

Horticulture Leaders - Across Horticulture Leadership Training - 2013 and 2014 programs

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Strategic Business Development Pty Ltd

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Summary

The project was focused on the development of business and leadership skills in Horticulture leaders. It was funded by Horticulture Australia Limited ("HAL") and was given the public working title: "*Horticulture – the Next Generation Program*" by the Project Steering Committee to improve branding and recognition.

The Program commenced in 2012 with 50 Leaders and was funded again in 2013 and 2014. 20 Leaders participated in the 2013 Program and an additional 25 Leaders in 2014. This was 5 more participants than originally agreed and was funded by efficiency improvements within the Project Team.

The Project was developed around the need to ensure the long term viability of Australian horticulture, which is partially dependent upon the availability of quality leadership at both and industry wide and individual business levels.

Many of the industries represented by HAL have strategic plans that highlight the need for enhanced and continued leadership development. However, some industries lack the resources to develop and provide their own training programs, which raised the need for funding of an Across Horticulture Leadership Training Project.

The objectives of the project were to:

- Improve the ability of our leaders to lead and guide the Industry;
- Stimulate industry dialogue and encourage innovative thinking;
- Encourage the next generation of industry leaders to improve industry & business succession;
- Improve strategic thinking, planning and problem solving at an industry and business level;
- Provide a model for effective leadership development in other sectors.

In order to meet these objectives, Strategic Business Development, and project partners, Mindshop International, created a leadership program around a number of key elements:

- Face-to-face Training Workshops
- On-line Training Courses
- Executive Coaching Support
- Webinars on selected topics
- Website, Blog and Social Media platforms

Horticulture – the Next Generation has continued to build in activity and industry engagement through an extension of the access period for online industry training and through increased social media and webinar activity.

Since 2012 the Program has directly engaged with over 310 industry leaders through workshops and on-line training. Webinars are well supported and average 120 views per webinar session. Over 2014, social media engagement has increased significantly with participation rates increasing across all platforms to 1371 users.

Keywords

Leadership; horticulture; training; business; skills; management; industry;

Introduction

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- Website, Blog and Social Media platforms

The intent was to focus the program around a small group of industry leaders by providing them with intensive training and support services but to also extend the program to the wider horticulture industry by offering access to training webinars, an informative website, social media platforms and online training opportunities.

The project established a dedicated website www.horticulture-nextgeneration.com.au, a YouTube Channel, Facebook page, Twitter feed and LinkedIn Discussion Group. Regular webinars and newsletters are being sent from the website. In 2013, the website was reformatted to be viewable on tablet and mobile devices to improve access.

Methodology

The annual process for delivering the Horticulture – the Next Generation Program has been divided into phases:

A. Workshop Program:

- Promotion and Participant Selection
- Understanding participant needs
- Program Development
- Logistics and initial communication
- Workshop Delivery and Evaluation
- Follow up and Support

B. Free online Training:

- Promotion and Participant Selection
- Program Delivery

Each phase is addressed below.

A. WORKSHOP PROGRAM

Promotion and Participant Selection

The program recruited Business Leaders from across Australian horticulture to be involved in this program. Timeframes to initiate the program, communicate to Industry CEOs and IDOs, recruit and select interested individuals were short if participating leaders were to be given time to accept, book travel and accommodation for the first workshop.

The promotional program involved:

- Members of the Project Steering Committee communicating with Industry CEOs, IDOs and Industry members
- Circulation of a flier to all Industry CEOs and IDOs by HAL (example flier shown)
- Fliers and press releases sent to major Industry publications, websites and magazines
- Circulation of the flier through mailing lists, social media contacts and contact lists developed by the Project Leader



Are you a business leader within the Australian Horticulture Industry?

- Applications now open for HAL funded leadership program, **Horticulture – The Next Generation**
- 25 places available to business leaders from across the industry

[Click here for feedback from previous participants](#)

SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS WILL RECEIVE:

- 4 full days of face-to-face leadership and business development training;
- Networking and best practice sharing opportunities with fellow industry leaders;
- Access to a wealth of web based support tools, webinars and training programs;
- Experienced one-to-one coaching support.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM
Horticulture – the Next Generation is a tailored leadership development program that provides hands on practical tools and concepts for growing and building your business. Content is tailored to meet the specific needs of participants and covers areas such as business planning, problems solving, practical sales and marketing, leadership, time management and decision making. There course includes two face to face workshops in Brisbane and Melbourne and an online learning component.

WHO SHOULD APPLY?
Business owners and managers of levy paying businesses who have responsibility for managing staff, are looking to grow their business and have a passion for the industry and its future are encouraged to apply. Additional places are available for businesses in the horticultural supply chain, however these applicants will be required to fully fund their involvement and will be considered on a merit basis.
[Contact Russell Cummings for more information.](#)

DON'T MISS THIS UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY – APPLY NOW

To apply, submit an application form by 5pm 30 April 2014.
Click here to download form.

Applicants will be shortlisted based on the quality of their application and reviewed by an Industry Reference Group. Successful applicants will be notified in mid-May 2014.

PARTICIPANTS MUST BE AVAILABLE FOR THE FOLLOWING DATES AND LOCATIONS FOR THE 2014 PROGRAM.

1st Workshop: July 7 - 8, 2014 Brisbane, Stamford Plaza	2nd Workshop: October 13 - 14, 2014 Melbourne, Punhill Hotel
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Note: Travel and accommodation costs will not be covered as part of the program.

ANY QUESTIONS?
Contact [Russell Cummings](#), Project Leader or [Sharyn Casey](#), HAL portfolio manager. [Click here to apply](#)

www.horticulture-nextgeneration.com.au

Applications Close: 5:00 PM, 30th April 2014

Prospective participants were asked to respond to a dedicated website with an online application form. After the closing date, all applications were collated and tested for completeness. Applicants that failed to address key selection criteria were excluded from the evaluation process.

Applicants were assessed against key criteria:

- Leadership potential
- Previous leadership experience
- Understanding of key industry issues and opportunities
- Quality of written response.

36 people registered interest in the 2014 Program and were assessed by the Selection Panel.

In 2014, 25 Leaders from a range of industries were selected on a merit-based system by an industry-led panel from across horticulture. 20 Leaders were selected in 2013.

Understanding Participant Needs

Successful applicants were surveyed to determine group needs. The survey was online and is found at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RHJ69MN>.

Individual phone interviews with all applicants prior to the Workshop highlighted key areas of emphasis that were incorporated into the Workshop program.

Program Development

Based on feedback from the previous year and the Training Needs Analysis, the "Base Program" was modified slightly to meet emerging participant needs, wherever possible.

For example: for the 2013 and 2014 Program, the module on Negotiation Skills was swapped for a session on Simple Financial Management Skills. Similarly, the session on Personal Productivity was expanded based on prior year feedback.

Logistics and Communication

Workshop Venues were booked prior to promotion of the annual program so that participants could book travel and accommodation with certainty. Successful participants were sent a welcome email with relevant information for both events.

Communication between workshops was a combination of individual and group emails supplemented with a tailored newsletter.

Delivery - Face-to-face Training Workshops

The project directly engaged 45 leaders from across a range of Horticultural industries in 2013 and 2014. In 2014, supply chain partners and Program Alumni were invited to attend on a User Pay's basis – 3 people accepted the offer.

Leaders were involved in 2-Day training workshops in Brisbane in July/August with a second 2-day workshop held in Melbourne in October.

The aim of the workshops was to provide leaders with a range of business tools and processes that would improve their ability to manage and lead their businesses and industry groups. There was also a focus on introducing new concepts and ideas that would change existing paradigms around business and industry.

The Workshop program was crafted based on a Training Needs Analysis that identified the top 3 issues of the 45 leaders as being:

- Planning and strategic thinking ability
- Financial Management Skills
- Problem Solving and Decision Making Skills

Workshops were evaluated with surveys.

