

# FIVE CASE STUDIES

How Duluxgroup, Evolution Mining, AON, Genea, and Cenitex are putting participant experience first

**PX**  
THE NEW  
IMPERATIVE  
FOR FAST  
LEARNING



# Participant experience: how five companies benefit from human-centred design

## WHAT'S INSIDE

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Five people and culture leaders testing participant experience

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In the words of the senior People and Culture Executive

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Innovative new approaches to leadership and expertship

**Participant-led learning is a principle that we adopted as a company in 2015, when the current owners of HFL took charge.**

Create an amazing learning experience for the participant (participant experience, PX), we reasoned, and the clients would be happy. So it has proved.

Participant-led learning comes in many shapes and sizes, but at its heart is a simple premise – design a learning experience that works for the individual participant.

This journey has led us to challenge accepted wisdom about program design. It has meant we've blown up a couple of "typical approaches". It also means that, counter-intuitively, we have created some programs along lines that went out of fashion last century. That's what happens when you put the interests of the participant ahead of everything else.

The case studies herein – described in the words of some of our wonderful clients – show this variety. Small group coaching pods are all the rage at the front line. Five day workshops work their socks off for experts. And bespoke super-blended designs work for more complex businesses.

We are extremely grateful to the busy clients who took time to talk to us and share their journey with you.

We are always eternally grateful to the very busy leaders featured in this booklet who gave us their precious time to talk to us and put themselves out there.

We hope the content contained in this booklet is informative and helps you shape your next important participant-led interventions in the leadership and expertship space.

On behalf of our whole team,

**ALISTAIR GORDON**

Chief Executive Officer  
HFL LEADERSHIP / EXPERTUNITY

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# Flexible, on topic and personalised. How Fastlead transformed DuluxGroup's front line leadership through coaching

**Sally Sharman, Head of Learning & Capability at DuluxGroup, and her business sponsor had a clear view of what they wanted for their front-line leaders – critical members of the team at Dulux. After an extensive search and due diligence process, they chose to deploy HFL's Fastlead program across the many Dulux businesses in Australia and New Zealand. Here's why, in Sally's words.**

**What is your role at DuluxGroup and what does DuluxGroup do?** I am the Learning & Development Manager, the Head of Learning at DuluxGroup. I look after leadership development, including the Graduate program and other levels of leadership development, professional skills learning and our talent acceleration program.

DuluxGroup is a marketer and manufacturer of premium home improvement products such as paints (Dulux, British Paints, Porter's, Berger) and coatings (Cabot's, Protective Coatings), adhesives, both consumer and industrial (Selleys, Parchem), garden care products (Yates), garage doors and openers (B & D group) and cabinet hardware (Lincoln Sentry). With over 4,000 employees across seven countries, DuluxGroup is an ASX 100 listed company.

At DuluxGroup we are focused on developing our people, with a series of high quality leadership programs that are practical, thought provoking and high impact.

**When you embarked on the search for a front line leader solution, what were you looking for?** We had a tight brief from the Executive General Manager for Supply Chain on this. Our front line leaders lead teams every day and are critical to the success of our business, especially in delivering in full and on time for customers. Our employees in these roles such as team leaders, supervisors, or store managers can't be taken off the floor for long periods of time, so full day programs were not going to be suitable. We also know that many people don't learn well in that

workshop environment as well. We wanted the total time for the program to be around 2 days in total. We also knew that breaking up the learning would get a better outcome.

Our participants are geographically spread – in major capital cities in Australia and in New Zealand, so we had to partner with someone who could service that spread. Given the nature of the group as well, we wanted a face to face solution. Many of our participants have had no formal leadership training, and they don't work on a computer all day – they work in warehouses, factories or stores.

**How did the FASTLEAD program stand out in the crowd to fit your development and business criteria?** We were immediately attracted to the small coaching pod model. The



Sally Sharman,  
Head of Learning  
& Capability,  
DuluxGroup

**“We were immediately attracted to the small group coaching pod model. The time frame – two hours, once a month – also seemed to be the right fit in terms of the audience.”**

time frame – 2 hours, once a month – one topic also seemed to be the right fit in terms of the audience. We reviewed the core models carefully to ensure consistency and were very comfortable with the content. All of our learning offerings have to be highly practical, with a real focus on application. FASTLEAD delivers that.

**What results have you found from implementing FASTLEAD?** The participants have reported back that they have really benefited from not only the topics covered by the coaching, but they have really enjoyed working with others from DuluxGroup. In the pilot, most of our groups were made up of participants from different parts of the business. This allowed them to not only speak freely about what was going on for them in their workplace, but to get to know people they wouldn't ordinarily

**“In terms of implementation, I would strongly recommend mixed groups – people from different sites and doing different roles.”**

meet. Relationships between managers and their participants have also been improved through the program, as the manager takes on the role of coach back on the job. With the set-up of the Fastlead program, the managers also learn new skills and knowledge as they experience the program through their participants, so that is an extra benefit.

