

Class Act

Impact Statement

Class Act Conduct fosters a culture of respect, support, inclusion and belonging – consistent with the Safe Work Australia’s Code of Practice for managing psychosocial hazards at work 2023.

2023 Update



“Class Act promotes a positive and collaborative work culture – it equips staff with additional skills in dealing with difficult situations and has boosted staff morale.” Client

We surveyed five organisations to gauge the impacts of the Class Act Conduct program—revisiting them one to three years after their original participation.

Across all five groups, we found:

85%

of staff report that they are no longer significantly stressed by negative team communication behaviours at work.

Even 3 years after participation, the number of staff reporting **significant stress from workplace behaviours was just 8%.**

Coach case-studied two of these organisations to track change over a 12-month period, gathering quantitative results and qualitative responses from staff. In both cases staff originally participated only in the 1.5 hr Class Act online program, with no further facilitation or additional Coach support thereafter.

In just 12 months, across both workplaces, participation in just the Class Act online program alone **reduced incidents of bad manner in the workplace by 64%.**

Class Act Impact Statement

2023

Some feedback from one of the participants:

“

I would like to congratulate both the CEO and HR for bringing us the Class Act program.

When completing the modules, I felt a tinge of anxiety, as I had a personal experience of every case that was presented in each module.

My experiences often left me with feelings described by the presenter. At the time I internalised them and felt that it was all my fault, especially in lacking personal ability to confront the person or asking for help and support from within the organisation. The situations I had encountered were both personal and through other colleague's experiences. These experiences were often professionally destructive, personally demoralising and a productivity waste. I observed some colleagues who required psychiatric help to deal with drug and alcohol issues, depression and anxiety as a results of these behaviours. The experiences encountered were at all levels within the different organisations, from aggressive behaviours of leaders to unprofessional colleagues who aimed to socially isolate and intimidate co-workers.

In my own PhD studies, I reviewed many communities of practice studies. This gave me some insight into how the culture of a workplace can breed this behaviour of intimidation and aggression. If you don't join in...then you'll become a victim!

My feelings after completing the Class Act modules – I feel like I am finally part of an organisation that can look internally and see how damaging these patterns can be to the overall productivity of the organisation.

I feel very happy to be in our work environment as a welcomed, competent professional who does not need to be micromanaged and is appreciated for the skills that I bring to my role.

I am looking forward to a productive, cohesive workplace, with like-minded colleagues.

Thank you for the initiative, it makes us a standout organisation to be a part of!

”

1 Case Study

“We now have a more cohesive staff culture and less toxicity – the Communication Charter essential to us.”

Leader

Have you recently been, or are you being, affected by bad manner at work?

- **71%** at participation
- **reduced to 33%** after just 12 months

On a scale of 1 to 5, how much stress do you think these negative communication behaviours cause you and your colleagues?

- **43%** of staff rated 5 at participation
- **no staff** rated 5 after just 12 months

Do you ever hold back from supporting your colleagues for fear that you will receive poor manner in response?

- **42%** at participation
- **no staff** after just 12 months

Participants' feedback:

“It promotes a positive and collaborative work culture. It equips staff with additional skills in dealing with difficult/confronting situations and it has boosted staff morale.”

“Giving staff the tools to deal with situations that may arise using self-reflection.”

“Giving us the tools to cope and manage situations that arise in a respectful manner.”

“Has made the staff sit up and look at their actions and think hard before they speak/make decisions. Points out problems we may have been unaware.”

“Class Act has given the tool to assist us in making our workplace more productive.”

“Think more about how/why we communicate to staff, parents and students.”

“Has you thinking about how you interact with staff and the skills to deal with staff.”

“Class Act has set out expectations for behaviour amongst staff and given us a level of behaviour we should maintain in an easy to understand format.”

“Class Act has shown us how to handle any situation we might face in the workplace.”

“Staff are aware of the importance of professional courtesy and are more mindful of how they interact with others.”

“An improvement in workplace relations and conduct in staff meetings.”

“Staff information and support for specific professional skills and knowledge.”

“Discussions surrounding how to approach the manner over the matter in regards to all community members.”



‘Relationships are the key predictor of organisational performance.’

Professor Paul Brown, 2015

Class Act Impact Statement

June 2023

Participants' feedback:

"This experience drew out one of my team's behaviours and helped me to deal with them- negative, prickly and curt. She is good at the technical aspects of her job but has very poor communication skills. A lot of people are offended by her and avoid her, and I think she lacks confidence in herself. Her behaviours are mostly subtle. For example displeasure she conveys through her face."

"Class Act empowered me to have conversations I wouldn't have had otherwise. I became more aware and comfortable raising issues. We now have the most collegial group we've ever had."

"It's very seldom that you get this level of training. Extremely valuable. It's all about good communication and respect for others."

"We are using humour to address and stay mindful about communication behaviours, and that's working well. Eg 'That's not part of our charter. I'll call you on that!'"

"There are very robust social groups here who practice mutually exclusive behaviour. I have seen a moderation since we participated."

Class Act encouraged people to have the discussions about difficult team communication situations. It has been absolutely fantastic. I have printed out the list of behaviours and our principles to remind myself and show others how important this is, I use it all the time."

"Class Act has given people the courage to address communication practices. I had someone come to me recently complaining about a staff member. I asked them, 'Did you go and talk to this person?' They hadn't. I was then able to talk to them about how to have that conversation so that they could deal with it themselves."

"We now have permission and support from management to prioritise team communication behaviour."

"I love having things to hang on to. I can now say, 'This is what we do here.' Next year we are doing more to reinforce the charter."

"Class Act has made me more aware that we have a big problem with talking 'about' people rather than 'to' people about problems. People either simply enjoy complaining, or they are afraid to raise issues directly, or both."

"I want to empower staff to go straight to others if they have a concern, having those conversations professionally and considerately."

"A lot of issues flushed forward because of our participation. I had a huge problem with a small group of staff generating negativity about me behind my back. A couple of my team members came to see, through participating in the program, that it wasn't right, and came to me and my supervisor with their concerns. It was painful to deal with, but we have. Otherwise I'd still have the problem."

"I found this process extremely valuable. I've had to have a lot of difficult conversations this year. It is too early to comment on changes to our culture, but I believe they will come from this."

"Class Act has been great. I have three team members who gossip and undermine others and have already started addressing these patterns."

"It brought forward some staff negativity towards one of our ELT members ... Now the matter has been resolved positively. We had a small group who were very negative. "

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Case Study

"The Class Act program has been excellent. We do things slowly here but well. Next year we want to visibly show we are taking this training seriously by displaying posters around the school, talking about it with each other and with parents and students, embedding it in our communication."

Leader

Have you recently been, or are you being, affected by bad manner at work?

- **31%** at participation
- **reduced to 6%** after just 12 months

Do you have someone in your midst who does not demonstrate professional courtesy?

- **22.22%** at participation
- **6.25%** after 12 months

Do you believe you have a conversational bully in your midst?

- **17%** at participation
- **no staff** after just 12 months

