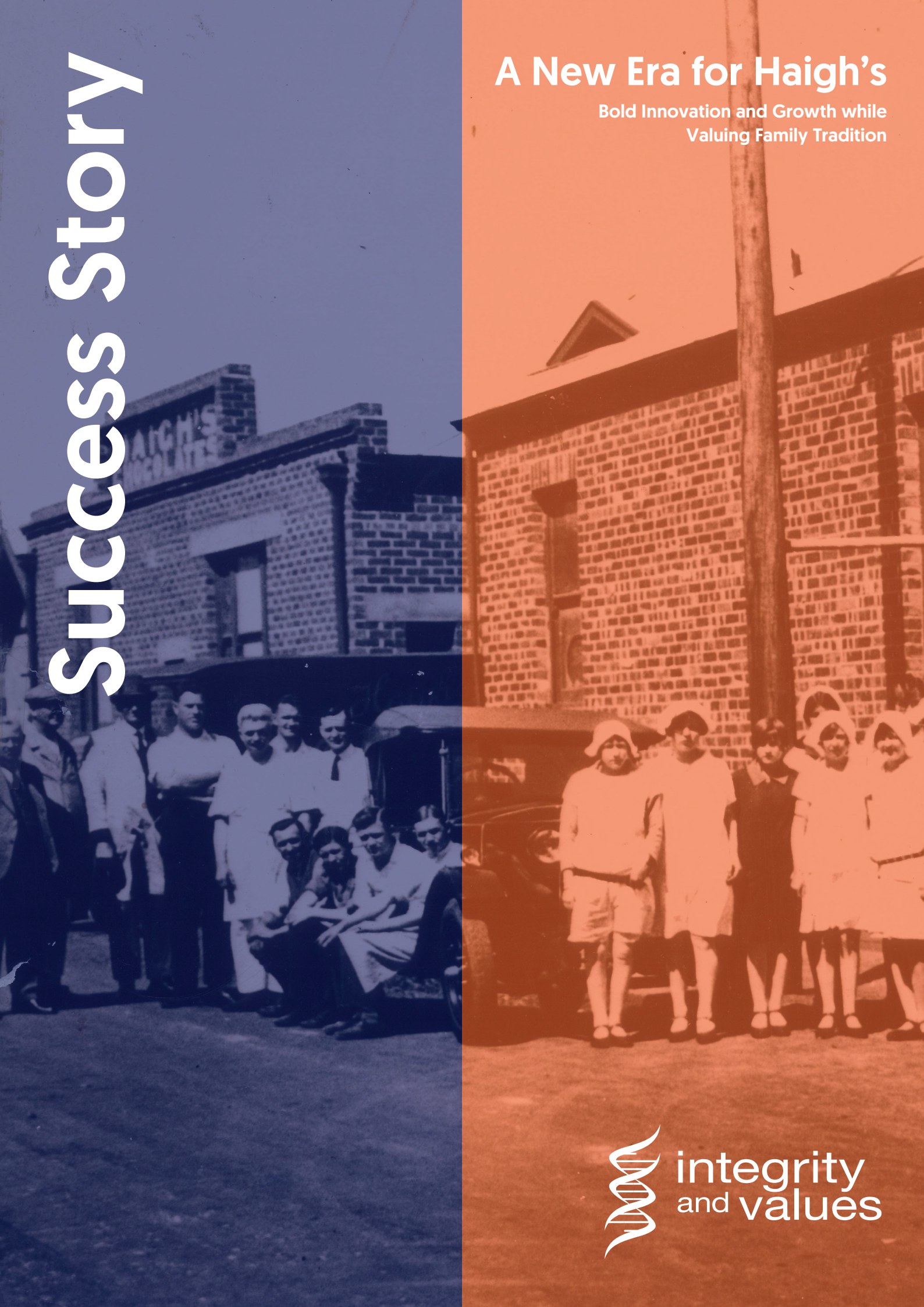


Success story

A New Era for Haigh's

Bold Innovation and Growth while
Valuing Family Tradition



integrity
and values



Haigh's Chocolates

A Beloved Aussie Icon



“
I want the company to be able to run without the next generation feeling the pressure of having to run it.”

