

## Green Cross Health Uses Real Projects to Lift Leadership Performance

Green Cross Health  
Best Use of Blended Learning  
November 2017



### Company Background



Company At-a-Glance	
Headquarters	Ellerslie, Auckland, New Zealand
Year Founded	1981 (as Pharmacy Brands)
Revenue	\$382,250,000 in 2016
Employees	9,800
Global Scale	New Zealand
Customers/Output, etc.	Pharmacy retail sales to 1.2 million registered customers; Medical Division, more than 1 million patient visits per annum across 90 accident and medical centers; Community Health Division, in-home based healthcare supports more than 18,000 clients.
Industry	Healthcare
Stock Symbol	GXH (NZ Stock Exchange)
Website	<a href="http://www.greencrosshealth.co.nz">www.greencrosshealth.co.nz</a>

## Budget and Timeframe

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Overall budget	\$250,000
Number of employees involved with the implementation?	2
Number of Operations or Subject Matter Expert employees involved with the implementation?	11
Timeframe to implement	18 months
Start date of the program	May 1, 2016

## Business Conditions & Business Needs

Although the New Zealand retail industry had just 2% growth, Green Cross Health's pharmacy stores were maintaining their retail growth due to the recent success of the NZ Certificate in Retail qualification. Maintaining that success was a challenge.

Lessons learned when implementing the program that offers the Retail Certificate:

- In healthcare organizations it's not just "clever" to sell the why behind organizational initiatives, it's crucial. Initial research showed a perceived incompatibility between commercial results and patient-care standards leading to customer experience and bottom-line suffering.
- A key for success meant engaging managers to coach and support the learning. Without their input, effectiveness of the training program would be severely compromised. They needed action plans and schedules to follow and help making time to support training, e.g. create training rosters.
- Regional managers need to be engaged to discuss employee performance and development when they met with frontline leaders and owners.

The Retail Certificate program was successful but put pressure on leaders to coach and support their team members. The process exposed areas where they could be better equipped to create an environment where their people and their business can thrive.

Historically, Green Cross Health had used classroom-based leadership workshops run by an external supplier. Elements of the workshops had been well-received and generated

occasional local successes, but the learning didn't stick. An investigation across all levels of the organization showed that leaders needed tools and context to support real-world implementation. They would be drawn into the usual hectic pace of their working lives and remain at a loss to formulate a plan to address their teams' needs.

Many Green Cross leaders were excellent managers with strong technical skills and positive attitudes, but they lacked the abilities and tools to lift team performance to the next level. Leaders were capable and prepared to work hard, but they didn't know what specific things they needed to do.

As one pharmacy owner/manager said: "I was always stressed, time poor and bad tempered (very hard for me to admit). I thought I was doing a good job, but my staff (I realize now) didn't."

A new approach was essential. Green Cross needed a sustainable leadership program that included tools to apply on the job.

## Overview

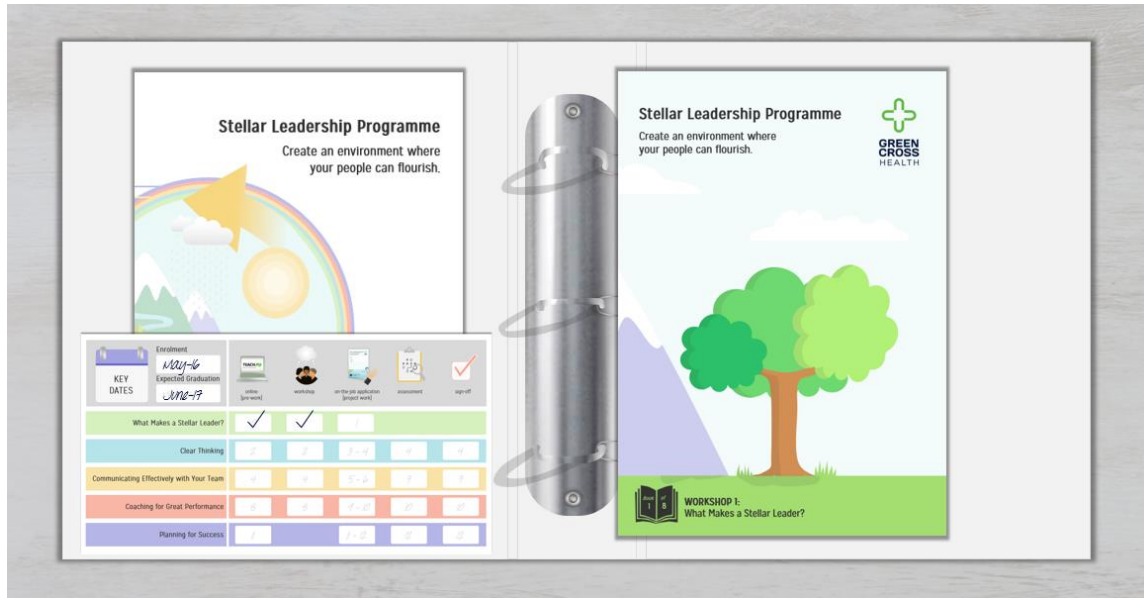
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The Green Cross Health Academy Stellar Leadership Program (NZ Certificate in Business) was designed to be an action-oriented program to lift leadership performance in all three business units: retail pharmacies, medical centers, and community healthcare. The leadership program needed to run alongside the pharmacy's Certificate in Retail.

