Michelle Ockers:
Listeners, welcome to a guest packed episode of Learning Uncut. We have three guests today, a rare occurrence. But before we kick off the conversation, I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. So today we're exploring how One New Zealand transformed their learning model to enable consistent, scalable, and engaging learning across the organisation. With the support of MakeShapes, they built a learning ecosystem that cultivates learning right across the business. So let's start with our two guests from One New Zealand. Welcome Lane Hannah and Ange Forde.

Lane Hannah:
Thank you, lovely to be here, Michelle.

Michelle Ockers:
Yeah, thank you. Maybe we'll start with you, Lane. Do you want to introduce yourself, where you fit into the organisation, and then, Ange, you can follow on.

Lane Hannah:
Sure. So my name's Lane, as Michelle said, and I'm the Learning and Capability Manager at One New Zealand. I've been at One New Zealand for eight years, but in the learning and development space for nearly 20 years across retail, banking, and in the last eight years, obviously, in telco. I think, you know, through that time, always looking for opportunities to improve and enhance the learning experience for people in the organisations that we work with. So that's me.

Michelle Ockers:
Thanks, Lane. How about yourself, Ange? Is it Ange or Angela?

Angela Forde:
Ange is great.

Michelle Ockers:
Fantastic.

Angela Forde:
Angela is what my mother calls me. So I, in Lane's team and I'm our learning experience design lead. My focus is to also create these innovative and engaging learning interventions across our organisation and try and foster this culture of continuous learning and drive performance and innovation within our organisation. Like Lane, I've got about 20 years experience behind me working in banking, government and insurances.

Michelle Ockers:
So lots of great juicy words in there, Ange. Looking forward to getting into the conversation. And Dan Hibberd. Welcome, Dan. Would you like to introduce yourself?

Dan Hibberd:
Yeah, awesome, so I'm Dan Hibberd, co-founder and CEO of Make Shapes, and we're a digital platform for scaling group learning in large, complex organisations from kind of facilitator-led, trainer-led, leader-led, peer-led, anywhere where people learn with and from each other is where we love to play, and we'll be talking more about that shortly.

Michelle Ockers:
Yeah. Thanks, Dan. And I've been following Makeshapes. I think I met you and your co-founder whose name escapes me.

Dan Hibberd:
Mike

Michelle Ockers:
I met you and Mike at a conference in New Zealand about three years ago now and have been long time listeners of Learning Uncut. I'm a huge fan of social and collaborative learning and the power of peer learning. So I've kind of been following your journey, including introducing you to one of my clients. So thank you for inviting Lane and Ange to join us for the conversation. And Ange and Lane, thank you so much for being willing to be here and share the journey you've gone on with the listeners. Let's move back to One New Zealand. And Lane, can you tell us a bit about One New Zealand, who you are, a little bit about your workforce, as well as any recent changes that might be relevant to today's conversation?

Lane Hannah:
Yeah, so I think one of the things that's interesting about New Zealand companies is that we're quite small on the global scale as a country. And even our biggest organisations are a bit of a speck in comparison to some larger global organisations. But what it might be helpful for people to understand is that we have for the last kind of 25 years of our history, 20 plus years of that were as part of Vodafone Group. So Vodafone, much larger organisation, we were a wholly owned component of a Vodafone group globally. And it was about four and a half, five years ago that Vodafone sold its New Zealand operations and we were taken on by two organisations, two investment firms. But what that did was it gave us the opportunity really to start to chart really our own course. And while there's a lot of benefit you get from working in a large multinational company, including some quite deep learning resources and tools and things that we had available to us, in a way, becoming our own organisation has given us a greater degree of flexibility in terms of you know, some of the things that we tackle from a learning perspective, and that's meant that we've been able to take some quite different directions as we've sort of continued to change. So, and it was only about two years ago that we actually changed our brand. So for a while, we remained as Vodafone New Zealand, and then our

branding changed and we're now One New Zealand. So very much a kind of a moment in time where we've stepped away and a true New Zealand organisation in a lot of ways and charting our own course, I guess.

Michelle Ockers:
Yeah. So workforce size, Lane, what size workforce are you supporting?

Lane Hannah:
About two and a half thousand.

Michelle Ockers:
Okay. And Ange, I'm going to flip over to you. Tell me a bit about that workforce. What kinds of roles, what kinds of people are you supporting?

Angela Forde:
Quite a diverse group of learners, I guess, we are supporting both in New Zealand and offshore and in multi-locations across New Zealand. So we're supporting from our frontline staff, our retail and contact centres. Those are both here and offshore. We are supporting our sales teams. We are supporting our own, all people currently at the moment with some of our initiatives going off in the AI space. Very diverse group, both needs requirement and location.

