

St John New Zealand & Melbourne Business School, Mt Eliza Executive Education

Transforming Healthcare through Leadership Development



When Peter Bradley became CEO of St John New Zealand in 2013, he knew he was leading a community-based organisation, at the frontline of health delivery, that needed exceptional leadership capability to build a sustainable future and implement a new, patient-centred, Integrated Business Plan.

He asked Melbourne Business School Executive Education (MBS) to work with him to identify the impact of the St John Leadership Development Program (LDP), which MBS had delivered for five years, and, most critically, to help St John create its future leadership development strategy.

Adapting to change: the challenging medical, health and social landscape

St John's vision is enhanced health and well-being for all New Zealanders. Its 2200 paid staff and 8500 volunteers work closely together to provide ambulance and other assistance to almost 90 per cent of New Zealand's population. Over 500,000 people access its services each year, which include first-aid training, event medical services, medical alarms and youth and community programs.

As with most healthcare organisations globally, its challenges include increasing patient expectations, funding competition, controlling costs and delivering operations in multiple locations, while operating under national legislation that sets high service-delivery and compliance standards.

St John also needs to innovate, while respecting its foundations, and engage with multiple stakeholders, including government, donors and communities, who provide funding and support.

Measuring value and results

Against this backdrop, Peter and his Executive Management Team asked MBS to prepare an Impact Study to answer two key questions: "To what level did the St John LDP build foundational leadership capabilities for St John?" and "What are the leadership skills required to deliver on the new transformational strategy and Integrated Business Plan?"

St John Leadership Development Program

Designed in collaboration with St John New Zealand and delivered between 2009–2013 to 300 managers from multiple regions and functions, the St John LDP paid particular attention to building the foundations for greater leadership capacity through increased self-awareness and interpersonal effectiveness.

The program incorporated a global, best-practice learning design, including experiential learning strategies, psychometric instruments, and dialogues about strategy and culture, aiming to build leadership capability and collaboration. Senior St John executives participated by leading sessions about St John's future direction and supporting action-learning projects.



67%

The St John LDP was adjudged to have improved leadership performance by 67%





Delivering value and results

When surveyed up to five years after completing the St John LDP, participants were asked by how much it had helped increase their leadership performance. They responded, "By 67 per cent". When asked by how much their colleagues had increased their leadership performance, they said, "By 55 per cent" – a significant result as it is often difficult to see how others' behaviour has changed on a day-to-day basis.

Participants also said the St John LDP had increased organisational performance by 66 per cent.

And 76 per cent credited the program with improving their performance at work. This group said the program increased self-awareness about their strengths, areas needing development and personal effectiveness. They also said it helped them improve their ability to communicate, deal with conflict and change their behaviour to strengthen relationships.

At an organisational level, they said it helped them:

- gain more confidence to manage change and take a lead role in culture change
- connect, communicate and collaborate across different functions and locations
- gain a broader perspective and deeper understanding of St John's history, culture and purpose.

More than 65 percent of respondents also highlighted the value of networking during the St John LDP – particularly meeting and working with people beyond their region and functional area.

The results showed that the program helped build enduring, key, leadership capabilities to ensure delivery of St John's services.



The St John Executive Management Team was open to researching what happened through the St John LDP and then exploring insights to inform strategy

Aligning leadership capability to strategy

St John and MBS used the Impact Study to develop the organisation's Leadership Development Strategy for 2015 and beyond. This strategy will help implement St John's new Integrated Business Plan and transform the organisation in a time of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. The strategy has two key leadership initiatives, being delivered by MBS:

- the Executive Management Team Program to give a relatively new leadership team the opportunity to develop their leadership focus together
- the Community of Leaders Program to help St John leaders, selected by the Executive Management Team, build their leadership capabilities by: understanding themselves and others in order to embody St John's values; taking a strategic approach to leading organisational issues; and championing the "One St John" vision of organisational engagement.

Partners for the future

St John New Zealand's motto, 'here for life', sums up its attitude to developing its people. It has been saving lives and helping prevent injuries for a long time, and it will continue to deliver on its vision.

The partnership with Melbourne Business School Executive Education has been instrumental in creating significant value for St John, its community and its stakeholders.

60%

The St John LDP was adjudged to have improved organisational performance by 60%

76%

76% of those involved stated the St John LDP had improved their individual performance