



Westfield Europe Limited case study

the challenge

“how to create a high-performing collaborative working culture: driven by organisational values and behaviours, where employees learn and grow together and work cross-functionally.”

Critical success factors were:

- To build knowledge of the business across the business.
 - To build relationships across the business (vertically and horizontally).
 - To build alignment and the feeling of one team.
 - To develop the right talent with the right competencies in the right way.
 - To support talented individuals to be the best that they can be.
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our insight

Working with senior stakeholders to identify the challenge and critical success factors, our internal research highlighted the potential to leverage the relationship between the business leaders and emerging talent within the organisation. In doing so, we felt that this potential could be the catalyst to the cultural transformation required.



our solution

Using this insight, we partnered with Westfield to design, develop and launch an innovative and impactful 12-month mentoring program – where Mentees (high performing, high potential employees from across the business) problem solved with and learned from Mentors (Board Members/Directors) as well as each other. The program incorporated a variety of collaborative learning experiences and real-world, real-time business challenges to make it highly practical, relevant and real. Here's how we did it:

Engaging senior leaders

Westfield's starting point was for the program sponsors, their HR Director and Chief Operating Officer, to gain the support of the entire senior leadership team with our support. Their aim was for the leadership team to not only fully support the program but to self-select six – eight members of the leadership team to become the Mentors. However, with 11 of them rising to the challenge and stepping forward as Mentors support for the initiative wasn't lacking. All were keen to be actively involved in the 12-month mentoring program.

Identifying Mentees

The next step was to identify the Mentees. Choosing the right people – talented employees eager to learn, grow and contribute to a high performing collaborative culture – was crucial. To help ensure success here we worked with Westfield to develop the program communication and participant criteria and application process. With over 60 employees applying and 23 selected (with all senior leaders actively and collaboratively involved in the selection process), we had our Mentees and Mentors on board.

Building connections

With the Mentors and Mentees identified and excited, it was important to start building connections within and across the two groups as well as between the individual Mentees and their identified Mentor specifically. Also important was the critical role for the Mentee's line managers too in supporting their team member's development. Embracing this, our next step was to support Westfield's HR Director in creating the communications for a kick-off event bringing everyone (Mentees, Mentors and line managers) together. Led by the HR Director, the tone was personal, authentic and relaxed where Mentors and Mentees could get to know each other and understand more about their roles and next steps. The kick-off also connected everyone to Westfield's values and behaviours – the bedrock of the initiative.

our solution continued

Enabling leaders as knowledge sharers

As well as embarking on their 1-2-1 Mentoring role, the Mentors also embraced their roles by setting up and running monthly 'Breakfast and Learn' sessions – for all Mentors and Mentees to participate in. The aim was to educate participants about their areas of the business including their vision, strategy, current projects and future opportunities.

Crafting collaborative learning experiences

Supporting the collaborative learning experiences of the 1-2-1 mentoring relationships and 'breakfast and learn' sessions, we also designed and launched two further collaborative learning initiatives. These were kicked off at the same time as the 1-2-1 mentoring relationships and Breakfast and Learn session, and included:

1 8 x 1 Day workshops, facilitated by artgym, which Mentees would experience throughout the 12-month program.

The aim of the workshops was to:

- Equip the Mentees for their Mentee role.
- Help the Mentees define their learning and mentoring relationship goals.
- Help the Mentees maximise their mentoring relationships.
- Share their learnings with each other as fellow Mentees.
- Personally develop as role models of Westfield's values and behaviours
- Personally develop in the areas of Leading Self, Leading Others and Leading Business.

2 Learning group learning activities

During and outside the workshops we also split the full Mentee group into smaller groups (of 4-5 Mentees per group). In these small learning groups Mentees, throughout the 12-month program, would:

- Support each other's learning and development
- Work on real-world, real-time projects. A number of the projects (both small and large) result in the Mentees presenting their outputs to the Mentors for feedback and implementation.

The program was designed to be highly interactive, experiential, intensive and challenging for the Mentees and Mentors so that they collaborated and problem-solved together – and applied their learnings and actions rapidly and consistently for tangible and impactful results.

outcome

“i’ve never seen a programme on this scale implemented before now. you only have to see the bonds being developed within the group to appreciate how genuine collaboration across the business will grow from this initiative.”

“what a big impact this entire programme is having across the business. as Mentees, we’ve noticed a change in the way departments are operating with one another. because the mentor programme network spans all parts of the business there is an obvious improvement in the engagement and collaboration between departments.”

“the business now has Westfield edge champions embedded within its fabric – actively and consciously role modelling behaviours.”

While this 12-month intensive program is ongoing throughout 2015, Westfield are experiencing great outcomes already and as a consequence are talking about 2016’s program. A number of the current Mentees are keen to be Mentors and become the ‘knowledge sharers’ for the next generation!

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