The success of the pilot lead us to implement 14 more FASTLEAD pods. We've since added a further eight pods to the program.

**So if you were talking to someone in a role like yours, would you recommend FASTLEAD? What tips would you give them for successful implementation?** I would certainly recommend Fastlead for Frontline Leaders. The model is very suited to the audience, and HFL deliver it well.

The administration is all done by HFL, and the materials are very good quality. The coaches are responsive, and can speak with people at all levels. The account management team are customer-centred, always wanting to ensure the program is hitting the mark. They have also shown themselves to be very flexible. We had a topic we wanted included and they

wrote the module for us.

In terms of implementation, I would strongly recommend mixed groups – people from different sites and roles in each pod. You definitely get the extra benefit. Following our pilot, we spent time reviewing the communication and onboarding of our people into the program and made improvements. Logistics are a challenge with mixed group, but it is really worth the effort.

My other suggestion is to spend time with the managers of the participants, ensuring they are really engaged and clear on their role in the program. Our most successful participants were those whose managers took the time to follow up and gave their participants the scope to try on new behaviours back on the job.



### **WHAT IS FASTLEAD?**

**Fastlead is a front line leadership program delivered in small group coaching pods – typically 3 or 4 front line leaders to one coach. Check it out at [www.fastlead.com](http://www.fastlead.com)**

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**British Paints**

**SELLEYS®**



**Yates**

**Cabots**

**LINCOLN  
SENTRY**

# How a mining company struck leadership gold

Evolution Mining is one of Australia's most successful gold miners, with a track record of continued growth, increasing safety, and well managed assets. An ASX 100 listed company, it has – since its formation in 2011 – grown in size and performance. Evette Hartley, Evolution's Group Manager for Organisational Development, explains how the company has focussed on growing its people as well as its performance. How has the company built a series of development programs for its middle level management, based on delivering clear and consistent business objectives and outcomes?



**Advice from Evette**  
What advice does Evette have for colleagues at other companies. Visit our website to see her six pieces of advice – [www.hflleadership.com/evolutionadvice.html](http://www.hflleadership.com/evolutionadvice.html)



**What was the strategic driver for the investment in leadership development at Evolution?** Over the last few years, the company has grown strongly by acquisition, which has meant we have acquired leaders through these deals. We realised there was a significant legacy around leadership, both in our existing organisation and in those that we had acquired, and different expectations of leadership. We needed to define what we expected of our leaders at Evolution. We are a very growth focused business, so we not only needed to develop leaders for today but also leaders for tomorrow.

Right from the start, we had strong support from the Executive Leadership Team. They recognised that if we wanted to continue to be a growth organisation, with a strategy of acquiring value accretive assets, as well as divesting assets to improve the quality of our portfolio, we

would be continuously evolving. That meant we would need a platform which would enable us to better engage and induct our leaders as we evolved.

**What approach did you take?** We started in 2012, partnering with an external supplier (HFL) to develop a leadership capability framework to define what leadership meant at Evolution. This was the first step. The next step was to educate our leaders around what successful leadership looks like and build the capabilities through the lifecycle of our leaders, from induction, to performance and development and assessment of potential. Working with HFL, we developed the GOLD leadership development program. GOLD is an acronym for Guiding Our Leaders' Development – very appropriate with us being a gold mining company.

The GOLD program is a long-term leadership journey, that runs across ten months. We wanted to start with high potential individuals who were able to add value in the longer-term. They were people we really wanted to retain.

**What were your key design considerations?** A key design consideration for the GOLD program was the intent to help our supervisors, our front-line leaders, and mid-level leaders to build highly competent leadership skills. This cohort is responsible for managing 80% of our workforce, so we viewed them as critical to help us drive culture, efficiency and productivity.

We supplemented this cohort with similar level team members across technical functions and head office functions, so the participants were geographically and functionally diverse. Networking turned out to be a high value

outcome for participants.

Once the pilots were run, given the success of the program, the company decided to expand it into our wider workforce. From a design perspective, we wanted the program to be very practical, experiential, skills based, and containing a variety of delivery techniques (workshops, coaching, self-paced learning, projects etc. – so that participants had the opportunity to really embed new behaviours back in the workplace).

Additionally, one of our operations at the time had developed a good business planning process. We decided that, rather than produce a standard frontline leadership program covering management essentials – which can sometimes be a bit of a box ticking exercise – we would focus on making sure great business leadership was at the very centre of our gold program. It was the first time many individuals had been introduced to the company's business planning process,

**“We have found there are huge benefits to be gained in networking and collaborating by deliberately buddying up participants from different parts of the business.”**

and specifically to what that meant for them at their site.

