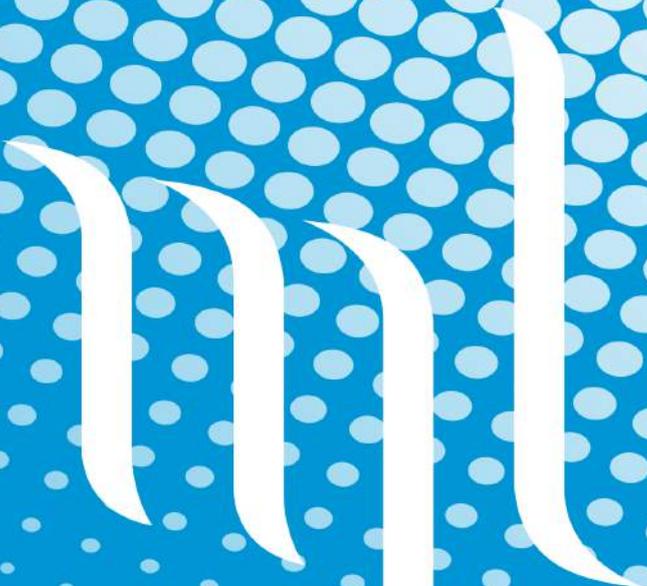




michelleloch

REWIRING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

A Case Study



Burdekin Shire Council

November 2014 to March 2015

Leadership Development

Burdekin Shire Council, like many other councils and businesses, had undergone a period of significant instability and change over the previous 12 months. The new CEO had a vision, and needed the team to step up and take their leadership roles to a more professional and cohesive level. The key issues identified by the CEO were:

- The new leadership team weren't operating as cohesive team
- The new leaders were unsure of their leadership role and didn't consider themselves a 'team'
- Some leaders didn't consider themselves 'leaders'
- The organisation was operating in a traditional silo structure, causing duplication, skepticism and a poor reputation in the community (customer)
- The uncertainty of the previous period had caused many staff to shut down, or become very negative, and many were concerned about further changes
- Leadership focus was on 'doing' not 'leading', resulting in a tendency not to delegate, a lack of trust that their staff could deliver, and frustration around people and motivation issues.

Planned Intervention

We ran a two and a half day 'REWired LEADERSHIP' retreat with the nine key leaders of the Council – and gave them a name – The SLG – Senior Leaders Group.

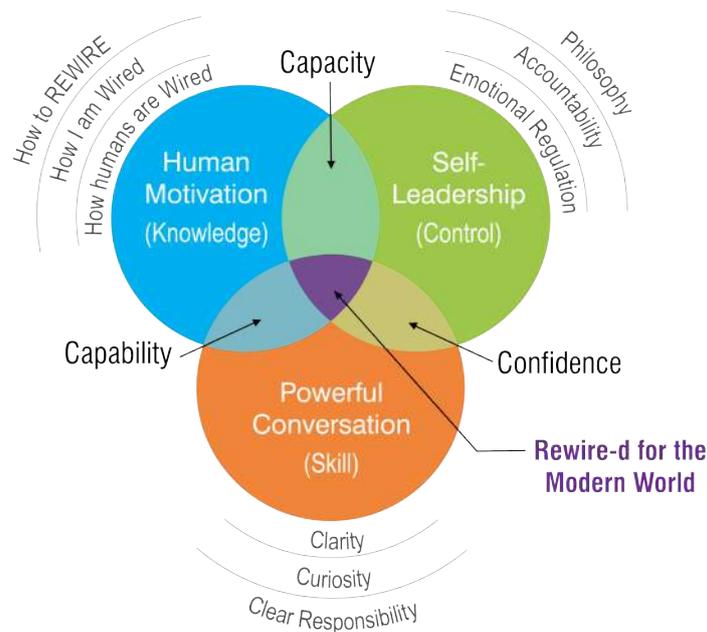
Over that time we focused on getting crystal clear clarity around their roles and gave them permission to step up to being empowered leaders.

We provided the group with ...

- a new way of thinking about themselves as leaders and as a team,
- the tools and knowledge to understand how to work with and motivate themselves and their teams, and
- the opportunity and brain space to work collaboratively on a shared vision that the team could all engage and commit to.

We introduced a number of useful models and concepts to the team, however the program centred on two key models.

The Rewired Leadership Model (below) to build their knowledge and skill around managing themselves and others and providing them with capacity, capability and confidence as leaders.



The Leadership Focus Model (below): to provide them with a simple, yet effective model for achieving efficiency, momentum and action.



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Return on Investment Survey

A pre- and post-retreat survey was conducted for both the participants, and their direct reports to identify positive changes in behaviour and the impact of that.

The survey benchmarked:

- Role clarity
- Feedback and support
- Autonomy and sense of empowerment
- Communication
- Leadership

The outcomes of the survey show a positive improvement in all aspects of the survey from both the participants and their direct reports within three weeks of the retreat.

