



— Integrity and Values empowers leadership of iconic bedding and wellness business A.H. Beard



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Discover how the unique partnership with Integrity and Values delivered both personal and professional outcomes for A.H. Beard.



450+
staff

120+
years

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A.H. Beard has gone from employing two people, grandfather and grandmother, to 450 people with factories in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart, Adelaide, Perth and Auckland. Supporting those 450 families is what makes us a true Australian manufacturing company of today.

Garry Beard, Chairman, on the successful journey A.H. Beard has undertaken.

CHAPTER 01

Introducing A.H. Beard, an Australian family success story

A.H. Beard is unquestionably one of the great homegrown Australian ongoing success stories. Spanning 120 years, the Beard family have led the company from humble origins to become the second-largest manufacturer of mattresses in Australia.

The company is currently led by Chairman Garry Beard, now in his fourth decade at the company. Inspired by his grandfather, and father's hands-on approach with the business, Garry worked his way up from making bases in the upholstery section, to leading

the organisation and upholding the industry-leading family legacy.

A.H. Beard today has over 450 staff with manufacturing plants across Australia, New Zealand and Asia. In 2014, the company announced its expanded vision of 'Improving Lives through Better Sleep' with a transition from mattress provider to a recognised global player in the wellness industry. A.H. Beard today strives to deliver better health and wellbeing through their expertise in all things involving quality sleep and rest.



Being a family-run business has been key to the A.H. Beard success story, with Garry highlighting their long term partnerships with some of Australia's leading retailers as evidence of the family-like bonds A.H. Beard maintain with their clients and customers.

Garry highlights their longest-running client, Harvey Norman — now in their sixth decade of doing business together — as a sound example of the success that their strong focus on enduring relationships and family-like bonds has had with clients.



“ What’s unique about A.H. Beard over my twenty-five years here, is they’ve had a vision which has been clearly communicated. I’ve felt that I’m a part of a bigger picture. Our employees have such a long tenure because of the family culture. When you talk to any of the 450 staff, they have this resounding loyalty and commitment to the business.

Gillian Wise, Group Education and Development Manager, attributing the unique bonds of a family business as a key A.H. Beard strength.



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You need people around you that are better than you and are more attuned to what you're wanting to achieve. We have seen the benefits through two general managers and now two CEO's from outside the family, to be where we are today.

Garry Beard, Chairman, on the need for A.H. Beard to seek external leadership.

CHAPTER 02

**'It's not the business
destroying the family.
It's the family that
destroys the business.'**

While A.H. Beard is undoubtedly a successful case study in family businesses, Garry saw a growing need to expand the leadership alongside the wellness vision for the organisation overall.

In 2000, Garry and his brother decided to recruit leadership outside the family, starting with a new CEO. This process continued in 2017 with the Beard brothers taking a step back from day-to-day operations and appointing Tony Pearson as the new CEO

and continuing the strategy of recruiting external leaders.

The Beard family leadership had primarily grown the business to its successful state in the past. The family was aware of a common point of failure for a lot of family businesses, as Garry shared, 'You think you know everything, you don't. It's not the business destroying the family. It's the family that destroys the business.'



CHAPTER 03

Finding and filling the gaps

Tony, invigorated by the opportunity, got to work assessing the organisation and identified a number of strategic intents that were not aligned. Through a process incorporating all 450 employees, new strategies were outlined for the next three years. Tony wanted a strong focus on laying down a platform for growth, both for the business and for the people who would ultimately deliver that growth.

Tony commenced with the people component of his strategy by looking within the organisation and identifying 'What are the personal and professional capabilities? And what do they need to

be for us to be able to accelerate the opportunities available to our business?'

The critical gap found from these discovery processes concerned the organisation's leadership group as a whole. While the leadership team were all well-regarded and extremely competent, there was a lack of collaboration that was limiting A.H. Beard's future growth.

A.H. Beard then set out to rectify this gap by leveraging Tony's past experience with leadership upskilling in a consulting firm he owned, to engage with external leadership support.

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While functionally competent in their core roles; there was a lot of siloed activity in the Leadership Team. I felt we had a leadership competency gap which we needed to overcome rapidly. This was one of the main reasons for engaging Integrity and Values.