Michelle Ockers:
What about field technicians? Do you have a field technician workforce as well?

Angela Forde:
We do have a field technician team, but partners, suppliers for field technicians.

Michelle Ockers:
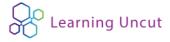Okay, so you're not responsible for supporting their development, or are you?

Angela Forde:
There's some aspects to ensure health and safety, and those kinds of things are aligned with New Zealand, but no.

Michelle Ockers:
Okay, so we're talking about a remote workforce in a range of roles, but predominantly sitting at desks. I think that's useful context. Thank you very much. So, Dan, how did the partnership with One New Zealand come about? Tell us a little bit like a time marker and what led to you collaborating with One New Zealand?

Dan Hibberd:
Yeah, look, I think it was great timing the initial connection with One NZ. I think it was Sarah Bellet who we connected with initially, or One New Zealand was moving up or moving toward the rebrand. And with that comes a whole lot of communication and learning requirements. And so they were looking at how do we achieve some of these things at the scale that's going to be required. How do we not have to go with something that scales and is maybe more passive or less engaging than they might

want, especially with something as critical as the rebrand? And so it was in that kind of transition phase that we got connected with One New Zealand, and Lane, right from the beginning, could see this opportunity from a peer-to-peer learning kind of delivery and the potential of the platform.

Michelle Ockers:
So is this around late 2022?

Dan Hibberd:
Probably, I think it was July 2022 is when One New Zealand came on board.

Michelle Ockers:
So around three years ago, just to put a little time marker on that. So we're talking about kind of a transformation that's taken place over the last three years to get us to where we are today. I think it's always really useful to give people those time markers because the kind of change journey you've gone on doesn't happen overnight and take some careful crafting and navigating to stay on track and end up where you've ended up. So we're talking back in mid 2022, you're getting ready for rebrand. Lane, when did you realise that you wanted to do something different with learning and from an organisational perspective and the way you support the organisation, what really triggered that?

Lane Hannah:
Yeah, I don't know that there was a moment so much where we decided we wanted to do something different with learning. And Ange and I are very similar. And for at that particular time and earlier than that, we were very much colleagues. And one of the things that's been very common for us through the whole kind of eight years really that we've worked together, is always exploring new things. So for us, I think, you know, the idea of trying something different to work on a significant transformational change in the organisation was kind of, in a way, quite natural for us. But you make a good point there about a rebrand, and Dan talked about this as well, as being quite significant. And one of the things that's vital for us is to kind of take people on that journey, but not lose the narrative that is crucial to that change. And we know obviously with a lot of learning things that we have, if we have a distributed force of people who are delivering that learning, you end up with these cottage industries. And so what we were really trying to do was to go, how do we engage people around learning? How do we get people involved and how do we make sure that they stay on message at this quite critical juncture? That really was a lot of the reason why when we saw the Makeshapes model, we kind of went, well, this looks like the right thing for us in terms of how we would deliver that.

Michelle Ockers:
And do you want to add from that, from the perspective of the learning experience design lead in the organization, what were some of the key shifts that you felt needed to be made in learning and why?

Angela Forde:
I think from our perspective too, there was this drive that came from, I think we've probably all experienced that whole decentralised, centralised of learning teams and going to not having sort of dedicated facilitation, but such a vast location wide audience. And as Lane mentioned too, about sort of that consistency of our training was becoming quite challenging and, you know, cost-centric, cost-aware of delivering sort of that face-to-face training element in those locations, hard to keep up with. So that was another driver for finding this tool, particularly keeping engagement. I almost feel like death by PowerPoint has almost been replaced by death by e-learning, but still wanting to get that level of engagement from this new tool. So for me, I feel like that was also a key driver to find something new, to get these consistent messages delivered to all of our people accurately. Our aim was to utilise more sort of influencers to deliver this content, but keeping that consistency, accuracy and the right messages going up with our learning.

Michelle Ockers:
Yeah, so consistency, scalability, reach were kind of some of the key objectives. Dan, you've got a nice little phrase I like. The phrase is magical dissemination. What does that mean?

