as well.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, fantastic. I'll pop a link in the show notes for listeners. I had a guest on late last year, Brad Hodge from La Trobe University, who has set up a bot to support students in his Rural Health Innovation course. And he talks about how he set that up just using ChatGPT and trained that. So it's actually not beyond the reach of most of us mere mortals without big tech departments to do this kind of thing. Right, Amy?

Amy Vig:

Yeah, that's right. That's right.

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Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, I love that. I love that so much. So, we've got someone coming in, maybe using the learning assistant to figure out what I need, where I might go to get a pointer to what to dive into in terms of the types of learning offerings and the kind of modalities, you've mentioned, you know, resources, so curated collections of things that have been selected with a degree of discernment by the sound of it, with a considerable degree of discernment, high quality resources that they can self-direct their way through. You've talked about programs or instructor-led offerings. What else is available? Are they the two main offerings? Are there other types of support and offerings that are embedded within the AI Academy?

Amy Vig:

Yes. So I know I mentioned the sort of self-led. We do then also develop our curated pathways for our people. And that's another way that we get people to know what learning is appropriate for them. So we do have some pathways that are very specific for certain teams, for example, you know, that is important for us. And we also have some offerings that are for our, say our partners across the firm. So that's a way that we bring things through. We also bring in some masterclasses with expert speakers. So we have them on a regular basis and we've had a couple of AI masterclasses, which has been brilliant. We then record those, we make those available for our people as well. So that's in there. And then yeah, any other sort of modalities that we have, we just sort of anchor through. That's pretty much what we do have within it.

Michelle Ockers:

So how do you ensure that the learning is practical? Like, is there any particular ways you support people to apply and to practice the skills?

Amy Vig:

Yeah. So, we've actually just brought in some new sort of sandboxes and labs for our people to do with one of our learning providers. That is now where we're looking to improve our academy. So, whilst at first with a launch in August, we've had great success with our people going in for self-directed learning, instructor-led learning, etc. We do want people to go out and actually, you know, test it, apply it. Potentially not with anyone actually facilitating it, with our learning providers facilitating that. So, that is something new that we're just bringing into the academy. And that will be, I think, our next piece that we're really looking to dial up so our people can learn a skill. and then go and test it before they actually go and test it with a client or test it themselves.

Michelle Ockers:

Yes. And that's a good thing. Again, using AI to provide practice spaces and support practice and provide feedback as well as really high potential for us in learning to be thinking about playing with.

Amy Vig:

Yeah. And we've done a bit of that through over the past couple of years. And since we've launched our academy with, you know, actually community sessions, social sessions, where we actually bring use cases and that's through our academy as well. We've got use cases, can we go and hear about a solution that's been developed and talk about that? But I think that for people to be able to then be able to do that more individually and go and test it at their own pace, that to me is really exciting to bring in next.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, it is. It is. There's a great range of learning modalities being offered and supported and ways of helping people to practice and apply their skills. In terms of the things or the

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people that influence us in our learning, our choice to learn, the way we practice, the way we improve, we know that managers have a significant amount of influence over people's learning. And of course, we haven't talked about the degree of motivation to just to learn AI independently, because it's so obviously needed. It's a hot skill, right? Have you involved or equipped managers in any way to support learners? Or has that just not been needed because people have just engaged with it because of the intrinsic motivation around this skill area? What does that look like?

Amy Vig:

Yes. So, I mean, we have, we actually do have our leader hub as well, that we do equip our leaders with the ability to go and help people develop out their personal development plans or to know where someone needs to and have those discussions with their people. And we provided some really great resources for our managers to be able to then talk that through with their people and help them to go look, here we go, have you thought about looking at the AI Learning Academy? This could really help you to be able to build those skills that you're looking to do. So we've definitely, that's a continuous process as always with our managers to help them be able to develop and refine those skills to help their people to develop, but we do provide a lot of support in that space. We've also, with our academy, we have provided demos, you know, so we've got drop-in sessions and demos for our managers and our people to go and go and watch. So again, that way, you know, even just around how do you use it? So, how do you go about it?