Tony Pearson, CEO, on the instigating factors that led to external leadership upskilling support.

CHAPTER 04

Why Integrity and Values?

Before A.H. Beard, Tony ran his own consultancy, and that role consisted of working with senior leaders in both the public and private sectors. Additionally, he had run several education businesses. He knew of Integrity and Values through both these avenues, they were an 'incredibly well-known' entity, particularly because of their founder Jennifer Elliott and her long standing reputation in the industry.

As Tony explained, 'Having known Jennifer, I reached out to her and gave her the brief, and she developed a program for attaining the rapid development for our people that we were looking for.'

While Tony had a background of positive feedback supporting his enthusiasm for working with Integrity and Values, CFO Adam Gorczyca had reservations. Adam defines himself as very black and white with

how he conducts the financial operations and sees things in general from a mathematical perspective. As he humorously described,

“All of this stuff around the emotional intelligence of human interaction and that sort of thing is all a little bit off with the pixies for me. Just give me the facts and let's make a decision and let's roll on.”

Adam, while out of the comforts of his standard operating procedure, saw potential in Integrity and Values through the programmatic strategies outlined by Jennifer and the team. The consistent program and coaching stood out for Adam. The structure reminded him more of university degrees and corporate accreditations than the regular leadership training he had scoffed at in the past.



With Adam and Tony on board and having belief in what Integrity and Values could deliver the A.H. Beard leadership team, Garry was next to meet with Jennifer. Garry was quickly impressed by what he described as, 'Her bubblyness, enthusiasm, passion and her brilliant use of language to express herself.



With Integrity and Values itself being a family operated business, Jennifer understood Garry's concerns around the changing circumstances of the modern business world for a family business. In particular, the newfound scrutiny, both public and private companies faced through social media.

A plan to develop and educate the leadership team to handle the digital era while still being themselves was formulated, with Integrity and Values as the next non-Beard family influence to be incorporated into the A.H. Beard story.

CHAPTER 05

Leadership in Action



October 2018

Eight members of A.H. Beard's leadership team embarked on a twelve-month Integrity and Values Leadership in Action program.



