

2018 Marshall Goldsmith Talent Development Award

WINNER: International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC Sydney)

My Extraordinary Journey

Origins and principles

ICC Sydney is Australia's premier convention, entertainment and exhibition venue opened in December 2016. ICC Sydney's vision is to be an extraordinary venue, operated by an extraordinary team, delivering extraordinary events. The motivation was to provide clear career development and pathways placing focus on long term progression within the business in order to support growth and stability within the business.

The My Extraordinary Journey initiative aimed to enhance the developmental journey of the team at all levels within the business from casual team members to senior leaders. To support this vision and ensure a successful launch in December 2016, ICC Sydney had to source, engage, on-board and train 1700 team members within 18 months and in a constrained market. Like many venues, ICC Sydney were hiring in a very competitive market experiencing skill shortages of 233,800 jobs within the hospitality sector (2016-2017 NCVET research report). With the need for such a large workforce in a short amount of time, ICC Sydney had to be different in order to attract the right talent and balance of CV and chemistry. This involved putting a new focus on career possibilities and advancement.

There was a need to look at training programs strategically to build clear pathways and journeys to ensure new team members were engaged and retained, but also supporting industry growth. Further to this challenge, the business covers a multitude of sectors, from hospitality, events, ICT, AV, business development, communications, executive services and finance. This led to the challenge of acquiring a reputable and trusted training organisation to partner with to deliver accredited training. ICC Sydney needed to provide a range of opportunities including leadership training and a focus on soft skills to support career growth and overall return on investment of the rapidly growing team.

Implementation

The challenge for ICC Sydney prior to officially opening the venue in 2016 was designing relevant, flexible departmental and business specific training to meet the ever-changing needs of a new business. The focus was on the corporate employee value proposition (EVP), compliance training, a range of departmental inductions and hard skills. The workforce grew from 700 on opening to 1700 within a six-month period.

To address these challenges, ICC Sydney devised a career progression program that aligned with the workforce development and strategic training plan. This initiative aimed to enhance the developmental journey of team members at all levels within the business from casual to senior leadership.

Geoff Donaghy, CEO stated "At ICC Sydney, our mission is to deliver extraordinary experiences and outcomes for all of our clients, patrons, delegates and attendees. Fundamental to this are our ICC Sydney team members and the skills and expertise each bring to our venue". He continues to state

“we believe that it is our people who define our offering and underpin our success, and we are 100 per cent committed to their growth and development. To date we have invested in training to ensure our team is not only operating to the venue’s world class standards, but to support them with strong career progressions”.

After being in operation for eight months, a need was identified to create a learning and development program that tied in the EVP and existing learning programs together with building sustainable programs that could sit across all departments for all teams across all levels. The My Extraordinary Journey (MEJ) was developed with three streams: Talent Development, Leaders Development and Career Development.

The Talent Development stream is the WELCOME Program. This is the gateway to a team member’s first real insight into understanding the brand and culture at ICC Sydney. Once a team member is onboarded into ICC Sydney they are welcomed into a range of different learning opportunities including orientation programs, departmental induction, compliance eLearning courses and quizzes. 29 different workflows which map the different requirements of our team ensure employees have an experience customised to the needs of their role. The training aims to be known for its industry focused, practise based teaching and learning. To support this learning culture an internal learning academy was launched - The Academy of Extraordinary (AoE). AoE defines ICC Sydney’s commitment to quality training and learning experiences embodying the organisation’s pillars – Together is the only way, Innovation and creativity, and Service Excellence.

AoE currently hosts over 200 courses and is accessible from all devices in any location and encompasses all learning needs and competency requirements across each position and department. It provides flexibility and convenience to employees. Part of ICC Sydney’s commitment to training was partnering with TAFE Enterprise whereby a TAFE representative is embedded in to the business assisting with aligning industry benchmarks and mapping departmental induction programs to nationally accredited courses. This gives the opportunity for our casual workforce (which makes up 79% of the team) to achieve part-qualifications and skill sets throughout their journey.

