

Learning Uncut Episode 189
What Happens After the Award, Reflection 18 months on –
Millie Law
Hosted by Michelle Parry-Slater



Michelle Parry-Slater

Welcome to Learning Uncut. In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge the traditional custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community, particularly the Kombumerri People, whose land I'm joining you from today. We pay our respects to their elders past and present and we extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples present or listening today. Australian listeners and viewers, you may also wish to take a moment to consider the traditional custodians of the land where you are today.

As we begin our episode, it's a revisit. We are welcoming back a returning guest. We're welcoming Millie Law, and Millie spoke to us initially on Episode 161, where she was sharing her award-winning blended learning with business impact. And it really does read like the who's who, the how-to, the what's what of modern learning and development. I had a re-listen to the episode and it reminded me why it really is my favourite episode from last year. And we're here today to follow up the what-happened-next. When we have a good who's, who, when we have a good how-to guide, we can't just leave it there. Millie had a 20 to 25% improvement in a key business metric that was and what a fantastic improvement that was.

So today we're here to talk about: what happens next when you have an award-winning program? When you're doing great work, how do you sustain it? How do you keep it going? How do you improve it? How do you iterate it? So Millie, just wonderful to welcome you back. For listeners who haven't heard Episode 161, they can certainly look in the show notes and have a listen after this. Can you give us a quick intro to who you are and a summary of your Better Business Development program? Why was it so good?

Millie Law

Gosh, Michelle, what an introduction. I feel very, very privileged to be back on Learning Uncut. It has been a bit of a goal of mine, I won't lie about that. So thank you for having me back.

For listeners who don't know me, I'm Millie Law. I have spent the last 22-odd years at ANZ in various parts of the business's learning function. But what brings me here today is our Better Business Development program and looking back on that award-winning program, which we're so pleased to have received that award for. A bit about Better BD, was really about identifying a business problem. And that business problem sat with our home lenders, where we really needed them to play a more active role in driving proactive business development conversations with existing but also prospective customers.

Learning Uncut Episode 189

What Happens After the Award, Reflection 18 months on – Millie Law

Which sounds pretty simple. But what we actually understood when we looked into it and tried to really get at the root of that problem was, it wasn't just a skill thing. It was very much equally a mindset piece. And so we had our lenders needing to reflect and understand where their home lending customers came from and why they were coming, how to identify those customers, how to identify potential customers, and really connect with them to discuss their financial wellbeing in the context of home lending needs and create plans to dedicate time to these critical activities.

So what we actually created was a learning experience that balanced both scale and personalisation. It had what I call a thin core of reusable assets from an enterprise learning perspective, but was built with personalised pathways to support those home lenders' needs wherever they were coming from at whatever stage they were in their journey.

In terms of its design, it had all those good elements in there that we really look for in learning and we inherently know about and how to actually bring that into life. With really intentional design, so things like space retrieval, deliberate practice, reflection, social learning, all of those things made up that design of better BD.

But I think what was really critical and what was most important was where we leveraged our respected subject matter experts. They came in the form of business coaches, effectively, really working with those home lenders day to day. And they were really critical in that delivery model. And as you said, the program has seen some tangible business impacts. We measured against a few different metrics, but seeing that 20 to 25% business impact, and also returned a four times return on investment in the first year after the program launched, to me that was just astounding and such a highlight of my career.

Michelle Parry-Slater

It really should be, because that's amazing. And I should just give a big shout-out to Biscuit for any of our listeners or viewers who heard Biscuit in the background earlier, Biscuit is Millie's dog. We love dogs here on Learning Uncut. My dog Georgie has been known to have a little bark in the background as well. So no worries there, we'll power through, and maybe throw Biscuit a biscuit and he'll be all right.

Millie Law

Biscuit's been banished. He's outside now, so he's going to have to bark at the birds.