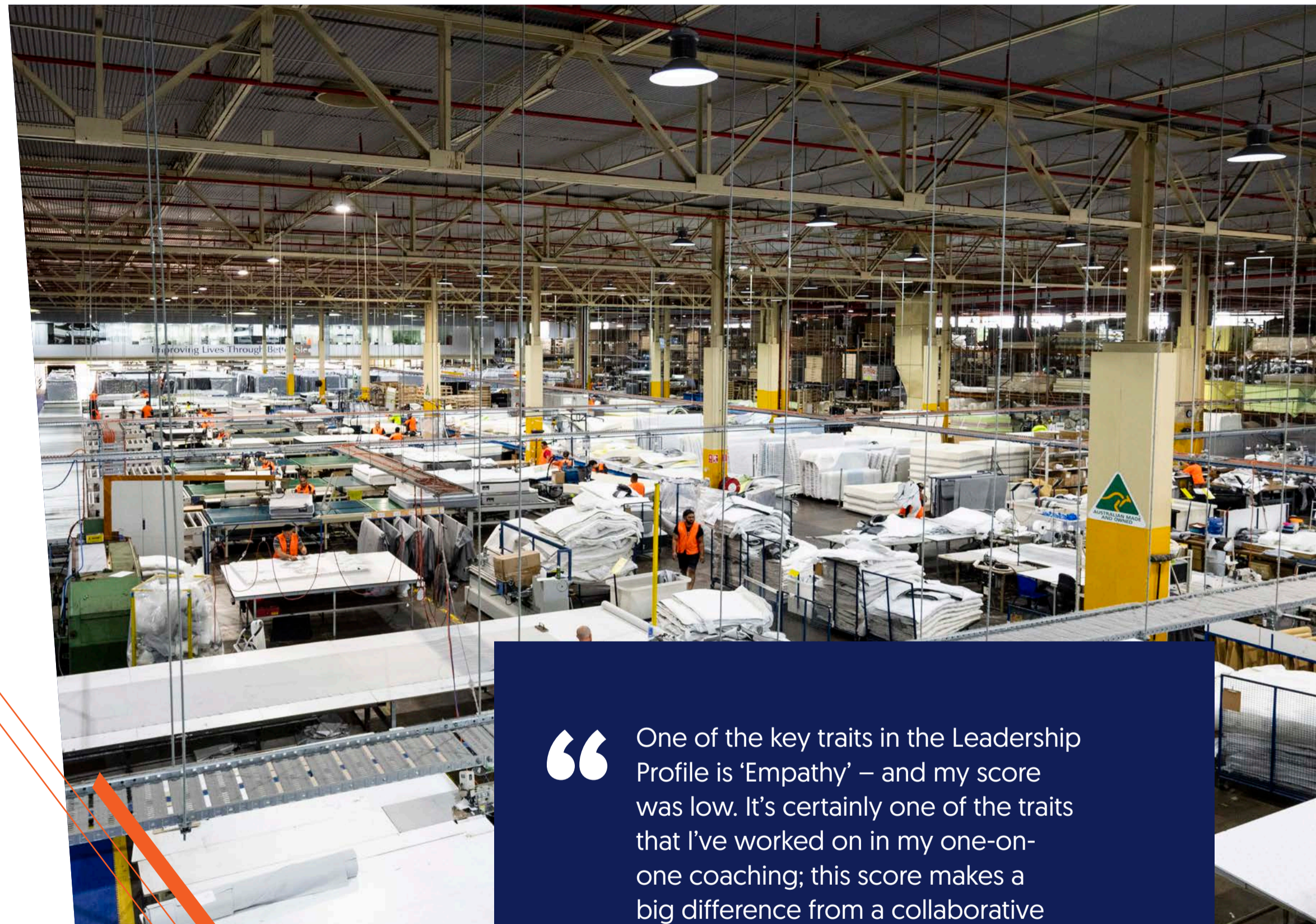
First Steps

Each of the leaders completed the Integrity and Values Leadership Profile questionnaire, a detailed profiling tool that identifies core leadership strengths, constraints and the gaps that limit success. The profile establishes what leaders need to know about their people and how to manage and develop them effectively.



Impact

The profile quickly enables individuals to see their impact, whether positive or negative, on the results they produce personally, and the results produced by the company as a whole.



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One of the key traits in the Leadership Profile is 'Empathy' – and my score was low. It's certainly one of the traits that I've worked on in my one-on-one coaching; this score makes a big difference from a collaborative perspective.

Tony Pearson, CEO, on his experience with the initial Leadership Profile component of the Leadership in Action program.



The Leadership in Action Program is all about building the confidence and mental muscle to become great leaders. The plan incorporates a combination of confronting monthly team workshops followed by individual coaching for each of the eight leaders.

The program embedded the training around conversations on 'Integrity' and 'Responsibility' within the leadership team by unpacking the core values of leadership and demonstrating how they drive behaviour and subsequent results.

An important role of the monthly workshops and one-on-one coaching is keeping leaders responsible and accountable to one another for the changing behaviours they've committed to making. They also provide an opportunity for leaders to have a sounding board to test themselves and their leadership

“ One of the greatest things for me was having that person who can reflect back at you, hold you personally to account, also you can talk openly about business-critical areas or struggles that you're having, both personally and professionally. It changed my life and the life of the business.

Tony Pearson, CEO, on the impacts of the one-on-one coaching component of the Leadership in Action program.



“ This is not just someone standing at the front of the room reading bullet points from a PowerPoint presentation. Your character will be tested. Courage and resilience are required – because you will be put under the microscope in the process.

Adam Gorczyca, CFO

CHAPTER 06

Not ‘just another management training program’

There were reservations from the leadership team from the outset, with expectations of this being ‘just another management program’, as COO Brent Tyrrell stated. However, he noted this led to a feeling of ‘shock and awe’ from the team as it ‘quickly evolved into something that was a lot more and added a bunch of clear value’.

The Integrity and Values team challenged the leadership group individually as well as in a group environment, ensuring it was conducted with an emphasis on trust and support. While several members of the team detail this process as confronting, they unanimously agreed the benefits gained outweighed any initial reservations they held.





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'.

“ It’s a very supportive environment, and it was clearly proven that the more open you were, the more the support grew. I believe we had a good level of trust – and the Leadership in Action process developed us to become even stronger. That’s the real power of connection – we are connected to each other.