Michelle Ockers:

Yes, so they can role model it and don't feel like they're behind the eight ball on that.

Amy Vig:

Exactly. And that's been really great as well. And, you know, I do think that we've built the Academy to be as intuitive as possible, but to make it even better, that's what we have done. And on another note, I mean, I know that we've talked about people can access it through the Academy, but we have also made sure that our Academy is linked into all of our divisional learning hubs. It's linked into divisional communications to really encourage our people to even go in and access through the relevant learning for them as well. So we've worked to make sure that we are working with all different business strategies to make sure it's brought to life as well.

Michelle Ockers:

I'm just thinking about influencers and sticking with that for the moment. You talked about your SMEs as kind of early adopters, testers and advocates for the Academy. What does that advocacy look like? And has it been something you've kind of deliberately worked on setting up or is it just more naturally emerged?

Amy Vig:

It's more a bit of both, actually. It's naturally emerged because there's a lot of people really interested across the firm to be advocates. But then also, as I said, we've got a great community as part of our AI enablement forum that has been set up that helps us to be able to go and build those advocates. And what it sort of looked like is, you know, we do a lot of early engagement with those populations to say, this is something exciting, this is something that's coming, this is new, actually, we're building this, can we get your input, you know, to get them to be really invested in what we're developing and delivering. Then being able to go and link into those communities to say, hey, this comms is going out across the firm. Can you please like, share, distribute, talk about it? Here's some talking points. So we do a fair bit of work in the comms and engagement space to encourage then a broader reach when we do, when we first off announce the academy, but when we do then release more new

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things or exciting stuff that's coming up as well. We definitely leverage them, but we also, it's kind of what's in it for them. We give them sort of early access and get them sort of a first look and see, and also, can we get some of their input? That really helps us with our early adopters and our advocates.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, fantastic. Was there anything you considered including in the Academy but decided not to, or anything you rolled out that didn't land and you've unwound it?

Amy Vig:

Not yet, actually. No, not yet at the moment. It's more actually about, we've been focusing on more about what else can turn the dial and accelerate. So no, luckily enough, I mean, myself, my team, when we're developing it, we did go in with a sort of let's just go for it. Like, you know, have that safe to fail attitude around If something's not working, we'll adapt it. And we have had, I guess, not so much about something that's been big and we've had to remove it, but we have had, obviously, feedback about the academy. So, we also have a leave feedback form within the academy and that's been brilliant. We're always really kind of going, yeah, this is brand new, if you've got any feedback, let us know. And we've made some slight adjustments around, you know, some of the content and ordering of the content within the academy and pieces like that, but nothing that we've had to remove so far.

Michelle Ockers:

It's been more fine-tuning, right?

Amy Vig:

It's been fine-tuning, yeah. And I really like it when someone will come back and say, like, actually, this is super important for us at the moment. Should we highlight this a little bit more within the academy? That just helps us to go, like, as learning professionals, we're not the SMEs in sort of in this area either. So, it helps us to be able to then adjust it.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, you talked a little bit before about tracking usage of different assets. You've obviously got a feedback mechanism for people to leave you their thoughts, you know, at any time around the academy. Usage is one metric and it's a great place to start, particularly when you're offering so much that people can self-direct to and through. How are you overall approaching the question of tracking and measuring the effectiveness and impact of the academy?

Amy Vig:

Yeah. So, I mean, first I might just talk a little bit about that tracking of usage and because that's a really big piece for us. We did have one of our goals from a learning perspective was initially to have 50% of our workforce that have actually completed an AI program through our academy. We actually blew that out of the water, that was fantastic. You know, just with that continuous advocacy from our SMEs, from our execs as well, we were able to achieve that by Christmas time, which was great. So, we've now stretched that to 70% of our workforce, which we're on track to deliver. So, we did develop out a tracker. So, to be able to track our AI learning academy around usage completions, particularly around our digital badges, for example. And what we've done with that is we've also then been able to give access to that dashboard to our people that need it to help us to be able to go and provide that feedback into the business around usage. So that's really great because it does give more visibility for our people and our managers to go, you know, who's actually engaging with the academy? Who's not? Do I need to do a little bit of work with those people that aren't engaging and understand why they're not engaging? That really does help those