Michelle Parry-Slater

Well, look, four times ROI. Who in their right mind can say "I'm a learning professional and I've achieved four times ROI?" You are truly deserving, Millie. But

Learning Uncut Episode 189

What Happens After the Award, Reflection 18 months on – Millie Law

what happened next? Because four times ROI is great, I'm not diminishing your achievements, they're wonderful. But I'm really curious. We often talk about reflective practice, we often talk about looking at things again. Reflective practice is really where embedded learning actually happens. So we're 18 months on from when you recorded with Michelle Ockers, and before we get into the detail of the headline, I'm just curious to know, what's next, what happened? Can you describe that journey from February 2025 when the episode launched to here we are in August 2026? What are your reflections?

Millie Law

Yes, I did have to look back and have a think about what was actually going on then. While we recorded that episode in 2025, the program had actually been running since 2023. So, we had a good level of data in there. And the program continues to be delivered, but it has changed a little bit in terms of its evolution.

So Better BD was really targeting our Australian home lenders. But very intentionally, we also built a New Zealand version off the back of that and it was very much, I think, about 95% the same, but with a little bit of tweaking to account for that New Zealand context. Both of those programs have continued to be delivered to this day. I did have to check on that this morning to make sure they were both still running. They've evolved a bit, but they do continue. And I think that's a real testament not just to the work itself, but to demonstrating that the impact and the value is still being achieved and we're still adding value into the business.

So, it's really fantastic as part of that program to see it can continue to live on so many years after we first launched it.

Michelle Parry-Slater

The how-to guide continues then, because this iteration that you've talked about is really what needs to happen, isn't it? If we can't have a once-and-done approach to learning, it's got to move with the times, it's got to move with the economy, in your case being a bank. Are you still looking after the program? Are you still delivering it? Are the coaches still involved? What's the story there?

Millie Law

Yeah, so it's an interesting one, and it probably comes back to the way that our learning function operates at ANZ. Like many big organisations, we operate in a federated learning model. And in my role as part of the strategic capability team, we focus on those capability areas and the workforce segments that we've identified through our strategy that we need to disproportionately invest in as a bank.

And so these are areas that we've identified and that form part of our learning strategy and that's been a partnership with our executive committee to make sure

Learning Uncut Episode 189

What Happens After the Award, Reflection 18 months on – Millie Law

that we're really landing on the right areas and the right segments. So, from a strategic capability team perspective, our role is to partner with the business. Not doing it for them, but really partnering with them to solve those business problems. And the way that we do that is through experimenting with ways that we can actually lift capability. But the goal is always to be able to scale it and sustain it across the bank, as well as in the specific workforce segments and parts of the business. And Better BD was actually one of the first solutions we tried in this way, as part of the current operating model.

As part of that scaling and sustaining solution, the content for our Australian audience has been incorporated into the Accelerated Lender Performance program as part of the retail business's overall home lending curriculum. And very pleasingly, it is still run locally by those credible business coaches. And I think that's really, really important, because to me that was one of the key X factors of Better BD. To see that continue really shows that it was a great design decision and the value that you actually get from being that close to the business and being that trusted facilitator and coach to help build that capability.

So while the program has changed, it's no longer known as Better BD, it is still run as part of their overall curriculum, and it's actually come a little bit closer to the home lending induction program in terms of its spacing. The design has still maintained some of those key elements around spaced retrieval and deliberate practice. The program as it now runs covers about three months, and I think they have workshops every fortnight or so, led by those business coaches, that really helps them to continue to build that business development capability. And similarly, in our New Zealand home lending business, they still run the program, and it's still closely connected to their home lending induction program as well.

Michelle Parry-Slater

I love that you're not precious about it. Because sometimes when we build something great and it's award-winning, we can be like, this is it, this is fixed, this is fantastic. And actually what I'm hearing you talk about is the joy of evolving it, the joy of moving it into something else that's more appropriate for the times it's in. And how does it feel to make those changes? Is it like watching your child grow up? Let's be honest does it feel a little bit difficult that they've taken something you designed and won for, and it's now different?