The new program makes it possible for retail leaders to document and draw on their experiences coaching and supporting their teams and, at the same time, fulfill several requirements of their own leadership qualification.

The program runs for 12 months, and learners are asked to complete one project per quarter. The cycle kicks off with research, analysis and eLearning, followed by implementation-focused workshops and practical application, evaluation, coaching, and review. Each successive project refers to earlier concepts to build long-term development plans for each team member, the team as a whole, and the business.

Figure 1: Resource Binder with Month-by-Month Schedule

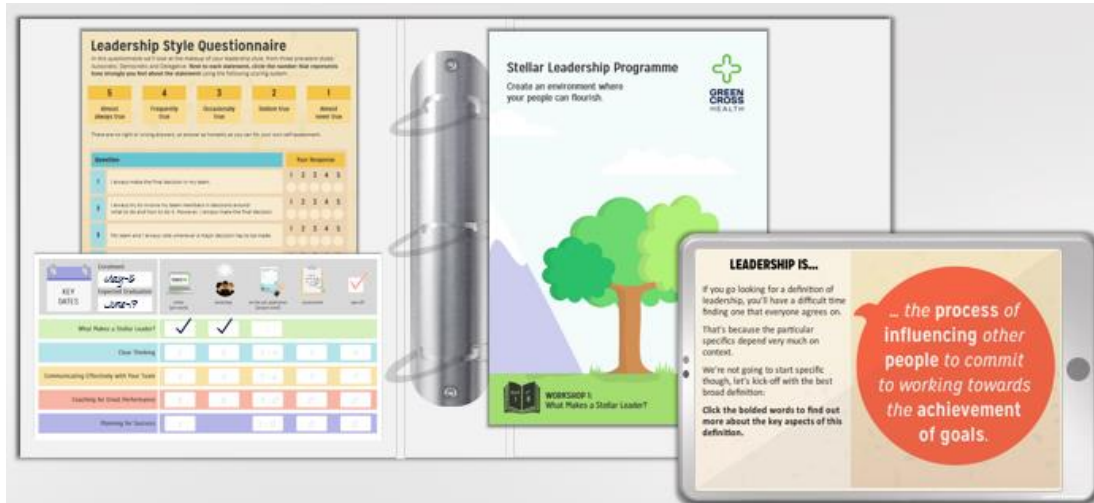


Source: Green Cross Health 2017

The program starts with a question, “What makes a stellar leader?” Participants spend the rest of the course designing an answer.

## What Makes a Stellar Leader?

Figure 2: Core Components



Source: Green Cross Health 2017

With research and case studies to examine in the context of behavioral profiling and learning stages, this section is as much about participants developing a picture of their own strengths and weaknesses as it is about understanding their staff members. The objective is to enable people to look beyond challenging behavior to recognize and leverage the positive intent driving it.

