



Making career
development easy

ARC Group Case Study

'No more glass half-full'

— Integrity and Values guide
ARC Group to develop the
management muscle to go
'for the full glass'

Introducing ARC Group

ARC Group, on the surface, is an organisation that provides support and training services. Through delivery of care, education and guidance, they also work towards improving people's lives in various important and impactful ways.

For nearly twenty years, ARC Group has been a source for those seeking practical education to further their careers through accredited training programs.

These training programs enrich organisational recruitment capabilities, connect recent school leavers with the

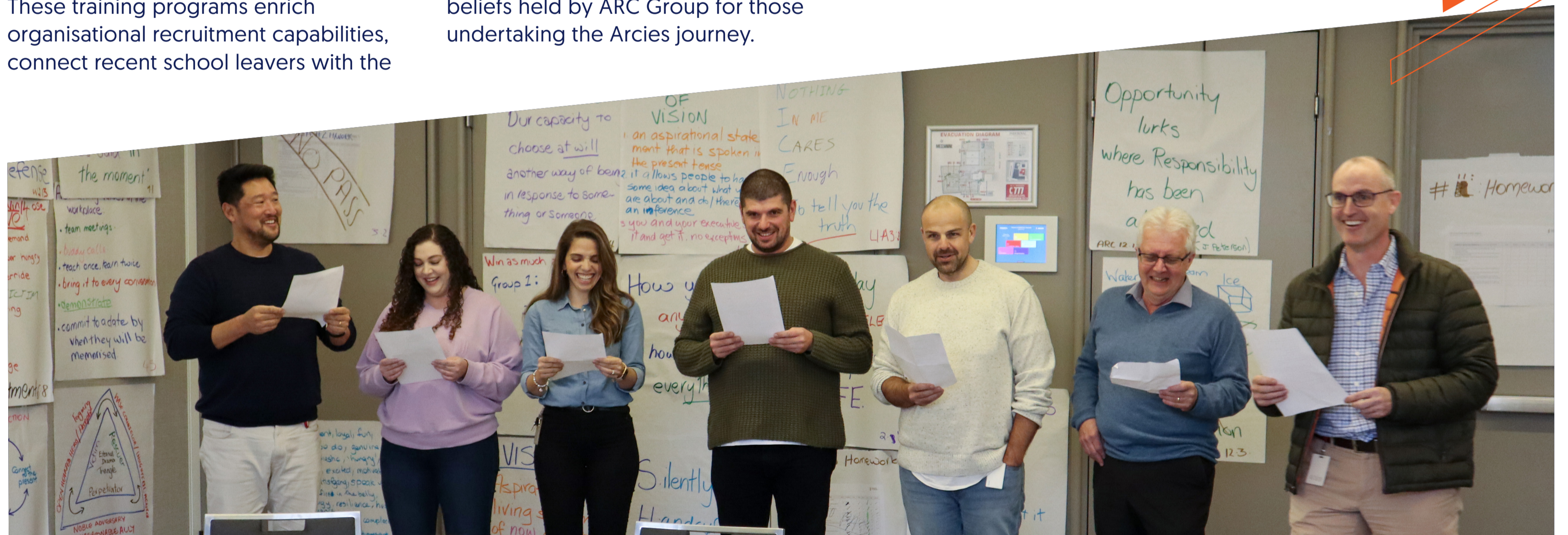
right roles, and run 225 training courses per year for various industries.

ARC Group works with corporate organisations to help young people find the best landing spot to kick-start their careers. ARC Group fondly calls these young recruits 'Arcies', believing in them so firmly that they frequently recruit them for internal roles.

One former Arcie, Mercina Markou, is now the GTO Manager of ARC Group and evidence of the capabilities and beliefs held by ARC Group for those undertaking the Arcies journey.

“ We're in human services. We provide group training, recruitment and also NDIS accredited care services. We work with people to improve lives. That's what we do.

James Kim, Head of Cality Care, outlines the people-centric approach that binds the diverse offerings of ARC Group.





“ ARC Group practices what they preach, we hire our own trainees. I was hired as an internal trainee, initially on a twelve-month contract at reception while I was doing my Cert III in Business, and then ARC kept me on permanently after that.

Mercina Markou, GTO Manager

If this was not enough to achieve their objective, ARC Group decided to amplify their mission in 2015 by creating Cality Care to deliver reliable, high-quality home care services to some of our most vulnerable Australians.