Millie Law

Well, it actually does not feel difficult at all. And there's a really good reason for that. I mentioned that the strategic capability team's role is to partner with the business. And so when we were building Better BD and the program in New Zealand, we really did partner with the business. We actually created a cross-functional pop-up team for the life of the project. In those early days, that included business representatives from the Australia retail learning team and from the New Zealand

Learning Uncut Episode 189

What Happens After the Award, Reflection 18 months on – Millie Law

learning team. And so they co-created it with us. We had their business context represented right from the start. And we could still work on that mindset of, we're trying to build an enterprise solution, so that thin core, but with the business context that's really going to be meaningful and drive not just capability outcomes, but genuine business outcomes.

So I guess when it came to handing over the program, it didn't really feel like handing it over. It just felt like the natural progression. It really wasn't a difficult transition at all, because we had those business representatives so deeply immersed and invested in the program right from the start. They were really pivotal to its creation.

So, while I got to stand up there and accept the award, it was very much on behalf of a team that crossed both Australia and New Zealand.

And it was just amazing to see that it continues to do that. They were involved from those early performance consulting conversations right through to the build and the pilot and the experiments, the failed experiments and the ones that proved their worth and got us to success. And so right from the start, we were able to establish those relationships. The transition was just smooth and really quite uncomplicated.

Michelle Parry-Slater

So you're not running it anymore. Do you know the answer to this question, is it still performing? Is it still getting those amazing results?

Millie Law

Look, I can't hand on heart say whether it's still achieving that 20 to 25% uplift. But for me, knowing that it is still running in some format, I trust the businesses that now hold those programs and are responsible for running them. They know what they're doing. They're very experienced and they will be measuring it. I have absolute 100% confidence that they wouldn't be running something that's not adding value to the business.

I think the way it has evolved, shifting not just the design but where it comes in a home lender's learning journey, is a great signal that it is still adding value. The bar has been raised. So while business development activity was something that people had some mental barriers towards, we can see that its importance and its relevance is being brought much closer to their onboarding experience. And so, it becomes that fundamental piece around, this is an important part of your role, this is why it's an important part of your role, and we want you to feel confident and skilled to fulfil this part of your role.

Michelle Parry-Slater

Just picking up on something you said there about people having a bit of a mental barrier to essentially sales in a home lending capacity when they were traditionally

Learning Uncut Episode 189

What Happens After the Award, Reflection 18 months on – Millie Law

perhaps not salespeople. Do you think it shifted culturally? That it's just become a normal part of business as usual, this is what we do, this is part of our job? And do you think this particular program, one of the things I picked up when I listened was actually practising in the workshops, you know, actually calling potential customers and having that conversation and not digging into the conversation itself, “did you make a sale”, but how did you feel making that sale? I thought that was a really genius move. And I just wonder, has that shifted something in the wider business psyche?

Millie Law

I think it has. And I think the fact that this has now become such a core part of a home lender's role, it is about having those conversations. And you framed it as getting the sale. I wouldn't say it's even about that. For me, the way that we've positioned this program has always been about the customer. So by picking up that phone or reaching out to a customer in whatever shape that looks like, what you're actually doing is creating that connection. And we know that the role that banks play is really critical in some communities more than others. So it's actually quite an important customer experience piece.

Really taking the time to say “hey, whatever your circumstance may be, you've up for a renewal, we can see your fixed rate's about to expire, let's have a conversation and see if this solution is still serving you to the best of its abilities. And if it's not, let's work on a solution that will.”

So I think that was a real key piece in the mindset shift around, it's not actually about pestering people or bothering people. It's actually really coming from a place of good intent around is this solution still working for you, and how can we actually make it work for you?

Michelle Parry-Slater

That mindset piece is fundamental to the success of this, isn't it?

Millie Law

Really, really is. And the program was intentionally designed not just as a skill build, but really to shift some of those mindsets and that's what it has done.