This endeared the program, as you might imagine, to many of our more senior business leaders, and made it really practical and real for participants. We engaged senior leaders to come and deliver some of the business planning parts of the program, and this received great feedback both from the participants and the leaders (who really enjoyed it).

**So, business at the centre, what was the participant journey?** The GOLD program design is an intensive



blended learning journey. It includes orientation via videoconference or teleconference, followed by face-to-face facilitated modules, each of the three sessions are for two and a half days. The sessions have an HFL facilitator and an Evolution facilitator - partnering was at the centre of our approach.

In between these workshops we have coaching sessions via teleconference. These coaching sessions are done in pods (small group coaching), which are self-selected by the individuals following the first workshop. Before the first workshop the participants may not have met some of the people from the other sites. We have found there are huge benefits to be gained in networking and collaboration by deliberately buddying up participants from different

parts of the business. At most workshops we typically have a group of 12 (although numbers varied because of operational priorities). We ask the participants who they want to work with in their coaching pods. Choice will vary. Some may want to work with someone in their own functional area, so they can grow their expertise. Others may want to work with someone outside their area of expertise, enabling them to get a broader sense of the whole mining experience. It was important to us to make the design as participant-centred – participant led if you will – as possible. They need to own their own development journey. We have since expanded this to allowing pods to choose their own coaches as well.

Participants undertake a 360 degree multi-rater survey, which

### **WHO ARE EVOLUTION MINING**

Evolution Mining is a leading, growth-focussed Australian gold miner. It has operations in Queensland, Western Australia and New South Wales. Evolution Mining's diversified portfolio combining production and growth has made it become the second largest ASX listed gold miner. [www.evolutionmining.com.au](http://www.evolutionmining.com.au).

**“The level of engagement of senior leaders is enormous and we think a key success factor of the program.”**

initially was debriefed after the first workshop, but we have since brought this forward to occur prior to the first workshop. Helping existing frontline leaders understand how their leadership is currently being experienced by those around them has been an important part of the participant journey.

These coaching sessions, as well as the whole program, are supported by a wide range of digital assets - all attendees are able to access all the resources and materials, plus additional materials such as podcasts and manager briefing sessions.

We conclude the program with a session with the coach, the manager and the participant to ensure we really hold the participant accountable for their development to date, and ongoing learning.

We have a philosophy around the GOLD program of paying it forward, so that while the participants are achieving this phenomenal self-reflection and growth, they are also able – and expected - to develop their people and their team. This enables the program to be shared with others who may not have had the privilege of being on the program.

**You also include continuous improvement projects the participants have to execute?**

Yes, and the coaching pods also assist the continuous improvement project teams, which is a huge component of the program. The teams must come up with improvement

ideas that help Evolution be more efficient, more sustainable, safer, or more innovative. At the end of the third workshop these teams present their ideas to a panel of senior leaders. Often this means relatively junior managers will be presenting to the Executive Chairman - which is a great opportunity to have an engaging conversation with him and the rest of the senior leaders present. It's a great learning experience.

Participants get a great development experience, including the opportunity of working with people from different functions and perspectives and styles, and also the fulfilment of getting endorsement from the senior leadership team to pilot their projects.

**How did you go about engaging the senior leaders?**

The level of engagement of senior leaders is enormous

and we think a key success factor of the program. We got a range of senior leaders, including the entire Leadership team, involved in creating the EVN leadership attributes, so they could help shape the journey and messaging from the beginning.

We asked the senior leaders to be sponsors for some of these continuous improvement projects.

A further benefit was that the senior leaders themselves were exposed to the rich array of talent further down the organisation. We have now put over 120 leaders through the program. It has become a strategic imperative for the business. The business is promoting the course internally, rather than our team having to do it. It has become a business-led program. It certainly helps that the business planning and execution aspect of the content is at the very centre of the program.

The program has also been used to help with the integration of new operations as we have acquired them, getting everyone on the same page.

The GOLD program has become an important way of the business units interacting with each other.