**Figure 3: Clear Thinking**



Source: Green Cross Health 2017

The Clear-Thinking Project requires learners to:

- Document business goals.
- Apply time-management skills to manage the increased workload due to project responsibilities.
- Start the process of creating Personal Development Plans by collaborating with team-members to create “Team-Player Profiles” that accurately reflect their strengths and weaknesses and their behavioral preferences and triggers.
- Set team members up for success by delegating effectively using the planning checklist provided.

Figure 4: Communicating Effectively with Your Team



Source: Green Cross Health 2017

The “Communicating Effectively with Your Team Project” requires learners to:

- Assess a conflict case-study from their own experience and implement strategies to keep calm and objective when navigating conflict situations.
- Regularly give praise and offer meaningful feedback to their team-members.
- Assess which stage of the Team Lifecycle their team is in and apply relevant interventions from a tailored selection to advance their team to the next stage.
- Run a strategic team building activity. Options were provided, but learners also were free to choose their own activity.
- Lead the team to success by achieving a specific business objective. Options were provided, but learners also were free to set their own.

Figure 5: Coaching for Great Performance



Source: Green Cross Health 2017

The Coaching for Great Performance Project requires learners to:

- Reflect on their own performance and develop an ongoing learning plan for themselves.

Figure 6: Planning for Success



Source: Green Cross Health 2017

The Planning for Success Project requires learners to:

- Complete a SWOT Analysis for their area of responsibility.
- Identify the root cause of selected weaknesses and think critically and creatively to develop a solution and a team work plan.

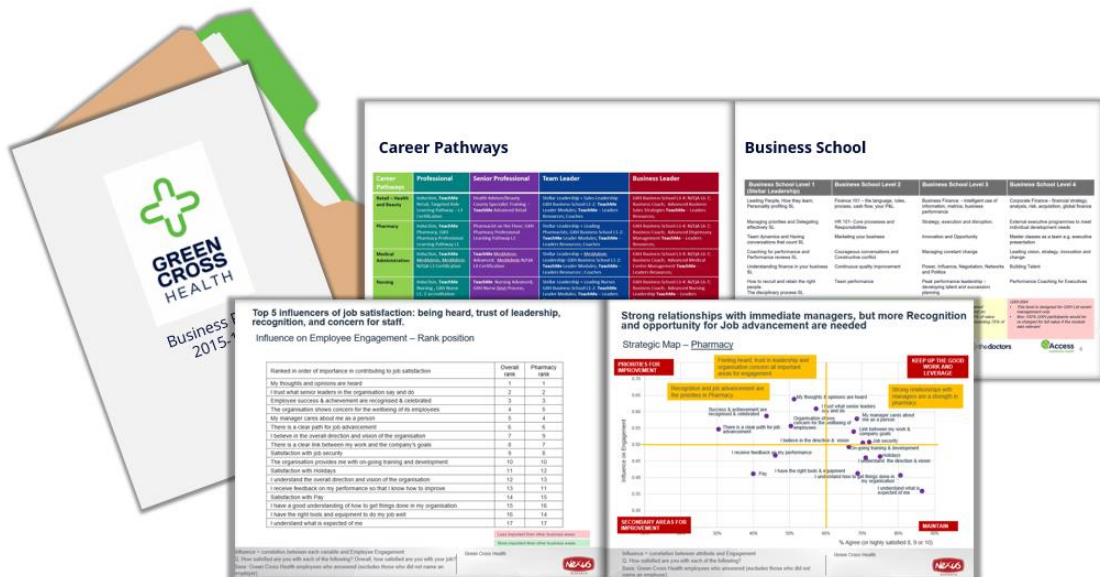
- Document personal development plans for each team member.

Implement regular one-on-one coaching meetings with their team-members.

- Klick-start the coaching process by using the GROW model to coach them to set SMART goals.
- Run formal performance reviews which start the Personal Development planning cycle anew.

## Link to Organizational Objectives

Figure 7: Green Cross Health Business Plan



Source: Green Cross Health 2017

In the 2015-16 business plan, the key organizational goal focused on growing market share by attracting new acquisitions. To meet the goal, retail staff needed to maintain retail growth in a challenging economic climate. The short-term target for individual stores going through the program was 3%; the target across the business was 1.5 %.

