



AVJennings

Case study

When Phil Kearns started as CEO of AVJennings 12 months ago, he had a number one priority - People. "Our company focus is creating communities that Australians feel part of, a sense of real belonging" the ex-Wallaby Captain said. "We have the same ethos within the organisation - our most important community is our staff. But, you don't get success without inspiring and empowering the whole team to work together: getting the best people, in the right places and enabling them to fulfill their potential is critical."

One area Phil and his HR lead Lisa Hunt wanted to focus on was their women. "A diverse workforce brings tremendous diversity of thought, only bringing us better results. This is crucial to withstand the headwinds that face us in this kind of challenging economic environment" the new CEO said.

So, what to focus on? Rather than your run-of-the-mill training, they wanted to be innovative, raise the bar and really invest in long term development of their female staff. "I've seen so many organisations waste money on large scale roll-outs, with seemingly little reward. We wanted something different, that would genuinely move the needle and support the whole wellbeing of our staff."

Phil had heard about Brain Powered Coaching's Executive Authentic Confidence (EAC) course through its founder, Caroline Brewin and had been intrigued by the feedback they were getting. "We had been working with several organizations including the Bank of England" Caroline said, "and the feedback we were getting was tremendous: One participant said, "This is the best programme I've done in 20 years of banking" - it's really very rewarding that we are making a long-lasting difference". Phil's response? I've got to have some of that!

Caroline, also professionally trained coach, tells us about her passion and why the neuroscience of confidence is at the heart of what Brain Powered Coaching does. "I have seen so many women through my 18 year investment banking career not achieve what they could do, because they lacked confidence. It underpins so much of the issue we see in getting women up through the ranks." The research shows this is a critical step in shifting the diversity landscape. "McKinsey have shown in their Women in the Workplace report for the last 3 years - one of the core reasons we aren't seeing change is because of the 'broken rung' - women miss out on those initial junior manager roles and then are playing catch up. We want to empower them to speak up, step up, go for those roles and believe they can do it, whatever stage of their career they are at".



But what is different about it? Caroline broke it down. Most training courses are one day of loading you up with information, then you forget it all so quickly". In fact, statistically, you forget 75% of what you learn within 1 day and 90% within 7 days - not such a great return on investment when organisations are trying to make transformational change. "I wanted to create a programme, based on real neuroscience, delivered over an extended period to allow participants to integrate the tools, habits and strategies for change. With bite-sized chunks sessions of 1.5 hours a week, for 6 weeks, you see the most wonderful transformation as well as a deep connection forming between the participants." The neuroscience piece was crucial in standing it apart from other training programmes. "A lot of training is only competency based, lacking substance and not dealing with the underlying issues of confidence. EAC's foundation is neuroscience, applied to challenging fundamental beliefs and behaviours, then using practical tools and habits to transform the individual - that's where the real power lies."

They started with a pilot of 8 women to test the water and didn't look back from there. "Our initial pilot was extremely promising" said Lisa Hunt. One attendee from the pilot said "I am going through a tough time at the moment. I got the strength and courage to face the situation as a result of the course." "Once we saw these kind of results emerging, we didn't even question rolling it out to the broader community", Lisa said.

They saw some really interesting statistical changes too - based on surveys taken at the start and end of the programme, they saw stress levels drop by 27%, happiness levels go up by 13% and energy levels rise by 8%. "This is such an important part to understand about the programme and what we are tapping into here," said Caroline. "Employee wellness, motivation and confidence have a real impact on the effectiveness of the brain and hence performance overall".

What's the feedback been from the female participants at AVJennings? Suzan, Sales Consultant said: "Starting the Executive Authentic Confidence course I honestly thought this was another course that might help with an area or two in my life and would forget most of what I've learnt. I was absolutely wrong, this course has exceeded all expectations and has honestly improved so many areas in my life from my work environment to personal life. This has helped my confidence levels and as a result improved my work ethic and will surely help many women in the workforce."

Elain, Development Manager said, "This course really opened my consciousness to what's really important to me and that by not following my passions (goals) adds to my lack of confidence in my worklife. By recognising this and acknowledging my goals 'out loud' and using the tools Caroline introduced, I'm now more confident to pursue these goals, which has made me believe how awesome I really am."

"What really cemented our commitment to this project was the broader impact on our staff" Phil said. "Seeing how this was impacting not just work, but their overall lives so positively was just incredible - we know that that will feed back into us at AVJennings, as well as out to their own communities - mission accomplished!"

What's next? After the success of the first cohort, the programme is being extended through the organisation, including opening it up to the wider group including men too, alongside other core cultural change programmes they have planned. "We understand that confidence is something that impacts everyone, so we want to broaden the opportunity to our whole community if they would like to take part. It's not just about confidence, it's about overall wellbeing too - with these kinds of results, we know we are empowering our staff at AVJennings for real success in the future."