James Kim, Head of Cality Care, explains this as a primary focus on helping *'Australians who are older, or with disabilities, who need support to live independently.'*



“

We'd just gone through a whole lot of growth as a business and went through a painful period of adjustment because we didn't have great structures and practices in place for the areas of our business that were growing the most. I just felt that we hadn't, as a business, supported the development of our leaders.

Cameron Ryan, CEO



CHAPTER 02

Growing Pains for ARC Group Leadership

ARC Group went through a strong period of growth and success that led to the CEO, Cameron Ryan, having eight to nine separate leaders in the business reporting to him directly.

While Cameron had undergone various training and coaching programs personally, none had resonated enough with him to consider leveraging such services for his increasingly overwhelmed leadership team.

'Not my place, not my area, not my team, not my department, not my problem, was the common mindset.'

Mercina Markou GTO Manager

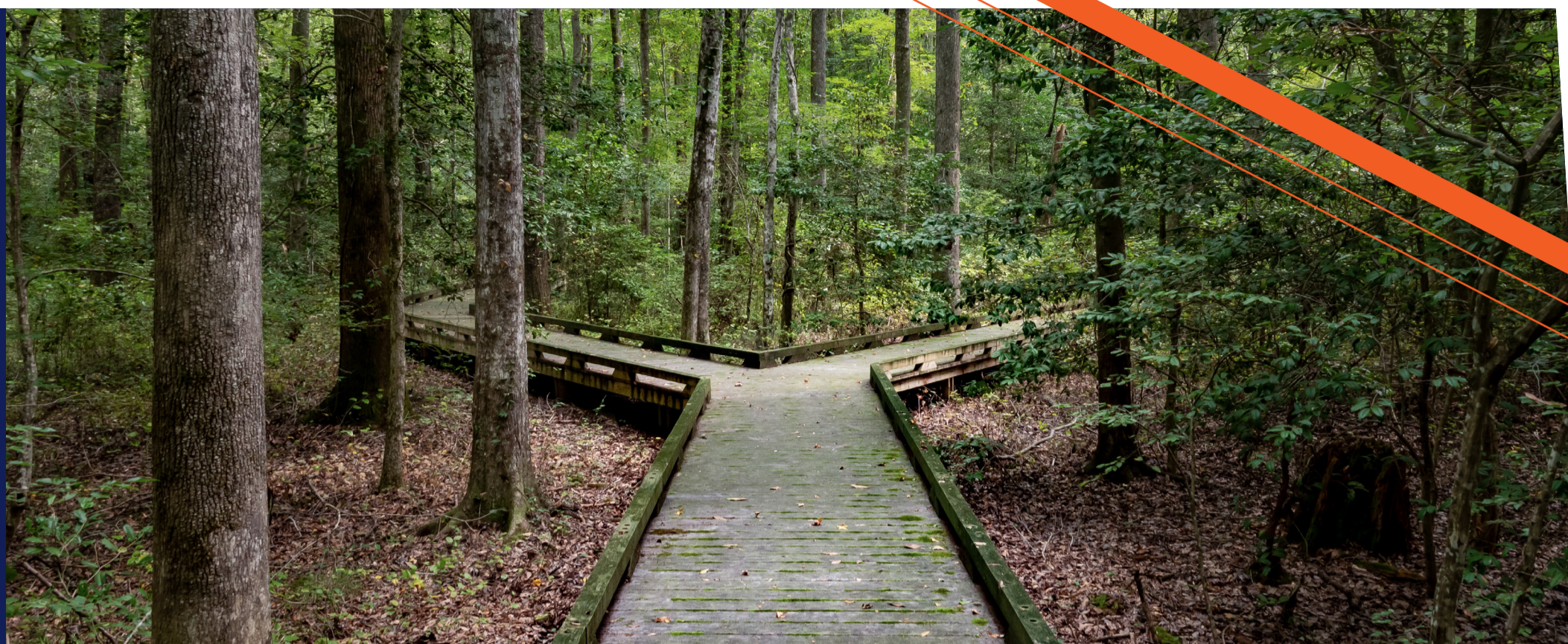
The leadership team was a diverse group of talent, some cultivated in-house over the years, like Mercina, and others bringing external experience and ideas into the fold; what they brought to the table as accomplished individuals was not in dispute. However, their aversion to confrontation and viewing colleagues' contributions through rose-tinted glasses brought their abilities as a cohesive, effective leadership team into question.

