

CASE STUDY:

UnitingCare



600% return on investment and 94% staff retention from LMA and UnitingCare Community partnership



The Issue:

The rapid growth of UnitingCare Community saw the need to create an effective succession plan by developing capability below senior management. Additionally, the need to improve engagement and personal and professional development of staff

The Solution:

A comprehensive program of courses was developed to meet organisational challenges, upskill staff for succession planning, enhance service delivery and improve staff retention.

The Result:

UnitingCare have seen a 600% return on investment and a 94% retention of staff who undertook training.

UnitingCare Community is a leading provider of community services in Queensland, and prides itself on client-focused care in 160 different community service programs and 150 Lifeline Shops across Queensland.

But as the organisation expanded rapidly over the past few years to meet service demands, it realised it needed to develop greater capability across leadership and management levels to ensure effective succession planning.

“Supporting widely dispersed staff to achieve better organisational and client outcomes, improving staff retention and developing staff professionally and personally were also goals we believed we could reach through our training partnership with LMA,” says UnitingCare Community Executive Director, Bob Gilkes.

A training partnership:

LMA was first appointed by UnitingCare Community in 2008 because of its acknowledged ability to engage staff personally and professionally in training, and to help them develop for the benefit of the organisation, clients and themselves.

“Staff participating in LMA courses have found efficiencies and improvements in services, systems and processes, and better use of energy and time.

On average, they have achieved efficiencies of more than five hours a week,” says Bob Gilkes.

“Just as important are the achievements of personal outcomes in health, relationships, financial and home areas, as well as the development of strategies to improve work/life balance and self-care.”

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Bob Gilkes, Executive Director, UnitingCare Community:

“UnitingCare Community views the outcomes from training investment in terms that are more balanced than just dollar returns. The ways staff have engaged, reducing stress, improving client service delivery and improving their experience, are all of critical importance to the future of the business and the well-being of our clients.”

Key challenges for UnitingCare:

Three key challenges faced UnitingCare Community:

1. Support staff in a geographically dispersed and technically diverse organisation to get better organisational and client outcomes.
2. Create an effective succession plan by developing capability below senior management.
3. Improve staff retention and development by better engagement and through personal and professional development.

A training partnership with LMA:

UnitingCare Community and LMA formed a training partnership in 2008, initially training four staff. The outcomes were extremely positive, and more than 70 staff from nine divisions have now participated in a range of performance, productivity, leadership and management development courses.

1. To support its widely dispersed staff, UnitingCare Community and LMA used a combination of open courses in metropolitan and regional areas along with in-house and tailor-made delivery.
2. Succession planning involved a range of management and supervisory staff participating in in-house and open courses. This has facilitated the development of staff to cover personnel movement, freed up time for senior management and given individuals the capability and confidence to “step up”.
3. LMA courses focus on improving individually identified personal and professional attributes, a benefit which reflected UnitingCare Community’s desire for staff to have ‘self care’, and therefore deliver better outcomes for their clients.

The results:

1. UnitingCare Community clients have benefited significant from training and development outcomes including:
 - A 600% return on investment from training
 - Improved systems and processes to streamline client services
 - More proactive time spent with clients and on client matters
 - Better focus and interaction with clients
 - Improved skills and confidence in communicating with clients.
2. Staff participating in LMA courses have found efficiencies and improvements in services, systems and processes and made better use of their energy and time.

On average, they have gained more than five hours efficiency per week. This has a domino effect on their own self-care and frees up the time of others. Confidence, self-belief and people management capabilities have all improved.
3. While staff were initially anxious that training and development might detract from critical client and business matters, this changed as they recognised the value of the course. Every participant completed their course, and UnitingCare Community subsequently achieved a retention rate of 94%.

Bob Gilkes says, “LMA provides an outstanding solution to our needs, and the results are self evident in the feedback from participants, their line managers and all those around them.”

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