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coaching and development conversations as well. And so that's a good way for us to go, well, you know, people are engaged. That's helping us to build our adoption. But what else we've been then looking to track and monitor is that adoption. So we've been able to see since the launch of our academy that we have increased our prompts within our internal chat GPT Kim chat by 70% each month. Right. So it's, it's huge. Right.

Michelle Ockers:

Is that each month? Like month by month?

Amy Vig:

Oh, sorry. No, I mean overall. So some months we've seen a huge spike when we've had some key deliverables around some learning events, we've seen a huge spike, which, you know, might not be all contributed to learning, but we could contribute quite a fair bit to that, which is, which is awesome. And we've actually seen, you know, usage of our internal KimChat to be, you know, second most used tool behind Outlook, right? So that's like, it's pretty great that we've been able to see that. And what we're then looking to do, you know, as we further develop our skills in AIs, obviously see more of that come through. So we are able to look at when we've launched training, for example, for our Microsoft co-pilot, we've then been able to monitor, you know, off the back of that training and now usage. I'm now saving 30 minutes to 4 hours in my day by using Copilot. So, we're starting to look a little bit more about that around sort of that business impact.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. So, looking at productivity and efficiency there as well.

Amy Vig:

Yeah. But definitely for us, driving that learning culture, it does start with, you know, do we actually see a lot of people engaging with it? That's a really good test for us is, do we have something that's pretty good that people are actually going, I'm interested in this and I want to go and access it. So that's, that's really exciting for us. We'll continue to obviously focus on that and get higher and closer to the hundred percent mark across the, across the firm. But we do want to be able to then go, you've learned that, what results are we seeing?

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. And is this something that you monitor in conjunction with the head of AI enablement, for instance, or that AI enablement forum? What's the ongoing relationship in terms of continuous improvement with that group?

Amy Vig:

I mean, we have a great relationship. We meet with them a lot. So at least every fortnight to then go and discuss around the strategy. What else do we need to do? How can they help us? You know, these are some areas that from a learning perspective, we can see that there's opportunities to for them to help us to be able to grow in a certain part of the business. You know, we have a lot of that open discussion and I can pick up the phone to the head of AI enablement anytime and he's available to then talk things through. So that is actually a relationship that's really helped us to be able to turn the dial within the firm. I think that us working together has been able to help us achieve these great results.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, it sounds like a fabulous partnership, excellent. So reflecting back on all the work that's been done so far, what were the biggest challenges in bringing the Academy to life and how did you work through them?

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Amy Vig:

I think the first one was definitely the initial, and you know, that's always messy when you're looking at the concept and going, how are we going to structure it? You know, that was our biggest challenge that we had. And I would say it's just, test, test, test, test, test. That to me is, you know, that's how we ended up getting the solution that we did. But that was the biggest initial challenge that we had is making sure that we're going to have something that is great for our firm. And that's really important. Also then, that continuous improvement, that to me is, it's an ongoing challenge whilst we want to improve and take on everyone's feedback. The challenge that we have is we need to make sure that the feedback is a consensus, that if we do have some feedback. So that is just, look, whilst I say it's a challenge, it's not really a big challenge, but it is the challenge of just making sure we're managing that really well with our people that are suggesting these great ideas that they do have. Because potentially someone's suggesting something that we don't end up including. So that is just something that we just continuously do because we need to just make sure that if we don't just make every single every single amendment as well. And the other challenge, as I said, around the structure, but then also just what to include. And, you know, as I've shared, it's just it's hard to know what to include, what not to include. There's so much stuff. And again, that is that testing.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. So I take it then that one of the critical success factors has been the testing and thrashing early with the right people and trying things out. Are there any other factors that can be like truly critical to making this whole initiative so effective and impactful?