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I definitely have a tendency to put on my rose-coloured glasses and see the bright side. So that works sometimes - but not all the time. Ultimately, as a leadership team you need to be real and call out, 'Okay, if it's a bad situation, it's a bad situation'.

CEO, Cameron Ryan, provides an honest assessment of ARC Group's overly optimistic leadership approach that needed to change.

“ We had a big gap in our leadership capability and we weren't addressing it. We definitely had growing pains. Things were happening across the business that I wasn't happy with. Yet I wasn't clear how to get us on the right path. I just knew we needed something.
Cameron Ryan, CEO



CHAPTER 03

Seeking the right leadership path

Through his own training experiences, Cameron knew he had a leadership development issue and needed to source external resources to close this gap and alleviate ARC Group's growing pains.

While he had experienced numerous coaching and training programs himself, he needed to find the right training to deliver the results his growing organisation demanded.

He was personally getting a lot out of the individual leadership coaching program he undertook outside of work with Integrity and Values, and was unsure how to leverage it for the entire leadership team.

Mercina outlined the leadership culture change that needed addressing and it all came down to accountability and a fear of confrontation, even when productive and necessary.

'Prior to the program, you would go into a meeting and have a conversation with your peers and something would come to mind like, 'Oh, I'm not sure about that' or 'I kind of want to question them about this.' But it would not be voiced.'

This focus on niceties and avoidance of having difficult or confronting conversations as a leadership group could lead to detrimental outcomes for the business as it continued to grow, and with the quality of care and education a paramount mission for ARC

Group, Cameron knew this needed to be rectified.

“ I knew we needed the right help to address these issues and I knew that we could get much better outcomes by being a little bit uncomfortable now in getting to the right place, rather than avoiding it and ending up in a really bad place later.

**Cameron Ryan, CEO,
on ARC Group's need for leadership support.**

CHAPTER 04

Why Integrity and Values?

“ What Integrity and Values get that stands out is that who you are as a person reflects what you do in the business. There is no, ‘I’ll leave my personal self at home and my work self at work.’ You’re one human being, and your behaviours permeate everything you do.

Mercina Markou, GTO Manager



As gaps appeared in the leadership team's capabilities of the growing organisation, Cameron knew assistance was needed. As a leader, he had undertaken years of personal leadership coaching with Integrity and Values in his own time and had gained a lot of personal growth and leadership refinement in his experience with them.

Even prior to Integrity and Values, Cameron was familiar with business coaching but the approach Integrity and Values took struck a chord with him. As Cameron shared, *"Up until my personal Integrity and Values coaching, I'd been working with business coaches around understanding how to try and run a better business, and how to grow your business. Whereas, Integrity and Values's approach and was much more focused around behaviours, which resonated with me."*

Cameron then took this decision to his leadership team and emphasised his belief and conviction in the personal and organisational benefits of committing to the Integrity and Values leadership program.

As Cameron elaborated, *"I understood there was a gap because we hadn't addressed what we needed as leaders in this business. And I just felt the Integrity and Values program would be the right fit for us. I was happy with the personal program that I'd been doing with Integrity and Values since about 2015. So I began talking to Jennifer about a larger program, working with the whole business and a focus on the leadership team."*

The news of another potential leadership and coaching program was met with initial reservations by the team, however these were quickly resolved when introduced to Integrity and Values and the unique, honest approach they brought with them.

Mercina summarises, *"When we first started with Integrity and Values, I realised very quickly it was not in any way what I assumed a coaching program would be. It was very raw, honest and direct. And if I can be blunt, they just cut right through the fluff."*

Head of Cality Care, James Kim, admits to initial hesitation and reluctance also due to past experiences and 'knowing the principles of leadership coaching' - but echoed the sentiment of surprise at the Integrity and Values approach.

He highlighted two key points that stood out for him and earned his early commitment to the program: *"There's two things. (1), they are brutally honest in their assessment of you and the situation. No sugarcoating, no management cliches, they call a spade, a spade. (2), they have a level of commitment which was beyond just a consulting company coming in to do some work, they really care. That was what was really different, and very refreshing."*



CHAPTER 05

Leadership in Action

Cameron outlined from the outset that expanding his individual coaching progress with Integrity and Values to his leadership team, was due to the unique approach to leadership behaviours and accountability, rather than coaching program cliches he had experienced in the past.

He believed in his team, which had ultimately contributed to its successes and growth to that point. But, Cameron also wanted them to 'build their leadership muscles' so they could take on the challenges ahead and ultimately become better leaders.

