

Chameleon Program

Helping leaders adapt to change together

The Client

The Royal Melbourne Hospital is Victoria's oldest public hospital and one of its largest. Running it, and its many connected health services, requires the highest leadership standards. To maintain these standards, its future leaders must know how to adapt to constantly shifting challenges.

The Royal Melbourne employs around 10,000 people, including highly skilled medical specialists, administrators, technicians, researchers, fundraisers, carers, cleaners and even helicopter pilots, whose ability to work together is a matter of life and death every day.

With illnesses, injuries, treatments and technology constantly changing, the hospital's leaders need to keep one eye on the present and the other on nurturing upcoming leaders who can adapt, collaborate and innovate in the search for new and better health solutions.

The Challenge

One of the Royal Melbourne Hospital's most difficult tasks is to create a culture of collaboration and organisational awareness among its leaders, who come from a wide range of specialist areas.

Several years ago, the hospital recognised the need to bring leaders together from across the organisation to network, learn from each other and solve problems collectively – and it approached Melbourne Business School to help create a program to do exactly that.

Working together on a discovery and design process, the partners identified the most important capabilities that the hospital's emerging leaders needed at an organisational and individual level to create the program's learning objectives.



Unleash the power of people with a program designed by your organisation, for your organisation, with our help.



Government and
Public Sector



Financial Services



Health and Sciences



Energy and Utilities



Infrastructure Services

The Solution

The result was the **Chameleon Program**. Since 2008, it has been delivered to 12 cohorts of high-potential leaders and adapted each time to stay aligned to the hospital's shifting challenges.

The latest program was delivered over two months in late 2019 to 26 leaders, who included a deputy director of pharmacy, consultant psychiatrist, clinical immunologist, engineering coordinator and managers from governance, nursing, fundraising and elsewhere.

The program was built around four core modules that included one and two-day workshops and self-paced online study, reflection and workplace application to embed each module's learning objectives.

Program highlights

- Participants engaged directly with their managers to apply learning where it was most needed.
- Participants invited inspirational leaders they admired from across the hospital community, including the Royal Melbourne's board chair and the intensive care unit founder, to leadership dialogue sessions.
- The Organisational Systems Simulation put participants in the shoes of critical external and internal stakeholders, such as patients, government, unions, the broader community and the hospital staff who deal with them - uncovering for themselves the insights required to create and lead collaborative partnerships in their large and complex organisation.

Program outline

Module 1 ILLUMINATE

- Effective Learning
- Management & Leadership
- Creating Direction, Alignment & Commitment
- My Personal Leadership Fundamentals
- Organisational Systems Simulation

Module 2 EXPLORE

- Leadership Styles/ Situational Leadership
- Push & Pull Leadership
- Building & Maintaining Trust
- Leading in Complexity: Adaptive Leadership
- Peer Consulting
- Action Planning

Module 3 EXPAND

- Leading in Complexity: Adaptive Leadership (continued)
- Building Emotional Agility
- Case in Point Dialogue with invited leaders
- Action Planning

Module 4 CONSOLIDATE

- Leadership Accountability
- Giving & Receiving Feedback
- Action Planning
- Marketplace Discussion (with participants' managers)
- Celebration & Awards



“The program has given him additional confidence (highly important for his role) and tools and perspectives to apply to his work, while broadening his network and inspiring him to achieve more. It has also helped him step back from day-to-day tasks to think more about the bigger picture. Overall, a very valuable experience for him and a good investment.”

Chameleon Program participant's manager



“A good leader is someone who people follow and look up to, someone that people notice and aspire to be like, and someone who’s helping everyone go in the right direction and be the best they can.”

PROFESSOR CHRISTINE KILPATRICK
CEO Royal Melbourne Hospital

The Result

Before and after the program, managers rated participants against the Chameleon Program’s key learning objectives to track improvement. The results showed significant shifts in critical capabilities, identified in the discovery and design process.

A continuing partnership

In 2020, the hospital confirmed their trust in Melbourne Business School by asking us to widen the program’s reach and align it anew to shifting leadership challenges. The result is the Melbourne Way Leadership Program, to start in 2021, which features flexible online delivery to involve more participants and create leadership collaboration across the organisation.

Learning objectives	Improvement
Self-awareness as a leader, and ability to develop others	23%
Develop a diverse peer network for leadership advice	22%
Assess the organisational landscape effectively	20%
Lead in today’s complex work environment	19%

*Based on survey ratings of participants’ managers before and after the program

Participants have gone on to share their Chameleon Program experience across the Royal Melbourne Hospital, fostering new levels of organisational awareness and collaboration.



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