Dan Hibberd:
Yeah, that's a great question, Michelle. And I think really what Ange is talking about is this challenge that we've seen essentially all of our customers experience. And that is when they go to roll out a significant piece of learning, generally, there's two options. We're going to do a really impactful group experience and depending on who you've got facilitating that, if you're going to get internal facilitators or external, it's going to cost a lot. Then you can go down the path of scale with e-learning and things that maybe are less passive and don't give you the same active environment. Or you can do what One NZ was really doing at the time going, how do we deliver this? We still want to get in essence, the impact of a group experience. So we're going to try for peer-led sessions. We're going to look at leader-led in-store sessions. And so really that is, I think, this concept of magical dissemination is, I guess, the fact that often you just have to leave it to chance. You go, well, we're either going to deliver great training to these few people and hope that everything disseminates down, or we're going to deliver something that's maybe less impactful to a lot of people and hope that somewhere in there people get the desired impact of the learning.

Michelle Ockers:
Yeah. So, Dan, I'm going to ask you to give us just a kind of a generic overview of how Makeshapes works before we come back to Lane and Ange and look at it in context and as a start point for One New Zealand and then broaden out the conversation around, well, what else did you do? Because this wasn't the only shift that was made at One New Zealand, of course. So, Dan, what is the Make Shapes approach?

Dan Hibberd:
Yeah, so I guess the platform itself has kind of four core components to it. There is the authoring and building side of the platform. There's the actual delivery. We provide the mechanism for delivery to groups in this highly consistent way that Ange and Lane have mentioned. There's analytics and data that you can get off the back end of that. And so often that's something that you miss out with facilitator or group learning is they're often really rich, but getting data back is really tricky. And then tools to support the embedding and sustainability afterwards without some of the logistics that might normally be required. So those are kind of the core four components of the platform. But the actual experience is really delivered to groups, a host, we like to say a host clicks on a link, to launch an experience. People participate with a device, whether that be their desktop or a phone in many cases. People have kind of had much of the experience using tools like Slido, Menti, Kahoot. But if you combine that with the deck, with the expert pre-recorded content, there really is this guided experience. We like to think that the platform guides the group. And so whoever's hosting can do a really great job of supporting the group through I guess, a discussion rich experience, but without needing to do all the training or have the skills that you might have needed to have traditionally.

Michelle Ockers:
Right, so it's a designed experience supported with some expert content that allows for peer-to-peer learning through interaction that's shaped into the design experience that the host is able to run through the platform. But the host doesn't need to be a learning and development person, right? It can be one of the group, yeah?

Dan Hibberd:
That's it. We kind of talk about it as auto-facilitation, but essentially you're pre-designing what would be the best version of this experience if we had our expert or a really great facilitator delivering it and how do we make as much of that on demand so that every group gets that same great experience without the need for the person hosting to be highly skilled or to have done a whole lot of training prior in order for you to get that consistent experience.

Michelle Ockers:
Okay, so how big a shift, Ange or Lane, how big a shift was this from the way learning was being supported in the business at the time?

Angela Forde:
I sit here and I reflect on probably one of the first modules that we released, which was about identifying your own purpose. It actually resulted in, I had to add another half an hour onto this module that we had built because of the rich level of conversation that was occurring where we had people in surprisingly a very comfortable place to be able to have discussions and that was my aha moment of going, how we experienced learning before where, you know, we had heavy facilitator-led training, quite talk at me in some regards for sort of our induction programmes. So keeping that interactive and, to add in there, to deliver our inductions, we use people who that is their day job as well. So maybe not high in facilitation skills or still learning those skills themselves because they are doing the

roles and this is going back into our inconsistency of delivering messages, it's like, I know a better way, I know an easier way. And it was still what I was observing, sit and listen and do. So that real moment for me of going, wow, this is actually really changing. And you can see that social thing starting to happen and that people are interacting with each other, adding value in those conversations and that richness to meet the objectives that we'd set to create this piece of learning.

Michelle Ockers:
So what does the participant experience look like? We've talked a little bit about kind of what's designed, what's available to the host. If I'm a participant, just take me through my experience right from being invited to join a session and how kind of that process is handled through to, you know, what happens after the session.