Follow-up and Support

One Page Plans developed by each workshop participant were uploaded to the private Coaching Area on the Mindshop Resource Centre for future review and discussion.

Participants were encouraged to utilise the individual coaching support provided via phone and/or video conferencing.

A custom on-line training course recapping key elements of the Workshop was developed and made available to all participants, in addition, to a 90-minute Recap Webinar following each workshop.

B. FREE ONLINE TRAINING

Promotion and Participant Selection

The free Online Training program was promoted via fliers to CEOs of Horticulture organisations, IDOs, blog articles and mail outs to the newsletter mailing list. Links were also regularly promoted on social media platforms and during free webinars.

Applicants complete a simple online registration form providing contact information and stating whether they are engaged by a HAL member organisation that contributes to the levy program – see <http://www.horticulture-nextgeneration.com.au/training>.

Applicant details are checked (using a Google and/or LinkedIn search) to see if they are real, Australian horticultural businesses. Applicants that are not eligible are notified via email. Where eligibility is unclear, applicants are contacted and asked to provide more details and/or referred to the HAL Program Manager for further clarification.

Delivery of Online Training

Successful applicants are provided a link to access their selected course.

The courses are delivered via the Mindshop Resource Centre.

Outputs

Program Outputs were to:

- Deliver 2 x Workshops per program with 20 attendees – 40 attendees over 2 years
- Offer Industry access to 100 online Training Packages per annum
- Provide ongoing coaching support and training via an online Resource Centre
- Deliver a series of webinars, videos and blog articles on a range of business and leadership topics promoted via social media platforms and newsletters

Table 1 below highlights outputs from the Project.

Program Element	2012 Program	2013 Program	2014 Program	TOTAL
Workshop Program Participants	50	20	25	95
External Workshop Participants			3	3
Online Training Participants	62	78	72	212
Website Hits - since July 18, 2013		4,189	11,798	15,987
Newsletter Registrations	165	339	539	1,043
Webinars	6	6	14	26
Webinar registrations	No data	293	645	938
Webinar attendees	No data	120	233	353
Recorded webinar views	189	237	908	1,334
LinkedIn Discussion Group Members	100	232	303	303
Facebook Likes	48	121	152	152
Twitter Followers	89	273	347	347
YouTube Videos (Excl. Webinars)	12	7	25	44
Total YouTube Views	636	1,098	1,761	3,495

Table 1: Program outputs 2012 to 2014

Face-to-face Training Workshops

The Program engaged 45 leaders from across a range of Horticultural industries – 20 and 25 participants in 2013 and 2014, respectively. Supply Chain partners and Program Alumni were invited to attend on a User Pay's basis – 3 people accepted the offer in 2014.

2-day training workshops were held in Brisbane (July/August) and Melbourne (October) for each program.

The aim of the workshops was to provide leaders with a range of business tools and processes that would improve their ability to manage and lead their businesses and industry groups. There was also a focus on introducing new concepts and ideas that would change existing paradigms around business and industry.

The Workshop program was crafted based on a Training Needs Analysis that identified the top 3 issues of the leaders as being:

- Planning and strategic thinking ability
- Financial Management Skills
- Problem Solving and Decision Making Skills

Workshop #1

The initial workshop was developed as a "*foundation session*" to ensure that leaders were trained in a series of key tools that would form "building blocks" for the second workshop. These building blocks focused on essential tools for: planning, problem solving, basic communication, marketing, personal productivity and strategy development.

Keynote Speakers, Alex Livingstone (Growcom CEO) and Jolyon Burnett, CEO at Macadamias Australia, provided an opening address for the Leaders in 2013 and 2014, respectively, highlighting the importance of effective leadership in our industries.

Program Alumni: Darren Woods, Renee Holbrook, Chris Gill and Sue Allen addressed the Leaders on evening of Day #1 on the benefits and insights they gained from implementing the program in their businesses.

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Figure 1: Workbook Table of Contents – Workshop #1

Topics covered in 2014 Workshop #1 included:

- Key management frameworks to drive business success
- Understanding the Why? (purpose) of your business or organisation
- Powerful problem solving techniques to solve any issue
- Gaining greater clarity for your business, personal or industry vision
- Identifying the key elements to achieve 'change' as a leader
- Understanding your competitive advantage in today's market
- Ranking your key issues/opportunities for 2014
- Time management and personal productivity
- Developing innovative strategies to suit future market conditions
- How to implement effective strategies as a leader
- Coaching and developing your teams
- The One Page Plan: how to use it personally and in business
- A new model for driving change

There were only minor changes in content between 2013 and 2014.

All participants developed a One Page Plan focused on their business, industry or personal situation. All plans were photographed and uploaded to a confidential online coaching area to improve accountability.

Participants were provided with a HAL-branded workshop binder, agendas and workshop manual.

The workshop manual cover and Table of Contents provided to all attendees are presented below.

Workshop #2

As in previous years, this workshop was developed as a more focused "technical" session designed to engage leaders in a range of more specialised business and leadership topics. It was built on the tools and techniques covered in Workshop #1.

Topics covered in 2014 Workshop #2, included:

- Key industry issues and challenges
- Understanding the Change Success Model
- Driving efficiencies across your business
- Profit Improvement & Waste Reduction Process
- Marketing "sweet spots" in horticulture
- Practical ways to get maximum leverage from social media and other technologies
- Simple Financial Management and Analysis
- Understanding the Du Pont Employee Retention Model
- How to leverage social media in your business
- Personal Productivity – maintaining your energy levels and life balance
- Putting the 'sizzle' back into your ability to sell your horticultural products & services
- Improving your decision making ability
- Refining your One Page Plan for 2013

Changes to the 2014 Program were minor. A session on a new Change Success Model was the major inclusion.

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Figure 2: Table of Contents for Workshop Manual #2 - 2014

Elements of this workshop were delivered by additional presenters:

- Ray Johnstone, HAL Director, and John Dollison, CEO APAL, addressed the Leadership Group on “Key Leadership Challenges” in 2013 and 2014, respectively. The talks were very well-received.
- James Atkins from Vantage Marketing delivered sessions on Product Marketing
- Mike Boyle from Banjar Group presented on Sales Processes and Strategies
- Russell Cummings delivered the remainder of the program for Workshops #1 and #2

Participants were provided with workshop manuals.

