

# SECTOR FOCUS: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

## ■ CASE STUDY: SCENTRE GROUP

HRD sat down with Scentre Group's Director of Human Resources, **Janine Frew**, and Organisation Capability Manager, **Carolyn Agar**, to discuss how enigmaFIT's program has helped transform the company's leadership team



Carolyn Agar (left) with Phillip Campbell and Janine Frew

### HRD: Can you provide some context around why you revised your leadership development programs?

**Janine Frew:** With the establishment of Scentre Group (owner and operator of Westfield in Australia and New Zealand) several years ago, we had a new corporate entity, a new board and a new CEO, but effectively the same leadership team that we had when we were known as Westfield. Our aim was to establish Scentre Group as a new identity.

The executive team started by creating a new purpose and also the DNA or cultural values of the organisation. That process revealed there was a significant culture shift needed from where we were to where we needed to be. We also knew that from a capability perspective we also had to make a shift from being a very technically competent, operationally efficient organisation to one that was more focused on strategic thinking, innovation and being able to adapt to the changing needs of our retailers and shoppers.

We knew we needed to have the right leaders in place in order to make that transformation. We've explored a whole range of approaches to how we could go about doing that, and what struck us about enigmaFIT was that it was quite different and unique in that there was a very strong emphasis on building that strategic agility and innovation and actually working with your existing leaders. The question was: could these leaders

become more agile, more strategic? That's where enigmaFIT came in.

**Carolyn Agar:** We also wanted to focus on the next layer down from those 20 or so senior executives. We needed to be grooming that pool of 24 high-potential executives so we could eventually elevate them to more senior executive roles. They were seasoned senior managers and we wanted to understand what they had in their tank if they had to step up. So it was a key part of succession planning and building bench strength.

### HRD: What attracted you to the enigmaFIT program?

**JF:** The enigmaFIT program gave us the ability to understand where people were at, but just as important, it gave us an understanding of how much each individual could shift. We wanted participants to increase their adaptability and agility so they could deliver results, but do that in a really effective and efficient way. That was quite unique. It also allowed us to use our own language in how we applied the tool and the process. It couldn't be just another leadership program; we didn't want the jargon. It had to be meaningful and relevant to our business strategy and where we were taking the organisation.

### HRD: How do you assess a program like this?

**JF:** We always start with the anecdotal piece, which occurs when you talk to the individuals

who went through the program. We did this with the executives and every person who went through the complete program, of which enigmaFIT was one part. enigmaFIT was reported in some cases as being the most life-changing, most impactful element, so that anecdotal feedback was incredibly powerful. Then obviously we looked at the results pre and post the program in terms of any change. One of the reasons was to support the pipeline of talent through the business.

When we look at those high potentials, 20 of the 24 have been promoted or had significant role-stretch in the organisation. For those in the GM ranks, we've had a significant amount of movement there too – moving into roles of greater significance. So you could definitely say it's done the job we needed it to do.

### HRD: How about the more subtle elements – the culture change, the desire to create a new entity?

**CA:** In an employee survey we ran last year, our engagement score was at 85%, which would indicate people have a huge amount of goodwill towards the organisation, and that is primarily achieved through their relationship with their leaders. When you look at things like whether people are clear on what they're here to deliver on and do they understand the strategy of the business, those scores are in the 90s. So it has definitely helped to translate strategy into clear goals for people. **HRD**