To reach those targets, there needed to be an unbeatable employee-value proposition by creating learning and career pathways and providing development and advancement for staff across all business units. Surveys of the pharmacy group showed that teams were reconnecting with their leaders and the company vision, but there were gaps.



Recommendations included the following engagement measures:

- My thoughts and opinions are heard.
- Success and achievement are recognized and celebrated.
- The organization shows concern for the wellbeing of employees.
- There is a clear path for advancement.

People leaders could fill those needs every day – provided they're equipped to do so.

## **Design of the Program**

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The program was designed to support team development and learning by equipping managers to conduct performance coaching and maintain retail growth in Green Cross Health's 300+ pharmacies.

The Certificate in Retail program exposed both successes and weaknesses. Overall, leaders lacked the ability to lift team performance to the next level by inspiring and empowering their people to reach their full potential.

Leaders want to do a good job coaching their reports, but there wasn't a clear vision of how to achieve that goal. Leaders needed to both possess the skills to create hotbeds of success and the motivation to apply those skills.

The new leadership certification was developed using six design principles.

- **Design Principal 1. Remind learners that what they do has meaning.** Senior leaders are keenly aware of the leadership role and are proud of them, demonstrated by consultations across operations and the executive leaders. Across the organization, people were asked to define the traits of leaders they have admired and itemize what they wanted from a leadership course.
  - The program sought to embed tolerance and empathy with a positive, inclusive and forgiving tone throughout all learning materials. For example, staff interaction simulations and interactive video addressed counter-productive behaviors in an accessible, even humorous way, to make it safe for leaders to acknowledge that they weren't always giving their team members what they needed to develop and grow.

- **Design Principle 2. Make learning accessible.** To set learners up for success, they needed to understand the structure, scope and pace of the program from the start. To make a step-change in how the businesses are led, the program needed to make it easy for people to learn, with staged, blended delivery that allowed for meaningful application and consolidation of the learning.
- **Design Principle 3. Allow people space to honestly assess their own abilities.** Create quick, accurate and extremely accessible profiling tools and anonymous self-assessment quizzes and games to give them a confidential, balanced view of their own strengths and weaknesses.
- **Design Principle 4. Embrace a kinder perspective.** This principle meant teaching leaders how to demonstrate kindness to themselves and to others, enabling them to provide meaningful performance and development opportunities for their team members.
- **Design Principle 5: Prove that it works, fast.** Leaders received tools they could use on-the-job from day one, and Green Cross Health trainers spent face-to-face time collaborating with leaders on ways to apply the tools to develop teams. Generating quick wins for leaders drove the program's popularity as people across all levels of the organization began to feel the impacts.
- **Design Principle 6. Sustain the change by setting good habits.** The program is accredited, so learners gain a qualification at the end of it. This certification offers the perfect mechanism to ensure leaders follow through in implementing their carefully crafted action plans. The assessment was built in because project work required concrete evidence for sign offs throughout the 12-month duration of the program.

By the end of the program, participants have built up a toolbox of more than a dozen targeted interventions and tools that they can re-use to drive their final project, restarting the Personal Development cycle and developing a strategic business plan for their teams.

## Delivery of the Program

The 12-month project on the knowledge and experience gained from each session and the final project requires learners to deliver a strategic and operational business plan for their area of responsibility.

The project cycle kicks off with research, analysis and eLearning followed by a planning workshop and implementation.

Figure 8: Leadership Projects Cycle



Source: Green Cross Health 2017

By the end of the face-to-face time, leaders are equipped with action plans and implementation tools in digitally interactive or paper formats and ready to implement