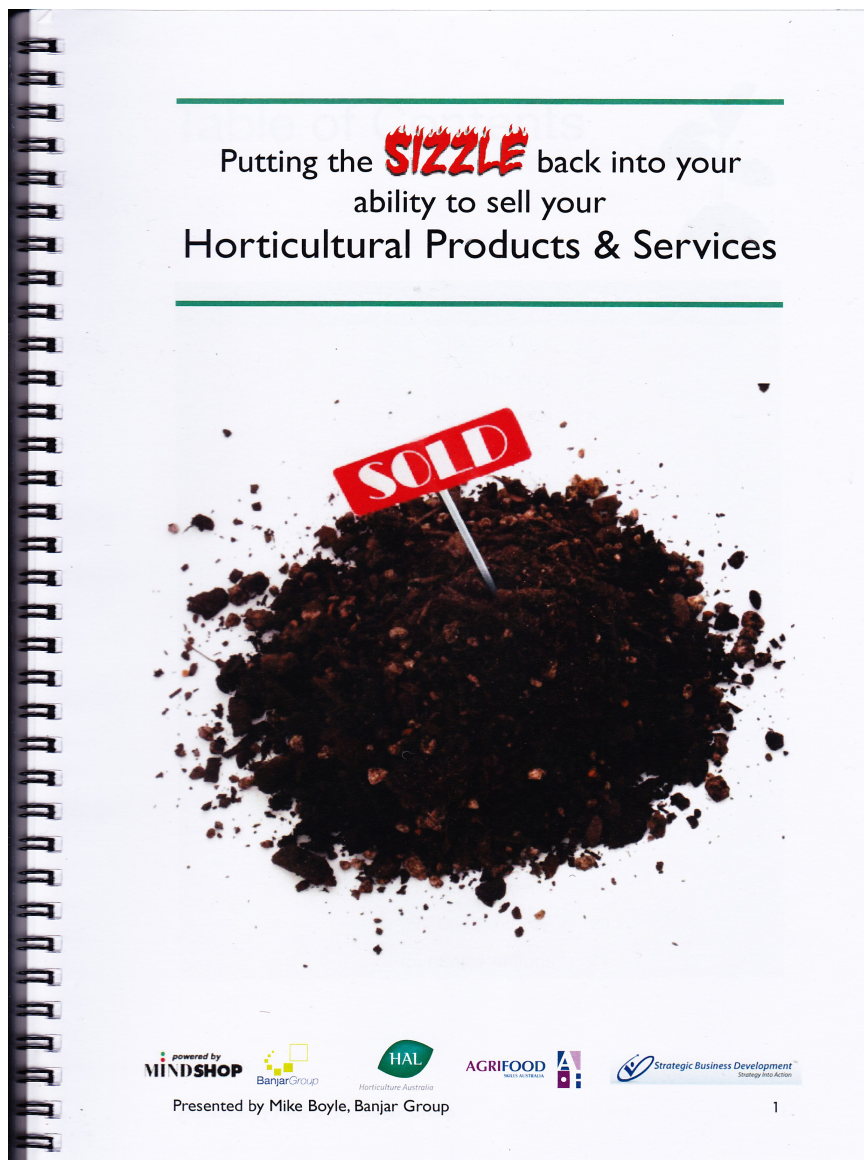


Figure 3: Workbook Cover – Banjar Group

Online Resource Centre & Training Courses

Access to a range of online resources was an integral part of the *Horticulture – the Next Generation Program*. Leaders were given unrestricted, 24/7 access to the Mindshop Business Leaders Resource Centre for the duration of the Program.

This online resource centre included:

- 9 online Training Programs;
- Over 150 Business tools – each with video instruction, templates and tools;
- More than 20 diagnostic programs across a range of business areas;
- A Private Planning Area for confidential communication with their Coach; and
- Access to templates, spreadsheets, documents and presentations on a range of business topics.

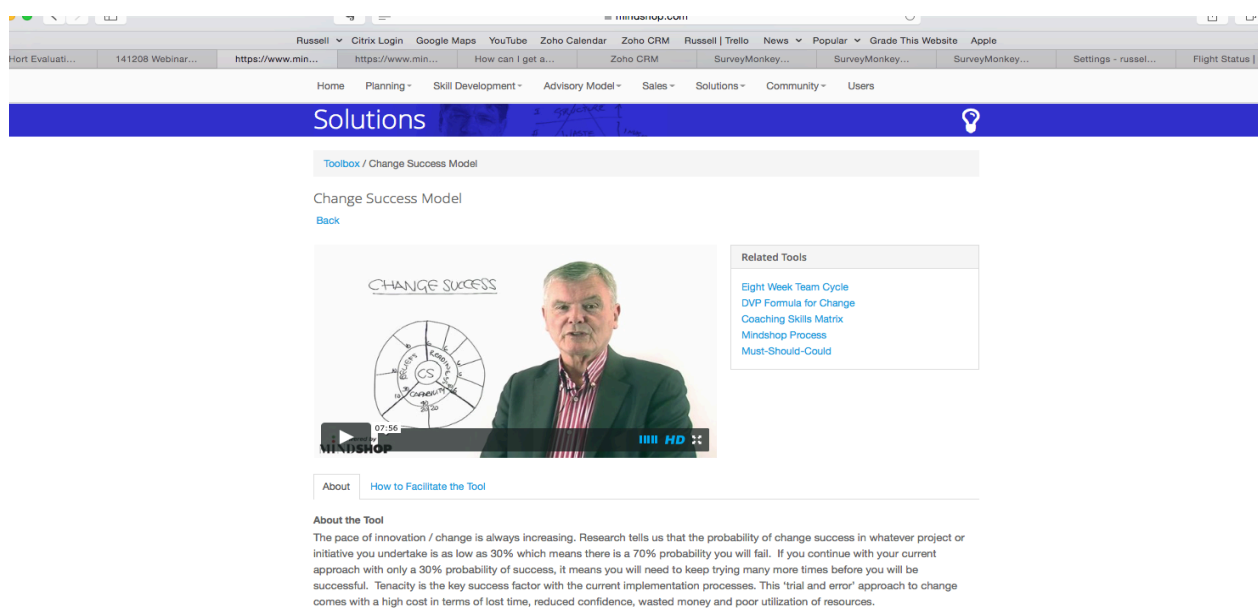


Figure 4: Sample screenshot from the Resource Centre

Leaders were encouraged to make use of the Mindshop Resource Centre and were constantly referred to it with hyperlinks to specific resources. Leaders were also encouraged to complete at least 2 of the online training programs as part of their course.

The registration page for the online training program is shown below to illustrate the courses available to leaders (see Figure 5).

Executive Coaching Support

All leaders were offered access to experienced Executive Coach, Russell Cummings, for the duration of the program. Coaching support was provided in a variety of formats: 1-on-1 meetings, video conferences, telephone calls and regular e-newsletters.

Figure 5: Online Course Topics

Courses:

The following courses are available for online learning. Click on the course icon for more information.

 Business Improvement COURSE	 Consulting Facilitation COURSE
Course Overview	Course Overview
 Continuous Improvement COURSE	 Leadership Development COURSE
Course Overview	Course Overview
 Marketing & Sales COURSE	 Personal Improvement COURSE
Course Overview	Course Overview
 Self Confidence COURSE	 Team Development COURSE
Course Overview	Course Overview
 Sales Performance COURSE	 Problem Solving COURSE
Course Overview	Course Overview

Website

As part of the project, the team created a dedicated website – <http://www.horticulture-nextgeneration.com.au> – to build a community around the leadership in horticulture.

The website was the core communication channel for the project with the wider horticultural community.

The website publishes regular newsletters and updates on the program and now has 539 people registered to receive the newsletter.

In addition to information about the program, we also publish regular blog articles on business and leadership topics, most with supporting videos (hosted on YouTube).

The site also includes: recommended reading lists, smartphone apps and videos.

Our webinar recordings and registration forms are also hosted here.

Industry leaders were also able to register for online training programs via the website.

Leaders were able to access a free online Business Diagnostic to give them direct feedback on the key issues in their business. This service is available to all of industry via the website.

