

Results from Staff Training: Brief Report

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Introduction

The last few years has been a time of significant restructure and challenge for telecommunications company 'AA'. This has been reflected in results from the 2016 Employee Engagement Survey demonstrating that staff wellbeing has deteriorated relative to normative benchmarks. After a client engagement period lasting 3 months, the team at Mindfulness Training Australia developed and delivered a one-day program for 28 senior company staff. In attendance were the Regional Director, 3 General Managers, 2 Area General Managers, 12 Store Managers and an array of Band 2 Individual Contributors. Feedback from the program indicated that it was met with very high levels of participant satisfaction and learning - particularly for Store Managers.

Highlights of the program

Excellent buy-in from senior management.
Very high levels of participant satisfaction.

Greatest Opportunity

A brief new training program to assist in-store staff improve their skills with angry customers.



Program Description

The primary focus of the day was on using mindfulness techniques to develop higher levels of mental health and emotional resilience. This was achieved through a focus on 'Breathing Retraining', 'Active Acceptance' and positive self-talk. The evidence base for combining these elements in promoting psychological resilience is substantial. The secondary focus of the program was 'Introduction to Deep Listening Skills'. In this module, session content focused on a number of role plays aimed at defusing customer aggression, through the summarising of customer content, emotion and meaning.

In addition to the in-person content, the program benefits from an online course delivered over 10 weeks. Every Monday morning participants are sent an email directing them to a new lesson. The lessons are designed to build sequentially on each other, to include both individual and interpersonal mindfulness skills.

70% Individual Mindfulness Skills

30% Interpersonal Mindfulness Skills

ONE DAY PROGRAM OVERVIEW



Online Session Content

M1	Introduction to Mindfulness and Resilience	M6	Mindfulness and Communication Styles
M2	Mindfulness and the Two Hands Technique	M7	Mindfulness & Deep Listening
M3	The Four Breaths Practice	M8	Mindfulness & Dealing with Conflict 1
M4	Better Self-Talk	M9	Mindfulness & Dealing with Conflict 2
M5	Mindfulness & Emotional Awareness	M10	Brining it Together: Mindfulness and Two Fronteers



Participant Satisfaction Ratings

Participants were sent a 12-Item Questionnaire regarding their satisfaction the week after training. Ratings were given typically on a 1-4 scale (from 'Poor' to 'Excellent', or from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree'. Very pleasingly 0% of participants who rated the program as Poor on any item. In contrast the program enjoyed very high levels of satisfaction.



Focus on Store Managers

Store Managers were clearly the beneficiaries targeted in this program. They have previously indicated very high levels of stress, as evidenced in their responses on the 2016 Employee Engagement Survey. As can be seen from the highlights below, 100% of Store Managers felt more capable of managing stress levels than immediately prior to the program.

Overall Verdict for the 1-Day Program	Excellent = 75%	Good = 25%
Participation in this program will help me manage stressful situations at work more effectively	Strongly Agree = 75%	Agree = 25%
I would like more training from these presenters in future	Strongly Agree = 100%	
My staff would benefit from training by these presenters	Strongly Agree = 100%	



What they would like future training to focus on



Stress management dealing with angry customers.



Anything that assists us to deal with stress and team burnout.



More on the actual conversation regarding staff conflict.



Key Recommendations

There is clearly significant need for training in the area of managing difficult customer experiences. This item has been endorsed both in our conversations with Senior leadership, in addition to feedback in person by participants and through results of survey. We feel confident in our ability to assist store staff in being able to identify and manage these episodes for the greatest positive business impact. To this end we have identified 4 tasks.

- 1 Provide Store Managers with expertise to assist staff learn new assertiveness behaviours.
- 2 Teach in-store staff directly how to manage difficult customer experiences more effectively.
- 3 Provide practical guidance on the verbal and non-verbal components of managing difficult customer experiences.
- 4 Combine in-person with online content to consolidate skill acquisition.



About the Author

Cameron Aggs is one of Australia's foremost mindfulness training specialists. He has facilitated more than 200 professional mindfulness training programs in Australia and in the U.K. Cameron is best known in the design and delivery of programs which reduce the negative impacts of mental health and communication issues on profitability and performance. Cameron has a strong grounding in human behaviour as a Clinical Psychologist. He is an internationally published author on Mindfulness with Taylor & Francis (U.K).



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