



SYDNEY, OCTOBER 19 - 21, 2025

Business & Agency Leadership



Advertising
Council
Australia



COURSE MANIFESTO

Lead like you mean it

Confidence is a critical trait in leadership. Clarity, focus and a tone of certainty all build belief inside and outside of an organisation and importantly, in our ideas. It's also fundamental to creativity, acting as the courage to explore and experiment. Without it challenging assumptions and trying new things is at risk.

That's a risk no agency can afford. The industry relies on confident leadership to evolve a business, its practices and inspire a culture to change. In this course we'll help leaders see the opportunity in uncertainty and unlock their creativity to lead through any change with confidence.

COURSE AGENDA

Day 1

Leading in Confidence

Sunday, October 19, 2025

9:00am	Welcome with Chris Howatson & Kirsty Muddle
9:30am	Creating High-Performance Teams with Mike Read
11:00am	Morning tea
11:30am	Learning and Communication Preferences with Mike Read
1:00pm	Lunch
1:30pm	Confident Communication in Leadership with Mike Jenner
3:00pm	Afternoon tea
3:30pm	Confident Communication in Leadership with Mike Jenner
6:00pm	Free Time
6:30pm	Dinner at Jimmy's Falafel (330D George St, Sydney)

COURSE AGENDA

Day 2

Confidence in Creativity

Monday, October 20, 2025

9:00am	Fireside chat: The future of networks with Nick Garrett
10:00am	How remuneration can be more appealing to clients with Josh Grace
11:00am	Morning tea
11:00am	It's all about talent with Lea Walker
12:00pm	Lunch
1:00pm	Great design isn't enough. How to keep ideas alive with Ellena Mills-Stainer
2:00pm	Psychosocial hazards with Clinton Parr
3:00pm	Afternoon tea
3:30pm	Working with AI: A case study on Plus Also Studios with Jessica Coulson
4:30pm	Reflections with Chris Howatson & Kirsty Muddle
5:00pm	Free Time
6:30pm	Private Dinner at George Room (Level 3, QT Sydney)

COURSE AGENDA

Day 3 In Confidence

Tuesday, October 21, 2025

10:00am	View of industry with Brittney Rigby
11:00am	Morning Tea
11:00am	Social responsibility with Rob Galluzzo
12:00pm	Lunch
1:00pm	Panel: Better understanding of retail media with Justin Papps & Paul Brooks
2:00pm	Lego game with Ashley Ringrose
3:00pm	Afternoon tea
3:30pm	Fireside chat: The effectiveness of creativity with Brent Smart
4:30pm	Reflections with Chris Howatson & Kirsty Muddle
5:30pm	Canapes/Drinks
6:00pm	Fireside chat: Waking the giant with Sir John Hegarty
8:00pm	Farewell

2025 Chairs and Speakers

2025 CHAIRS



KIRSTY MUDDLE
CEO, Dentsu Creative & CEO,
Merkle Australia & New Zealand

Kirsty Muddle is CEO of multiple brands in the Dentsu portfolio including of Dentsu Creative, Australia & New Zealand. Dentsu Creative is a global network that transforms businesses and brands through the power of creativity.

She is also CEO of Dentsu's CXM and data business, Merkle and Dentsu's end to end B2B business, which is the No1 B2B business in the world.

Kirsty started her career in Econometrics at a WPP agency in London and still maintains her love for the interplay between humans and data. She was one of the Founding Partners and CEO of a globally awarded independent agency, Cummins&Partners before joining Dentsu.

Kirsty has been awarded Women of the Year and Executive of the Year twice, sits on the ACA and AANA Boards, investing her time in industry Accreditation and Self regulation for the industry. She also sits on the Ridgeway board, a business that is majority Indigenous owned and run that drives Social Impact for Indigenous Communities through consultation with Government and Corporate Australia.

2025 CHAIRS



CHRIS HOWATSON
Founder + CEO,
Howatson+Company

Chris is recognised for his ability to design, lead and embed brand, customer and technology transformation of bluechip and scale up companies.

In 2021, after 19 years with Clemenger Group. Chris founded Howatson+Company with the vision of creating a legacy agency brand, fully independent and responsible for re-establishing advertising as a multi-disciplinary profession, valued for generating economic value. Three years on, H+Co has grown rapidly with 120 staff, offices in the creative precincts of Sydney and Melbourne and has been recognised the world over, winning a raft of prestigious creative awards, including a Spikes Grand Prix, D&AD International Independent Agency of the Year, Cannes Global Independent Agency of the Year, and most recently Adnews Creative, Independent, Employer and Agency of the Year.