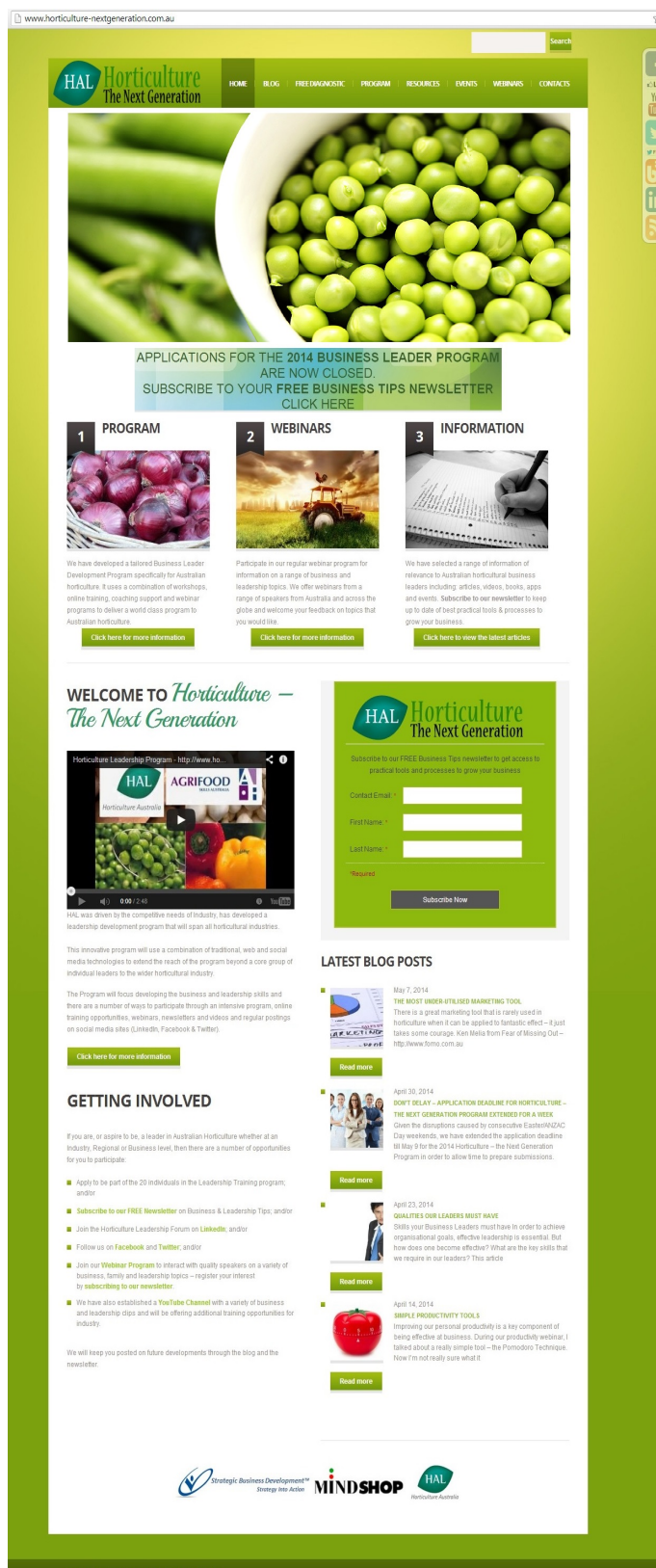


Figure 6: Website Homepage

Screenshots of selected webpages are shown below.

Figure 7: Website - example pages



Social Media

In addition to the website, the Project Team established “sites” on a number of social media platforms including: LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

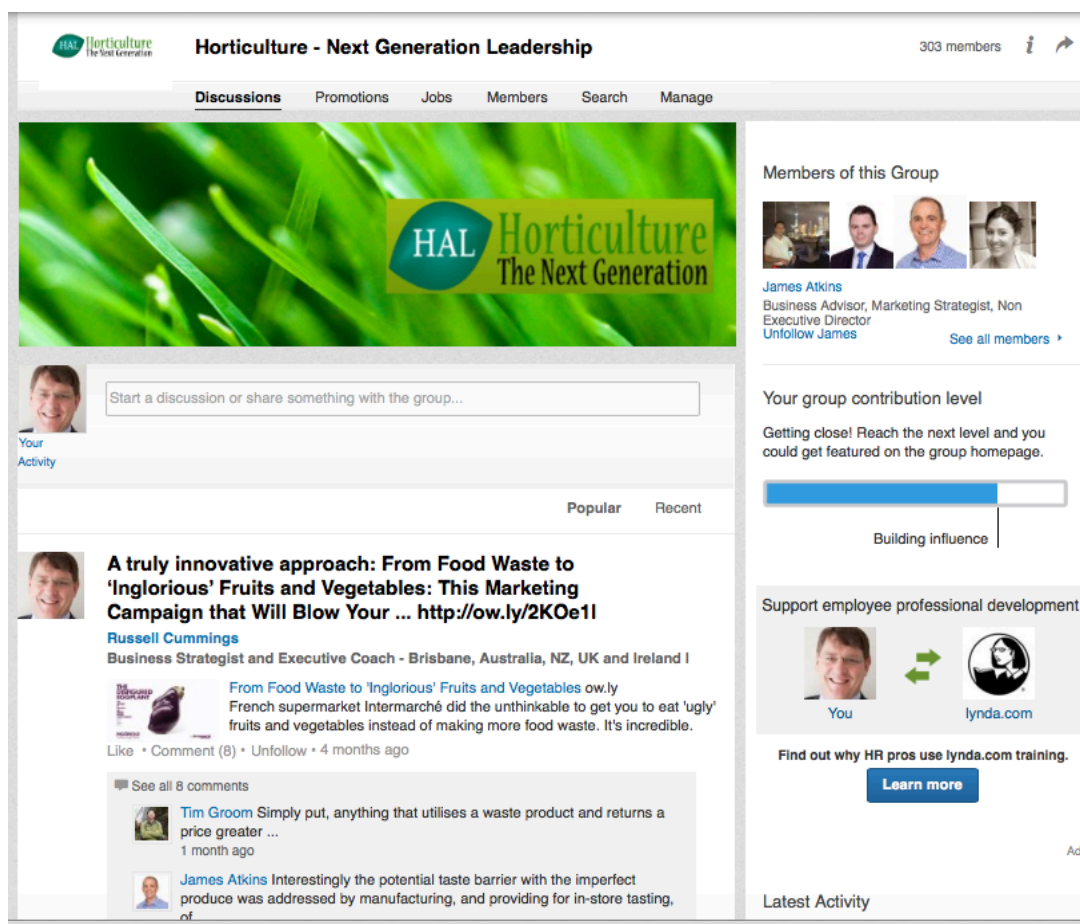


Figure 8: Screenshot from the LinkedIn Discussion Group

LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) is primarily a Business-2-Business social media site and is the predominant site in Australia with a large proportion of the business community engaged.

The Project Team established a dedicated Discussion Forum for Horticulture leaders to facilitate improved discussion at an industry level called: “*Horticulture – Next Generation Leadership*”. We currently have 302 members.

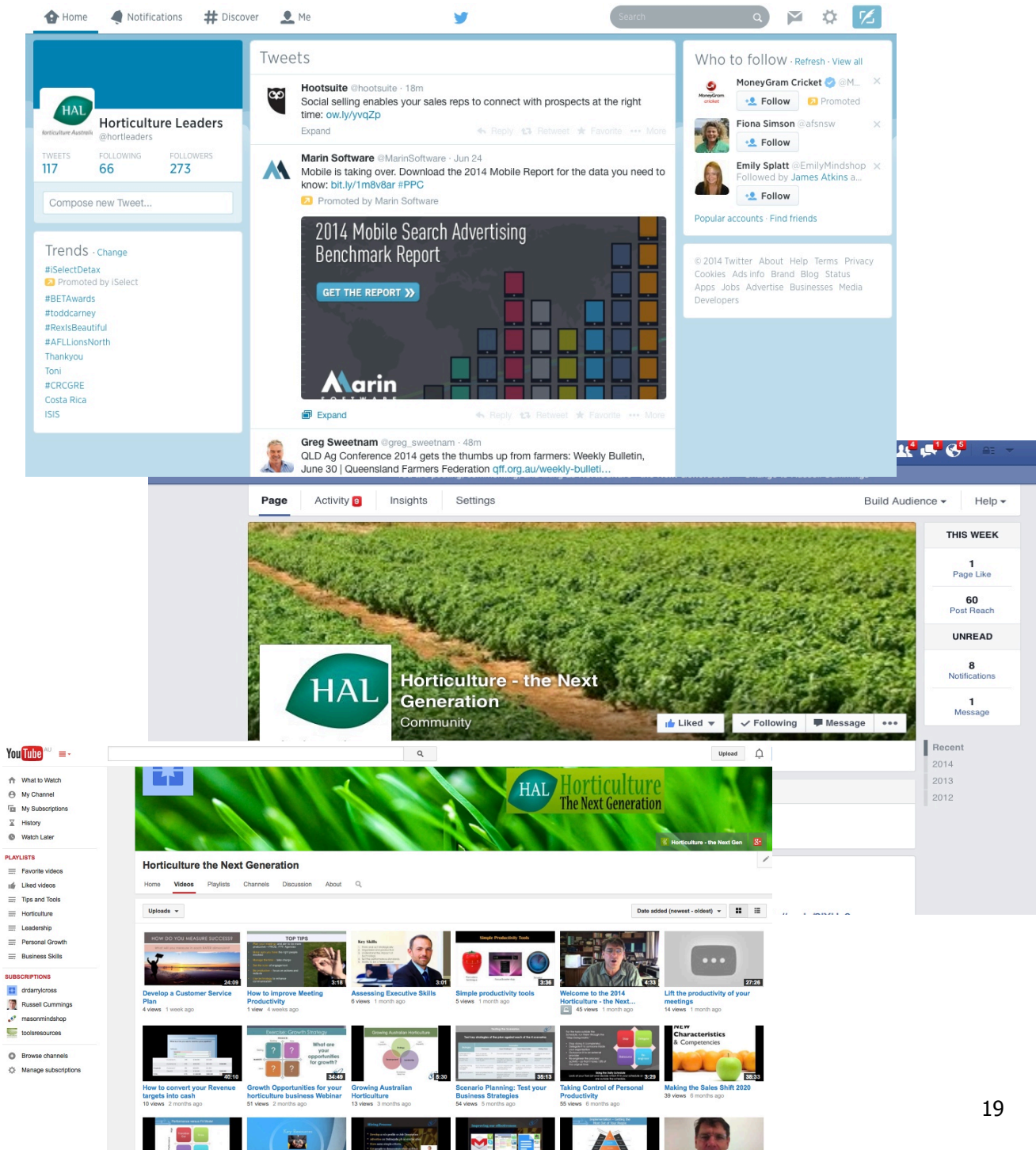
Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/HorticultureNextGeneration>) is largely a Business-2-Consumer social platform and a page was established for the project to communicate with members of the horticulture industry who see this as their primary social media platform. The FB page currently has 152 likes.