Angela Forde:
Great, I guess you've got some flexibility with how you set up and how people are invited to this piece of learning. We've used different methods of embedding a Makeshapes module within a learning journey or an induction program or we have a kind of self-lead learning library where anybody who finds the need can go in there and set up their own teams meeting to bring in their own social group of learning. So once the host has the link to the module it is a simple click of the button for the host and participants can join either via a mobile device or on their laptops and it is all very interactive right from that word go when you click on that button. There is a sort of a registration process asking a couple of questions and we kick off straight into the learning. So there is absolutely sort of no responsibility on the host other than to click that button, as Dan mentioned earlier. The activities within the build are really interactive. You know, we get a lot of feedback. There's a great little activity about drawing a picture and then you can share it. And then you follow that with a bit of a conversation. So we're already starting to break down, I guess, that safety, because we're getting to know the people. It's a bit of an activity at the front. What I really like about the tool is, you know, live people can answer and then we can refer back to those answers sort of on that next phase. So you're not having to forget, but you're building on that knowledge and learning going through. So it's quite interactive for the learner and they are actually doing something. I also find, you know, with the audio and the video capabilities, you're finding that people are having to pay attention and listen. You know, common thing in the classroom is your mind wanders off. Oh, look, there's a bird at the window. So those interactions, you quickly watch people go, oh, I do really need to pay attention and listen. And then that rich conversation and activities come out of it. It's quite a seamless process from the learner perspective.

Michelle Ockers:
Yeah. So, Ange, you mentioned that you use these kind of peer-to-peer sessions as part of learning journeys. What have you found in your experience are the best points in a learning journey or the best types of learning objectives to support or how do you decide, I'm going to use this peer-to-peer, I'm going to use a peer-to-peer session at this point versus there's some other method that's a better way to support the learning that needs to happen right now.

Learning Uncut Episode 169
Empowering Peer Learning at One Zealand – Angela Forde, Lane Hannah and Dan Hibberd

Angela Forde:
I feel like I've had a great variety. I've had a great play and I've pushed the limits with Makeshapes to try it in multiple different areas. First off the ranks, we were looking at compliance type topics where it's quite essential to have subject matter expertise delivering concise and clear messages free from, I think, interpretation of, say, somebody like a facilitator might have led So we've done a number of compliance type modules for our frontline teams to ensure that consistency when it's a really critical moment. Following that, I think I mentioned earlier about the 'my purpose' module too. Great use there because it's kind of more of a softer skill. I have a challenge with that word.

Michelle Ockers:
I like power skills or human, human skills.

Angela Forde:
Yeah, much better term. To really invoke that rich conversation and talking through and getting everybody on the same page and connecting. And I think that's why this drive towards more social learning for our AI space too is we're really going to connect in and use that social learning at the rate that I guess it's moving. This is where I go. MakeShapes is going to be a critical tool to enable that social learning and get cross-collaboration across teams as well because, you know, we traditionally, we set up role-specific or group-specific training where I feel all of this is going to change in the future as we move towards these skills organisations. So what faster way to sort of lift capability than kind of with your peers almost like social learning's mentoring. So, that'll be another ideal use as we move and use this tool.

Michelle Ockers:
It's like co-mentoring. Lane, let's pick up on the AI conversation. Why do you think peer-to-peer learning is such a useful approach for something like AI, like for learning about AI?

Lane Hannah:
Yeah, look, I mean, that's a great question. How long have we got here? No, look, I think peer-to-peer learning is crucial in something like AI. I think there's a lot of nervousness around AI, and justifiably so for a lot of people, for all sorts of reasons. And what we're beginning to discover in our organisation is that there's an appetite for learning about AI, but there's also this nervousness that sits underneath. And the way really to remove that is to have people working together and to start to see areas where they could apply AI, start to see perhaps some of the inherent issues, I guess, with AI or the things that AI can't do. And what we're beginning to see is people are beginning to have this experience where they're saying, well, we know actually that AI can do these things and it might do those things really well and it's going to save me time and help me free up some time but actually it doesn't replace the community that you get with other people that you work with in your organisation and so peer-to-peer learning therefore becomes even more important in a way because it is so much about the human activity of a being together be actually then kind of learning together and then realising that it's that element, that is the stuff that the best ideas come from, and that this stage anyway, AI is regenerating content that

has already been produced, and yet we are the people to create more content. At least that's my view, right? I know that things are all a bit different, but what it does mean is that it's much more important, I think, to bring people together. Something like Makeshapes allows you to bring people together without making someone feel very nervous about the need to have to be a facilitator. Because we see this a lot with people. When you are asking people to stand up and facilitate to a room, even of their own team and maybe a relatively small peer group, it really gets people quite nervous. And what Makeshapes can do is actually bring people together. It's got some nice little quirks, like you choose an icon and a colour, and then you can press your icon button and little ducks or chickens or whatever fly up across the screen. So it's got that really nice sort of the same sort of interaction you might have if you're texting someone or having a pretty relaxed kind of Teams chat with all the emojis and so forth. And yet, they don't have to worry about the content, because in a sense, they're sort of an MC. And they get the team around, everyone connects, and you have a bit of fun. And it gets people thinking about how they work together. It brings that sort of human warmth into the session.

