

Can leadership training improve culture in the real estate industry?

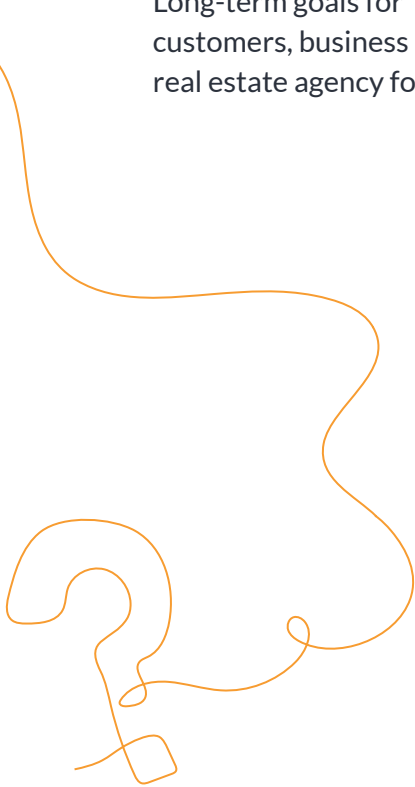
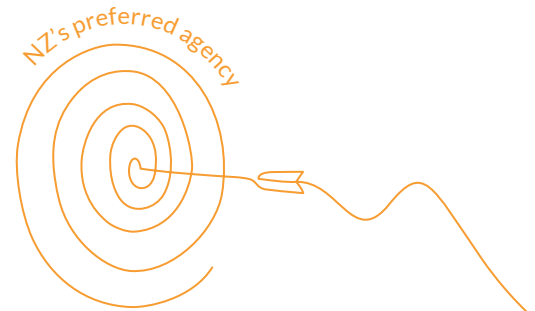
Tall Poppy Case Study



Introduction

Established in 2012, Tall Poppy Real Estate is one of New Zealand's leading agencies. Skilled sales agents, excellent customer service, and fair, transparent pricing have helped the business win multiple awards in the last decade.

Long-term goals for Tall Poppy are to keep adding value for customers, business partners and agents and be the preferred real estate agency for both vendors and sales agents.



Challenge

When Steve Guiney joined Tall Poppy as Chief People Officer (CPO) in 2021, he found the organisation had an opportunity to invest in professional development.

Both he and the CEO, Mike Seymour knew that if Tall Poppy was to achieve its strategic goal of market leadership, they needed to support their team to increase productivity, collaborate together and focus on goals.

Tall Poppy was ready to invest in their people and they turned to Winsborough to help develop a leadership training programme.

Results at a glance

Winsborough's Leadership Essentials programme increased the confidence and leadership skills at Tall Poppy Real Estate by 43%. For CPO Steve Guiney, the programme increased his team's self-awareness, built trust across the business, and **helped Tall Poppy's leaders understand why and how to lead.**

"The Winsborough Leadership Essentials Programme has been a game changer for Tall Poppy. It's been one of the key pillars to our increased morale, increased productivity and our inclusive culture."
- Steve Guiney, CPO, Tall Poppy Real Estate

