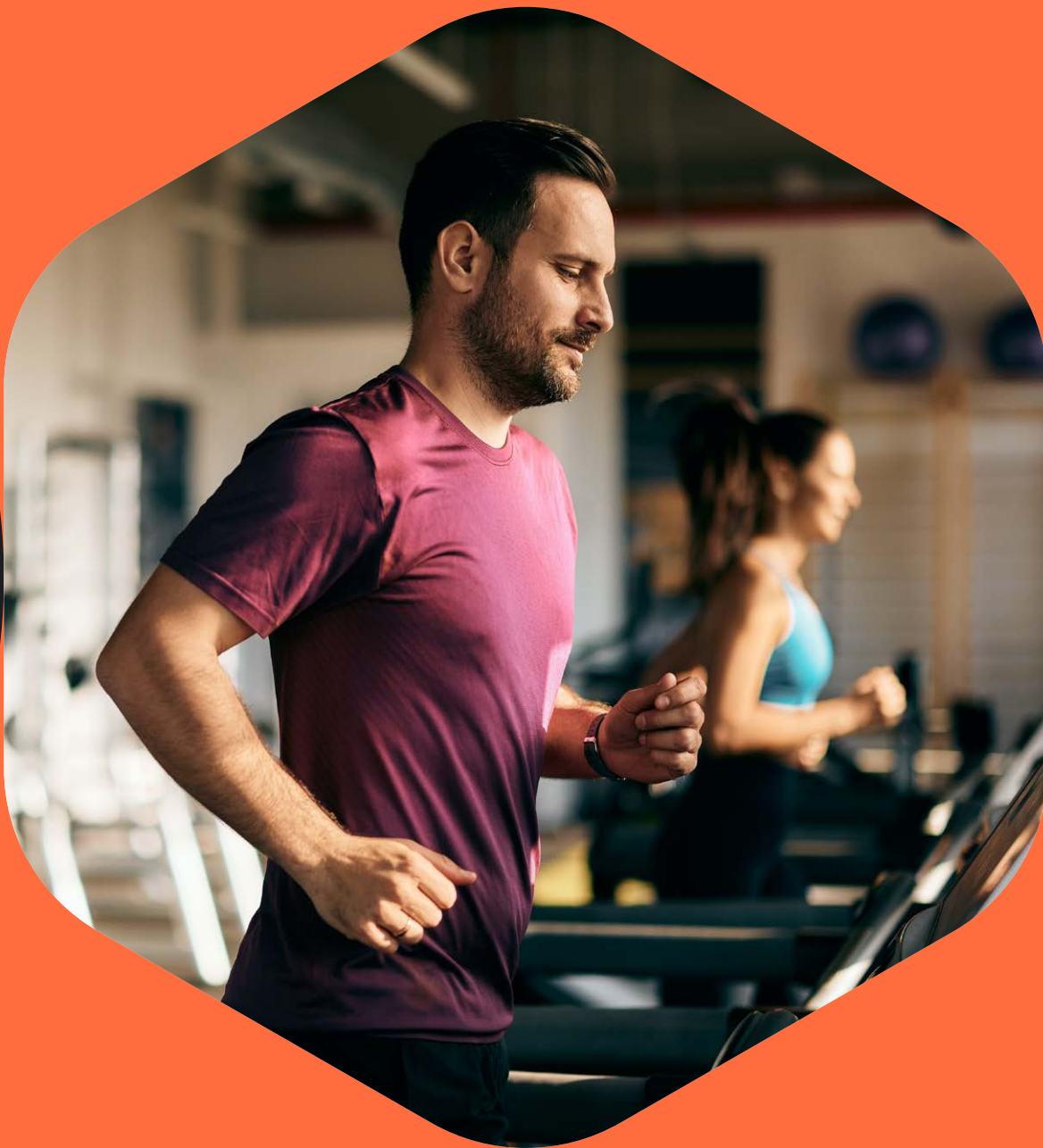Expr3ss!

Predictive Hiring
Technology

Q&A: Next Gen Health & Lifestyle Clubs

We chat with Debbie Debono, from Next Gen Health & Lifestyle Clubs, about their success in using Expr3ss! to change the culture of their business.

About you

E. What is your role?

D. Group People and Culture manager for Next Gen Health & Lifestyle Clubs.

E. What are the key business outcomes?

D. To deliver the overall business strategy from a people and culture perspective.

E. What keeps you awake at night? (Your single biggest problem)

D. At the moment I would say maintaining a highly capitalised workforce during the JobKeeper scheme. In particular managing a team of casuals not prepared to work for their JobKeeper or offering to do the bare minimum in order to maintain their JobKeeper.

E. How do you get recognised for what you do?

D. When challenges arise within the business I think I'm recognised for dealing with those tough situations through my experience by being able to guide people in a practical and simple way.