Previously as Group CEO of CHE Proximity Australia, Chris imagined a new type of agency, perfectly balancing customer consultancy with creative expression. Over this time CHE Proximity was recognised as WARC's most creative agency in Australia (2019), WARC's 3rd most effective agency in the world (2020), Contagious' top 10 best and bravest agencies on the planet 4 years in a row (2017, 2018, 2019, 2020), Australian Financial Review's 3rd most innovative Australian company (2019) and winner of AFR's most innovative marketing solution four years in a row (2017, 2018, 2020, 2020). In 2017 and 2018 he was recognised as B&T's 'male champion of change' across Australian marketing and media industries.

2025 SPEAKERS



MIKE READ
Founder & Director,
Pigs Can Fly Too

Mike has enjoyed an international 35-year career in the communication industry, spanning the fields of consumer marketing, advertising, innovation and now People & Culture.

Having left the body corporate in 2005, where he was a Director at Grey Worldwide (London) he decided to shift from a consumer brands focus to putting organisations, functions, teams and people at the centre of his work.

Since then, he has been working with C-suite executives and their teams on a diverse range of cultural engineering programmes, helping to raise individual, team and organisation wide performance. Whether via Executive Performance Coaching (team / individual), workshop facilitation or conference platforms, Mike has helped to facilitate meaningful and lasting change across a wide range of clients in multiple industry sectors and geographies.

Since founding Pigs Can Fly Too (PCFT), Mike has fulfilled consultancy roles as P&C Director at Wrigley ANZ, Starcom and Publicis, as well as facilitating and coaching with three leading Australian L&D providers: 6Degrees, pHuel and Wentworth People.

Mike is able to deliver value for PCFT's clients by drawing on behavioural science, researched frameworks, and his experience working with and for world famous businesses and brands including Bacardi, Bluescope Steel, CBA, Fairfax, GlaxoSmithKline, IPG Mediabrand, JC Decaux, Kellogg, KFC, Mars, Nestlé, nbnCo., News Corp., Paramount, Publicis Groupe, Snapchat, Toyota, Unilever & Virgin Australia to powerful effect.

Outside of his work, he loves spending time with his family and friends, playing and watching sport, cooking, entertaining, music and travel.

2025 SPEAKERS



MIKE JENNER
Director, Head Coach,
in•flu•ence leadership development
consulting

Mike has an MBA from the Harvard Business School and a B.Eng in Production Engineering and Management from the University of Bath, England.

Mike has frequently been engaged as a professor of leadership. He has held academic engagements at the Booth School of Business, Chicago, the University of Sydney Business School and the Australian Graduate School of Management (AGSM).

Professor Jenner was the top ranked faculty member at each of these three graduate schools of business. At Sydney, his MBA leadership course was the top rated out of more than 600 offered by the Sydney Business School. At Booth, he ranked #1 out of 178 faculty teaching at the business school.

in•flu•ence's mission is to fundamentally transform the way leadership is learned. Leadership is about what you do, not what you know. Effective leadership has to be learned through practice and feedback, being in the arena, repeatedly interacting with others. Our passion is the creation of these learning environments where people can transform their practical leadership effectiveness.

Client organisations are primarily Australian, European and U.S. Fortune 500 companies. in•flu•ence prides itself on its expertise working equally effectively in the executive suite and on the management front line. Clients have included CEOs and Managing Partners all the way through to newly minted MBAs.

More information on in•flu•ence leadership development consulting can be found at www.in-flu-ence.com.

2025 SPEAKERS



NICK GARRETT
CEO,
Omnicom Oceania

Nick Garrett's career spans nearly a decade in the creative agency sector, where he has led several successful organisations. His leadership has been instrumental in driving growth and innovation, earning him multiple "Agency of the Year" accolades. Garrett's return to Omnicom marks a significant step in the company's strategic evolution, focusing on deep specialisation and seamless integration for its clients. His extensive experience and strategic vision make him an ideal leader for Omnicom Oceania, where he will work closely with brand agency leaders to deliver integrated solutions and enhance the client experience.

2025 SPEAKERS



JOSH GRACE
Founder,
Upscale Marketing Function

Upscale's mission is to scale your mission. We are neither a consultancy offering theoretical advice, nor an agency focused on producing ads. Upscale Marketing Function is your marketing operating partner - delivering strategy, execution, and scale through expert leadership and AI-powered ecosystems.