“ Going through this with my leadership team, and having to confront my behaviours alongside my team, I've realised now as the leaders of the business, how we behave, and how I behave flows through the business. You've got to stop, you've got to confront this, and you've got to take it on.

Cameron Ryan, CEO, on his leadership team taking action and making real change

Cameron had found the profiles, one-on-one coaching and group workshop sessions 'confronting' at first. His leadership shared this initial 'shock to the system' as they worked through their individual behaviours in their one-on-one sessions, and together as a team. As James Kim outlined, accountability started with the confronting regular sessions: *"My one-on-one coaching sessions happened to be at nine o'clock in the morning, it was always a very intense, deep, personal hour session, then the next day we would have our regular group session. There was nowhere to hide."*

Identifying, reviewing and resolving behavioural road blocks throughout the leadership team was a process that needed committed focus, accountability, and strong guidance from Integrity and Values. James Kim highlighted this as the key turning point early in the program: *"We truly recognised where our problems were and acknowledged those problems together with real accountability."*

Mercina Markou supported this sentiment and outlined behavioural focus as a significant breakthrough in her own leadership journey: *"Businesses are made up by people and I think this is what Integrity and Values get that stands out. It's crucial to understand that there is no leaving your personal self at home, and your work self at work; your personal behaviours permeate whatever you do."*





“ What I learned from Integrity and Values is that it’s the things we hide behind as leaders that cause the biggest problems, particularly the glass half full approach where everyone is nice and lovely and no one wants to rock the boat. When you’re not being honest about your situation however, you cannot grow, develop, or truly succeed. You just can’t because you’re working with half-truths.