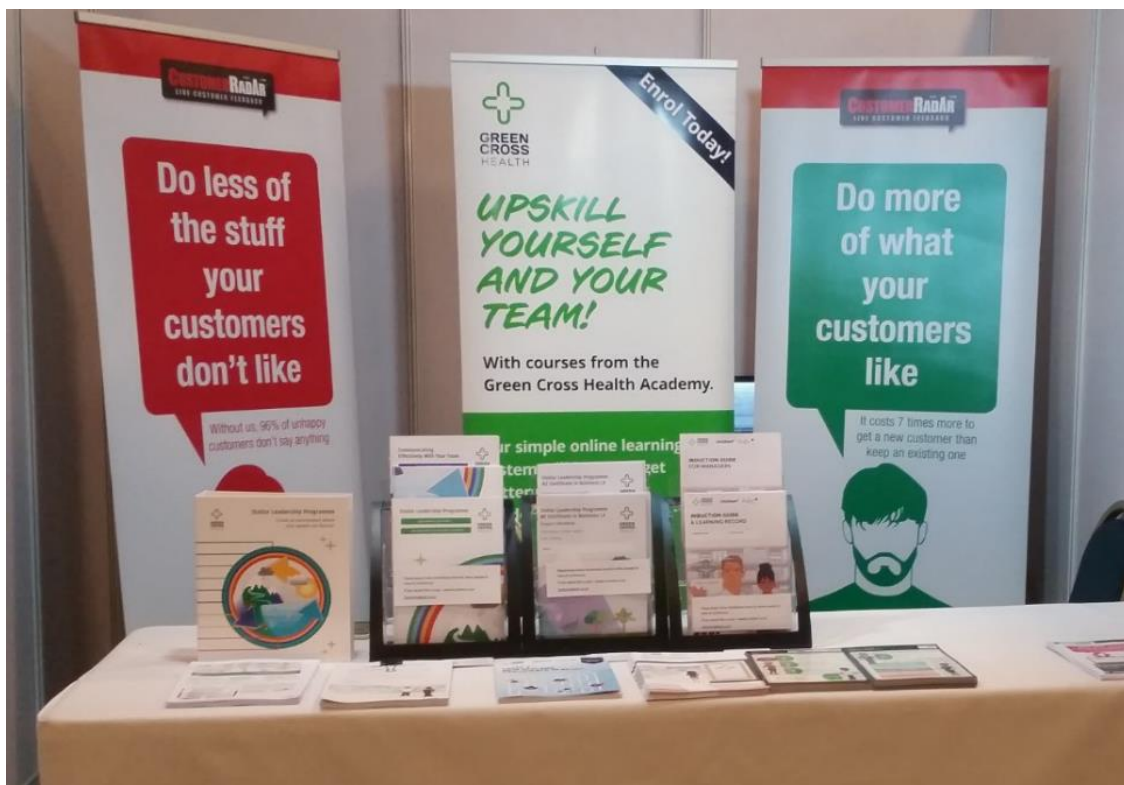
their improvement plans. Regional managers, charged with coaching and sign-off duties, are embedded in the process from the start and are actively involved in the planning workshops.

After participants implement their action plans, they record the outcomes and evaluate the success of their initiative. Finally, they share their experiences and project notes with their regional managers in one-on-one coaching sessions until they are ready to be formally assessed and managers sign off on that stage.

## Change Management Efforts

The training team focused on communication. Emphasis was placed on demonstrating that the program is driven by feedback from the business, including conference presentations and industry publications.

Figure 9: Conference Promotion



Source: Green Cross Health 2017

The training team set a clear and compelling vision for what success looks like and the pathway to get there. Demand was high, but leaders could defer enrollment until after

their first planning workshop. The workshop proved to be a great appetizer with more than 85% of undecided participants starting the registration process by the end of the first session.

The focus on getting leaders to execute one step at a time generated early success and created a buzz around the program's effectiveness, even stimulating interest from outside of the group.

**Figure 10: Pharmacy Today Features Green Cross**



**B**an Quillinchi has spent her entire working life with Green Cross Health as well as its predecessor, Pharmacybrands. Thirteen years ago, Ban joined Radius Pharmacy as a pharmacist fresh out of the University of Auckland and she has been climbing the career ladder ever since. She is now the business manager at Unichem Fred Thomas Pharmacy in Takapuna, and has plans to become a partner of Green Cross Health in the near future. Ban Quillinchi shares her story on why working in community health is a great career choice.

**What you put in is what you get out.**

Ban Quillinchi is often asked why she continues to work with Green Cross Health. The answer is simple – she suggests that her employer is so supportive of progressing her career, it's easy to remain loyal.

"Green Cross Health leads you in the right direction if they see something in you, they give you the chance to step up and shine," Ban says.

It's been just five months since Ban was promoted to her new role after spending seven years at one of Green Cross Health's highest performing stores Life Pharmacy Downtown before it was closed to make way for the Auckland City Rail Link earlier this year.