Michelle Ockers:
Yeah, I think we're in an era now of change happening on an ongoing basis and recognising that our emotional response to change needs to be explicitly acknowledged and it can help us to learn, or it can get in the way of us learning. So the things that people are concerned about or care about, I think that explicit acknowledgement is an important part of enabling learning to happen. But there's also this idea of sort of the collective sense-making that you're doing. So it doesn't all have to be about, here's the expert in the room telling you the way it is and passing on their knowledge. It's about us exploring and sense-making together and leaning into collective intelligence which you can design to enable as well. And I think when we're asking people to absorb so much and move so much more quickly and when things just keep changing, my hope anyway is that peer-to-peer learning and collaborative learning is going to be back in vogue and we're going to recognise the importance of it to help with this kind of adaptability.

Dan Hibberd:
I was just going to say one thing on the peer learning and AI. I think anything that requires significant change at scale, I know the Neuroleadership Institute talk about everyone to everyone learning and the power of social normative pressure. And if you can get enough of the organisation experiencing the same learning and concepts and really diving into those at the same time, it's almost like you can achieve a tipping point where it becomes quite normal. And I think that's where peer-to-peer learning is really powerful because you get this engaging thing, but you can also achieve the scale that you need in order to reach those tipping points where it wasn't that Lane did the introduction to AI workshop six months ago. And so when I do it this week, there's really not too much to connect over. When you get a lot of people at the same time experiencing learning in an impactful way, it has a real power to shift the culture and change an organization beyond what maybe you could do through other mechanisms potentially.

Michelle Ockers:
I want to come back to that idea of cultural change in a little bit, but I'm keen to look more specifically at designing these kind of peer to peer experiences. And can you talk to me about, you know, how you go about designing and what might be different from the way you would design, for instance, an e-learning module or a facilitator led session?

Angela Forde:
So I think when I'm looking to design for social learning interaction, it is more about the interaction or the experience that I'm not facilitating, but enabling and putting that in place. So we've still got our key objectives sort of underlining what we're designing for, but it's how will I make that happen? I don't want to digress, but I got some feedback just recently following an event where a more senior member of our sales team, who is of mature age, she sort of said to me the way I had set up, which was a complete social interaction, and set it up to invite in other people to kind of figure out and teach her a basic solution when she was using an AI tool she said it was set up that made her feel safe and that she really appreciated the inputs that other people came in to help her come to the solution. And that resonated with me because that's kind of like when you are designing for that social situation. It's almost like throwing out the problem and encouraging, in probably a digital environment, because I think, you know, we've got so many digital tools now to support social learning, Teams, Zoom, these kind of tools, throwing out that problem and pulling the right people in to sort of discuss, have the conversation and share those learnings that they have. I kind of feel like it's, you know, it's that old, saying that we used to do about you learn more around the water cooler. So how do you set up those exact same situations? And when we're building in something like Makeshapes, it's setting up the right questions, probes, or nudges, I think, to just start off and share that learning that's coming in.

Michelle Ockers:
Yeah, I'd once did a course designing social learning course with Jane Hart. Are any of you familiar with Jane's name from the Modern Workplace Learning Center? I think she's retired now, but I'll have a look for the show notes, if her site is still up and running. But one of the key things she taught us in that course about designing for social learning is very much start with the activities and interactions first. You start with the social and then you go, well, what's the minimum amount of content that needs to be injected to enable people to go through some sort of activity, some sort of experience to come out the other end having learned something. So it's a very different approach. It's not a content-led approach at all. You're supporting people to learn from and with each other with just the right amount of content. Does that kind of match the way you think about it?

Angela Forde:
I love that.

Lane Hannah:
I also think, you know, like Ange as a learning experience designer, we actually kind of view things are slightly differently. I don't mean that in a controversial way. I have

spent much more of my career facilitating and facilitating leaders with a leadership bias kind of in the last 10 years, I suppose. And when I think about creating learning events, I do think largely about that kind of peer-to-peer approach, because particularly when you're working with leaders, it's the conversation and that peer-to-peer kind of interaction where the richness is, and so, in a way, you're kind of crafting, whether it's workshops or courses, what have you, that kind of rely on something that you don't know yet whether you have it or not. And this is one of the things that, from a functional learning perspective, if you're teaching someone something quite technical, ironically, Makeshapes can bring in that peer-to-peer component, and you can have a conversation about things, despite the narrative being quite structured, if that makes sense. So you can get to this point of people going, here's the outcomes that we're aiming to achieve, and we achieved them. but you get there with some peer-to-peer interaction, even in learning situations that might have normally been quite a bit more static and a bit more prescribed.