Adam Gorczyca, CFO, on the support and trust that was cultivated by the Integrity and Values team.

“ I recall my coach saying ‘You’re an extraordinary manager and a terrible leader of people. Do you want to change that, your choice?’ To get the most out of this program takes a high level of commitment and self-reflection. It also takes vulnerability – with your vulnerability comes the power to really move the dial.

Glenn Anstey, Head of Sales, highlights an initial confronting moment with his coach that still resonates with him today.



“ The members of the leadership team, we were all amazing. All you had to do was ask us, and we'd tell you that. And we all thought everybody else was amazing, and we told everybody how lovely we were. 'How are you today?' 'Yeah, good.' 'How're things?' 'Yeah, good.' Everything was good - when in actual fact, things were not. So, we got labelled as the Lovely Club.

Gillian Wise, Group Education and Development Manager, on the origins of the Lovely Club.

CHAPTER 07

The timely demise of The Lovely Club

Integrity and Values taught Gillian and the leadership team that things were not, in fact, always 'good' and challenging conversations needed to be had that were not 'lovely' at all. Understanding that authentic leadership required the courage to be vulnerable and request assistance, or admit when things are not great. The crucial importance for a leader to hold themselves and others accountable was a key learning for the entire leadership team.

A vital tool for this process was 'Inoculation', a strategy based upon directly establishing

the clear need to have a difficult conversation from the outset, and ensuring these conversations contain both honest vulnerability and respect.

Gillian went further to state that the demise of the Lovely Club ultimately led to increased confidence in her ability to successfully lead her team of fifty employees remotely in New Zealand, through unprecedented pandemic impacts.

“ I've got a team of fifty employees over in New Zealand, and it's important for them to understand the company values and how to resolve conflict with mutual respect. I often explain the Integrity and Values lessons to them, so they understand that I want them to take responsibility in their remotely managed roles. This wouldn't have been a job for the Lovely Club.

Gillian Wise, Group Education and Development Manager.

CHAPTER 08

Professional insights and personal outcomes

The journey with Integrity and Values was different for every member of the former Lovely Club, each tackling the differing 'gaps' in their leadership skills, alongside their own personal quirks and eccentricities. These gaps were brought to the surface and addressed in the group and individual sessions.

When it comes to the individualised outcomes, who better to hear from than the leadership team members themselves?



“ Having worked in the people development game for quite a long time, I already understood the value of having professional mentors, coaches, and consultants to hold you to account and that is something I'd lacked before engaging with Integrity and Values.

Whether you're the captain of the team or not, the coach is there to support everyone individually. It wasn't that I necessarily needed a coach to hold me to account - I needed a coach to remind me that it was my responsibility. Integrity and Values did an exceptional job of that. It permeates everything, not just when you're wearing your corporate hat, your personal hat too.

Toward the close of this program, I made a personal commitment to myself to do something about my health. It was because of the coaching, and Jennifer's reinforcement of my commitment to hold myself to account that I stuck with the program, which resulted in me losing 60 kilos, that I have kept off. So the benefits of that for me personally are immeasurable, and I really want to reinforce that I got a lot out of it, not just from a senior leader in an organisation perspective, just as importantly, I got a lot out of it as an individual.

Tony Pearson, CEO

While Tony emphasised the importance of his leadership development, the program also assisted with his personal commitment to improve his health.



“ For me, Integrity and Values really brought home the fact that we’re in this together and it needs all of us working cooperatively at all times, and considering others and what expertise they might bring to the table.

The group sessions, while at times emotionally charged and quite intense, did build a deeper connection between us as work colleagues. A shared experience is an easier experience, so it is important to trust in others and share what you’re going through.

They have made the team, as a unit, move forward more efficiently and become productive. This has had a positive impact across all of the teams and for the business, it has brought normal everyday business issues front and centre every week, ensuring they can be dealt with expeditiously.

Adam Gorczyca, CFO

For Adam, the team building and the collaborative skills gained throughout the program resonated the most for his personal and professional development.