Josh's 25-year career has included CMO roles for multinationals like Abbott and Samsung Australia, where he was crowned 2020 B&T Marketer of the Year. More recently he was in private equity for KKR-owned Colonial First State and as a non-executive Director for the world's only multi-surf park operator - Urbnsurf.

He has also had a 20-year career in Advertising leading Leo Burnett Sydney to be a top-3 Agency worldwide and culminating in being a Managing Director of Leo Burnett, Singapore. Josh's extensive agency and client-side experience includes B2B to B2C across Financial Services, Healthcare, Consumer Electronics, Telco, FMCG and more.

2025 SPEAKERS



LEA WALKER
Founder,
Mrs Walker

Lea has spent the last 30 years working for and partnering with some of the most respected individuals and creative organisations in Australia, the UK and the US.

Her journey includes 15 years of Account Management experience. A decade with Leo Burnett in Sydney and Chicago. And then her account management career culminated in being Head of Account Management for Fallon London and the 'suit' on Sony Balls.

In 2010, she pivoted into Recruitment and after 5 years as Director of Recruitment for Wieden + Kennedy in Portland, she started Mrs Walker in 2018.

Mrs Walker was built to offer independent, bespoke and creatively motivated Talent Consultation to agencies and brands around the world.

In this capacity, she has worked with the likes of Mother, BBH, TBWA, Special and Wieden + Kennedy on roles across all levels and disciplines, as well as Marketing Leadership and in-house agency roles.

Although her clients extend around the world, the last few years have seen her invest more heavily in the Australian and New Zealand markets alongside her appointment to the AWARD Council and the success of Bear Meets Eagle on Fire, which she co-founded with her husband.

2025 SPEAKERS



CLINTON PARR
Founder,
A Lion & The Vibes

Clint has over a decade of experience working in People & Culture, he spent the first part of his career in HR as Head of People & Culture at TBWA and ClemengerBBDO, where he was responsible for leading all aspects of HR and People & Culture.

In 2018, Clint founded A Lion & The Vibes, which was designed to help smaller companies who couldn't afford, or didn't need a full time HR person, to set up the systems and processes, and develop the skills they needed to look after and get the best out of their people. In this time, Clint has found himself working closely alongside, or coaching leadership teams on how to design and create effective workplace cultures. A part of this that Clint is particularly passionate about is bringing awareness to, and creating meaningful change when it comes to Sexual Harassment & Bullying, and creating workplaces that foster mental wellbeing.

In all aspects of his work, Clint seeks to combine humanity, simplicity, effectiveness and joy. Life is too short for work to suck.

2025 SPEAKERS



JESSICA COULSON
Managing Director,
Plus Also Studios

Jessica has over 15 years of experience in the advertising industry, spanning brand strategy, customer experience, technology, and innovation. She has led major initiatives for renowned brands including Woolworths, NRMA Insurance, Telstra, and Endeavour Group. As Managing Director of Plus Also Studios - a creative technology company, Jessica oversees the development of market-leading creation tools that streamline the production process and deliver significant time and cost efficiencies for marketers. Her work sits at the intersection of creativity and technology, driving smarter, more effective ways for brands to connect with their audiences.

2025 SPEAKERS



BRITTNEY RIGBY
Managing Editor AUNZ,
Little Black Book

Brittney Rigby is Little Black Book’s managing editor across Australia and New Zealand. She has held leadership roles across both newsrooms and agencies, and joined LBB in 2024 to build editorial momentum across the region, and bring depth and craft to creative coverage. She also freelances regularly for mastheads like The Guardian and Sydney Morning Herald, and is qualified as a lawyer.

2025 SPEAKERS



ROB GALLUZZO
CEO,
FINCH

Rob is the Executive Producer and CEO of FINCH, one of the leading production companies in Australia and New Zealand. He is also co-founder of 36 months, which led a national campaign to raise the minimum age of social media from 13 to 16 — the first law of its kind anywhere in the world. Rob recently returned from New York where 36 Months presented alongside Australian PM Anthony Albanese.

Rob is also co-founder of Songbird Studios. Their recent film, “Porcelain War”, has been recognised with honours including an Academy Awards® Nomination for Best Documentary and the Sundance U.S Documentary Grand Jury Prize.

Under Rob’s leadership, FINCH’s work won the very first SDG Grand Prix for The Lion’s Share, many Cannes Gold Lions, the first Branded Entertainment Lion, two D&AD Black Pencils, one White and many Yellow Pencils, Grands Prix at The New York Festivals, LIA, Spikes Asia and the Grand Lotus for Humanity at Adfest in Asia. FINCH’s work has also been nominated for an Oscar, several Emmys, an AACTA award and an ARIA award.