Mercina Markou, GTO Manager

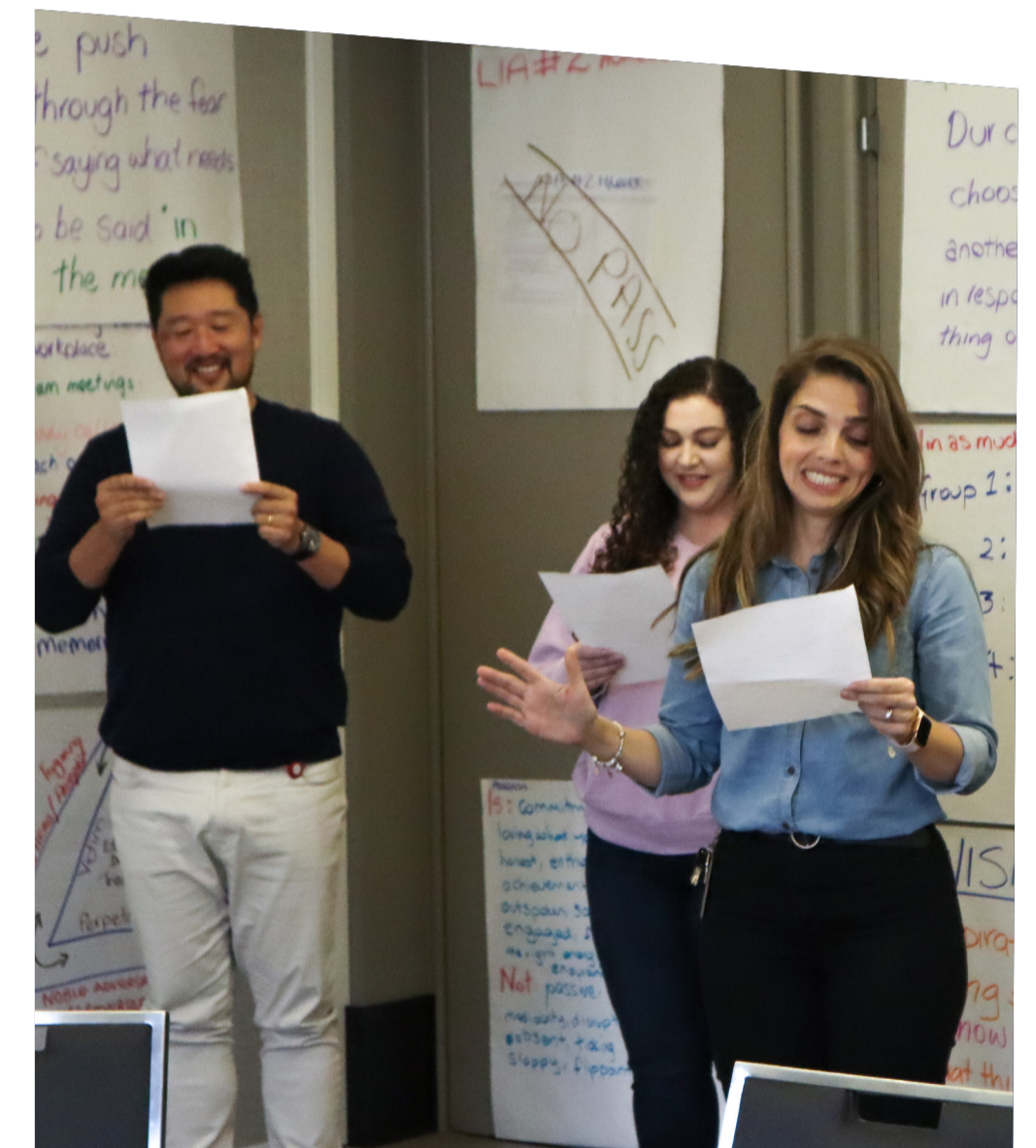
CHAPTER 06

Building the leadership muscle and going for ‘the full glass’

Leading any organisation effectively is important. However, with ARC Group delivering quality care, training and support - often to society’s most vulnerable - it was crucial to get right.

For ARC Group to achieve their mission of improving people’s lives, they first needed to improve the way their leadership team operated, and have some tough, honest group discussions to successfully undertake the journey of leadership transformation.

CEO and Founder of Integrity and Values, Jennifer Elliott, identified quickly a common attribute across the leadership team, a resistance to confrontation and overly prioritising niceties. As Jennifer outlined; *‘No more glass half full rhetoric! It was time for the team to build the muscles to truly lead and go for the full glass!’* A common term used by the leadership team for this transformational journey was ‘building the leadership muscle’ for the team as individuals to be able to lead day-in and day-out, with consistent vision and capability.





While prioritising accountability was confronting, it was clear to the team that this was a necessary first step in 'becoming the right people to be leaders moving forward'.

Mercina elaborated on the collaborative components of the program and how it enabled the group to take on the challenge of leading and being accountable, *"It was good to go through the program together, because everyone was on the same page. We were all building the leadership muscle, and having the difficult conversations, and we were also building the muscle to hear what other people had to say and not immediately jump to a place of defensiveness or justification."*

James further expanded on this sentiment of 'building the leadership muscle' to be able to hold not only themselves accountable, but also those around them when the time calls for it;

"The Integrity and Values team drove us to build the muscle to confront issues in the right way. I saw the need for me to be okay with being vulnerable, to ask for help, and be strong enough to call things out that were not ok. I think that the training helped a lot with that for the entire team."



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I think a key turning point for me was when I was able to identify through the coaching that I actually have a fear of conflict. I don't like conflict, I never have, and my avoidance of conflict was actually creating a massive issue for our business. So Integrity and Values helped me unpack that and then gave me the tools and very strong coaching to take it on and correct.

Cameron Ryan, CEO

CHAPTER 07

Re-evaluating niceness

From the top down, the ARC Group leadership team avoided confrontation and took the position as 'nice optimists', who ultimately were hesitant to ever address the negative. As Cameron outlined, his tendency to *"put my rose coloured glasses on and focus on the bright side"* was not a reliable business strategy he could continue to rely on. Through the coaching and team sessions he realised he needed to drop the glasses and *'call a spade, a spade and be comfortable calling a bad situation, a bad situation.'*

"Before the program everyone was very conscious of not offending others. The LIA program teaches you how to have hard and

confrontational conversations and how to do it cleanly. We now have the muscle and the strength to say what needs to be said in the moment and not worry about being 'nice'.
Mercina Markou, GTO Manager

Integrity and Values used the team and coaching sessions to identify and call out this 'nice' behaviour and outlined how detrimental it was to the business going forward, and for their individual progress as leaders. Cameron believes identifying his own behaviours and being 'comfortable enough' to discuss them for better organisational outcomes was his biggest personal breakthrough from the program.

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The whole Integrity and Values method is built around this ability to continually challenge yourself and others to provide accountability.

They concentrate on the realities of running a business, not the fluffiness and niceties around leadership.