Amy Vig:

I think it is also making sure that there's learning in there that is advanced enough. So that is, again, that's something more for us to continuously focus on, but the pace of change with AI in general, it means that we have to work really quickly to make sure that the content we have within the academy is advanced enough and it's helping us to be able to accelerate. That is where we do continue to work with our SMEs. We do continue to look at research. We look at the news. We look at everything around what's coming up. You know, for example, you know, Gen AI is a big focus that hasn't emerged. And so that is something that we are then accelerating within our academy as well. But I think that's always going to be a challenge going forward is just it's just such a fast moving. It's just like, how do you just keep that keep it current, how do you keep it, you know, making sure that we're accelerating those skills and, you know, modern as well.

Michelle Ockers:

Yes. So you touched on working quickly, this idea of you continually scanning outside the organisation, talking to people inside of the organisation, that that's part of how you keep up with this ongoing change. That's a way of working, right? So in terms of skills, mindset, ways of working for you and your team, what's been most important for you to be able to deliver something like this at this scale so quickly?

Amy Vig:

I think that, as I mentioned before, I think that agility in the way that we work. So, you know, having that safe environment that it's okay if something doesn't work, let's just try it. Let's see if this does work. That's been something, that's been definitely skills that my team have had to really turn the dial on and have that growth mindset of, you know, what is something that's different? How do we bring different ways of offering learning within the firm? That to me has been something that's been really important for my learning team to deliver on this, this initiative. So as I said about growth mindset, not be stuck on like, this is the structure. This is what we set up. This is, this is, and being rigid, you know, we need to be flexible in

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our approach. And that's something that's been really important for my learning team from a skill perspective to have.

Michelle Ockers:

How have you as the leader of the team created that environment? What do you think it is about you, how you've approached your work, how you've set the tone with the team? Is there anything, and I'm asking you to put yourself out there, right? This is hard if you're trying to be humble, but what is your part in that as a leader? And if someone else, let's flip it around. If you were coaching another leader to create this kind of environment, what advice would you give them?

Amy Vig:

Yeah, so I think I've had to be quite bold around this is something new. We've never done this before. And that is something that I have then spoken to my team about is, you know, let's be bold. Let's be brave. Let's just, like I said before, try new things. If it doesn't work, that's okay. Not everything has to always be 100% successful it's still a success that we've tried something new. So I think that that psychological safety around particularly that safe place to fail has been really important for me to set the tone within my team. And, you know, I'm very much, like I said, if someone doesn't quite work, I'm not a leader that then goes, well, that was wrong. What are we going to do to go and fix it? Like, it is kind of acknowledging that that's fine. What did we learn? So what did we learn? What could we do differently next time? versus going into someone without command and control of you've done something wrong. So that has been really important. And I also have just encouraged my team to think outside the box, look externally, you know, what is best practice? What is maybe not happening elsewhere? and let's go and do it. So it is just that environment to encourage innovation. And I think that that's really important in the learning space. If you want to do something that's really different and helps our people in this crazy fast world, that's something that I would definitely say for people to encourage.

Michelle Ockers:

What a great opportunity in terms of this whole initiative, this whole project you frame as a learning opportunity for your team, right? The learning is the work. The work is the learning. And you must be one of Australia's most AI adept L&D teams at this point in time, having gone through all of this yourself as well. It's a fantastic piece of work.

Amy Vig:

Yes, definitely. We've had to learn, definitely, as we've gone through this journey. So hopefully we are.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, fantastic. So we will put a link to your LinkedIn profile in the show notes if listeners want to reach out and discover a little bit more. I thoroughly enjoyed this conversation with you, Amy. I think listeners are going to just find it so useful for so many reasons, not just around building AI, but you know, many other aspects you've spoken about, the way you work with partners, the way you're continuously monitoring and fine tuning and improving. I think there's some fantastic takeaways. I really appreciate you sharing your story today with us, Amy.

Amy Vig:

Excellent. Thanks, Michelle. And thanks for the opportunity.

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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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