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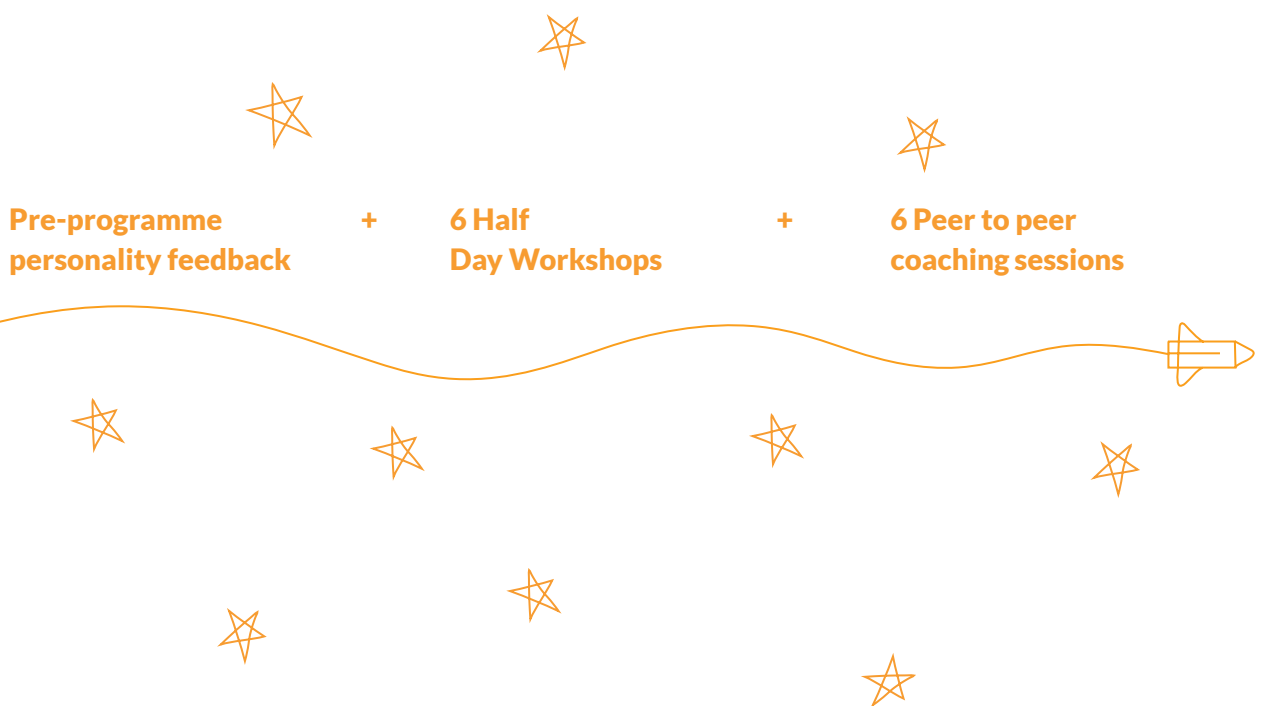
Programme overview

Tall Poppy chose the Winsborough Leadership Essentials programme to kick start its leadership development. It was rebranded as the Amazing Leader Programme to align with other development initiatives running at Tall Poppy.

From Tall Poppy's nationwide team, 48 franchise owners, leadership figures, influential senior agents and team members took part.

The programme ran over 12 modules and included: a personality inventory and feedback session followed by 6 half-day workshops and 6 peer-to-peer coaching sessions.

It should be noted that during the programme there was a 4-month interruption caused by COVID and the corresponding shift in the real estate market.



Survey results

This case study is based on interview and evaluation survey responses from course participants at the end of the programme.



Context & expectations

Tall Poppy's middle management had limited exposure to leadership programmes—and thus little interest in being better at it.

Before the programme, one leader described their leadership style as “**ambulance at the bottom of the cliff rather than the coach.**” Another said they were “**...relaxed and non-effective; working hard but not smart.**”

Initially others didn't see themselves as leaders and hence didn't understand why they were in the programme. One respondent said that “**I basically was standing there with my hands up saying I don't actually understand why I'm even here.**”

Outcomes

1. *Becoming more self aware*

The programme's first action is to open the door to better self-awareness, beginning with the premise that who you are is how you lead.

Early on, participants reflected on their identity and behaviour through a Winsborough personality evaluation and development-focused feedback sessions. Revisiting these assessments throughout the programme became a catalyst for self-reflection and growth.