Michelle Parry-Slater

One of the things that I always talk about with learning is, when you build great learning solutions and people go through them and they feel them, they're not just experiencing or doing the learning, they're having an emotional reaction to it, it lands in a way which is much more resonant, and those ripples go out. So I'm not surprised to hear your answer there. Because of course people do feel better about it, I'm just helping somebody, I just happen to be talking about home lending. And then the next time that customer thinks “the bank were really nice, they were really

Learning Uncut Episode 189

What Happens After the Award, Reflection 18 months on – Millie Law

helpful.” It's a little bit like policing, if all you ever do as a police officer is go out and arrest people and do the hard stuff, when somebody sees you coming, they're on guard. But actually if you're part of the community, if you're around and helping, well, they're on our side.

I'm not sure if that's a good analogy or not but it really is coming from a place of “we are here to help” and I just love that, it feels very much Millie, we're had a couple of conversations prepped for this and I've obviously listened to you on the pod that Michelle did with you and it feels very much like this is your *raison d'être*. This is your career approach. This is how you deliver on learning and development by being useful, by being helpful, by helping people to feel something better about their work. And you've been at ANZ for over 20 + years now?

Millie Law

Yes, twenty-two years this year.

Michelle Parry-Slater

You've obviously got fantastic genes because you don't look a day over twenty.

Millie Law

I started when I was five!

Michelle Parry-Slater

Obviously, obviously!

Talk to me a little bit about you've worked in lots of divisions, you're in the central enterprise team, the way that you think about learning and capability and how you bring that to your work.

Millie Law

Gosh, yes. So I have been at ANZ for quite some time. And when I've been reflecting on my career to date in preparation for this, I look back at those 22 years and really I've kind of ping-ponged between the divisions, always in learning and then the enterprise team. So really two stints in each. When I reflect on my time in the divisions, it gives me so much energy, because you're just that one touch closer to the customer and really able to see the impacts of the decisions you make in learning and what that does.

Being that close to the people that are really helping and serving our customers is just a feeling you just can't compete with.

But then in the enterprise team, I've learned so much about thinking in a bigger picture sense. Really building up my strategic thinking skills and being able to not just think about good designs, but: what does that mean long term? Are these the right investment decisions to make? Is this the right time? How do you create that

Learning Uncut Episode 189

What Happens After the Award, Reflection 18 months on – Millie Law

alignment and how do you create that support so that you get more examples like Better BD, where it has continued to be sustained in the business, and it feels like it's always been part of the business, because it has, because they co-created it.

Both are absolute brilliant opportunities and give me energy in different ways. And I would highly recommend that if you're in an organisation that has that scale and you've got an opportunity to mix it up and be in different parts or different roles, take it.

But in some ways I think I've found that being in the strategic capability space is almost like that sweet spot between the two. Because we do get to have those partnerships we form with the divisions and really surface those business problems and solve business problems through learning where we can.

But stepping back around my career, there are some things that are universal. So whether I've been in enterprise teams or divisional teams, the skills that really come to mind for me, that have been honed and that I continue to work on even now, are really good performance consulting skills. Having those conversations and really getting to the root of what the problem is that you're trying to address and sometimes recognising that learning isn't the solution and that's okay. And the relationships, you cannot underestimate the relationships. And I think bringing those two pieces together is around talking in language that the business understands. So while we can talk about learning and know the language behind it, that doesn't necessarily resonate with the business and it doesn't need to. We need to meet them where they're at and be able to talk about how we're going to help them. These are the key experiences that have really shaped my career so far, that have really shaped it and been really critical for me.

Michelle Parry-Slater

It's the opportunity really to see the business in action, which enables you then to reflect it back in the learning. And what you just said there, learning isn't always the solution, is so true.

Sometimes leaders, managers, even workers in an organisation think “I need some training”, when actually they might just need a really good conversation. They might just need a robust challenge or to try something new. I wonder if you've got any top tips. If you're listening to this and thinking, “I work in an organisation, maybe it's not as big as ANZ” how do I get into these spaces? How do I have more robust conversations? Particularly if you're seen in a transactional light in that traditional L&D way. What would be the one tip you can give to a colleague in another organisation to step into some of these conversations you're suggesting, having like performance consulting or building good relationships?