"I've always felt like the lines of communication have been really open with the team at Support Office. When I knew the mall was going to close I approached them and said, 'look I really want to step up, I have a lot of ambition and I feel like a new challenge'," she says.

It was only a matter of time before Ban was nominated for the Stellar Leadership Programme to prepare her for the next step of her career as a business manager. Part way through completing the programme, Ban was offered the role at Unichem Fred Thomas Pharmacy.

"The leadership programme was amazing. It really helped me to make the transition from dispensary manager to being a business manager. It helped me to understand different people, what drives them and how best to lead my team," she says.

Green Cross Health prides itself on being able to provide various training programmes through the Green Cross Health Academy, assisting all staff with both their professional and personal development. In addition, all pharmacy staff have the opportunity to enrol in the online courses offering modules in retail management, customer service, security and all the operational ins and outs of running a pharmacy. On completion of the course employees receive an NZQA Certificate in Retail Level 3.

"For me it is a no brainer. Green Cross Health has a support network like no other and being able to draw on the experience from people who care just as much as you do about your business is invaluable," Ban says.

While she hasn't looked back since she graduated, Ban says a career in pharmacy wasn't always part of the plan.

"My career took a slight detour – I originally wanted to be a dentist so I enrolled in health science at Otago University. Coming from a family of health professionals, it was always something I was interested in, but at the time dentistry was a tough road to go down and I realised it wasn't for me."

Ban was later accepted into the University of Auckland's pharmacy degree in just its second ever intake and then snapped up by Radius Pharmacy soon after graduating.

"What attracted me was the ability to lead a balanced family life. You can still have kids and work as a pharmacist and, much like other careers in healthcare, you're helping the community and building trust with your customers."

Ban says pharmacy has evolved significantly since she first set foot behind the dispensary. Being part of Green Cross Health has allowed her to stay on the cusp of advancements in integration, the adoption of new technology and the expansion of healthcare services offered in pharmacy.

"We are much more involved as service providers now with the likes of cholesterol testing, blood pressure testing and vaccinations available in store. It has opened up opportunities for pharmacists to become even more integrated into a patient's healthcare journey taking the pressure off doctors."

With bigger and better things just around the corner, Ban says she can't see herself working for any other company.

"For me, the next step is owning my own business. I know I want to do that through a partnership with Green Cross Health who'll give me the support and confidence to make it a success."

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Source: Green Cross Health 2017

## Measurable Benefits

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Results were measured across the categories of the Kirkpatrick Evaluation method.

### Reactions

Although retail growth was the ultimate measure of success, response and uptake mattered as a measure. The leadership program needed to maintain the momentum from previous interventions to create a culture shift towards an aspirational performance culture where commercial and vocational aspects thrive alongside each other.

Enrollment and completion levels are high: 125 have enrolled, with word of mouth increasing the enrollment rate to 175 in the second year. All are on track to complete the program.

The manager quoted in the intro as saying she was “always stressed, time poor and bad tempered” then went on to say:

“I had a this ‘lightbulb’ moment very early in the course, where I realized that I was a poor leader/manager! That’s all changed. I’m now really enjoying my role as a mentor, coach and team leader, and so are my staff!”

Here is a similar story from a leader who asked for anonymity:

“I really thought ‘staff management’ meant telling people what needs to be done on any given day and that was that... how wrong I was! It was frustrating and I didn’t enjoy nagging my staff... Along comes the Green Cross Health Stellar Leadership Program... I was apprehensive and didn’t think it would be much different from all the other so called ‘management training’ courses I’d attended over the years... again, how wrong I was!

“I now feel confident that I have the skills and resources to successfully lead my team. I’m really enjoying being a positive influence on my team, as opposed to a ‘grumpy nag.’

“This course has been the best thing I’ve ever done, especially discovering not only my own personality traits, but those of my team, via Active Botanicals online. I’m a ‘Herb’ -- we don’t like confrontation and tend to shy away from conflict. I kind of knew that, but didn’t have any real idea what that actually meant. I do now! By using the skills and insights I’ve learned I have been successful in facing ‘conflict’ and resolving some major issues that I’ve shied away from for more years than I care to remember.”