Haigh's Chocolates needs no introduction. Beginning in 1915, Haigh's is Australia's oldest family-owned chocolatier and has been delighting generations of chocolate lovers for over a century. The Haigh's family has grown the business into an extensive operation employing over 900 people in 26 locations including a corporate support office, retail stores, and manufacturing and distribution facilities.

Haigh's is unique within the confectionary market. As “bean to bar” specialists, it is one of the few chocolatiers worldwide overseeing the end-to-end manufacturing and merchandising of products in their online and retail stores. From sourcing the best ingredients and roasting cocoa beans in their Adelaide plant, Haigh's is renowned for

their specialty chocolate blend with its own distinct aroma, texture and flavour. Many of their chocolates continue to be hand dipped and finished by artisans using the same techniques from when the business first opened its doors.

As a family run business, Haigh's has traditionally been passed onto the eldest son. Alister Haigh, the current fourth-generation owner, was on a pre-destined path after graduating from high school. He worked his way up from the factory floor, before his father, John Haigh, handed him and his brother, Simon, the business. His departing words were, “Don't stuff it up and keep it going.”

Alister has been mindful not to put the same pressures on his three children. Over the years, he's encouraged them to find their own paths and, if that led them back to the family business, it would be by their own choice.

After 10 years, Charles, Alister's middle child, has now chosen to work in the business.

He explains, “I want the company to be able to run without the next generation feeling the pressure of having to run it.”



The Challenge

Rapid Growth and Team Dysfunctions

Under the fourth generation, Haigh's has achieved spectacular results. New stores were rapidly being opened, profits increased and the business more than trebled in size. It became increasingly clear that Haigh's would soon run out of capacity to meet market opportunities. Alister saw a pressing need to systemise and professionalise Haigh's before he stepped back. He knew that Haigh's focus would have to expand from making premium chocolates to include visionary conversations that aligned with their strategic goals.

COO Peter Millard reveals:

"As a family-run business, that's been its defining characteristic, with the family managing the business. The question was, 'How would you do it differently now that Alister wants to step back? What's next in that transition? Haigh's had become a medium size company in its own right and could no longer be run using the family business practices of the past.'"

In addition, there was a level of dysfunction within Haigh's Leadership Team where excuses, justifications and a lack of accountability went unquestioned. This was exacerbated by an unwillingness within the business to confront these issues, causing growing frustration and missed opportunities.

“

Our customers tell us that we've got world class chocolates. The business looked great on the surface, what was happening underneath was a whole different thing.”

Alister Haigh, CEO

“

We lacked commitment to our promises and were unwilling to hold each other accountable for our inactions.”

Michael Dillon, Commercial Manager, discusses the dynamics of the leadership team.



Integrity and Values: A Leadership Ally

Alister first met Jennifer Elliott, Integrity and Values’ Founder and CEO, at a Family Business Association National Conference. He was intrigued by Integrity and Values’ Leadership Profile and its ability to provide deep insights into an individual’s strengths and developmental gaps. Since his children were beginning their careers, he put them through the profiling tool believing that it would present an ‘unbiased and unemotional’ overview of their core competencies.

Alister also shared with Jennifer his desire to step back from the business and the leadership challenges that Haigh’s was facing. As a family business owner herself, Jennifer understood the leadership demands on a growing business and the careful considerations required when a CEO decides to step back.

Alister engaged Integrity and Values to run their Leadership In Action Program – which the team found challenging and life changing. He was clear that he would benefit from having an experienced ally as he navigated his succession and the behavioural issues on his executive team.

Who is Integrity and Values

Integrity and Values specialises in delivering leadership transformation programs that empower leaders to build highly impactful teams. With over 30 years experience, the team of accredited facilitators and coaches are experts in transforming businesses by first transforming leaders.