Reported Return on Investment

The return on investment as reported by the CEO and the SLG team are:

ROI	Which enables...
Increased trust	One focus, support for each other, cross-collaboration, synergy in the team, a united front of confidence for the rest of the organisation, permission to challenge, permission to take calculated risks, permission to say no
One team mentality	Breakdown of silos, economic sharing of resources
Increased job satisfaction	Energetic and enjoyable work environment that is 'safe' for all
Reduced distraction and procrastination	Capacity to focus on achieving the Council's vision and strategy, happy and focused staff
Increased momentum	A sense of progress – a primal human motivator!
Better communication	Clarity, reduced misinterpretation and procrastination, honest and robust debate and dialogue, efficient and focused meetings, ability and permission to say no

**Refer appendix for more detail*

On-going support and cascading

Three months after the initial SLG retreat, a further two and a half day retreat was held with the 22 members of a newly formed SSG (Senior Supervisors Group – essentially the direct reports to the SLG). The SSG was created to enable the same benefits of the shared team approach from the SLG to filter down into the organisation. One train, one direction, all aboard!

Whilst initially wary of 'another boring leadership program' the insights reported by the senior supervisors at the end of the retreat were:

- Stop trying to solve everybody's problems. Stop telling them what to do and start helping them to think
- Stress (busyness) is a significant inhibitor to intelligent and objective thinking
- Doing it all myself is not useful
- Everybody is different, so I need to communicate and motivate others around me in a way that works for them. I need to consider other's perspectives.
- Leadership is hard.
- Trust is critical.
- Being able to engage in productive conflict is paramount to good decision-making.
- What happens on tour (in the leadership meeting) stays on tour.
- As a member of the leadership team, I must commit to the team's ultimate decision, even if I didn't believe it was the right decision – we are all in it together regardless!
- Understanding how people 'tick' – the human motivation bit – helps me to diagnose why people do what they do, and then do something useful about it.

Future plans

- It is planned that the SLG will attend a one-day development day each March and a two-day retreat each October on an on-going basis to maintain momentum and to continually challenge the team to stay fresh and focused.
- The SSG will attend a one-day program on an annual basis for the same purpose.
- Over the months following the SSG retreat, the group, with the support of the SLG will develop and evolve a structure to ensure that, as a team.

APPENDIX

CEO comments – Three months after the initial retreat

- The SLG has established itself as a united and focused leadership group
- The trust level within the team is high
- The commitment level to the Council as a leadership team is high
- The team are keen to grow their leadership capability at every opportunity and have embraced the concepts from the training 100%
- The team now has the motivation, capability and united trust to enable the implement of the Councils Vision and Strategy over the next five years
- The team are focused, are delegating and saving previously wasted time
- Have much higher levels of confidence in terms of managing their staff for efficient outcomes.

Indicative behaviour as observed by the CEO

- Individual members of the team have commented that they now 'can't wait to get to work'

- After a discussion around resourcing, one leader offered to give up one of their FTE's to another team (as a permanent arrangement) to meet the overall needs of the Council – and this shift has taken place
- Individual leaders report improved self-control and stress, and an improved ability to manage distractions and interruptions
- Individuals leaders are encouraging, and expecting their staff to think more for themselves and to take appropriate action when needed

SLG Participant comments – Three months after the initial retreat

1. What have you learned about leadership?

- That being a closed book is not useful for those around me – working alone doesn't work
- There is great value in having a team around you that you trust, and that you can consult to assist you with your leadership challenges
- It's not about 'my patch' it's about 'our patch'
- There is no one-way to handle situations, there is only the right way for that unique person and circumstance
- Great leadership is about developing tolerance, and understanding humans so you have the confidence to take action
- Our job is to make sure the right people are on the train

2. Who are you as a team that you weren't before?

- I feel the SLG has developed into a more cohesive team than prior to the commencement of the journey.
- We are powerful. We are united. We are strong.
- I am less guarded as a Team member in the SLG than I used to be. I provide input and suggestions without the fear of being judged or pushed to the side. I feel that my opinions are respected and that I am a pro-active team member who is willing to participate effectively to produce great outcomes.
- Any evidence of the existence of silos are well and truly behind us. They've been Fukushima'd.



- We now need to focus on getting the SSG (next level of leaders) to buy in to the “One Council” ethos boots and all.

3. What specific new behaviours does your team now exhibit that are useful and beneficial for you as leaders of the Council?

- We trust each other more and definitely engage in productive conflict more than ever before without fear of affecting relationships. I feel that all members of the SLG team have a new level of confidence in knowing that their decisions are supported by the group and all concerns can be discussed openly and freely.
- We are open to each other. We care for each other.
- Trust and an understanding that we are not silos but one team. We all have a better understanding of the positives and negatives faced by each SLG member and together we discuss issues openly and honestly and produce great outcomes. We also enjoy each other’s company. We now have a support network where we feel “safe” to discuss issues and matters and hopefully gain some excellent results for the organisation.
- Everybody is comfortable expressing their opinions without fear of ridicule which I think is an indicator of trust and the fact that we feel comfortable with each other.