Millie Law

Yeah, for me, I think it's looking at those opportunities. And you know, even with twenty-two years' experience and twenty-two years in this organisation, I will still get the odd email that says "we just need a training program on this", or "I think we need a two-day session on X, Y or Z". So it still happens. And I think rather than think... and I would call myself a bit of an introvert, and early in my career I probably would have just responded saying, sure thing, no worries, let me work out what we can do for you, and gone off on my merry way to try to please people. But as I've grown and matured and reflected on what works and what really has impact, it can be as simple as not responding to that email through an email, but picking up the phone.

Having a conversation. Just wanting to understand this a little bit more. What does that actually mean to you? I did get this exact scenario just last week where I got, "we think we need a two-day course for 500 people on XYZ topic". I'm like, okay, cool . . . pick up the phone. "Tell me more about it. What's going on? What seems to be at the root of it?" And through that conversation, it might not be a full-blown picture-perfect performance consulting conversation, but you're able to pick out those gems. "You said this, does this mean that?" And playing it back to them and actually getting them to think about, is that the right solution? And then opening that door through that conversation to say maybe we could look at something different, or who else can I speak to, to get a different perspective or understand this a bit more deeply? I think that's where I would start, not being afraid to pick up the phone. Not framing it as you're wrong and it's not the right solution, but just being a bit more curious and asking a few more questions to understand what's really driving this request.

And then if all that fails, you can always put it back to them around, "you want 500 people off the floor for two days?" That's going to cost you this much. I jest. But I think there is an important part in really understanding and just taking the time to be curious and ask more questions.

Michelle Parry-Slater

I cannot agree more. And I think if you do need to come down to that cost perspective, it's a dollar, pounds, shillings cost, but it's also a performance cost, a goodwill cost, the cost of pulling people away from their work and making them more busy than they were before. Those costs factored in as well can help people think a little bit differently. So I love your advice there, pick up the phone. It can feel scary to do that. If you were to give that advice back to younger Millie, even before the award win, before Better BD, how would you really encourage someone, because that is quite hard, especially for somebody young into the profession, new to the profession, picking up the phone to somebody who's got manager or leader in their title. How do you actually muster the courage to do that?

Millie Law

Look, I think there's a level of understanding your business a bit. And if it does feel like there is a significant gap between your role and the person on the other side of that email or request, you have your networks around you, whether that's your people leader or others around you who can help you navigate that. Is it me that needs to have this conversation, or is it someone else?

But in all honesty, I think coming from a place of curiosity and really wanting to help, but also be curious about it, I don't want to waste anyone's time, but I do want to understand this problem before I go off and build you a two-day program. I really need to understand what we're trying to solve for, what the gap is, and who's really important in that gap. And who else can I speak to, to understand that? So it can be as easy as, I don't necessarily need to talk to you, but who else could I talk to? Or, if you've got the courage, pick up that phone. What's the worst that they're going to do? Not answer?

Michelle Parry-Slater

I think yeah, there's the answer. What's the worst that can happen? They can say I don't want to talk to you, just provide me the course. In which case, like you say, you may have to provide the course. But also leaning on your team around you, leaning on your own line leader to perhaps have that conversation, ideally I'd love for that to happen alongside you, so that as a new or younger person in the profession you're there as well. These are all lovely, generous ideas. Thank you so much for sharing them.

I want to go back to the program itself and one of the big opportunities in the program, people learning from each other and the community of practice. You now lead the capability community of practice at ANZ. Can you talk to us a little bit about that? Because I genuinely think we need to include more communities of practice within our learning offers and we don't see it as much as we should. What's your perspective? What's your experience? Many of our listeners might aspire to have a community of practice. What are your top tips?