Acknowledged Global Leaders

- Behavioural change
- Leadership Profiling
- Executive Coaching
- Leadership Development
- Cultural Transformation



17,000+

Leadership profiles
conducted



4,300+

Profile consultations
completed



2,100+

Leadership clients
coached



“

The business was so busy managing the day-to-day that it was hard to talk about what we could be doing next. A lot of those next steps involved engaging in really difficult conversations. Having the difficult parts facilitated enabled us to work through what Haigh's next steps would look like.”

Peter Millard, COO

The Solution

A Tailored Leadership in Action Program

The Integrity and Values 'Leadership in Action' program gave Haigh's executives an insightful look into their strengths and blind spots, and the support to unlock their leadership potential by developing new behaviours. With the guidance of facilitators, Haigh's was able to zoom out, giving the business a systemic view of issues that had gone unchallenged throughout the years.

Through Integrity and Values' Leadership Profile, individual coaching, interactive workshops and additional resources, executives worked on their ability to embed accountability, responsibility and ownership into their day-to-day conversations.

The experience also revealed who was fiercely loyal to Haigh's and willing to meet the needs of a growing business where open dialogue, innovation and collaboration would be integral to their future success.

Overcoming Team Resistance

Integrity and Values' programs can be intense and emotionally charged. They put your teams leadership behaviours under the spotlight and push executives out of their comfort zone. They are confronting and totally worthwhile.

Many of Haigh's leaders were initially resistant to the program as it exposed a number of truths that were hard to hear.

Michael Dillon, Commercial Manager reasons that, "We're used to telling others about what they've got to improve. It's a challenge to hear about what you've got to do to improve yourself. It's difficult to investigate those very dark places of yourself and recognise that you're not what you pretend to be."

These hesitations soon dissolved after the team noticed positive changes within themselves and the organisation. In particular, Michael Dillon says a turning point for him was seeing structural changes within Haigh's, including a reorganisation of the leadership team, which he didn't think could happen and certainly not at the velocity that it did.

The team's resistance also had the surprising effect of bringing the executives closer. Alister says that "one of the most rewarding aspects of the program was seeing leaders cross the finish line by working collaboratively and holding each other to account".

"There was a sense of recognising that the team is only as strong as the experiences you go through together. Realising that how we function as a team is the thing that's being tested, not us as individuals."

Peter Millard, COO on how the team dealt with uncomfortable moments in the program together.

Embedding Accountability, Responsibility and Ownership

Many factors had contributed to the team's dysfunction over the years. The biggest elephant in the room was an unwillingness to hold each other to account for their actions. Whether this was self-preservation, a lack of confidence or fear of appearing disloyal, remaining silent about underperformance hindered the team's relationship and performance. It made them into a 'Chocolate Brown Mess', a description that the leaders created to define their dynamic as a team at the beginning of the program.

Integrity and Values taught the team that whatever they were not saying, they were accepting.

Each time a leader bit their tongues, they were giving people permission to not take ownership and responsibility for their actions. This was a particularly tough lesson, the team recalls confronting moments where their facilitators dug into uncomfortable places to get to the root of their behaviours.

Despite many of these being difficult conversations, the leaders recognised that they were necessary. For their team dynamic to improve, it took a third party, with zero tolerance for excuses, to hone their new behaviours. Integrity and Values proved to be unrelenting, consistently holding leaders in the moment and engaging them in robust dialogue. Soon, the leaders began to see how open, honest dialogue freed them up to relate to each other on a productive level.