Rob was Jury President of Film Craft Cannes Lions Festival, and has sat on juries for Dubai Lynx, Ciclope Festival, D&AD, One Show Award, Spikes Asia, LIA, LLB’s Immortal Awards, AdWeek, Project Issac, Axis Awards, and AWARD Award.

Rob Galluzzo delivered closing remarks as part of The Lion’s Share launch event at the opening of the UN General Assembly in 2018. The Lion’s Share is a charitable initiative he co-founded with the UNDP and Christopher Nelilus in order to draw together the worlds of conservation and advertising

In addition to “Porcelain War,” Rob has Executive Produced longform content, including the branded documentary Losing Lena, and the bushfire documentary A Fire Inside, My Sister Liv, Girls Can’t Surf, Red Hill, Machine, as well as being instrumental in the production of Netflix’s genre-defining documentary series Chef’s Table.

Rob is a director of Nakatomi, a venture studio led by imagination. Rob hopes that the world will be filled with more compassion and imagination, something he’s injected into each company’s DNA.

2025 SPEAKERS



JUSTIN PAPPS
Lead Partner,
Tenet Advisory & Investments

Justin - or JP, to everyone except his Mum - leads the Tenet Customer & Brand business, drawing on his local and international experience across brand, marketing, media and communications strategy. Justin's career is characterised by the trifecta of leading highly awarded creative agencies, time as a global CMO, and, most recently, as a trusted advisor and consultant to some of the region's biggest brands and governments.

2025 SPEAKERS



PAUL BROOKS
Partner,
Tenet Advisory & Investments

Paul - or Brooksy - is a retail media, media and marketing executive with 20+ years' experience driving growth across retailers, agencies, and publishers. Paul specialises in building and scaling retail media capabilities — from strategy to execution — leveraging data, technology, and commercial innovation to unlock new revenue streams and deliver measurable, sustainable business growth.

2025 SPEAKERS



ASHLEY RINGROSE
Founder,
SMG Studio

Ashley Ringrose founded digital agency Soap Creative in 2002, which went on to win several Digital Agency of the Year titles and hundreds of other awards. He then founded SMG Studio in 2013 as a subsidiary to Soap. As Studio Head, he has overseen the biz dev, hiring, marketing and overall slate management for SMG. He's also writing this bio! So very hands-on.

2025 SPEAKERS



BRENT SMART
CMO,
Telstra

Brent Smart has won both a Grand Prix at Cannes and a Grand Effie, demonstrating his belief that more creative is more effective. As CMO of Telstra, he has transformed a legacy corporate brand into the region's most creative, bringing home 8 Cannes Lions and 4 Effies in 2025 and at the same time more than doubling connection revenue ROI. Previously he was CMO at IAG where he took NRMA Insurance from 36th strongest brand in Australia when he joined to third. Brent spent 20 years in the agency business, leading NZ Agency of the Decade Colenso BBDO and as CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi New York he worked on iconic American brands Cheerios, Tide and Walmart. Brent is a footy tragic who loves the Blues and the Reds.

2025 SPEAKERS



SIR JOHN HEGARTY
Co-founder & Creative Director,
The Business of Creativity

John Hegarty has been central to the global advertising scene over six decades working with brands such as Levi's, Audi, Boddingtons, Lynx, British Airways and Johnnie Walker. He was a founding partner of Saatchi and Saatchi in 1970. He co-founded Bartle Bogle Hegarty in 1982 with John Bartle and Nigel Bogle. The Agency now has offices in London, New York, Singapore, Stockholm, Shanghai, Mumbai and Los Angeles. John's creative awards are numerous. He has been given the D&AD President's Award for outstanding achievement and in 2014 was admitted to the US AAF Hall of Fame. John was awarded a Knighthood in 2007 and was the recipient of the first Lion of St Mark award at the Cannes Festival of Creativity in 2011. John has written two books: 'Hegarty on Advertising – Turning Intelligence into Magic' and "Hegarty on Creativity - there are no rules". In 2022 John co-founded The Business of Creativity, which aims to unlock creative potential through inspiring, distinctive and entertaining products.

Business & Agency Leadership is a three-day residential course that equips tomorrow's agency leaders with the skills to build and lead a resilient, forward-thinking business. Inspiring guest speakers and experts in transformational leadership will prepare you for the challenges and opportunities that come with the top job.

SOCIAL MEDIA

We encourage you to comment throughout the course on your social media platforms. Please use the following hashtag: #IPALeader

We encourage you to connect with our chairs and speakers via LinkedIn.

CONTACT

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