



University of South Australia

Learning by Collaboration

Presenter: Lindsay Ryan

**Position: Director,
Strategic Partnerships
University of South Australia**



unisa



University of
South Australia

Overview of Presentation

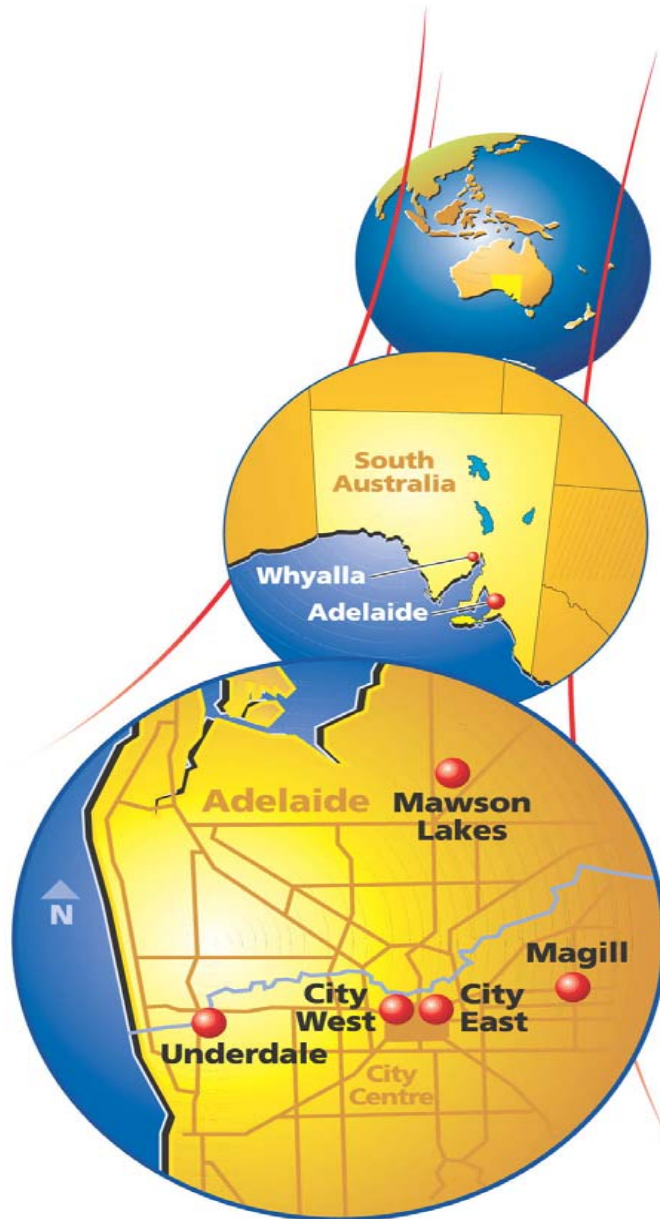
- **Context: UniSA – Strategic Partnerships**
- **The Leadership Connection – a collaborative learning consortium**
- **Purpose of the Collaboration**
- **Successes**
- **Problems**
- **Recommendations**
- **Open Forum Discussion**





University of
South Australia

Context



Australia

South Australia

Adelaide





University of
South Australia

University of South Australia

- A history dating back to 1856
- The largest university in Adelaide and the fifth largest in Australia
- 6 campuses – 30,000 students
- 7,000 international students (including offshore)
- Close working links with business, industry & the professions
- Programs that attract professional recognition
- Over 300 study programs
- Over 75 institutional agreements worldwide
- Graduate qualities



City West Campus





University of
South Australia

Strategic Partnerships

- **Specialised unit of Division of Business & Enterprise**
- **Structure: “4 pillars” - Director, Business Manager, Program Executive Officer, Partner Relationships Manager**
- **Administrative support team**
- **Contract expertise and facilitators as required**
- **Customised education programs delivered in-house to industry**
- **University award programs**
- **Executive Education**