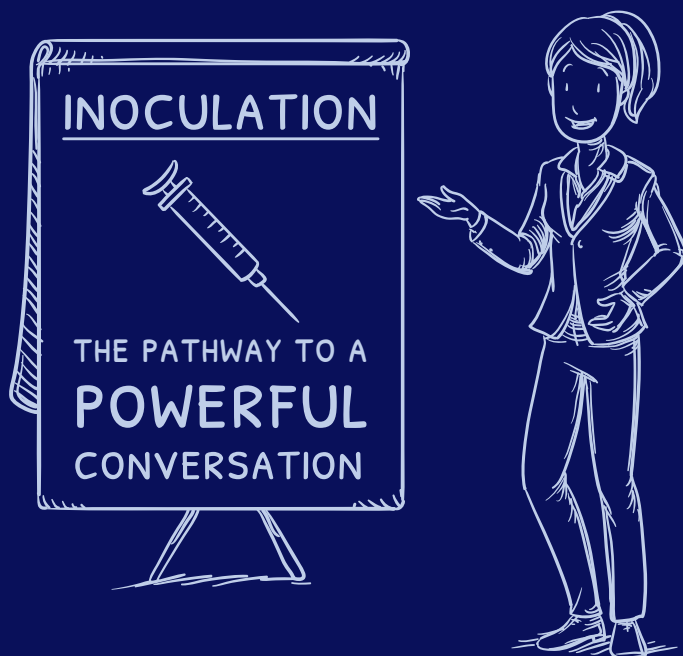
"The most challenging aspect of the program was the owning up and being honest about what we haven't done, why we hadn't done it and the fact that we were letting each other get away with it. Having these conversations was uncomfortable – the fact was to do it we needed someone else to point it out because none of us were holding our colleagues to account."

Michael Dillon, Commercial Manager

Turning Difficult Conversations into High-Value Dialogue

Leaders were given practical tools to turn challenging accountability conversations into high-value, robust dialogue that drove organisational success. Executives were taught to go into these situations with curiosity, openness and vulnerability – hallmarks of authentic leadership.

An important tool that has facilitated these conversations is 'Squalling'. This concept requires leaders to be courageous in staying in difficult moments until an issue is resolved. It opens up a safe and respectful space for teams to anchor hard conversations around business outcomes, not the individual.



“Squalling is a word we use quite a lot. If somebody says, does or hasn’t done something, we want to debate whether that’s the right thing. Somebody will say, “I think we should squall about this for a while”. In the previous world, nobody would have wanted to bring up the uncomfortable fact that someone hadn’t done what they said they were going to do and we’d all sit in silence and then move onto the next agenda item. Now, we use the word squalling and it signals to everyone that we can’t just let the issue go. It creates a safe place to debate, and it enabled us to have hard conversations and discuss issues, knowing we’re doing it for the good of the business.”

Michael Dillon, Commercial Manager on how he now focuses conversations on Haigh’s vision and values.

Handing Over the Keys (literally)

“As a business, we’re no longer victims to what happens to us and we’re accountable for what we are and are not achieving.”

Peter Millard, COO

Through the Leadership In Action Program, Peter Millard emerged as a highly competent candidate for succeeding Alister and was promoted to Chief Operating Officer. Having been with the company for over a decade, he had a strong vision for Haigh’s future and the ability to deliver sustained business value.

Integrity and Values facilitated one-on-one sessions with Alister and Peter to prepare them professionally and emotionally to step back and step up, respectively.

There were many lessons for the pair: for Alister it was learning to let go and trust the process, and for Peter to lead ‘above the line’, by owning the situation and his part in it. With Integrity and Values’ facilitation, these conversations focused on overcoming these gaps and creating a stronger bond that would drive performance at Haigh’s.



To symbolise this leadership transition, Integrity and Values encouraged Alister to carve out a moment to recognise his new relationship with Peter. Alister handed Haigh’s master keys to Peter in front of his executive team during a workshop, signalling that they could now turn to Peter for leadership.

More recently, Alister formalised Haigh’s new leadership by giving Peter his company jacket at a Haigh’s annual conference with all his senior leaders in attendance. This high visibility celebration was a memorable moment for both leaders as it solidified Alister’s trust in Peter and it confirmed that Haigh’s was now in Peter’s hands to lead.



“

The challenges and learnings that came out of the Integrity and Values program have made those people who remain on the leadership team today capable of, and willing to, engage in challenging conversations. We certainly didn't do that prior to this experience.”

Michael Dillon, Commercial Manager

Haigh's Chocolates

Outcomes

Since the Integrity and Values Leadership Development Program, Haigh's leaders report being focused and determined to work on the next phase of the business. Leveraging the personal insights and new language gained from the program, leaders are already taking their learnings back to their teams and seeing positive results.

The most significant change is that there is a strong sense of responsibility and ownership. Excuses are far fewer because leaders are creating an environment where accountability is prioritised.