Twitter (<http://www.twitter.com/hortleaders>) is a short blogging platform where posts are limited to 140 characters in length. It was used as a secondary distribution channel for project information and news. We currently have 347 Twitter followers.

YouTube is a video format social media platform (and the second largest search engine). Where possible, the Project Team supported blog articles and information with video to improve access. All webinar recordings were also stored on YouTube. The Project Team established a dedicated YouTube Channel – “*Horticulture – the Next Generation*” at <http://www.youtube.com/user/HortNextGen?feature=mhee>. We currently have 30 subscribers and over 3400 views.

Screenshots of Twitter, Facebook and Youtube pages for the project are shown below.

Figure 9: Screenshots from Twitter, Facebook and YouTube Pages



Webinars

Webinars are seminars delivered over the internet. They usually involve a slide presentation to provide the audience visual cues and a live presenter providing audio. Participants log on using specialized (web-based) software and are able to see and listen to the presentation and interact with the presenter and other webinar participants.

The Webinar program has been outlined below.

Topic	Presenter	Date
Productivity Improvement Webinar – Time Management	Russell Cummings	25 October 2012
Social Media in Business	Fergal Coleman	8 November 2012
Positive Psychology & Leadership: What can we learn?	Dr. Daryl Cross	20 November 2012
Recap Session 2012 – Workshop #2	Russell Cummings	4 December 2012
Industry Development Webinar	Jenny Margetts	7 December 2012
Recap Session 2013 – Workshop #1	Russell Cummings	27 September 2013
Making the Best Use of Virtual Assistants	Russell Cummings	13 November 2013
Creating Innovative Business Models Webinar	Russell Cummings	27 November 2013
Making the Sales Shift 2020	Mike Boyle	4 December 2013
Scenario Planning: Test Your Business Strategies	Russell Cummings	23 January 2014
Growth Opportunities for your Horticulture Business	Russell Cummings	7 April 2014
How to Convert your Revenue Targets into Cash	Russell Cummings	30 April 2014
Lift the Productivity of your Meetings	Russell Cummings	27 May 2014
Develop a Customer Service Plan	Russell Cummings	19 June 2014
Finding Value in your Value Proposition	James Atkins	8 July 2014
Horticulture – the Next Generation Leaders Workshop #1 2014	Russell Cummings	30 July 2014
Execution v Strategy	James Atkins	21 October 2014
Horticulture – the Next Generation 2014 – Melbourne Workshop Recap	Russell Cummings	22 October 2014
Creating your Personal Brand	Russell Cummings	6 November 2014
Top 5 Trends in Australian Horticulture	Russell Cummings	2 December 2014
Creating Employee Passion for the Brand and the Customer	Jim Parry	11 December 2014

All webinars were recorded and hosted on the project's YouTube Channel with direct links from the Webinar page on the website. Webinar links were also promoted via the e-newsletter and social media posts. You can find webinars at: <http://horticulture-nextgeneration.com.au/webinars/>

Industry Online Training Courses

As part of the program, Mindshop offered free access to online training resources for an additional 100 industry leaders (in addition to the 20 engaged in workshops). These resources were offered as a "value add" to the project at no additional cost to HAL.

The training offer was promoted to industry via the project website, e-newsletters, social media posts and fliers distributed to industry CEOs and IDOs.

In both years, the online program was under-subscribed with 78 participants in 2013 and 71 participants registered in 2014 (although applications are still open till 19 December 2014).

Outcomes

The Project delivered the Workshop program to 45 Business Leaders - 5 more than the original target of 40 leaders. This was done at no additional cost to Industry.

Feedback from Workshop participants in all years was very positive and consistent. When asked for feedback on the annual program, participants were extremely pleased with the course and level of support provided. The Workshop Program is the "intensive" training part of *Horticulture – the Next Generation* and is where participants are fully immersed in the Program. Feedback on individual Workshops in each year has been provided in previous Milestone Reports.

In developing the program, the Steering Committee agreed that there would be many different "journeys" for course participants with some people focusing on either personal, business, industry growth or a combination of all three.

When 2013 and 2014 survey data was combined, feedback on the program's impact on their business was strong with 85% of leaders rating the program 8/10 or better while 100% rated the program 7/10 or better for personal impact. Industry impact was slightly lower with 82% of participants rating the program 7/10 or better for its impact on their industry.

Similar trends continued when surveyed about individual program elements including: workshops, applicability of the program to my situation, 1-on-1 coaching support, the online Mindshop Resource Centre and overall support throughout the Program. In most cases, more than 85% of respondents rated the Program at 7/10 or better.

Webinars and the website were rated lower by some participants although no-one rated any element below average.

Net Promoter Scores

The Net Promoter Score, or NPS®, is based on the fundamental perspective that every organisation's customers can be divided into three categories: Promoters, Passives, and Detractors. By asking one simple question — "*How likely is it that you would recommend the Program to a friend or colleague?*" — you can track these groups and get a clear measure of the Program's performance through your customers' eyes.

Customers respond on a 0-to-10 point rating scale and are categorized as follows:

Promoters (score 9-10) are loyal enthusiasts who will keep buying and refer others, fueling growth.

Passives (score 7-8) are satisfied but unenthusiastic customers who are vulnerable to competitive offerings.

Detractors (score 0-6) are unhappy customers who can damage your brand and impede growth through negative word-of-mouth.

To calculate your NPS, take the percentage of customers who are Promoters and subtract the percentage who are Detractors. This is illustrated in Figure 10.