Millie Law

Yeah, so I think for us at ANZ, I've had the pleasure of running the capability community of practice though I don't even want to say 'running' it, because I truly believe it is a community-built experience. You get out what you put in, really. For us, our capability community of practice is kind of about three things. So it's that opportunity to bring the community together. We operate in a federated learning model, people spread across different countries, different time zones, different parts of the bank. And bringing them together to focus on that learning strategy is really important. We are all employees of ANZ, we're all working in service of our

Learning Uncut Episode 189

What Happens After the Award, Reflection 18 months on – Millie Law

enterprise strategy. So this is a great opportunity for us to come together regularly to connect and share and grow.

We actually did a bit of a self-review of our community last year, we felt that our foundational engagement was pretty good overall and was well in place, but we had some opportunities to improve in some of those other pillars around the sharing and the growing aspects of it, so this year we've been a little bit more intentional about trying to find that right balance, between enterprise messages, divisional updates but also those opportunities to grow as a community, some formal, some less so.

But what is also important to acknowledge is that we are a pretty experienced community and when did some analysis of who makes up the community I think the average tenure in learning was 10+ years on average. But I am also acutely aware of how many people start in learning and whilst its those formal qualifications that are popping up around learning design and organisational learning, many people also still fall into learning by being really good at what they do at their jobs and helping others learn on the job. So our community is that way of creating that connection, whether you are tenured, new to learning or new to learning at ANZ, you have people that you can talk to, lean on and share your ideas, successes, problems and really focus on learning together as well.

Michelle Parry-Slater

Sounds like that's what keeps people involved and keeps them coming back. How do you actually host the community? Where does it meet? Is it online? Is it physical? What does it actually look like?

Millie Law

So we have a virtual community, because we are spread across so many different countries, time zones and locations. And I think one of the core drumbeats we created is that we do meet every month, the same first Thursday of the month, 2pm Australian Eastern Standard Time. So people know that it's in their calendars, and we very rarely move or deviate from that time. We do recognise that people have other meetings and business priorities, so we always keep a recording of the sessions.

I love to go back to listen to some of them because we do have a lot of fun on those and there are a lot of agenda items in there. But yeah, we're a virtual community with that once-a-month connection online where we all come together. And it is an open community, there's no levels or gatekeeping about who can attend. Anyone's welcome.

One of the things I really like about the capability community is that we have an open agenda. I regularly encourage anyone in the community to add their own items. Yes, I might have to do some curation and time management of the agenda from month to month, but we're getting a really nice balance, particularly this year

Learning Uncut Episode 189

What Happens After the Award, Reflection 18 months on – Millie Law

given our more intentional effort, to find that balance between, yes, you can hear some enterprise messages, but we want to hear from the divisions, we want to hear some problems, we want to learn together, we want to crowdsource ideas. So it's a lot of fun.

Michelle Parry-Slater

Sounds awesome. It really does sound useful as well. How did it even start?

Millie Law

Wow, look, it's probably existed in different shapes and formats over the years. But when I came into this role, about six years ago, I'd come out of the division, I was actually in the retail part of the business. And a colleague of mine from the retail team was informally starting to meet with different divisional capability leads. And so it kind of grew from there. I said, can I come? And he said, yeah, absolutely. And so we continued those conversations and then just grew it a little bit more and a little bit more. And then this year, we opened it up to the whole community, so it became less about just the divisional leads meeting, and became a whole-of-community that anyone could attend, really contribute to, ask questions of, raise their own agenda items, share stories, share wins and successes or problems.

I kind of laugh that I may have hijacked what a colleague of mine had already started and put a little bit of structure around it, whether that's for the good or bad, I'm not sure yet. But that's how it's been panning out over the years.

Michelle Parry-Slater

What's the hardest thing about running a community of practice, especially in a large, federated organisation, where you're saying it's now open up to everybody?