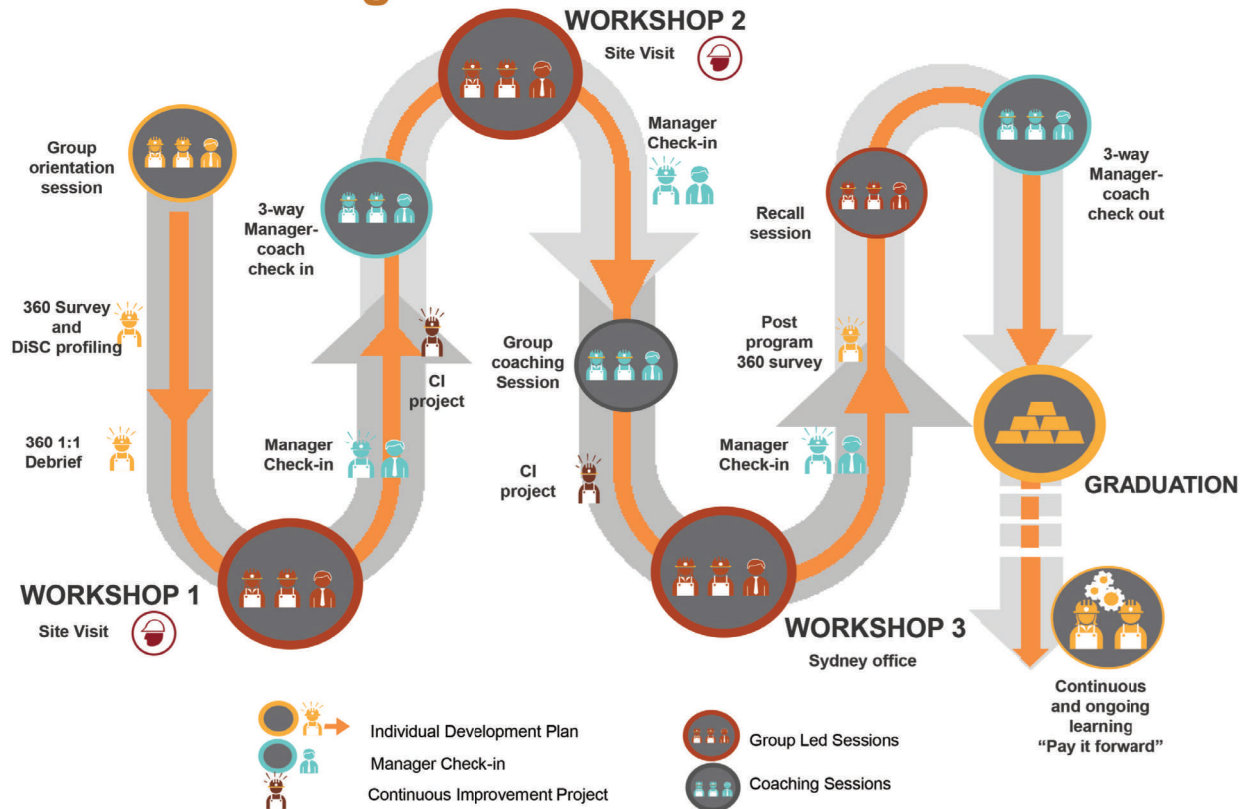
**GOLD is now part of a suite of offerings?** Yes, we have a suite of offerings. With HFL we have also developed a SILVER program, an intensive two-day management essentials program

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- If you want to get the business fully engaged in a leadership program, centre the program on business takeaways created through great leadership.
- Senior leader involvement is a critical success factor, regardless of the level of the program (even for front line leaders!).
- Start by defining what great leadership looks like for your business.
- Evolving the offering is critical – “we improved it 100%”.
- A key measure of whether continuous improvement projects are worth including is whether the best of the ideas actually get implemented.
- Linking the program to real business planning and objectives made it real and garnered huge support and involvement for the program from the business.



# Gold Plus Program



for those leaders who have transitioned into supervisory or frontline leader roles.

The critical design element was to make sure the two programs were aligned, and the same concepts were being explored, notwithstanding that GOLD went into much more detail and at a higher level.

The latest initiative is that we have also developed a GOLD Plus program. We really wanted to empower our senior leaders

to support their frontline leaders who have been on the program, and also involve some of our transformation and effectiveness team. Senior leaders manage a large number of people and are able to influence functions across our business, so we worked with HFL to develop this enhanced program. The GOLD Plus program is designed around the idea that as the participants are more senior,

the content and concepts needed to be aligned but uplifted.

A central part of the new design was the development of an Evolution Business Case Study, built in collaboration between the Commercial General Manager and HFL. (See HFL's website for details – type in “case studies”.)

It has proved immensely popular with the participants, to the point where the feedback

was that it was the “best bit” of the program. It is applied, experiential learning.

In Summary It's been a great journey, we've learned a lot, and it has been extremely rewarding for all those involved at Evolution – particularly for us in the Organisational Development team. We've been overwhelmed by the positive response of many of our participants, who've described the program as life changing.

# How Aon supercharged its consultants and technical experts by transforming how it evaluated employee potential

**Kim Johnson, Head of Organisation Development - Pacific at Aon, has developed a new holistic talent planning approach to to valuing, developing and retaining high-value technical experts. It requires some outside the box, and inside the box thinking. In her words, here's how Kim and her team led the redefinition of potential inside Aon Pacific.**



**Kim Johnson**

Kim Johnson is a senior human resources executive specialising in all things talent with an exceptional track record of outcomes achieved in progressing the talent agenda to achieve business goals. She's spent more than 25 years in learning and development and organisational development roles spanning retail banking, financial services, telecommunications, pharmaceutical and construction. Currently she is Head of Organisation Development - Pacific at Aon Australia.