The massive shift for me over the past twelve months has been in my self-awareness. Being aware of my impact on other people was something that I didn't really consider before the program. Spending six years in the army had shaped how I was as a leader. When I started the Integrity and Values journey, I was working long hours, as Jennifer put it, 'a highly capable person and I can do a whole bunch of different things'. The reality is that's not the point of being a leader. The point of being a leader is to get the maximum benefit out of the resources you have, including your people. Encouraging them, guiding them, putting them on that journey and keeping that high-level view, ensuring that everyone is going in the right direction, were all skill gaps I missed. It's so obvious to me now, at the time I was buried in how much I could get out of a given day. What quantity of work could I do rather than engaging the group and actually getting the results. Going on that journey of understanding who I am, and then understanding how I impact others, has had significant outcomes personally and professionally.

Brent Tyrrell, COO

Brent's journey to COO aligned with his Leadership in Action program, which really supported him to evolve his leadership approach and capabilities.

Additionally, Brent elaborated on how the Integrity and Values program assisted him, having come at a personally challenging time.

In the middle of the program, I separated from my wife of ten years. It was challenging, I was able to be very open with the group, and with Jennifer. All of the lessons that we went through were flashing through my mind at that moment of crisis. And it was a personal moment of crisis, it had nothing to do with work - it really gave me the inner strength to be able to get through. Being able to process it with emotional intelligence has allowed me to move on to better relationships, that are meaningful, and genuine. It has put me in a clear headspace which has allowed me to be an effective leader.



“ The Integrity and Values program is a life-long journey that provides you with all of these leadership tools. It’s not just a once-off. I’ve been to programs before, and I couldn’t even tell you what the content was because I’ve forgotten it. With Integrity and Values, yes, you go into the program then, the program finishes, and that’s when it all truly begins. That is when you start to transform because you use all the lessons that you’ve learned, and all of the tools that they’ve given you to now implement.

Now when a situation with my team here or overseas arises, I ask myself ‘What lesson can I pull out of my toolbox that will support me with this situation?’

Gillian Wise, Group Education and Development Manager

Gillian keenly embraced the learnings and skills from the program, labelling them as her ‘toolbox’ and this was a critical asset for her in successfully leading her team of 50 remote New Zealand staff during the pandemic lockdowns in both countries.

“ It was like nothing I’d ever done before. When they sat us down in the beginning and said ‘you’re in for the ride of a lifetime’, they weren’t joking. Jennifer asked me early on, ‘Do you want to keep selling mattresses day-to-day, or do you want to be able to develop a team that can sell it?’ and with that piece of advice, I realised I needed to address developing my team and therefore myself. If I couldn’t have tough conversations with people on their performance, then I was never going to be able to do it as a leader.

With this ‘awakening’ as Glenn called it, he instigated a considerable restructuring of his team. He realised he had too many people in the team and not enough of the right people. This was in part due to his reluctance to have the tough conversations a

leader needs to have. The outcome has been significant. Glenn outlined:

‘I went from having quite a large team, down to four, punching out greater numbers than we were before, we just had too many people, and not the right people.’



Glenn Anstey, Head of Sales

For Glenn, his biggest challenge was learning to lead and not just manage. As a highly-skilled Executive Account Manager, Glenn knew how to get things done and drive results. Now with a large team as Head of Sales, the challenge was building and leading the team. Integrity and Values addressed this challenge throughout the program and it was a regular focus of his one-on-one coaching sessions.

CHAPTER 09

Integrity and Values Impact

A.H. Beard's leadership team may no longer be a 'Lovely Club'. Still, the group's club-like mentality has only strengthened because of the bonds of trust and understanding that developed together throughout the Integrity and Values program.

The impact the lessons and skills have had on the leadership team has already had ramifications throughout the business. This can be seen today through Glenn's efficient Sales team continuing to do more with less, Gillian using her toolbox to impart Integrity and Values lessons to her team across the Tasman and Tony continuing the healthier lifestyle after his inspirational transformation.

Brent has now commenced putting his own team's leaders through training and Tony has initiated plans for the next tier of leadership to go through a similar Integrity and Values experience.



“ I had a large strategic imperative for our business; undertaking the personal and professional development of our people, predicated over everything else. I needed to achieve that as quickly as possible. There was no one in the leadership development industry that I'd entrust that to other than Integrity and Values. Integrity and Values have produced amazing results for our people, and as an outcome of that, our business.

Tony Pearson, CEO, outlining the experience with Integrity and Values.



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