Millie Law

I think honestly, we just have high aspirations and want to do more, but I've got to maintain a pragmatic view that we all have day jobs as well. Yes, it's great to come together and really solve problems and do this regularly and we would love to do so much more in the growth space for ourselves and our own community. But we do need to keep servicing our businesses and keep on helping our businesses create impact through learning. So I've been trying to be very kind to ourselves and really focus on fewer things but making sure they're the right things.

The last couple of years we've had a few different areas of focus from a growth perspective where we've gone in as a community and built a bit of a campaign around performance consulting, community members building it alongside me, working with me, facilitating it, running it, getting the feedback and seeing the impacts of it. And we've done similar things with learning measurement as well.

Michelle Parry-Slater

The opportunity for you to measure the success of your community, I mean, four times ROI for your program. How do you know the community is adding any value? How do you know it's the right thing to do? How do you know it's right for the people coming along and a good use of their time?

Millie Law

Yeah. Not that we want to talk about attendance metrics, but the fact that people are still coming back month on month, that is a good indicator that there's something valuable there. But for me, what creates the bigger signal is, while I still go out each month and say, here we've got some space on the agenda, what do we want, I'm having to do that less and less. People are coming to me and saying "I think I've got something, I don't know, should I share it? When could we fit this in?" And having people approach me about that, and also putting their own agenda items in themselves and the level of conversation that we have in these community of practice meetings, it's never dull. There are always really good questions, really good acknowledgement and great shares as well.

So those are the signals that this is adding value. It's not a four-times return on investment or a 20–25% business impact uplift, but I can see that those small signals are demonstrating that there's something here that's really worthwhile and really special for the community.

Michelle Parry-Slater

I love that use of the word signals, because really that speaks to the ripples that we mentioned earlier. This is structurally impacting your culture, even if unintentionally, just by coming together as a team. And I also love the fact that it's now open to everybody. The most junior of people could have an idea, float that idea, and it goes somewhere and gets discussed and grows together. Have you got any tangible examples that you are able to share? Has anything surprised you with the community? Has anybody had an idea like that?

Millie Law

One of the things that did surprise me and it was quite a pleasant surprise and it probably shouldn't have been. I mentioned we did a bit of a self-review on the community last year, just to understand was it still having impact? It was feeling like a bit of a slog, and the pace of day to day work was really building up, it was getting a bit hard and I was getting a bit down on myself, thinking "was this a good use of time and were people getting much out of it?"

But when we kind of did our review analysed the data, of what we did have, we could see that there was something there and when we took that synopsis back to the community itself and said "look, this is what we've identified, what do you

Learning Uncut Episode 189

What Happens After the Award, Reflection 18 months on – Millie Law

think?” “Is there still value in this?” “How else are we seeing this come to life?” What happened after that was a conversation that shouldn't have surprised me, but what we were seeing is that the divisional learning teams were actually creating their own connections with each other outside of the structure that we'd created in the formal elements of the community. And they said “no, we talk all the time between Australia and New Zealand, yeah, we've got similar business problems, so we work together on that.” And I'm like “oh my gosh, this actually is working.” And so that was a real pleasant surprise that things were going quite well.

Michelle Parry-Slater

I love this social learning in action. Social learning is our base layer of learning. It's how we've done it for absolute millennia. And this is really what you're giving people, a space to think, a space to work things through. And these connections are really strong. There seems to be a lot of people at ANZ who stay for a long time. Do you think that feeds into the tenure? And how are you welcoming new people in when you've got these long-standing relationships, and a community that's already rocking? How do you welcome the newbies?

Millie Law

Look, I keep my eye out to see when those new people are popping in, whether that's through my peers telling me they're hiring someone new, or I can see roles being advertised for learning roles. I will kind of dig them out. And every so often I'll go through the organisational data and see where I can find those hidden roles or those friends of learning, as we like to call them. I do often give them a personal email and say “hey, I can see you're in this role, we've got a community of practice, here are some things you might want to do, here's the invite, we'd love to see you along”. And do that personal invite.