**When you arrived, you commenced a review of the entire talent strategy?** Four years ago, our talent strategy was in its infancy and the development of future leaders was a key pillar. Focusing on future leaders resulted in those not aspiring to Leadership roles, being out of sight.

More recently, Aon launched a leadership program, to take the next step.

As part of the development of our people strategy (led by our Director of People and Culture at the time) we went through an extensive consultation process. We interviewed senior leaders from across our organisation, to really understand their people needs. Once the people strategy had been finalised, the next step was to develop our talent framework which outlined the steps we would take to develop our talent for our business needs.

**What were the big insights?**

One of the big insights was that our development programs were focused on developing future people leaders and this was highlighted by our Head of IT Mark Smith. Many areas in Aon rely on Specialists and not all want to be the leader of their department. They play

**“As a result of the changes valued Specialists were leaving which created significant business challenges for IT, let alone the cost to replace them. We saw a need to provide development that was specifically relevant to Specialists.”**

a vital role in supporting and delivering to the needs of our clients and come to the table as an expert in their field.

Aon was becoming a more united organisation, globally, regionally and locally and we needed to build capability in our Specialists to bring innovative solutions to our clients, quickly and in a world of constant change.

Largely due to the flags raised by Mark Smith, we identified serious gaps in the accepted approach to leadership development. Even though his group was supporting Asia-Pacific, limited career opportunities were a challenge for his business as organisation structures were changing and not everyone wanted to work overseas.

As a result of the changes valued Specialists were leaving which created significant business challenges for IT, let alone the cost to replace them and these became Mark's

greatest concerns. He saw a need to provide development that was specifically relevant to his Specialists.

Mark partnered with HFL and the Expertship program was developed. The focus of the program was to build capability in our Specialists where they could partner with colleagues to develop and deliver innovative solutions to our clients.

**You made the bold move to redefining the meaning of potential in your talent process?**

We decided to add to our global definition of potential which helped our people leaders understand the difference between potential and high performance. It meant that people leaders had to have a clear idea of the aspirations of their direct reports in order to assess their potential for the future. This meant that we could not only focus on identifying future leaders but also identify the

potential in our Specialists.

The experience in IT could be applied across Aon and there was demand for a similar capability build in other functions to meet the changing needs of clients and Aon. So, we spent some time educating the organisation about the opportunity, and got a great deal of interest and demand for the Expertship programs.

**We get asked by many clients the “development or remuneration first?” question. What's your view?**

Obviously, as soon as you start developing enterprise skills so experts can add more value, they'll ask what's in it for them. Then comes the debate as to which do you do first. I certainly don't think you have to fix career pathways and remuneration both at the same time.

You need to take a pragmatic approach and assess the environment and marketplace, so, if the best opportunity

## **WHO IS AON?**

Aon Australia is part of a global professional services firm helping clients develop solutions for complex challenges including Risk, Retirement, Health and Talent. It has 50,000 staff operating in 120 countries. In an increasingly volatile world, Aon is driven to empower economic and human possibility for clients, colleagues and communities around the world.

**“Proudly, I believe Aon, with our talent framework, has resulted in a holistic approach to developing all of our high potentials – specifically including experts”.**



you've got at this point in time is to focus on development, then that's what you do.

Usually the capability build and outcomes achieved will produce better outcomes for the individual.

**Initially, experts resisted being nominated for the expertship program. Why was that and how did you handle it?**

The reasons typically were: They just didn't know what was in it for them, or we would often hear "I'm too busy to go".

Our success in eliminating instances of people not being able or wanting to go, is due to:

- Redefining potential;
- Ensuring managers are having career aspiration conversations with their direct reports and having the information necessary to position the nomination appropriately;
- Nominations are not random. Candidates for the program are identified via our strategic, integrated talent process.

We've now put 250 experts through the program and we run three a year in-house across Australia and New Zealand – 60 experts a year typically.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Redefine the definition of "potential" in the talent process**
- **Who now delivers innovation? Experts!**
- **Clear nomination criteria are important**
- **Experts may initially resist nomination**
- **Aon has now developed 200 experts through the Mastering Expertship program**

### **What's the strategic connection of all this to Aon's priorities?**

The change in perspective and the redefining of potential, are so important because it is helping us future proof our business. Some of the key skills in the emerging world of work are those related to relationship building, collaboration, influence and learning agility. With globalisation of audiences, customers and organisations, these skills will be pivotal to the value you bring.

Improving stakeholder engagement is one of

the critical customised development areas. Experts appreciate being strategic here. Enterprise skills will suddenly have relevance and value when you ask them:

- Who's not on their network map who should be?
- Who's going to get you promoted?
- Who's going to be the person choosing the makeup of that really interesting project?
- How will you build a relationship with them?

Proudly, I believe Aon, with our talent framework, has resulted in a holistic approach to developing all of our high potentials.