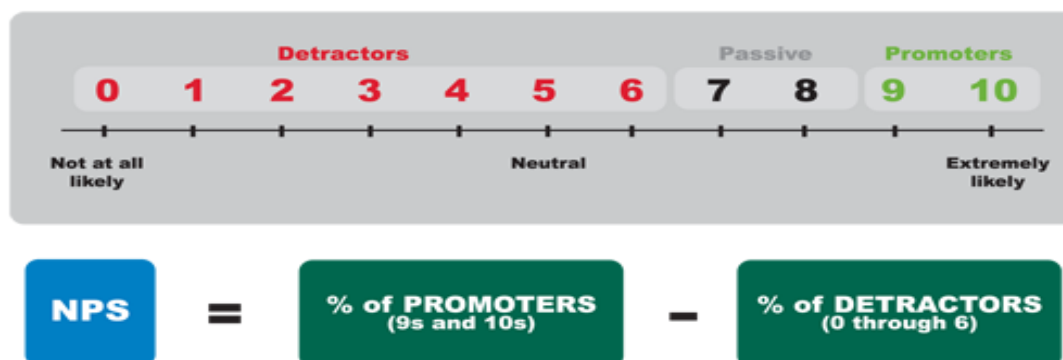


Figure 10: Calculating your Net Promoter Score (NPS)

The NPS Score for the combined 2013 and 2014 programs was 73.7%, which is an excellent result.

In evaluating these scores, any score over 50 is usually regarded as “exceptional” so a score of 74% indicates a very high level of satisfaction with the Program.

Coaching, Resource Centre and Online Training

As discussed above, leaders in the workshop program were given access to a comprehensive online resource centre to supplement workshop training, newsletters and executive coaching.

Coaching Support has been intensively utilised by 17 of the 45 participants with an additional 19 leaders making adhoc use of the service. When asked if they require additional support, a number of leaders indicated that they wanted to continue with more intensive coaching support. From the 2013 and 2014 Program, 4 Leaders have already invested in additional coaching support for themselves and their teams.

The Mindshop Resource Centre was patronised by 44 of the 45 program attendees, although with differing levels of interaction. The Resource Centre was upgraded in 2014 and the new platform doesn't allow detailed tracking of “hits” on the site.

In addition, 212 Industry Leaders have participated in the free online training programs since 2012.

Website

The *Horticulture – the Next Generation* website (www.horticulture-nextgeneration.com.au) was established as a central communication hub for industry leadership issues and information. The website was published in late July 2012 and completely revised on 18 July 2013.

The website's newsletter now has 539 subscribers and the project has published a monthly newsletter since September 2012. Feedback on the website and newsletters is strong as evidenced by the growth in subscriber numbers.

Figure 11: Copy of the May 2014 e-newsletter

Social Media

As discussed above, social media sites were established in key media platforms including: LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

LinkedIn: The LinkedIn Forum

(http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Horticulture-Next-Generation-Leadership-4529799?trk=myg_ugrp_ovr) now has 302 registered members from across Australian horticulture – an increase of 23% on last year.

Twitter: The “Hort Leaders” Twitter page

(<https://twitter.com/hortleaders>) currently has 347 Followers from all over the globe (up from 273 last year). Regular twitter postings have been used to disseminate information and guide people to resources like the project website and YouTube channel.

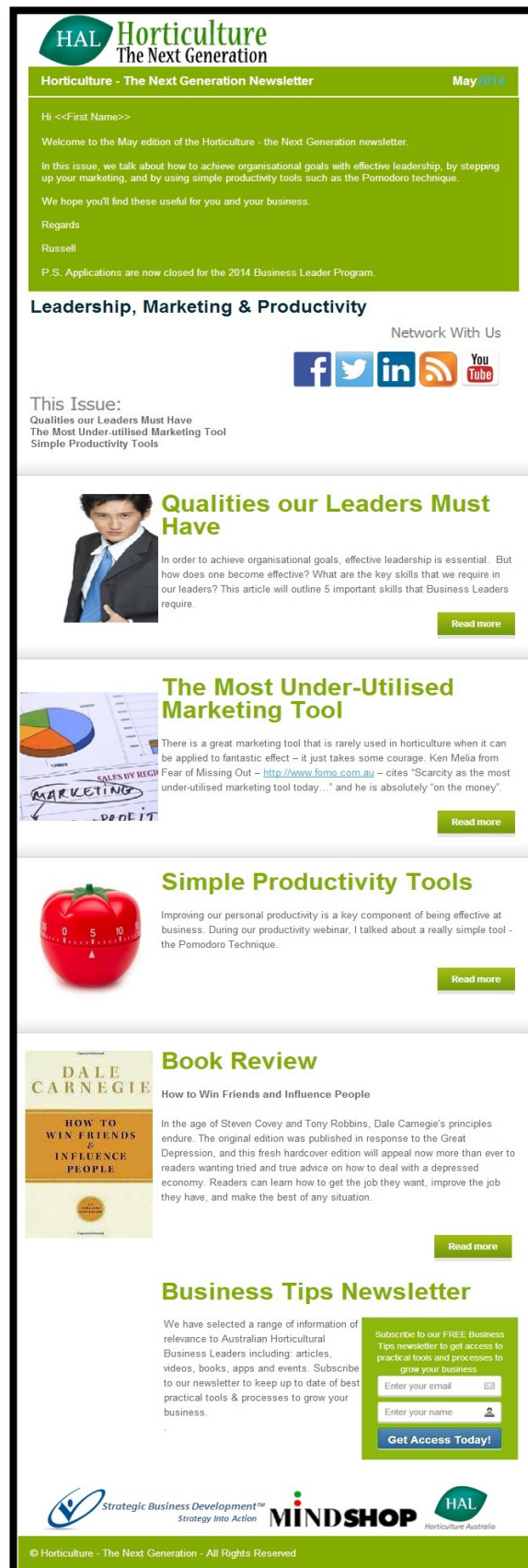
Facebook: The Facebook page

(<http://www.facebook.com/HorticultureNextGeneration>) for the project currently has 152 Likes – an increase from 121 last year. The Facebook postings mirror postings on LinkedIn and Twitter.

YouTube: The project YouTube Channel

(<https://www.youtube.com/user/HortNextGen>) has generated 3427 views. We now have 30 regular subscribers to the Hort YouTube channel. There are currently 44 videos on the site.

Overall, the social media interactions have increased the visibility of the “*Horticulture – the Next Generation Project*” to the horticulture community and extended the program beyond the leaders involved in the workshop sessions.



Webinar Program

In conjunction with the face-to-face training programs, a number of webinars were run to cover additional topics that were highlighted in the Training Needs Analysis.

These webinars were open to the wider industry and were promoted via the website and social media platforms. The program has delivered 26 webinars on a variety of business topics. Feedback has been excellent.

Registrations were positive averaging over 47 participants registering for each webinar with numbers increasing for later webinars.

Webinars were delivered over a 30-minute period to optimise information transfer and audience retention. Retention during live events was high.

Each webinar has been recorded and is posted on the website along with workshop materials and resources. Downloads have been strong with much higher numbers choosing to download the recording to those attending the "live" webinar.

There have been a total of 353 attendees (from 938 registrants – 37%) and 1334 webinar downloads to date for 20 webinars – 1687 total views – 84 views per webinar.

The lower attendance figures (attendees v registrants) reflect a common trend across industry where more and more people are "time-shifting" and absorbing content at a time and place that suits them.

Webinars are promoted through the Hort Next Gen newsletter list, SBD Newsletter list and social media platforms. Organisations like Growcom in QLD actively promote the events through newsletters and events.

HAL Horticulture
The Next Generation

HOME | BLOG | FREE DIAGNOSTIC | TRAINING | PROGRAM | RESOURCES | WEBINARS | CONTACTS

WEBINARS

Welcome to our Webinars page. As part of the Industry Leadership Program, we are conducting a series of webinars on a range of business and leadership topics. On this page, you'll see a list of new and earlier webinars that are open to all members of the Australian Horticulture Industry and are FREE to participate in.

NEXT WEBINAR

“Creating Employee Passion for the Brand and for the Customer”

Thursday, December 11, 2014 5:00 PM - 5:30 PM
Melbourne

This 30-minute webinar explores:

1. Examples of what passion for brand and customer looks like
2. 6 key principles for leaders to follow
3. Dealing with barriers

Jim Parry is a highly experienced senior brand marketer with 20+ years experience of leading teams and brand change programs across diverse cultures in European, International and Australian markets.