## Learning

Skill assessments in rapport building, communication, holistic selling and product knowledge quizzes recorded leaps in knowledge and the application of new skills. All learning is formally measured and documented with online knowledge and application assessments and on-the-job competency assessments. Digital sign-offs capture progress towards the qualification.

## Behavior

“I’ve really enjoyed the whole journey, especially watching, listening and supporting my team of ‘Stellar Leaders’ – they have become more organized, solution-focused ‘team leaders.’ Also, genuinely happier in their roles. I feel that many more of us now have a far better understanding of not only ourselves, but more importantly of our people. There is a ‘culture shift’ happening and it’s exciting to be a part of it!” –Gail Kirkland SBDM

Amy Kluit, Business Manager at a flagship Life Pharmacy store, was so blown away by the behavior change she observed in her retail team leader, Tina, that she nominated her for the organization’s new Stellar Leader of the Year award.

Here what Kluit had to say:

“Tina has always had a very black and white approach to staff; she would let her daily stresses affect the way that she interacted with staff. She could be very blunt and offhand with her direct reports. She had sporadic catch ups with her team and tended to have the mindset that if you want a job done properly, do it yourself! Resulting in a stressed out, overworked, grumpy manager. Tina has been in the Pharmacy/Life Group for 15+ years, so is by no means new to the role, so was very ingrained in her ways of doing things.

“Tina has blown me away with the changes she has made. She has mentored Divan whilst I was on maternity Leave and has developed him as a manager by using every opportunity to talk him through the multiple ways of dealing with things and the outcomes and letting him come to the best conclusion himself.

“Tina regularly refers to the Active Botanicals to tailor her approach to team members to get the best result. She has one on ones with her team and therefore is coaching them to learn new skills, take on new tasks, and be accountable for their areas. This results in more time for Tina to plan events and do the top level strategic planning that she needs to.



She has truly challenged herself to change the mentality of doing everything herself. I think slowly she is learning that if she coaches and develops her team to do new roles, it frees up her time to spend her valuable time on what she needs to. I have also noticed that Tina is a lot happier in herself and her role, now that she has time to complete what she needs to and is seeing the sales results from the plans she has put into place.

“Tina is now ensuring regular one-on-one coaching sessions happen with her team, and that they are accountable for the performance. She delegated very effectively by tailoring her approach to suit the different team members.

“She’s also really enjoying her role and the team are far more engaged, eager to learn more and take on more tasks. None of these things were happening before the program!”

## Results

Retail has one of the highest turnover rates of any industry. The Hay Group reports a median turnover rate of 67 percent for part-time retail employees. Since the program was launched in 2016, the average staff turnover rate of 41% dropped to 38% by the end of February 2017.

Figure 11: Pharmacy Turnover



Source: Green Cross Health 2017



## Retail Growth

The primary measure was retail growth. By the end of the program's first year, retail had leapt from 5% to 10.5% in an environment where the industry as a whole in New Zealand experienced negative growth at -4.2%.

And as for Green Cross Health, retail growth in stores that participated was up 3.7% versus retail growth in the NZ industry as a whole dropped by 7.4%.

## Overall

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### Key Findings

With regional managers charged with coaching the program, it was critical to include them in every stage to ensure they were equipped with the knowledge and skills to support it.

The six design principles allowed for leadership learning applicable across multiple business units. For example, leaders from the medical and community health divisions signed up for the second round of the program. Early indications show that this type of shared learning environment has had a strong positive impact on internal perceptions of company culture at a time of transition and adjustment as Green Cross pursues a strong acquisition strategy.

### What's Next?

The training team increased the profile of the learning pathways by creating Stellar Leader of the Year and Retail Star of the Year awards.

In addition, the team has started collating all the Stellar Leader toolbox models, structures and checklists into a mobile app that learners will receive upon graduation.

Recruitment enquiries continue to soar as a direct result of the buzz created by celebrating success stories, and the training team has partnered with the wider HR team to capitalize on this change. Green Cross seeks to recruit the best and invest in the industry through scholarships. The expenses could be offset by the revenue potential in licensing courses to the Pharmacy School.



## About Brandon Hall Group

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