



# Hands-on leadership, happier people – and a 25% gain in conversion

When Virgin Blue engaged Brava to implement its **Front Line Leadership system** at its Brisbane contact centre, the airline aimed to improve sales conversion. That goal was achieved - a 25 per cent improvement in the proportion of inbound enquiries resulting in sales.

But for Global Guest Contact Centre Manager Susy Goldner a more important objective was to provide managers with hands-on leadership skills.

She says the airline had the right people but lacked a framework for managing and coaching staff.

“We didn’t have coaching processes and there was an opportunity to improve rapport-building patterns between our staff and our guests (we call our passengers guests). I wanted them to be better communicators.”

“What I was aiming for was for the team managers, contact centre manager and coaches at our Brisbane centre to have practical leadership skills that could make a difference in managing the performance of their staff.”

“When I say ‘leadership’ I mean practical leadership skills. I need managers to be able to lead people, to explain the direction and help them to go in that direction, and give people the skills to achieve results.”

“When people do a generic ‘leadership’ course they come away with a lot of concepts about leadership. But what they don’t have is hands-on practices they can apply. That’s what I wanted from Brava — to turn leadership concepts into the capability for action.”

“And that’s what I got.”

Susy says one example is the consistent language now used by all levels of management.

“When we use words like “praise”, “coach”, “corrective feedback”, or “specific behaviours” — we all know what those mean now and how to do those things.”

## CASE STUDY

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“We have a consistent process for praising people. I’ve got Brava’s little card pinned on my wall which is our guideline for how we do this.”

“The materials provided in training and the support materials you can refer to, like the card on my wall, are really effective.”

“We don’t talk about it much any more, because it’s embedded in the way we work now. It has become practical leadership skills that people possess.”

Susy says the Brava approach has improved relationships between managers and made managers more effective. Staff are happier and more productive.”

“It improved morale within a day.”

“We moved from an unintentional model of telling people what they had done wrong, to telling them what they had done right.

“From the day we started that, I observed a body language change in the call centre, where people stood up straight, had their shoulders back, and were smiling more.”

“Over the 18 months since, the morale in our centre has improved from some grumbles and ‘haphazard happiness’ to — and this sounds a bit crazy — widespread happiness. And I wouldn’t describe it as bad previously.”

“There’s a commercial reality around happiness. Happy means productive, and not just for call centre staff. It applies to all layers including myself, because I’m not having to manage the problems which come from unhappy people.”

Susy recommends Brava to call centres seeking a framework for coaching and managing on-going improvement.

“I sell it unasked. I strongly suggest they do it. I tell them they need to sit down and listen to me about this.”

“I would like to have the influence to have Virgin Blue use it on a wider basis.”



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