

# Upskilling to add value

CASE STUDY -  
BALLANCE-AGRI NUTRIENTS



Since awarding their workplace training programme to Aspire2, following a formal tender process, Ballance Agri-Nutrients has not looked back.

## Upskilling to add value

Ballance is no small business. The fertilizer product manufacturer and distributor has plants in Mount Maunganui, Awarua (Invercargill) and Kapuni (Taranaki). And with a large team spread across the country, ensuring their people are at the top of their game is a linchpin to the company's success.

In 2019 Ballance chose Aspire2 Business I Workplace Communication to deliver an 'Aspiring Leaders' pilot course at their phosphate fertilizer manufacturing plant in Awarua. The programme proved so successful – both for the business and the learners – that Ballance has been working with Aspire2 ever since. Not only has 'Aspiring Leaders' now been delivered to several Ballance sites nationwide via Zoom, but staff at the Mount Maunganui plant have also reaped the benefits of the training provider's 'Learning for Life' programme.

Developed in close consultation with Ballance, Aspire2's customised training courses upskill staff in the areas directly targeted to their roles. Not only is it great for the company, but – as Ballance quickly discovered – it has been lifechanging for the people who work there. The ripple effect of learners' enhanced skills, knowledge and confidence has been felt far beyond the reaches of the workplace.

## Enhancing wellbeing benefits everyone

Wellbeing was a key focus area of the 'Aspiring Leaders' programme, and according to Ballance managers, the benefits this training have delivered are significant.

From improved productivity, staff retention and a more skilled and adaptable workforce to greater confidence, progression and positivity among

participating staff members. Perhaps even more importantly, learners have noticed an enhanced connection to their families and greater involvement and integration with their communities.

*"I am building relationships with my team and peers; we now have a better understanding of each other."*

*"I am observing body language more and getting a reading on people before I approach them, this lets me know what to say to them and how to start the conversation."*

*"I understand my daughter better now. I am talking to her and understanding or hearing what she is really saying to me."*

## Health and Safety a top priority

As with any manufacturing and distribution company, top-quality health and safety training is paramount. Aspire2 worked closely with Ballance managers to develop relevant training in areas such as hazard identification and risk control, compressed air safety, permit to work, and cleaning the mixer. Learners developed strategies that improved quality and processes and empowered them to speak up with concerns and resolve issues.

Here's what some of the supervisors had to say:

*"There is greater depth of understanding of health and safety in the workplace, resulting in a safer workplace for all."*

*"Learners have improved understanding of key workplace documents including risk control and permit to work, which means greater ability to connect with the content and apply it to their workplace. This will assist in the reduction of potential accidents."*

## CASE STUDY – BALANCE AGRI-NUTRIENTS

### Increasing productivity through waste reduction

Aspire2's training programmes boosted staff productivity and significantly reduced wastage and costs. The team were upskilled in areas such as interpreting graphs, calculating and bagging orders, stock taking and communication both internally and with suppliers. Michael Murray (Maru Street Hub Manager) was delighted with the outcomes he observed.

Says Michael " *Marcus's team were able to reduce the cost for the season by \$50,000+ as a result of the training. This has far exceeded our expectations from the 'Aspiring Leaders' programme and I would highly recommend it to other businesses*"

### Developing great leaders

Aspire2's training programmes empower learners to reach their full potential – both inside and outside the workplace. Boosting leadership and problem-solving skills were a key focus of the training and learners were taught how to motivate and coach teams, manage stress and de-escalate conflict. Authentic workplace frustrations were analysed and effective solutions developed.

*"I have better skills and tools to train others and am not so worried about this when new people start."*

*"I am now able to manage a team smoothly and effectively. They now open up and bring their own ideas which I listen to."*

*"I have learnt to look past the problem and look for solutions. I have become more outcomes focused."*

### Upskilling for the digital age

Digital skills are vital in today's workplace and Aspire2's 'Learning for Life' programme deepened employees' understanding of learning platforms and helped them navigate computer systems confidently and effectively. From using Google maps and YouTube to emailing attachments and photos, learners' digital capabilities were given a powerful boost.

*"I enjoyed the course on the computer which has helped me with things like emails. Now I am looking at getting a cell phone to help with the skills I have learnt."*

*"I can find forms for work now - I couldn't do this before. I even helped someone else!"*

## Targeted training that achieves real results:

Shane Macbeth was delighted with the achievements of Kapuni staff who completed Aspire2's 'Aspiring Leaders' programme. He noticed improved communication and task delegation, increased confidence and teamwork, better organisation and management of responsibilities and a more positive attitude to leadership.

Meanwhile Ballance Shift Supervisor Darren Bolger said the 'Learning for Life' course not only met their expectations and was professionally run, but had a positive impact on both the business (80%) and employees (100%).

## Key business impacts for Ballance Agri-Nutrients:

- Increased workplace productivity and savings of over \$50,000
- Improved staff wellbeing
- Enhanced digital capabilities
- Heightened understanding of health and safety requirements
- Strengthened leadership and problem-solving skills
- Growth of individuals and potential realised.