The sense of urgency is evident with Haigh's announcing a 10-year growth strategy, supported by a purpose-built Salisbury facility expanding its production, warehousing, and online fulfilment capabilities. Alister has similarly moved quickly to formalize a board of directors consisting of family and external members who will guide, advise, and ensure that Haigh's continues to flourish.

“

People have stepped up. The executives are taking accountability more seriously and realising that they are leaders in the business and their behaviours and actions set the standard for others. Before now, they just thought it didn't matter.

We would have not progressed without Integrity and Values. Peter and my one-on-one sessions, and then our joint sessions, fast tracked our progression which enabled the company to move forward on initiatives at greater speed than it would have otherwise. Our team has become capable and collaborative as they work together now.”

Alister Haigh, CEO

Professional and Individual Insights

Each leader had their own unique Integrity and Values journey. Some gained a deeper understanding of their inner world and others became cognisant of their impact on others. Most importantly, everyone walked away with an effective leadership toolkit that will drive Haigh's business outcomes. The program has seen the team step into their leadership potential and lead high performing teams that now achieve extraordinary results.

Here's how the program influenced some of the executives.

Alister Haigh, CEO

"As a professional, the program improved my self-discipline and gave me permission to be demanding of people. I'm holding our leaders to account rather than letting it slide. I'm speaking up instead of allowing things to pass by. I'm in control of my time and I have flexibility for my family."

With Peter taking on the COO role and setting up a board, Alister has found the breathing space to spend time as he likes. His team now describe him as light handed, with a newfound freedom and trust in his people.



Peter Millard, COO

Peter talks about learning to be open and allowing himself to be vulnerable when it comes to 'difficult' conversations.

"There are some opportunities where you have to make the choice about how you want to lead in that moment. Part of the program is facilitating these moments where you can take that step or not. It's like being taken up on an aeroplane and they've strapped a parachute on you, at the end of the day, you've got some choice to sit here and say, 'Do I jump out of the plane or do I stay where it is safe?' There's a moment there where you say, 'Okay, here's an opportunity where maybe I can be understood and I can understand others'. This requires confronting how you're feeling and saying things that maybe aren't said."

He's also been inspired by the program to coach those around him to become better versions of themselves.

"By watching how Integrity and Values facilitated us, it's empowered me to facilitate others and inspire their leadership capabilities as well. It's much easier to have those conversations when you've sat there and dealt with your own fear. I said to someone the other day – 'What's the very worst thing that can happen in this?' That's an important question to ask yourself in every situation. Would you rather sit there and not make yourself heard, or worse, be a victim to that forever? In those moments, you create the wisdom to lean into the moment, have a go and say I'm not going to let fear define me."



Michael Dillon, Commercial Manager

Since the program started, Michael's role has expanded from managing Haigh's Finance team to also managing IT. A key takeaway for Michael was learning that managing and leading people are two different things.

"On the one hand, I understand Finance's role and could probably do all my team's jobs if I needed to, whereas in IT, I have no ability to do that. The initial challenge for me was around what value I can add here. What's great is I've got someone who knows how to do something and they're telling me what it is they want to do. All I do is manipulate the context a bit for them so that they can get that done. It's shown me how I can change my approach to Finance so that it's not dependent on me being able to answer and solve every issue. It's about ensuring that ability exists in the team and what I can do to enable this."

He also talks about his view on assertiveness and how he's integrating it into his day-to-day life.

“

When you talk about assertive behaviour, certainly to me, there are often negative connotations with it. Truly assertive behaviour is not being passive. It's not letting someone steamroll me and me just sitting there, 'I hate this but I don't want to say something because it might be a bit rude or it's a bit confronting'. I don't have to be aggressive back to you. All I say is, 'Hey, this doesn't work for me. How about we continue like this?'

So, as an individual, I have become less passive and more assertive. I continue to pay attention to when I'm not being assertive, and that gives me the opportunity to step up and act."



Empowering leaders to build responsible teams that produce extraordinary results.

To find out more visit integrityandvalues.com