

Transdisciplinary Collaboration: A Recipe for Program Success

In 2019, Australian public relations agency Haystac, identified the need to differentiate themselves in their market. Haystac consulted QUTeX to develop a bespoke capability development program, which harnessed the business' objective of using sociology as a means for differentiation.

Haystac needed to leverage the existing capabilities of the team, whilst pivoting to a new way of thinking to set the team and business up for long term success.

The Client

Part of Australia's largest media company, the global Dentsu Aegis Network, Haystac was founded in 2001 and has grown to over 60 staff across offices in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. Haystac specialises in public relations, social media, content and creative and services a wide variety of sectors, from travel to technology.

The Solution

A Capability Development Program was co-designed by QUTeX with Haystac, to help embed a new way of seeing and practising public relations.

The program offered more than an upgrade or refresh of skills – it was developed as a platform to help Haystac implement a new methodology to make decisions and work with their clients. This also aligned to their ambition to grow their organisation through approaching business through a different lens.

To support Haystac's quest for market differentiation through applying sociology, QUTeX harnessed expertise from across the university, to deliver a program that worked with the participants to strengthen their knowledge of sociology and its intersection with public relations.

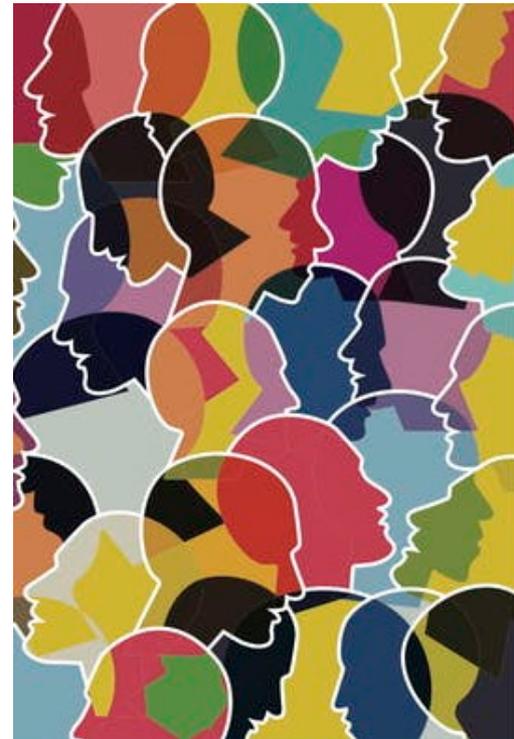
A variety of learning objectives were factored into the development of the program, including:

- Using sociological analysis to provide a deeper understanding of social norms, values and contexts.
- Strengthening the knowledge of evidence-based sociological and communication frameworks to guide business practice.
- Designing communication campaigns that draw upon sociological insights to effect change.
- Applying social justice principles to underpin good practice.
- Understanding and integrating the sociological principles of ethics, equality, power and culture in practice and communication.

“As part of the program, we hosted a lunch experiment. After researching Haystac's clients, we used one of them, as a means to explore a sociological lens through probiotic food consumption.

We then stocked a range of probiotic food and drinks to complement lunch, taking before and after photographs to examine behaviours and challenge thinking.”

– Lead Facilitator, Amisha Mehta



Partnership at a Glance



April 2019



Brisbane



Public Relations



Capability Development Program:

Workshop 1:

- Knowledge of sociology and using an evidence based approach.
- Communication frameworks and campaigns to guide business practice.

Workshop 2:

- Critically analyse communication plans.
- Integrate social, ethical and cultural principles.

The Project Team

To deliver on our commitment to Haystac, a collaborative team of experts was formed by QUTeX and led by QUT's Associate Professor Amish Mehta, who worked with Associate Professor Carol Richards to bring together the latest in content, research and thinking from QUT.

"It (the program) challenged me to think broadly on big picture concepts, which has been interesting personally and professionally."

– Program participant



Lead facilitator: Associate Professor Amisha Mehta, QUT Business School

Amisha is a public relations educator with specialised skills in risk and crisis communication. She has designs learning that is evidence-based to build capabilities that enable students to navigate or lead through change and maintain core skills.



Sociologist: Associate Professor Carol Richards, QUT Business School

Dr Carol Richards is an Associate Professor at QUT where she applies sociological theories into projects in agrifood, environment and sustainability. She draws upon the tools of sociological analysis to offer unique insights into emerging social trends and complex social issues.



About QUTeX

QUTeX collaborates with large and small public and private sector organisations to design, develop and deliver customised leadership education and coaching programs.

QUT's Faculty of Business is the first in Australia to earn the Triple Crown — all three international accreditation symbols of excellence from the world's leading business school accrediting bodies.

With our nimble and client-focused approach to corporate education for the real world, and access to experts on a wide range of topics, QUTeX will work with your organisation to create and execute a program that meets and exceeds your business' needs.

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Web: QUT.edu.au/QUTeX

Phone: Brisbane 07 3138 7733, Canberra 02 6198 3098

Email: qutex@qut.edu.au

Blog: blogs.qut.edu.au/qutex