We have:

- Equivalence in GM and technical thought leadership
- Developed capability to respond to our changing environment.

## EXPERTUNITY THE EXPERTSHIP MODEL

A capability framework for technical experts, available for free from HFL. Download the framework at [www.expertunity.global](http://www.expertunity.global).

# The Mastering Expertship Journey

Coaching, Assessment, Workshops, Digital Learning, Alumni



# Cost effective and personally customisable – why Genea chose Fastlead small group coaching

Genea is a mid-sized growth business, and HR Director Andy Brown was looking for a solution that was cost-effective, able to bring different parts of the business together, and affordable. Here's his view on why Genea chose Fastlead, and the results the company achieved.



Andy Brown  
HR Director GENE A

## What is Genea's business?

Genea has forged a reputation as a pioneer of fertility treatment, insightful research and world leading science. We implemented FASTLEAD to support their emerging and current front-line leaders in gaining the self-insight and skills required to lead effectively, and to encourage cross-collaboration across the business.

**How did you implement the program?** We started Fastlead with seven pods and then added a further four pods a little later. While all participants did Leading vs Managing and Time Management as foundational topics, pods could select the remaining four topics from the remaining fourteen that were available. Following the 6 month program, pod participants were mixed again and did the remaining FASTLEAD topics informally.

## When you embarked on the search for a front-line leader solution, what were your criteria?

- We were looking for a number of criteria:
- Relevant and current content that matches the challenges of front-line leaders today and into the next two to three years;

## WHO IS GENE A?

"Since its inception as Sydney IVF more than 30 years ago, Genea has built its reputation as a pioneer of fertility treatment backed up by in-house research and technology development. Our accredited fertility specialists treat patients across metropolitan and rural NSW, the ACT, Western Australia, Victoria and Thailand and early in 2014 we opened a partner clinic in New Zealand. Technology developed by our scientists and clinicians is now used in more than 600 clinics in 60 countries across the world."



**“We were looking for context that was flexible to meet the differing levels of experience and competence of the group.”**

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Ensure a high degree of internal ownership
- Different pods can do different topics, allowing participants to choose some of what they learn – participants loved this flexibility
- Use the pods to build communication and trust between different crafts within the business
- Small group coaching is perfect for mid-sized organisations

- A cost-effective solution as we were intending rolling out to a reasonably sized cohort for a mid-sized organisation such as Genea;
- Content that was flexible to meet the differing levels of experience and competence of the group;
- Also a vendor that was flexible in terms of what the final solution would look like.

### How did the FASTLEAD program fit your development and business criteria?

The pod concept and the ability to flex/tailor the module priorities in terms of the groups and sequencing, to meet specific individual and organisational capability requirements.

### What results have you found from implementing FASTLEAD?

Our leaders reported improved leadership skills, confidence in leadership ability and an improved relationship with their team. The majority also stated the program improved their relationship with their manager and made them more likely to stay with the organisation.

The personalised nature of the sessions, as well as the models shared, helped our leaders explore different ways of dealing with various situations. Time management, delegation and conflict management were particularly impactful, with participants reporting improved personal organisation, a more nuanced approach to delegation and a more confident approach to conversations with their team.

### So if you were talking to someone in a role like yours, would you recommend FASTLEAD? What tips would you give them for successful implementation?

Yes, I would definitely recommend Fastlead. My advice to any organization implementing it would be to ensure a high degree of internal ownership and coordination. This helps maximise the pod concept in terms of participant mix and modules, bring the broader groups together also for key learnings across the whole organisation.



### SUCH A FLEXIBLE SOLUTION – WHAT TYPE OF POD CONFIGURATION WILL YOU CHOOSE?

Birds of a Feather? Silo-Buster? Or one of the other varieties? Download our Small Group Coaching Advisory Document: [fastlead.com/podcons.html](https://fastlead.com/podcons.html)

# Building a customer-focused IT team: the Cenitex expertship journey

**Cenitex, an organisation that provides ICT support to the Victorian state government has – and still is – undergoing a significant cultural change. The mission: to build a vibrant, fast-moving, effective IT organisation to help serve Victoria. This required process and culture change. HR Director Catherine Proud describes the change in mindset required from the organisation’s technical experts.**



**Cath Proud**  
HR Director

## **Tell us about Cenitex.**

Cenitex provides ICT services to the Victorian government. We service a number of departments and agencies, but it's only a fraction of what we could potentially provide. When I joined Cenitex four years ago there was a plan to outsource all of the organisation's functions. But the Government undertook a major service delivery review, and the decision was made to retain Cenitex.

**So what did that mean for you?** It meant a lot of significant restructuring, and some soul-searching about why we are here. Essentially, we realised that the rationale for Cenitex's existence is to enable the

Victorian public service to be modern, agile, and productive. It also made us see that we were very technically focused. Our name is short for 'Centre of IT Excellence', and we have always had an internal focus. We realised that had to change.