“**This has given me a deeper understanding of who I am and how I show up as the leader.**” - Janet O'Shea, franchise owner





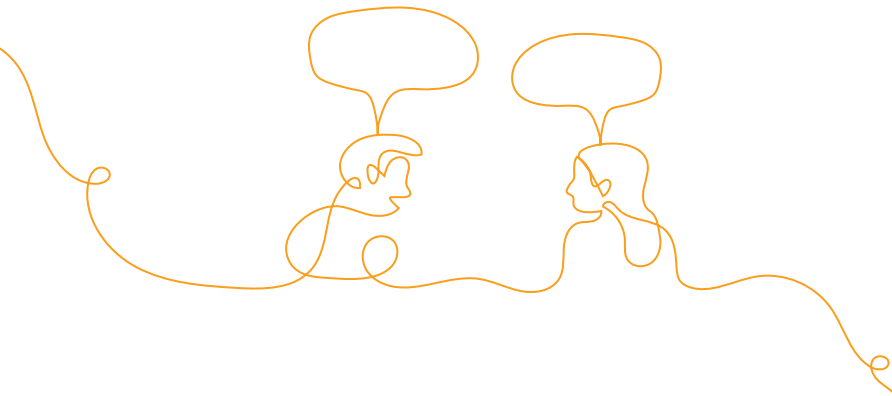
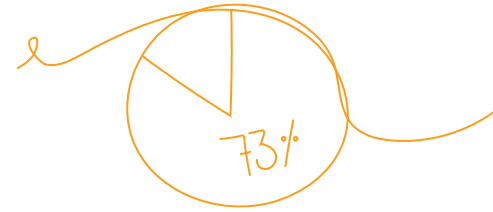
Outcomes continued

73% of participants found the personality assessment particularly effective. Many said it gave new perspective on how they are perceived and how they lead.

“It was very confronting going into the programme with some information about yourself that you hadn’t seen before and then being able to work on that throughout the process,” said franchise owner Tim Burton.

Increased self-awareness also had a flow-on effect on other aspects of their roles.

“How I believe I am and how I’m perceived and a lot of that is around my personality style and the way that I deliver,” said senior agent Tracey Black. “So for me that is by far and away the biggest thing and it’s not just in how I lead a team, it’s how I lead conversations with vendors, with clients.”



2. Empowering through coaching & developing others

Initially it was evident that the course participants were used to telling others what to do – both sales agents and vendors. By developing listening and coaching skills the programme improved communication, and as a result, increased performance.

57% of participants said the ‘Feedback and coaching’ module was **very useful**. One leader said learning how to coach instead of problem solve was invaluable. Michelle Facer’s lightbulb moment was to “recognise my job is to empower everyone in my team.”

“Now I listen and guide rather than just tell so people have a chance to solve it themselves, feel empowered and learn.” - Course Participant

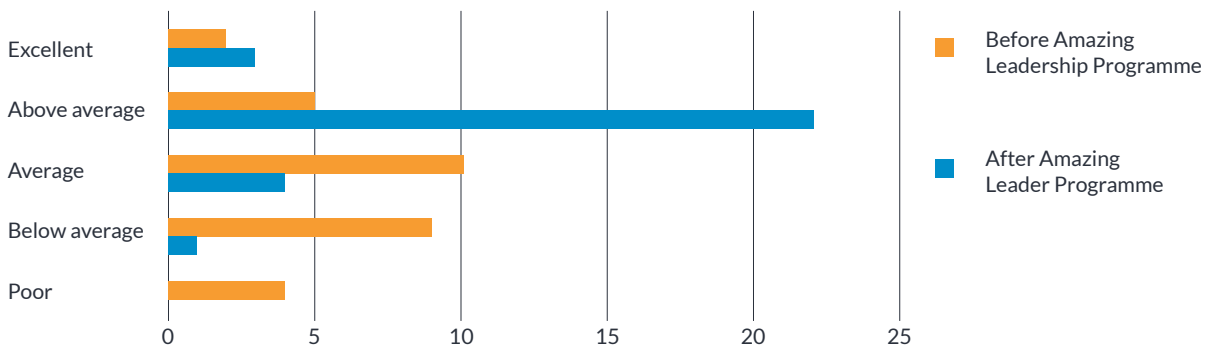


3. Leadership skills & confidence

During the Amazing Leader Programme, leadership skills and confidence at Tall Poppy improved by a remarkable 43%.

43% 
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Leadership Skills



4. Culture, trust & connection

From the survey and interview results, one module that stood out was **‘Building psychological safety and trust’**. This module helped Tall Poppy leaders build trust by equipping the participants, and the wider business, with the language to handle sensitive issues.

