

# CASE STUDY: AUSTRALIA POST

## Data driven insights for the Extended Leadership Team

How do you best equip middle-managers for a potential step up into senior leadership? That was the question asked of People Measures by a major government entity. We responded with an interactive development program that has won glowing reviews from participants and management.

Australia Post is a large organisation in every sense. From complexity of operations in an evolving business to the sheer logistical challenges involved in delivery to the huge number of staff members requiring management and development, it's one of the country's most dynamic but demanding corporations.

So when Australia Post's Chief Information Officer John Cox wanted to accelerate the evolution of his Extended Leadership Team, he decided to identify the strengths and potential weaknesses of 50 senior managers.

He called People Measures, having worked with the company before at another organisation.

*People Measures had been exceptional, did an absolutely cracking job and so I knew they were right for this, to help develop our Extended Leadership Team, he said. What we were after was a program that would give us data driven insights into our ELT's capabilities, measure their commercial acumen, their strategic thinking, to consider their confidence in presentation and their financial literacy.*

People Measures, in collaboration with John and other senior Australia Post managers, designed a Development Centre that included a Strategic Scenario Analysis, Group Discussion, Customer Interview, People Issues Summary Paper, Presentation and a Coaching Role Play. These activities were designed to assess ten of Australia Post's competencies and were chosen to ensure that no particular participant or function was at an advantage. In the end, the entire process happened in a single day.

People Measures' Paul Starr said it was a challenge that his team embraced. *We have worked closely with Australia Post over many years and have enormous respect for them. The way they conduct their business, and their values are exemplary. So, we were both fascinated and delighted when John approached us and asked if we can help*

*them develop their IT leadership team. The CIO team at Post work in an extraordinary environment given the evolving, demanding changes in technology, customer expectations, and the market place. To be able to assist the team to develop to meet these needs was a real privilege.*

*John and the team were keen for us to do the work in a relatively short timeframe, involve them as fully and appropriately as possible, and, as always, treat their staff with the most respect, including being respectfully frank and honest about where they needed to improve to meet their objectives.*

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One unique challenge for John was a need to reassure the ELT cohort that this was a genuine managerial push to help them improve, with no ulterior motives relating to potential downsizing or head counts.

*I made a commitment to them that it was purely for their development, he said. People Measures had enough experience to understand that people would be anxious. They're mostly psychologists as well so they understood that dimension.*

The reassured team approached the development centre in the right frame of mind and the performance data flowed across the range of competencies.

*People Measures' style is so clear and authentic, John said. The proof for the team was in what happened afterwards. We sat down the members of the ELT, gave them written reports and individual development plans to help them work on their individual challenges. We provided written feedback and I think they were amazed that senior Australia Post leadership had taken such a personal interest in their development.*

*One thing I liked was that my senior leadership team was engaged by People Measures and brought in on the assessments, John said. It reduced our costs but also taught my direct reports how to observe and provide high quality feedback to the extended leadership team.*

John said that such was the success he plans to repeat the work in 2019.

*The feedback was that this program was an incredibly stressful and scary day for a lot of people but they valued the way the message was delivered, the feedback and the concrete actual development.*