So we realised that our focus needed to be on the customer and their requirements, and not so much on IT. That meant understanding the concept of partnering and the customer's needs and requirements. We had to focus on solutions, rather than the latest technology.

**How did you start on making the change?** We had to refocus and work out what sort of organisation we wanted to be. We had to move from being very technical and internally focused to getting out and talking with customers. It was a completely different skill set – and a different mindset.

Some of our staff actually said things like 'I don't talk to customers'. That was the mindset we were dealing with. Some wanted to do it but were really nervous about talking to the customer and worried about what the customer might say. They were very technical people and this was outside their comfort zone.

**So, how did you persuade people to change?** We took two approaches – building accountability, and building soft skills and business awareness in our technical team using expertship programs.

Our Service Delivery team comprised three quarters of the staff of the whole organisation. They are technical and were mostly domain experts who stayed within their area of expertise. They didn't mix with other areas of the organisation because they felt they didn't need to. There was no cross skilling. That had to change.

We started by creating greater accountability. We found that people were talking to each other for the first time, even though they worked for the same organisation and worked on the same floor.

We had to get people to actually take control of the work they were doing. Too many people were not seeing the big picture, so they couldn't understand how they could contribute in other ways. They only understood their own narrow role. We had to make people understand that they are in charge of their career and that they shouldn't be waiting for someone to tap them on the shoulder.



## CENITEX AT A GLANCE



\$173.2 million  
in revenue



525  
employees



20 Victorian Government customer  
departments and portfolio agencies



35,000 public  
servants supported

We were dealing with highly intelligent people with very technical skill sets, but who were working in very constrained roles. We wanted them to understand – and to fulfil – their potential. We needed them to meet with customers and have the confidence to work with them on some of their issues. We had to get rid of the ‘that’s not my job’ mentality.

**How did the Expertship program help?** The Expertship program helped our technical people understand that they are not so different to other people. It helped them understand that they are part of the team, and that other people are concerned about helping them grow their careers.

**“Many people thanked us for the investment we made in them. They realised we were investing in them as people and not just their technical skills. That’s very important.”**

The Expertship program is unique in that way. It presents everything in practical terms and makes the participants realise that this is not all theory, and that somebody understands the issues they are facing. It just makes such a difference.

**Why choose an expertship program?** I think anybody going on a new course wonders why they are there. So many management courses just don’t hit the mark. But the feedback from the first people we sent on the program was very positive.

I was struck with the breadth of the course. All seven of our people who went on the pilot program came up with quite different development plans. They all took different bits out of the 20 or so topics, because we had a range of different types of different types of technical on the program.

Also important is the fact that the program doesn’t finish when they walk out the door. Expertunity stays in contact with people who have been on the program, which keeps what they have learned in the investment they have made front of mind.

**“Some of the experts were worried they wouldn’t be able to answer the customers question, which would make them look less expert.”**

Many people thanked us for the investment we made in them. It was the first thing like this we done for a long time. They realised we were investing in them as people and not just their technical skills. That’s very important. Everybody feels they have a clear career path.

**With what you’ve learnt, how do you determine who goes on the program?** We give a lot of thought to who we want to invest in—understanding who our talent is and making sure they are going on the program. We’re developing a talent matrix so we can identify those who really go the extra mile and will rise up through the ranks. We look at both technical and leadership aspects. We look at people’s ability to handle complex projects, their ability to coach others, their learning agility, and a range of other things.

We’re trying to get as many people involved as possible. It’s

a culture change. People have to change their mindset about this stuff. They have to listen to people as opposed to just making my point and win my position’.

**What’s next?** And as far as the expertship program is concerned, we want to get the best out of it given the amount of money we have invested in it. How can we further embed the learning that this program, how can we really make it stay alive for people and for it to continually be front of mind. How can we get the managers more involved? So the alumni initiative we have started is a good first step, and I know that changes to the way the program is delivered – including coaching sessions now after the workshop component – that’s also helping.

We have a great deal more to do but we’re in a very positive space as an organisation now, and it’s been a great journey.

# Participant-Led Learning

**"I really enjoyed being in a small group, going through real life scenarios."**

FASTLEAD participant

**"I am very happy with the content and the way Fastlead Pods are run. I think it's a great learning and sharing your experience with likeminded people."**

FASTLEAD participant

**"I absolutely believe the course changes people's lives. I feel with my relationships with people at work have changed, I'm now more accepting of other people."**

EXPERTSHIP participant

**"Best leadership program I have been on."**

Bespoke leadership program participant

**"I really wish I had done this course earlier in my career. In retrospect a lot of it seems like common sense, but common sense isn't very common. It's difficult to explain how innovative it is and how different the approach is."**

EXPERTSHIP participant

**"Even though prior it was what I was most dreading, it was the real plays...actually helped me the most. But the thing that was the best was that the facilitator got us to answer all the questions ourselves. No PowerPoints works better."**