Michelle Ockers:
I understand. So for hands-on skills and development of hands-on skills, what are examples of some of the hands-on skills that people need to do their work at One New Zealand?

Lane Hannah:
I can give you some examples and then I think Ange can probably talk about how we build these out. If you are joining us in our absolutely vital kind of frontline teams, you're joining in contact center on retail. For a lot of people coming into those places, these are early career, they may not have worked with particular tools and so forth before, and we have quite a complex environment of tools and things that people need to know. So think about retail. Those of us that have worked in retail, we know that you need to learn how to use a point of sale system. You need to know how to process payments. You need to know how to scan products. You need to know how to look after a store, that kind of thing. And then when a customer comes in, we're going, hey, we need to have people who can have the right conversation with the customer, talk about the products and the services that we sell, so a good degree of knowledge there, and then be able to process that and make that sale a seamless process. And that's true in, you know, certainly in a contact center as well. It's the same thing. It's conversations with customers. How do you identify the issue and resolve that? So those are the tactical things that we do need to get people across through kind of specific learning. And then I'm going to pass to Ange to talk about how she thinks about how we actually then deliver that.

Angela Forde:
Yes. So we flipped a lot of our training a couple of years ago from rather that change to talk and tell them everything, to teaching them to go and seek the right information. Multiple wins here in not having dating content. We're pointing to one source of truth and we're teaching our staff to seek and find that source of truth, to deliver it.
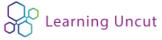
Lane Hannah:
I think it's cool. I mean, I can build on that a little bit, because you did right. I mean, we kind of flipped the way in which we teach people. So rather than just bombard them with technical information, we are making sure that we are giving them the ability to seek and find the answers that they need. So it's one of the things that Ange and I have talked about a lot over the years is it's the teach a man to fish versus giving them a fish. And, you know, it's worked out incredibly well for us. And ironically, I think it sets us in good stead for the future, because we were talking about change before and how rapid change is. And that's exactly what we need people to do going forward. All of us and all of our people need to be able to go I know that the tools I'm using or the way in which I might interact is going to change. And I need to kind of roll with that and work out how to change as it changes all around me. So rather than this, here's how you do your job, black and white, it's now a little bit grayer. And people need to be able to go, well, OK, where am I going to get the resource I need? AI tools will help with that. And what we try to do is lead people to the use of those sorts of tools in such a way that they'll then be able to continue to grow and develop as they go along.

Michelle Ockers:
Yeah, I just wanted to round out the conversation with asking about that, because we've talked a lot about the peer-to-peer learning, but it's not the only shift that you've undertaken in the organisation. So I think that helping people to go seek and knowing how to go seek the right information from the right sources, be it resources or people, is really valuable. So if you think, and I'm going to start with you on this one, Lane, if you think back over the last three years of the things that have shifted, what are the most, if I was walking around the organizsation three years ago versus walking around the organisation now, what would I see that's different?

Lane Hannah:
Well, we're a different organisation. Literally, yes. One of the things I think is that there's a real appetite for learning. We're fortunate in that regard. It's always been very easy to get people engaged in learning activities at One New Zealand and previously Vodafone. And with the advent of AI and the time that it's taken over the last kind of 12, 18 months anyway, there's this real appetite and people will engage in just about anything that you throw at them in that regard. So I think there's that. I think that there's a wider societal shift that I think you can see inside organisations and that is that things are changing. We may have been through kind of more difficult economic times or there's shifts in the ways that organisations are operating. And people, I guess, either really engage with that and move right into it. And we've been very lucky in the sense that most people do that. AI, as I said before, there's some fear around that. But we're finding that by demystifying it is really helping people recognise that, hey, this could be something quite good. This could really bring me some value. And to kind of, you know, come back to Makeshapes on this one. One of the things that Ange's designer built is a prompt-a-thon within Makeshapes. And again, just trying to leverage that idea of that appetite for learning and the opportunity for anyone to pick up and run a prompt-a-thon about a skill that is so crucial to getting the best out of AI. We see people treating AI like it's Google, and it's just not. And the way you engage with it really needs to change. So again,

utilising Makeshapes to familiarize and get people comfortable with this idea of how do you provide the real context that AI needs to give you the value that you want to get out of it.

Michelle Ockers:
Yeah, nice. Promptathon. I like that a lot. And how have you evaluated the impact of peer-to-peer learning in the organisation? That can be a tricky one, right? So how do you know if it's hitting the mark?