Dave Kopycinski, Registered Training Organisation Manager

CHAPTER 08

Professional insights and personal outcomes

2020 is a year that will be long remembered for many Australians for its unprecedented changes, starting with the environmental and economic impacts of the bushfires, followed by the global COVID-19 pandemic. It was suddenly far more difficult for the previously successful ARC Group to provide the training, support and care the organisation and their clients depended on.

In addition, the Integrity and Values program had highlighted that some members of ARC Group leadership team were not aligned and committed with the organisation and its mission, and they subsequently left the organisation in this period.

Being accountable, having difficult conversations and making impactful decisions was suddenly of critical importance for the organisation's leadership team, still undertaking the Integrity and Values program. Rather than pause or end the program as suggested by the struggling ARC Group, the Integrity and Values team instead insisted on regular coaching sessions with a focus on helping ARC Group leadership overcome this difficult period, with the financials of the program paused for the immediate future. This willingness to overlook current financial issues, and instead focus on working on a successful path through the pandemic resonated deeply with the ARC Group team, as they felt this really showed Integrity and Values 'practiced what preached', and that they truly cared as individuals.

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We went through a period when the business was beginning to struggle when COVID smacked us in the face by surprise like it did for so many companies.

I think the knowledge gained around how we needed to lead from the front and cut through to the stuff that actually matters really helped us focus on what works and just jump in and make decisions.

As a result, we saved the business and didn't have to go through what would have been a very difficult restructuring or worse.

Mercina Markou, GTO Manager





“ When we went through the program, our business was at various crossroads, and we had to make some tough decisions, including letting some of the team go in a restructure, influenced by our increased focus on accountability.

Our business truly operates as a team now and as a result we did not need to replace those roles, we just worked out how to do those functions more effectively.

Cameron Ryan, CEO



CHAPTER 09

Final thoughts on Integrity and Values

Enduring the hardships and complications thrust upon them by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent changes we all experienced in its wake, the ARC Group team progressed with the Integrity and Values training to completion, graduating in early 2021.

In hindsight of the initial program's successful completion, it's best to conclude on Integrity and Values' success in the words of the graduates themselves to sum up the experience.

'It is confrontational, but in the way it needs to be to cut through the noise and nonsense you accumulate as you grow as professionals. As someone who's been in the working world for many years, I have experienced first hand how you absorb perceptions of how you should or should not behave throughout your career. Integrity and Values identifies these throughout the program and teaches us to 'get real' and take them on.

I think that is where we are at now. The leadership team is actually comfortable with being uncomfortable. I know that might not sound good, but it's actually a great thing. We're having confronting discussions on things that are important and we're doing it in a way that's constructive, structured and most importantly, everyone is on the same page.'

Mercina Markou



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The program builds the muscle to say what needs to be said in the moment, and not worry about how others perceive you. It's crucial to have the ability to not walk past something when it needs to be addressed, and I did that before the program. I now have the personal toolkit to constantly challenge myself and think, 'Why am I walking past that? What am I resisting?' Build muscle, have tough conversations, do it in the moment. I am now using the Integrity and Values profile tool for new hires in my team.

There's been no better outcome for my career than the time that I've spent with Integrity and Values. I think this program is life changing. It's not a program that changes how you work, it's a program that changes who you are as a person and I feel that I'm a better person as a result of undertaking this program.

Dave Kopycinski

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If other organisations are in need of leadership development and considering Integrity and Values, I would definitely say that it is worth it. Integrity and Values is unique in how they get things done and it might rub people up the wrong way, but there is a method to their madness! They truly care. If you're a client, you're family, you're a friend. You just have to trust the program and let it run its course and they will look after you. As long as you truly want change.

James Kim



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Now that I have addressed my behaviours and accountability through the program, you realise it's a journey so you keep going. The program has really opened my eyes to what's possible and I can see a real difference in the business.

We are now cascading a lot of the lessons that we've learned from Integrity and Values through the business, and we want our teams to come on that journey with us. After going through the program and two years of pain in our business with COVID, we still have six leaders with us from the program, which is testament to how this has brought us together.

To get the most from Integrity and Values, the CEO has to be all in and really be willing to do the work, and take it on themselves. The quicker you can do that, the faster you'll get the results. It has to start with the CEO, and then your team will follow suit. The Leadership In Action program is very challenging and absolutely worthwhile. The team at Integrity and Values always deliver above and beyond, and will do everything they can to ensure that your business is successful. They will support your team and hold their own feet to the fire to create the change you need to be successful.

Cameron Ryan, CEO



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