Also due to the large casual workforce, the initiative allowed casual team members to be recognised through performance reviews aligned with values and core behaviours. Team members are rated as an Extraordinary, Consistent or Developing Performer. This then ties into training and development programs whereby team members are offered further training to develop their skills. Training programs are blended into soft and hard skills, which can be delivered both on and off the job. This also forms the basis for workforce planning and performance based rostering. Extraordinary performers are then offered opportunities to build their capabilities through our leader development streams.

The next stream of My Extraordinary Journey is Leaders Development. This stream is split into Emerging Leaders and High Potential Programs. These programs are designed to give career possibilities within ICC Sydney whereby tailored development plans and mentoring programs are designed for emerging leaders. Attached to our Leaders Development program is formalised accredited training through the TAFE partnership. This gave opportunities for leaders to gain national accreditation. The programs are designed with a range of developmental opportunities including coaching and mentoring, Think Tank workshops, project assignments and peer to peer learning workshops.

As a pilot program ICC Sydney offered 12 scholarship positions for a Diploma/Advanced Diploma Hospitality Management. This program offered employees the opportunity to formalise their experience and skills and gain a national accredited course. This scholarship program was customised and delivered in house to ICC Sydney leaders. TAFE programmed the course to include a

series of workshops, Director led sessions, on the job project based assessment with an online platform for accelerated delivery. The program encouraged employees to join working groups to complete projects and implement their recommendations to the business in the form of an operational plan proposal increasing their productivity levels as the groups were empowered to run their own projects within their departments, make recommendations to their Directors and implement their ideas into the business.

One example whereby this program was particularly successful was in Culinary Services. After analysing the business incidents and customer service feedback, the working group recommended six policies and procedures be implemented into their department. The team decided to incorporate eLearning and online quizzes to assess the understanding of the new policies. Quizzes were rolled out fortnightly to 50 culinary members and the completion rate was an impressive 90%. This improved knowledge and implementation of the policies then empowered the team to develop allergen online training which was delivered to over 680 culinary members.

The final stream of My Extraordinary Journey is Career Development. This includes career progression and succession planning. This program has been created to ensure that ICC Sydney have the talent in house for the future. Team members take part in this program via an expression of interest and create an individual tailored development plan which they drive. They are also required to complete psychometric testing and 360 feedback, mentoring programs and to facilitate workshops as a subject matter expert within their area. ICC Sydney believe that producing team members who have the capability and drive to perform at an optimal level and the retention of staff through engagement and career development is a key indicator of success.

Benefits and Outcomes

The initiative has led to success and development for both individuals and the business as a whole. ICC Sydney measures the benefits of training through team engagement, guest feedback and performance change. The initiative has led to increased engagement and productivity at work.

A Net Promoter Score (NPS) is used to measure the satisfaction rate of our team members by conducting monthly and quarterly employee engagement checks. Currently ICC Sydney have an 80% NPS for team engagement and a client satisfaction rate of 93%.

In 2017 180 internal sessions were run across 39 courses covering a wider range of training areas. This accounted for 22,596 training hours and over 5,138 team face to face engagements. Through the partnership with TAFE Enterprise, 50% of the ICC Sydney courses were recognised within registered certificates or qualifications. On average 25% of ICC Sydney team members participate in face to face training every month. To ensure ICC Sydney remains a premium brand, all content is created in house by departmental subject matter experts and instructional designers to ensure it is contextualised to internal operating standards. In October 2017, ICC Sydney celebrated the 1000th team member qualification through the TAFE Enterprise partnership.

Due to the training culture that has been built at ICC Sydney, departments are now eager and able to implement their own specific training in line with core training values. This has allowed training to be sustainable across all departments and ensure it is relevant to each role.

Summary

ICC Sydney had a bold vision to be a true employer of choice and a great place to work by providing tailored training and development programs resulting in long term careers for all employees. The My Extraordinary Journey program was established to achieve this vision. The program has led to success and development for both individuals and the business giving opportunities for team members and leaders to truly progress within ICC Sydney.