4. What have you loved most about this journey, what has it done for you personally in your leadership journey, and possibly in your personal life as well?

- Personally, I have developed several management skills including the ability to have better conversations with other members of the SLG, all staff and customers, the ability to say no and better delegation skills. I try to control my “gold” traits and not over-evaluate things but I must admit that having an engineering background and auditors breathing down my neck, I do tend to lose focus at times and drift off into my old ways. The difference is that I can identify this and get back on track quickly.





- We laugh together. I think I am far more attuned to people's spoken words and behaviours.
- I have always been a person who encourages and empowers her staff, friends and family to achieve great things. This training has allowed me to do this more effectively rather than by accident! I have been able to recognise the positives of my leadership style and also enhance the areas where I was "out of my comfort zone" and push forward for better results. My biggest journey is still time frames... I am still too soft when it comes to time frames that are not met and I need to make the consequences greater for staff not achieving these targets or goals. I need to provide better directions and set firm goals and targets. I need to SET THE FOCUS better.
- I think it's good to get an assessment of where you are at as a leader individually and as a team collectively. Endeavour should never stop growing

5. What has surprised you most about this journey?

- I am surprised how much the team has grown in the last few months. Just how much time I can save by trusting my team members and letting them solve their own problems (this has been more successful than I expected).
- The start was difficult and quite confronting. I'm now surprised at how easy it is.
- How easy it was for me to recognise what to do and understand that I was doing "some" of it. I just had to have the journey identified for me and some direction and understanding of the Leadership style to put it into practice better. As leaders I feel we all do this to some extent I just didn't realise what it was and how I could do it better. It's like stepping back and having a look at yourself and critiquing your own performance.
- The results, both personally and as a team. You have to let go and trust which doesn't come easy sometimes.

(Produced with the permission of the CEO, Burdekin Shire Council – 2015)



CEO reference

MICHELLE LOCH TESTIMONIAL PROVIDED BY BURDEKIN SHIRE COUNCIL

As Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for Burdekin Shire Council (BSC) I undertook an organisational restructure earlier this year which not only highlighted but exposed a significant deficiency in the attention that had been paid to the professional development of the senior management ranks at BSC.

I recently attended the LGMA's state conference at the Bunya Mountains and as part of that participated in a session conducted by Michelle Loch founder of Unlocked Potential. During that session I was totally impressed with her professionalism, knowledge of neuroscience and the vital role it plays in rewiring how we think about leadership, self management, the conversations we have and how we interact with people in our working lives.

Immediately upon my return to the Burdekin I started planning for how I could introduce my senior leadership team to the concepts I had just been exposed to and the enormous value it would add to their respective skill sets.

I organised a Retreat with the Senior Leadership Group (SLG) over 2.5 days which was conducted by Michelle and I can say unequivocally that the outcomes have exceeded my expectations to the point where I have committed to 1 full day for the SLG in the first half of 2015 and a follow up retreat in the second half of 2015.

I have also committed to a 2.5 day workshop with the next level of managers directly under the SLG so the lessons learnt filter down through the entire organisation and all of the management team are growing together, leading by example and performance managing their teams in a positive and proactive manner which has never occurred previously.

The way in which the SLG has come together as a single unit or team, the enthusiasm they are bringing to their roles and teams, the simple but effective leaderships skills they have adopted and implemented and the way they can now understand how humans are wired and respond accordingly is amazing.

Michelle has been a breath of fresh air to our organisation and I would have no hesitation in recommending her to any organisation looking to positively impact on the way their management performs and teams respond.

Yours sincerely,

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About the Author

Nominated for two Telstra Women's Business Awards – 2014 and 2015 - Michelle works with individuals and organisations to REWIRE their leadership approach to meet the needs and demands of modern humans and the modern world!

She is an expert in Neuroleadership, an emerging field of study that takes the latest in social cognitive neuroscience and applies it in a practical way to the art of leadership.

Michelle is all about 'making leadership EASIER'.

She does that by working with organisations to create massive energy shifts throughout all levels of the organisation, and educating leaders on how to self-lead, and lead others in a way that frees up time, and lifts productivity! And who couldn't benefit from that!

Michelle's clients describe her as... passionate, practical, and professional...and her programs as 'transformational'!

Michelle studied under, and then worked for Dr David Rock, the founder of the US based Neuroleadership Institute. She is a PCC Qualified Coach with the International Coach Federation, a Distinction qualified Mind Gym Coach, holds a Bachelors Degree in Education, Diploma in Teaching, and a Certificate of Neuroleadership.





Find out more...

To find out how Michelle helps organisations and individuals REWIRE from amateur to professional leadership, make contact on +61 412 380 124 or michelle@unlocked.com

To book a 15 minute free consultation with Michelle to discuss how Michelle's program can help your team to 'professionalise', visit this link www.meetme.so/meetingwithMichelleLoch

To sign up to receive Michelle's Weekly Leadership Blog and Newsletter, visit www.michelleloch.com

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