

Transforming our business

Staff Writer | Sep 30, 2016



Sarah Leo, general manager at printer Openbook Howden shares the transformation journey the company has been through from printer to services provider.

Like many companies in the graphic communications sphere, Openbook Howden is faced with the constant challenge of coping with change. Purposeful training like that offered through the Future Print Business Transformation Project has become a key part of our response.

Over the years, Openbook Howden has seen market demand change dramatically. In response, the company has grown into much more than a print service provider, today offering a suite of print, design, interactive and e-comms solutions, as well as stock management, distribution and mail services.

This customer-driven progress can be challenging to manage successfully, so accessing the right resources and training to ensure staff are properly equipped is a key to success.

Purposeful training is a key part of our company's response and, recently, 13 sales and management staff undertook courses with Leadership Management Australia (LMA), accessed under the Future Print Business Transformation project.

Our market has shifted quite dramatically over the past couple of years, and the pace of change is accelerating all the time. It is a constant challenge to manage the practical aspects of meeting the market, and finding new resources to help us was the reason we first became involved in Future Print.

We have always been happy to invest in professional development, but opportunities for subsidised training are rare – so when we found the right kind of training courses, offered by quality providers, under the Future Print scheme, we grabbed them with both hands. In the past, we have focused mainly on reskilling and upskilling production staff, but this was the perfect opportunity for us to extend that opportunity to our sales and management teams.”

Already, eight staff have completed the Sales course and three of the Leadership cohort are about to graduate. Two more have recently started the Leadership Management Course. All have been exceptionally well received.

Even though many of our team were already familiar with some of the material covered, without exception they appreciated the opportunity to remind themselves of the fundamentals, learn new ideas and approaches, and to refocus on the really important things, like communication skills and time management. The benefits of the training are also being felt more widely than the student cohort itself.

As is so often the case with training, we are seeing flow-on benefits for the whole team. People bring their new ideas and energy back into the business and it reminds us all of critical issues – like the need to set aside time to properly plan and manage change.

When things are changing so rapidly, everyone is consumed with what is happening at the coal face – whether that is bringing business through the door, keeping the figures straight or planning production schedules. It is easy to put off change until another day, but in today's market, that just does not cut it.

You have to make the time to remain responsive and agile, because if you are not forging ahead, you are falling behind. Future Print is right on the mark with its focus on helping businesses assess their performance, identify areas that need change and providing the training required.”

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