Bespoke leadership program participant

**"The Expertship program really switched on a light for me. It made me realise that there is so much more to being a technology person than the technology."**

EXPERTSHIP participant

**"The course content was great but the way it was executed and communicated gave me the tools to do what I need to do back in my work environment. Interactive workshop – working cooperatively. Support network. No PowerPoints."**

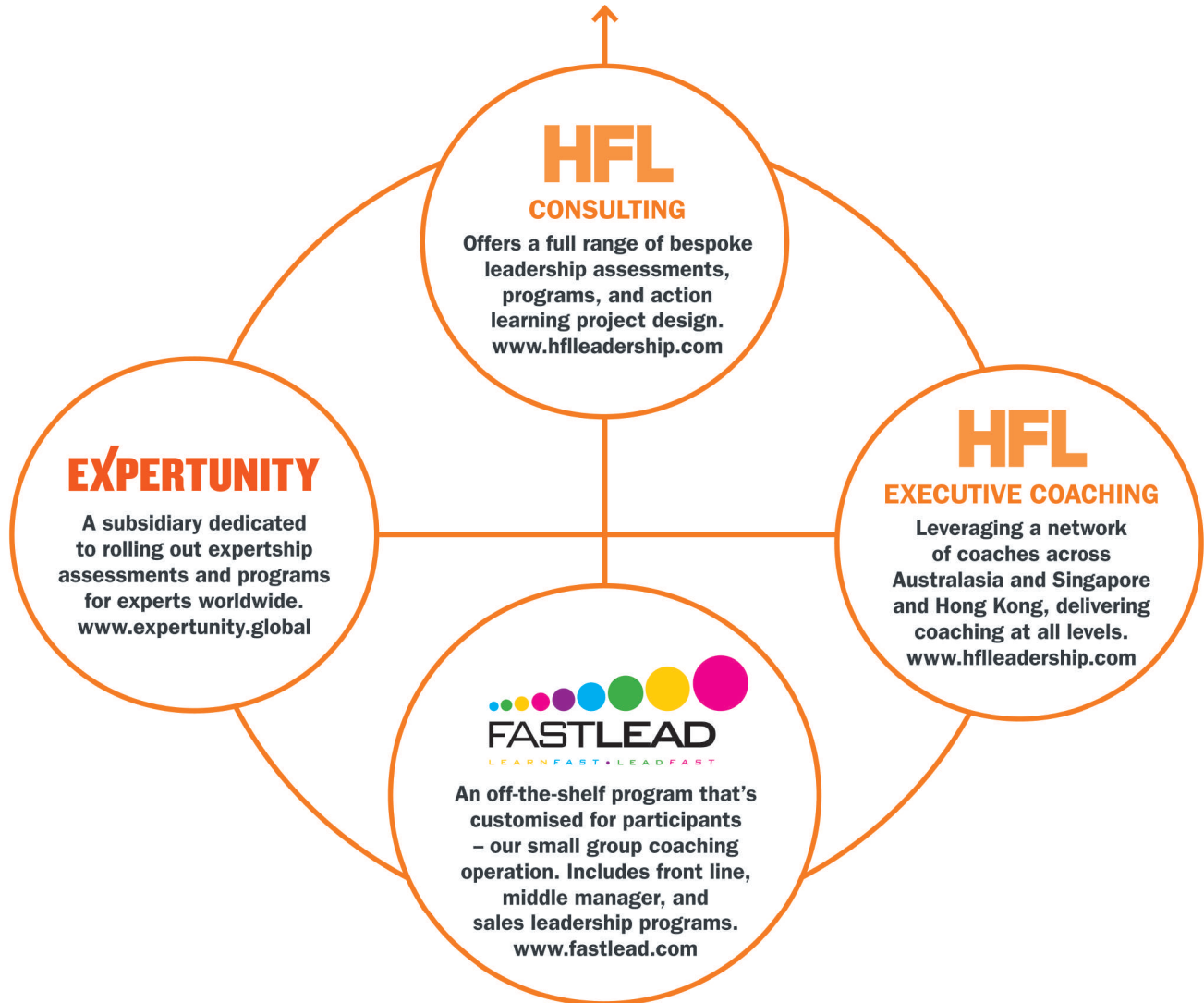
Bespoke leadership program participant

# Participant Satisfaction



# HFL At A Glance

Founded in 1981. 100 clients. Asia-Pac footprint (global for expertship)  
NPS in the 80s. Innovation is our middle name.





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HAVE LEARNED – WITHOUT OBLIGATION.**

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**HFL BESPOKE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: [HFLLEADERSHIP.COM.AU](http://HFLLEADERSHIP.COM.AU)**

**AUCKLAND, LONDON, MELBOURNE, NEW YORK, SINGAPORE, SYDNEY**