Angela Forde:
I think it is. It's very tricky. We've been fortunate with some of the AI interventions that we've put in place most recently that there is some great analytics tools that's even pulling it back down to it can measure almost the effectiveness. Sorry, just to give context, we've utilised a lot of social intervention learning to deliver our AI training, but we're getting scores back that are even lifting engagement, so we can start to see the effect of, essentially, they've gone through this training environment in a social learning place using this foreign tool. AI can be fearful, and we can see these shifts in sort of emotional, social and functional value because it's creating the space and engagement is increasing. We can look at our adoption rates. We are looking at sort of the accuracy we have, again sorry to keep using sort of co-pilot and AI as an example, but it's been one of our big hitters for going down the social learning space. We've got formats in an Engage tool that we are using for, you can check the accuracy of sort of the answers that are coming in from everybody and measuring that it is right and accurate.

Michelle Ockers:
So Dan, I believe that Makeshapes supports analysis as well. Can you tell us just a little bit about that?

Dan Hibberd:
Yeah, look, I mean, I think you can obviously get a sense during a session how engaged people are and so there's metrics that the platform provides you around you know of the x number of people in a group, how much of the experience do they actually engage with? I think that's often one of the challenges especially with hybrid and digital learning is as soon as someone's camera goes off, you're like, are they still there? Are they still engaging? And so because when you design a Makeshapes experience, it's punctuated with opportunities to engage, you can actually see the metrics of people staying engaged during the session. I think, yeah, Ange's example, and we've got others of this around, people wanting to have a longer session starts to give you a sense that the impact that that training is having people are seeing value in it and therefore they're actually wanting more of it. Again some of the other things that we kind of see that are not metrics as such but other parts of the organisation once they do an experience in the platform coming through and going, "Hey, can we use this for this other project?" But then off the back of that, one of the things that we've built in is the ability to have automated sequences after an experience. So that helps you to embed the learning and some of the key things afterwards, but it also provides you with a way of going, "Hey, what about if a month after there's an automated email that goes out, and says, hey, based on the training

that you received around introduction to co-pilot, what's one great example of where you've applied this skill? So I think there's the in-session data that you can see around people are really engaged, people rate the sessions highly, but then there's also this opportunity to go, you can capture the on-the-job examples of where training is starting to have an impact. And we definitely haven't got the golden egg solution to measuring ROI, but there's definitely more data that you can get, I think, from a digital experience that helps to support.

Michelle Ockers:
Yeah. And I think you touched on spaced retrieval and supporting spaced practice there as well, which we know are critical for application back in the workflow.

Lane Hannah:
I've got a bit of a build on that, Michelle. What Dan's talking about there in terms of one of the things that the tool allows you to do is produce outputs at the tail end for participants, as well as obviously sort of measuring kind of participant engagement. And Ange has mentioned the purpose module that she had built. We have in our leadership program, a strong belief that you've got to lead self in order to lead others. And that's our philosophy of leadership at One New Zealand. And part of the idea of leading self is to understand self well. And so as a prerequisite for a two-day leadership workshop that all our leaders go on, we were getting them working through this purpose module. What happens is at the end of it, they've done the thinking, They've chatted to a few other people working through that module together. There's some good sort of commentary that starts to come out and people start to kind of drill down into what's important to them and their own purpose. And then Makeshapes sends them a file at the end you get it via email with your purpose statement crafted. Through the process of doing the module, you end up crafting a purpose statement. And that purpose statement then feeds into our initial foundational learning leaders program. So, you know, there are components like that that also then link it to other things as well as being a way to kind of continue the conversation. It's about going, here's a point in time, and actually this is a building block that we will build on, even maybe in more traditional learning ways. But, you know, you've used something much more interactive to create the initial output.

Michelle Ockers:
Yeah, nice. It's nice to see how it's part of a learning flow and not just a one off. So what was the reaction in the organisation to this shift? Did you have to do much influencing and change management to get people to embrace this new approach?

Lane Hannah:
I think the short answer to that is no. And I guess, you know, earlier I'd mentioned that I think we're very lucky in a general sense. People in this organisation are very hungry for learning and they're also always very excited to try something new. So when we bring a new tool in that we want to try, people are like, wow, this is cool. And one of the things that was really kind of most amazing for me was that very, very quickly after doing the early Makeshapes modules and some of the things that we'd released, it became part of the language for a lot of our art is in the business. So people would come to us and say, hey, I want to do this. And can we do it with

Makeshapes? And I was quite surprised by that, because, you know, the language of no one comes to us and says, can you build something in articulate for us?