Click Here to Reserve Your Spot

WEBINAR PROGRAM 2014

As part of the Industry Leadership Program, we are conducting a series of Webinars on a range of business and leadership topics. These webinars are open to all members of the Australian Horticulture Industry and are FREE to participate. Not sure of what is involved in "attending" a webinar? - then see "What is a webinar?" below. The initial program is outlined below.

WHAT IS A WEBINAR?

A webinar is simply a "Seminar" that is delivered via the internet. A presenter will deliver their presentation using visual media and audio so that you can "see and hear" the presentation. It is like watching a movie on your computer except that you can ask questions and send messages to other participants and/or the presenter.

A Webinar is a cost-effective methodology for delivering quality content to a wide audience. It minimises travel costs and time and can be recorded for later viewing and recaps. It is easily shared with others who may be interested.

To participate all you need is a computer, a broadband internet connection and speakers (or a headset). You can even participate on your iPad or Smartphone by downloading the GoToMeeting App. You will need to register prior to the event and usually have to download a small piece of software to your computer - this is a simple process that happens automatically. If you are unable to participate on the day, then we will record the webinar and you can play it back as a video at a time that suits you.

RECENT WEBINARS

WHAT IS YOUR PERSONAL BRAND AND HOW DO YOU BUILD IT?

This short webinar explores the key elements of creating a "Personal Brand".

With more and more emphasis on the "individual" through social media, how you present yourself to the market (and internally within your business) is far more important than it has ever been.

Read more

STRATEGY → EXECUTION → SUCCESS

This interactive webinar explores approaches to setting up your strategy and plans for effective execution, and discover some simple tools and tips to help keep you accountable and improve the likelihood of achieving success.

Read more

DRIVING MARKETING & SALES ACTIVITIES IN YOUR BUSINESS

This short webinar looks at 3 key elements for building marketing and sales activities in your business.

- The 3 essential components of marketing and sales
- How to build a Sales Pipeline for your business
- How do "I" make it happen?

Read more

IMPROVING YOUR WORK/LIFE BALANCE

Many people struggle with the concept of Work/Life Balance. In this short webinar, Russell Cummings explores some of the key issues around Life Balance.

Read more

FINDING VALUE IN YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION

How do you deliver value to your customers? By starting with what the customer needs rather than what you want to sell! This webinar explores how to unlock value for your customers and outline a few tools and tips to help you do that.

Read more

Strategic Business Development™ Strategy Into Action | MINDSHOP | HAL Horticulture

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Figure 12: Screenshot of Webinar page from Project website

Horticulture – the Next Generation

Twenty young horticulture professionals took their skills to the next level last year via a unique, industry specific leadership program, Horticulture – The Next Generation. The program, funded by HAL as part of its Across Industry program, upskills participants via a series of face-to-face training workshops, business coaching and online resources such as webinars.

Jacinta Jowett, who runs Springhaven Meadows with her husband, Greville, was motivated to participate following opoene damage to the family property near Sundberg, Queensland in 2013.

"My aim was to learn new skills to grow the business and manage risk," said Ms Jowett.

Ms Jowett particularly appreciated the marketing and sales modules. "The one-page model is a great tool in helping to develop our current business model and identify any strategic gaps," said Ms Jowett.

Since participating in the program, the family business has had success developing new products and refining existing ones.

"Where other growers provide small, medium, or large bananas, we've made doing this by supplying 'little', 'queen' or 'king' sized fruit which comes together in a mixed box to form the 'royal family'. The business is also branching into selling value added products with increased shelf-life, and making use of the whole banana plant, including the leaves, blossoms and trunk, which is commonly used in Asian recipes.

"We've also been able to identify staff who want to move in different directions," said Ms Jowett, adding that the program has allowed them to identify specific staff training needs such as courses on English literacy.

They have launched a new website to showcase the business to consumers worldwide. "Through the website, we can develop a more personal relationship with potential buyers. It gives us a face out there in the digital world," said Ms Jowett.

Fellow participant Jarrod Casaretto became involved in the program to further develop the skills needed to grow the family business, Casaretto Almonds, Jarrod manages one of the two family almond orchards based in the Riverland, SA.

Through the program, Mr. Casaretto feels he has gained some new ways to review business strategies and maximise opportunities. "We're now looking forward to where we are going to be in five years time and it was great to review our strategy on getting there," he said.

Program leader, Russell Cummings from Strategic Business Development, feels that the networking opportunities provided through the program are highly valuable. "There is a wide cross section of industries involved, and we always encourage sharing ideas," said Mr Cummings. "Sometimes in business it's important to know who to speak to," he said, adding that many participants have also engaged with the guest speakers after the program.

"The webinars are also very popular," Mr Cummings added, with the number of participants more than doubling the reach of the program.

"Around 30 to 40 per cent of people watch the webinar multiple times," said Mr Cummings. In response to this demand, the 2014 program will include more intensive monthly webinars.

"We're also offering free online training for those that can't attend the face-to-face sessions, increasing the global reach of our speakers and developing more individually tailored online support," he said.

The program is open to an extra five participants in 2014, allowing 25 horticultural business leaders to be involved.

More information is available online at www.horticulture-nextgeneration.com.au



Figure 13: Newsletter Article – HortLink Winter 2014 – page 16

Alumni Feedback

Alumni from the 2012 and 2013 Programs were surveyed to determine the longer term impact of the Horticulture – the Next Generation - 26 of 70 Leaders (37%) responded to the survey.

The majority of feedback was very positive although there was one Outlier who rated the program poorly in all aspects but failed to identify themselves or leave any comments or feedback as to their scoring. It is possible that they scored the program incorrectly (-4 instead of +4) but the analysis has included their data as entered.

Overall impact of the program was strong, particularly on the personal and business elements. 90% of respondents rated the program at 8/10 or better for its impact on them personally (where 10/10 is a massive impact). Similarly, 90% rated the business impact of the program at 7/10 or better.

Industry impact was understandably less with 70% of respondents rating the program as having an impact on their industry of 7/10 or greater. This is to be expected as many of the participants were not involved in industry issues. Pleasingly, nearly 50% of Alumni respondents have stepped up into Industry roles while 30% have maintained or expanded on existing Industry roles.

When asked "What has been the biggest impact?" there were understandably a variety of responses ranging from a major change in mindset/attitude and confidence to large increases in profitability and sales. The most popular responses were that the program has assisted with: more informed decision making and planning, better management of staff and family and lifts in personal productivity.

The Net Promoter Score (see above) for the Alumni was 73% which is an excellent result. Any score greater than 50% is regarded as exceptional. Apart from the one Outlier, all respondents scored the program 8/10 or better for whether they would recommend the program. In a separate question, 72% of respondents had recommended the Program to a friend or colleague which supports the NPS data.

Feedback from the group was very positive and diverse. Some of the comments below highlight the key messages:

"The 2-day workshops in two different cities provided a great introduction to the tools as well as the opportunity to network with other horticulture producers. I particularly liked the fact that Russell held us accountable for our "one page plan" actions, which made that tool come to life, and I could see value in the application. The Mindshop online courses were valuable."

"It was a great refresher as some of the concepts I had come across before, but it was great to have the material presented in a format specific to Hort business interests. It was empowering to have a toolkit to call on for the myriad of day to day management challenges."

"Russell's program has helped me develop new skills and abilities that help both my business and my industry. I know I haven't been able to measure or quantify the changes but after 14 years in business I can see the impact. The skills he has trained me to develop have grown since the course. I have and will highly recommend this course to others."

"This type of workshop should continue to be offered because it provides valuable business management tools necessary to ensure a profitable enterprise in our modern business environment."