“There’s been a marked difference between the way our leaders approach people, the conversations that we’re having with them, and their understanding of their own roles.” - Steve Guiney, CPO, Tall Poppy Real Estate

Steve relayed a story to illustrate the change:

“I was just on the phone today with one of my team who asked, ‘Can I have a safe conversation with you?’ Now that guy would never have said that prior to the Amazing Leader course. He would’ve said ‘I’ve got something to tell you, but I don’t know if I can say it. Or he would have said nothing at all!’”



Feedback

“This programme has given me so many more skills that I didn’t even know I was lacking in. I took away so many key things that are going to help not only me as a leader but my team and business. The skills learnt are so valuable to my future success.”

- Course Participant

“This programme has been one of the best things that I’ve done in my business because I haven’t owned a business before... I’ve managed or mentored people in the past but, to have a deeper understanding of the whole psychology of it in the background, has made a big difference for me personally in how I am looking at my business and my team.” - Janet O’Shea, franchise owner



Janet O’Shea



Sheree Purnell

“Throughout all our sessions there were just so many skills that I just picked up and techniques I’ve been able to use to help manage my team. I had a very small team when I started this journey but throughout the process, I’ve now built up our team and this course has really given me skills and techniques to effectively run a team and deal with issues when they arise.” - Sheree Purnell, franchise co-owner

“I think even our own cohort grew or maybe matured...and I think that the Winsborough programme has had a huge amount of growth in all the business owners.”- Tim Burton, franchise owner



Tim Burton



Summary continued

Investing in leadership skills has helped Tall Poppy grow a more supportive, productive and positive culture.

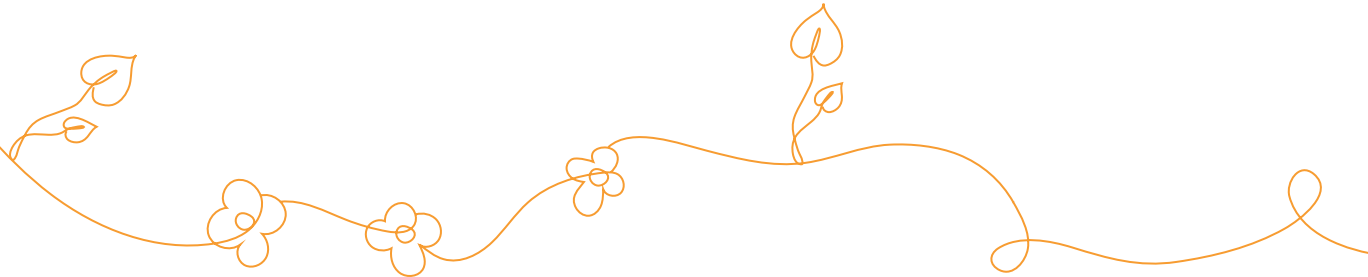
All participants have picked up tools and techniques they now use in their everyday leadership. They report being more thoughtful about leadership and more proactive in applying what they have learnt. Tall Poppy leaders have been embedding their knowledge by putting it into practice, initiating one-on-one meetings and getting feedback from their teams to build trust and connection.



Steve Guiney

Steve Guiney believes Tall Poppy's culture has changed significantly after the Winsborough leadership programme.

"The general rhetoric, the tone, the culture, the morale, you can measure it," he says. "It's so different to this time last year."



The last word:

There can be no argument that leadership – and leaders – are consequential. Bad leaders do untold harm. Good leaders may not do untold good, but they tend to keep things stable, peaceful and fairly productive.

It's the same in organisations. Poor leaders destroy value or waste human capital or both. Great leaders build value, make workplaces rewarding and enjoyable and generally act as stewards for the greater good.

At Winsborough, we take leadership seriously. So should you. Call now to enquire about how our Leadership Essentials programme can help you to build better leaders.

Contact the Winsborough Team:

winsborough.co.nz | 0800 222 061 | support@winsborough.co.nz