Michelle Ockers:
It's because Articulate is in the background, right? Whereas they're seeing MakeShapes as part of the experience and that they're in it. And they're probably comparing that experience with the experience of being in a team session or a Zoom session and seeing how much richer it is because it's purpose built for peer-to-peer learning rather than a meeting platform that we're doing our best to utilise in other ways. I think that's a real distinguishing factor here.

Lane Hannah:
Yeah, it really is. I mean, I'd have to agree. It engages people in a way that is memorable.

Michelle Ockers:
So, Ange, let's start with you. For our listeners out there, mostly learning and development professionals, potentially HR people or generalists who are thinking about how might I do more with social learning, what advice would you give them about getting started or doing a little bit more with social learning?

Angela Forde:
I think my top tip, and I feel like it's just been the way I work in learning and capability, is to jump in and get started and testing and trying. I kind of introduced myself at the beginning of this. I'm all about sort of continuous improvement and continuous learning and kind of fight the fear and jump in and try it. I think, again, as a seasoned L&D, instructional designer developer, it feels a little bit counterintuitive from such a structured way that we may have been taught in the background and having everything there. But experimentation, getting feedback, talking to your users, did it work? It's even that social interaction of UX sessions with people to find out what is actually working for them. My biggest surprise out of some of the most recent sort of social learning interventions that we have put in, is how freely people have come to me and told me that it's working a lot better for them. It's almost feeling like it's not learning because it's almost not so structured and, you know, it's putting them in that comfort zone, structuring it that, you know, you're almost bringing the right levels of capability together to explore and learn from one another. You know, that you haven't got somebody who's at a much higher capability level to somebody who's just starting out, that that level of intimidation isn't there to learn socially from one another. That would be my top tip.

Michelle Ockers:
Give it a go. Experiment. Try something out and learn from it.

Angela Forde:
Give it a go and experiment. What's the worst that's going to happen? You're going to have to jump in with another bit of an intervention. But it'll get better. It'll get so much better. And we're social creatures. You know, when did we have to get so

formal with the training? I think some of probably the biggest life lessons I've ever learnt haven't been in a classroom. But let's model that.

Michelle Ockers:
Yeah, thank you. And Lane, what advice would you have, perhaps for leaders of L&D teams who are wanting to do more with social learning?

Lane Hannah:
Yeah, look, I think it's a multimodal kind of approach. And if you take a multimodal approach across a journey, then you're giving people every opportunity to do all kinds of learning. So if you start off with a workshop, for example, and you're getting people a chance to really interact with each other, and then you're partnering that with an online virtual community where the conversation can continue to flow for people who are maybe geographically dispersed or working remotely, And then maybe there's another opportunity to come back together and use something like Makeshapes to, you know, have an ongoing discussion. So it's about thinking about all these different things. What we're seeing is that when we take people through big kind of event driven learning opportunities, And then we are saying, hey, there's some self-directed learning you can do over here. We lose track of what people are doing in the self-directed piece. And the way to bring them back is to keep a community going in the background so that this conversation that can continue to happen and people can support each other and ask questions and all these sorts of things. We've seen this to great effect with a rollout of Copilot and the community that's built up around that. And then you can provide other opportunities for them to then come back together again. And we're already seeing this a lot with, and I know we've talked a lot about AI, but it's just the current use case for us. But what we're seeing is that we've got people that rush off and do a whole bunch of self-directed learning, which is fantastic. We love that. We're all about that. But also when they are coming back together in these groups, whether it's in a community online, or whether it's in a workshop type setting or a Makeshapes little module, then they're sharing. And that sharing is supporting other people, it's helping other people think about maybe a different way of approaching something, or it's giving them an idea that allows them to then kind of carry on forward. So it's kind of trying everything.

Michelle Ockers:
It's about the blend, right? And having a fairly expansive toolkit so you can bring the right tool to bear in any situation.

Lane Hannah:
Yeah, yeah. And these are not difficult things to do nowadays. They did used to be harder, I think.

Michelle Ockers:
Yeah.

Lane Hannah:
There are so many tools now that enable us to build community in ways that we haven't been able to before.
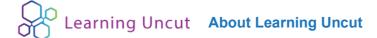
Learning Uncut

Michelle Ockers:
Connection. Thank you so much. Well, thank you, Dan, Lane, and Ange for joining me for this episode of Learning Uncut. We'll pop links to all of your LinkedIn profiles in the show notes if anyone would like to reach out directly to learn more about the approaches that we've been talking about today. Thank you so much.

Lane Hannah:
Thank you so much.

Angela Forde:
Thank you.

 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