Evaluation and Discussion

The Horticulture – the Next Generation Program addressed the project objectives in the following ways:

1. Improve the ability of our leaders to lead and guide the Industry

The Program provided industry leaders with tools and processes for developing plans and strategies. 50% of Alumni have increased their role in Industry while an additional 30% have maintained their previous commitments.

2. Stimulate industry dialogue and encourage innovative thinking

Hort Next Gen Leaders have tried to engage with wider industry via social media and other forums. Response through these platforms has been lacklustre. Anecdotal feedback on our webinar programs are that they are encouraging differing thought processes in some industry members.

Individual participants in the program have been particularly innovative post-program by accessing different markets (export, home delivery, direct sales) and driving down production costs and innovating business models. Keynote speakers have been an important part of this process.

3. Encourage the next generation of industry leaders to improve industry & business succession

Participants in the program have discussed a range of business succession issues in individual coaching sessions, however, succession is not an issue for all businesses. Some leaders have seen the need to become more actively involved in Industry Organisations to facilitate industry succession.

4. Improve strategic thinking, planning and problem solving at an industry and business level

Feedback from participants indicates that this is the area where the Program has had the most impact. This is to be expected as it is a tangible outcome from training in planning, problem solving and decision making.

5. Provide a model for effective leadership development in other sectors

The Horticulture – the Next Generation Program pioneered a number of elements (webinars, online training, video blogs, social media use and dedicated project website) that have since been adopted by leadership programs in other sectors – especially the use of webinars, social media and web-based technology to assist in delivery. Some of elements have been adopted by recent leadership programs in specific horticulture sectors.

Russell Cummings, the Project Leader, is currently in discussions with partners in the horticulture supply chain, maritime, agri-chemical and manufacturing industries regarding business and industry-wide programs that are based on the framework that he introduced as part of *Horticulture – the Next Generation Program*.

Some comments that highlight the overall impact of the program on leaders are:

"Has created a major shift in my mindset, now feel I have an incredible suite of tools as a resource for my business. Created a much better awareness of modern business environment and how to operate in it. I have made significant changes to how I operate as a leader in my business with visible results."

"Excellent, would recommend to every small/medium business owner as a must-do for sales. There are others in our business that should also do this course to become more enthusiastic in their business."

"The program assisted me to be much more focused, more strategic. I have already applied the learning from the program in a very rigorous way and a very positive, beneficial one."

"This program is the best leadership/development course I have done by far - it will be making a massive impact across Australian Horticulture - well done!"

When asked whether they could quantify the impacts, most participants were unable to accurately measure the impacts but a couple of leaders provided the following information:

"Reduction in harvest costs by up to 16%, less waste and defective product -8%. We now have a workplace that is clean and tidy where staff take pride in their work and are engaged in our mission."

"Perhaps the best measurement of whether the course changed my life is the amount of time that I now spend at work compared to prior to the course. I would estimate that I spend up to 15 hours less per week at work than I previously did but accomplish the same results through greater efficiencies."

"Turnover of both businesses up by 30% - reduced waste. More personal time. Joined 2 related industry bodies/groups. Less stress."

Discussion

Overall, feedback on the program from participants has been very high and feedback from previous Alumni has shown that this style of program is having a positive impact over a longer timeframe than the period immediately surrounding the training workshops – the "Halo Effect". Participants have made significant changes to their management, cost structure and profitability. They have also made personal improvements in Life Balance.

Options for delivery

Discussions with attendees and with potential applicants over the last 3 years have indicated that the timeframes involved (4 days of workshops in Melbourne and Brisbane) are challenging. Both Owners and Employees said that "getting permission" and/or "organising time away from the business" was a challenge. There are also significant travel costs for some attendees e.g. Far North QLD and WA.

Timing is also critical because with seasonal businesses there are times of peak activity. The challenge is finding a suitable time that suits all business types.

This raises the question: *"how can we involve more participants while significantly reducing cost per leader without reducing the quality of learning?"*

Based on the feedback received from this, and subsequent evaluations, it will be possible to keep refining the Workshop Program to provide more value and to include more people. This can potentially be achieved through changing the mix between: workshops, coaching, webinars and online support. It would also be possible to run a 100% Webinar/online-based program, which would reduce cost/user significantly for both the delivering organisation and the business.

There would appear to be a variety of options:

- maintain the current workshop format supported by online resources;
- develop a 100% Online Program that uses a combination of webinars, online training and phone support to deliver the workshop program;
- develop a hybrid program that has a face-to-face workshop supported by a series of webinars and online resources;
- create a series of custom built online training courses that people can complete in their own timeframes;
- All of the above...

The number of social media and webinar participants has been increasing indicating that horticulture businesses are open to new and emerging information channels to improve their skills and knowledge. Leveraging these programs will be the key to engaging with even more of the industry.

Building our Middle Management Capabilities

The *Horticulture – the Next Generation* program is specifically focused on improving the skillsets of Owner/Operators and Middle Management in Australian horticulture businesses. It is not suited to CEOs and supervisory employees and there are plenty of programs designed to suit these sectors of the market.

Research has shown that building the skills and capabilities of "Middle" rather than "Senior" Management will build organisational capability and this capability has long been associated with improved competitive advantage. Focusing on building the capabilities of Industry's middle management is critical to long term sustainability of the industry. Too often training is focused on technical areas (Cert III and Cert IV style training), regarded as "horizontal learning", rather than the "vertical skills" required to be an effective business manager in a complex, volatile environment. Vertical skills are usually associated with skills like: planning, problem solving, decision making, collaboration and people management.

Extending the Hort Next Gen tools and processes across the Australian industry is an important consideration as there are leverage points for industry from having leaders with a common language and toolkit for planning and problem solving.

To date, we have upskilled 95 leaders through an intensive program and supplemented skills of another 212 through online training. Given that there are more than 60,000 people employed in over 11,000 Australian horticulture businesses, there is scope to continue specific business leader training programs.

Ongoing Activity

Current restructuring of HAL to HIAL (“Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited”) has created uncertainty around the future of the program. Without project funding, the website and social media platforms could revert to HIAL (previously HAL) although it is unclear whether HIAL would have the mandate and/or resources to continue the operation of these platforms.

The Project leader, Russell Cummings, would like to see the program continued and is prepared to maintain the momentum of the website, social media platforms and webinar programs even if there is no Workshop Program in 2015. Russell’s business has the internal technical capabilities, and drive, to deliver and fund these continuing activities for Industry.

Recommendations

Facilitator experience and feedback from participants also highlighted a number of changes that could be made to enhance the program. The following recommendations are suggested:

Increase Participant Numbers: Review options for expanding the program using alternative formats, technology and tools – especially web-based, video technology and training.

Lift Industry Engagement. Improve the level of engagement with industry groups to spread the involvement and uptake of the program and to assist industry groups to communicate on important issues with the wider community.

Develop an Alumni Program. Develop a self-funded Program for Alumni to continue their learning and implementation journey.

Explore self-funded options – given potential funding changes at HIAL, explore alternative funding options.

Maintain the momentum - Ensure that HIAL maintains the program's current momentum by encouraging the Project Leader, Russell Cummings, to continue publishing the website, blog articles, videos and webinars.

Scientific Refereed Publications

None to report

IP/Commercialisation

The Project has created a branded website (<http://www.horticulture-nextgeneration.com.au>) and social media platforms.

References

There are no references

Acknowledgements

The Project would like to acknowledge the support of the following industry leaders who contributed to the success of this program:

- Robert Prince – CEO Nursery & Garden Industry Australia – Committee member – 2012 to 2014
- Ray Johnstone – HAL Board Member – Guest Speaker – 2012 and 2013
- Alex Livingstone – CEO at Growcom – Guest Speaker - 2013
- Jolyon Burnett – CEO at Macadamias Australia – Guest Speaker - 2014
- John Dollison – CEO at Apple and Pear Australia Limited – Guest Speaker - 2014

Appendices

There are no Appendices.