University of
South Australia

Strategic Partnerships Approach

- **Philosophy: education “partner” not outsourced provider – Flexibility and Accessibility**
- **Negotiate industry partner requirements**
- **Determine education program objectives**
- **Project manage entire partnerships – from enquiry to graduation a consistent point of contact**
- **Arrange documented agreement**
- **Detailed costing: $\text{Income} - \text{Expenses} = \text{Surplus}$**
- **Coordinate award programs: venues, equipment, lecturers, materials, guest speakers, assignments, catering**
- **Develop Executive Education modules**
- **Manage the on-going relationship with partners**





University of
South Australia

Industry Partners

- **Manufacturing**
- **Government**
- **Industry Associations**
- **Not-for-profit organisations**
- **Human service organisations**
- **Defence suppliers**
- **Electronics**
- **South Australia Police**





University of
South Australia

The Leadership Connection

- **A consortium of 5 Organisations: leading-edge manufacturers:**
- **Operate and supply products globally**
- **Mitsubishi Motors Australia**
- **Schefenacker Vision Systems**
- **Sola Optical - Lenses**
- **Seeley International - Air Conditioners**
- **Bridgestone Tyres Australia**





University of
South Australia

Purpose of Collaboration

- To learn from a cross-section of middle managers with potential as future leaders
- To develop a succession pool
- To share resources and sustain the program for long-term
- Focus on organisation development, not education qualification
- Program fully funded by employers
- Applied learning approach - assignments relate to organisation and major projects based on organisation issues





University of
South Australia

Drivers for Forming the Group

- Instigated by two organisations with a desire to develop their people
- Utilise a generic education program (MBA) and customise to their situation
- Link education with industry context/issues – real world perspective
- Organisation Development Strategy: Performance Management + education program + special projects
- Participants could learn by collaborating with other similar organisations





University of
South Australia

Benefits of Learning by Collaboration

- **Share costs: program, venue, facilities**
- **Sustainable program for longer-term**
- **Studying with like-minded organisations:**
- **Interaction and discussion**
- **Different perspectives on similar issues**
- **Ask questions, challenge paradigms**
- **Offer suggestions based on experiences**
- **Adapt other experiences to organisation context**





University of
South Australia

Successes

- **Enrolment by milestones: Grad Cert>Grad Dip>MBA**
- **Every person in the program has achieved at least a Graduate Certificate in Management – reflecting their learning and development**
- **15 people graduated with MBA, April 2004**
- **Involvement by CEOs and senior managers as guest speakers and facilitating real projects**
- **Building trust – close working relationship between UniSA and TLC**
- **University flexibility and responsiveness to partner enquiries and requests**





Problems

- **Initial unrealistic expectations of university program to develop ‘leaders’**
- **Lack of communication between each partner and the partners with the University**
- **Lack of shared vision amongst partners**
- **Diverse expectations of program outcomes**
- **Lack of administrative systems**
- **Success led to complacency**
- **Lack of involvement by some partners relying on the “champion”**
- **As original champions moved, their successors did not have same understanding or commitment**





Recommendations

- Documented agreement between the syndicate and the university
- Documented agreement between syndicate partners: responsibilities and commitment
- A syndicate leader and a champion in each organisation
- Formal Steering Committee – monthly meetings: one person from each partner and two from university
- Regular communication, telephone, email, coffee chats – as required
- Student representation in formal meetings
- Rotate chair and minute keeper for meetings – involvement and ownership





Recommendations (Continued)

- Documented and transparent participant selection process
- Involve executive and senior management
- Consider assessment that involves team projects
- Encourage people to learn as a group, not as individuals
- Focus on organisation development, not individual development
- Mix participants from various disciplines: eg HR, Marketing, Accounting, Production, Engineering
 - People become more aware of other people/functions in the organisation
 - Helps to break-down 'silo' thinking





University of
South Australia

Open Forum Discussion