But also, as teams have a bit of attrition and new people come in, those teams are inviting them in and making sure they've got the invite. I'll get the odd “can you add so-and-so to this, they've just joined.” And it's great, it really starts to grow. We also have an online presence through our Viva Engage platform and a Teams channel. So we can scoop up some people in there as well and identify when they're coming in and really connect. Because that's one of the main pieces, we want to connect, we want to share and we want to grow.

Michelle Parry-Slater

And that's what creates those signals and ripples, doesn't it? So, I want to start to bring us to a close. I think we could talk about this forever. So I'm curious to know what's next? We've talked about the reflections on a longstanding program, the fact that it's still running, the fact that great design is still there for you. And that's led into and continues with this community approach. What do you think's next?

Millie Law

Gosh, so many things on the horizon. I am so pleased with where we're at in terms of learning at ANZ. Yes, we've got some things that we could absolutely strive for. We've got a great opportunity that we're really exploring to amp up learning culture across ANZ and really start to shift mindsets about what learning really looks like across the organisation.

What does learning look like just for an individual? We know so much of it happens in our day to day, it could be a quick Google search, or picking up the phone to a friend and asking a question. And trying to reshape the way people think about learning inside ANZ in those contexts as well. So, we've got some exciting stuff around knowledge management that we're doing, and more of the social learning and application and reinforcement aspects of learning. But for me, it does come back down to relationships and really just picking up the phone, finding out what's going on, being curious, and understanding the needs of those people who are helping serve our customers.

Michelle Parry-Slater

Solid performance consulting is really at the heart of it all, isn't it? We've got an episode coming up on knowledge management, so look out for that one, Millie. You'll be able to learn from an adjacent community there as well. But is there anything else as we close today? Is there anything that you wanted to say that you haven't had the opportunity to add?

Millie Law

Look, for me, I started in learning as many did, as a bit of a facilitator. But looking at the way that learning has really evolved over the last twenty years or so, for me, the awards are great but the great learning work it's really about the learning itself, or the asset I should say. It's more about those relationships, the alignment, and starting those conversations early and keep telling the story, I think. So don't underestimate the time it takes to bring people with you, because that often actually determines whether the work lasts or not.

Michelle Parry-Slater

Do you think the award made a big difference to you? Did it make a difference to you personally, to the team? What's the benefit of receiving the award?

Millie Law

Look, I think the award was absolutely a great achievement personally and on behalf of the team getting to accept that award for some really fantastic work and a lot of effort over a number of years to bring something to life.

Learning Uncut Episode 189

What Happens After the Award, Reflection 18 months on – Millie Law

We experimented, we failed the first few times, but we kept persevering, and we were really fortunate that we had sponsors around us who were very allowing of that opportunity to experiment, fail fast, move on and pivot. So that's been fantastic. But in terms of the award, do people at ANZ who are doing this program know that it won? Probably not. But does it serve us well in terms of knowing that we can be held up against others in the industry who are doing equally great work, and we know that we're onto something good here?

Michelle Parry-Slater

Beautiful. You certainly deserve it. As I say, my absolute favourite episode just to listen to a how-to. So if you haven't listened to Episode 161 please do go back, it will be in the show notes. And for anybody who wants to contact Millie, we'll make sure that her LinkedIn is included in those show notes as well.

But as for today, it's just an update that reminds you, do go back and have a look at your work. It is only in reflecting that we recognise what went well, what could be even better, and what is next for us.

So thank you, Millie, for sharing with us all of your approaches and your attitudes towards learning. Millie's answer is really quite simple, isn't it? Hand it over well, stay curious, and keep the community talking. Until next time on Learning Uncut, thanks for listening. And if you've enjoyed this episode, please do share it, like it and spread the word, because the more people that listen to our episodes, the more people will come forward to share their stories. Because we're all about the real stories for real learning from real people here on Learning Uncut. Thank you, Millie. I really appreciated having the update 18 months on today.

Millie Law

Thank you, Michelle.

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](#).