E. What does the future look like for you and your role?

D. One of the challenges I have is trying to implement positive strategies within the business with limited budget and resources. In regards to the future, my focus is on changing the culture of our business and changing the workplace demographics to suit those strategies.

E. How do you interact with the CEO, CFO, and COO?

D. I interact with each of our C-level execs quite independently, drawing on each of their input individually to then collectively drive the overall executive strategy.

E. What HR topics do you discuss with the CEO, CFO and COO? (e.g. Cultural Fit, Staff Development, Succession Planning)

D. Within those independent discussions we cover the range of People and Culture strategy. Culture fit is a frequently discussed topic with our CEO in particular. We're looking at a learning and development plan at the moment for our employees via a partnership with the Australian Institute of Management. In this current environment compliance is another important topic of discussion, specifically Covid compliance and social distancing is at the forefront for us and not just from a safety compliance point of view but also a qualifications point of view.

E. Do you discuss recruitment strategies with your CEO, CFO or COO? If so, what areas do they cover?

D. We do discuss recruitment strategies, in particular working to define which people are best suited to particular roles within the business and in turn, aligning the pay structures to suit.

E. How many employees do you currently have? What categories of roles do they fall into?

D. We currently have approx 600 staff across Australia and New Zealand, from Club Manager level to Heads of Department throughout the various areas of our business including Health and Fitness, Food and Beverage, Swim School Operations etc.

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> Group People & Culture Manager,
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Group People & Culture Manager,
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E. What is a typical salary?

D. Having a wide range of roles within the business means this varies from 50K base commission based roles to 100K+ managerial and executive positions

Your upcoming recruitment plans

E. What are your employment plans in 2021? Do you plan to employ more people in 2021?

D. Probably not, I think as with most businesses feeling the effects of Covid we may consider a back to basics approach for our existing clubs for 2021. That said, we do have a brand new club opening in Melbourne next year and we will be recruiting for these positions as our focus for 2021.

E. What types of roles will you be recruiting for in 2021? (e.g. Administration, C-Suite, Customer Service, Data Analysts)

D. Moving forward, as we have changes of staff I think our focus will be on assessing each position individually and deciding whether we simply re-hire for a particular position or, do we "spread the load" so to speak from the staff we currently have or promote internally to ensure we have the best fit to role for each position.

E. What are the key factors you are looking for in your recruitment for 2021?

D. Longevity will be a key focus for us in 2021. Attracting the right people who are committed to both the business and the industry and this is a key area where Expr3ss! allows us to attract and pinpoint those best fit applicants so easily.

A lot of our employees are uni students so Next Gen is often a stepping stone career wise which may suit their particular study timetables etc at the time. So our focus for 2021 will be attracting those applicants seeking a more long term career within the industry.
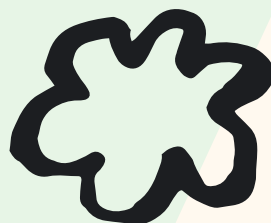
Prior to Expr3ss!

E. What were your biggest challenges prior to jumping on board Expr3ss!?

D. As Expr3ss! was already in place at Next Gen when I started, I can only speak from my challenges within recruitment in a different industry and not having Expr3ss! to rely upon. I would say not having such a thorough insight into a candidate prior to interview which Expr3ss! provides. Also being able to now communicate with each applicant so easily which often falls to the way side with internal recruitment teams relying on a mostly manual process.

E. On average, how many weeks of productivity was lost when an employee left?

D. This really depends on the role for our business. Because we have so many areas of our business where we have multi-skilling in role, i.e.. staff working in a certain department who can easily cross over and cover another department when needed. For our senior roles however, heads of department for example, we would be looking at anywhere from 8 to 12 weeks in lost productivity by the time we receive notice, advertise, interview and eventually hire the new staff member.

E. On average, how many weeks of productivity was lost during the onboarding process of a new employee?

D. Ideally you want to have a hand-over period when a staff member does move on, however when a hand-over doesn't happen it does make the onboarding process that much longer because you are relying on either other employees in the business or other managers help with that onboarding process. So I would say best case scenario 2-4 weeks lost productivity, worst case scenario more like 8-12 weeks lost productivity.

Expr3ss!

Predictive Hiring Technology

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Expr3ss! just does everything I need from a staff selection system. And in addition to that, there are so many additional features being released regularly even in just the two years I've been here, that keeps the system fresh, updated and continually relevant for the changing HR environment.

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Getting to know and use Expr3ss!

Sales and Customer Service

E. What has your experience with the Expr3ss! customer success and account management team been like?

D. When I first started with Next Gen I'd had a very short handover period with my predecessor and therefore had very little time to become familiar with using Expr3ss! The Customer Success team was there for me right from the get-go and organised weekly catch ups with me to walk me through every aspect of Expr3ss! while I was using it. I really got the sense right from the beginning that they were committed to making sure I was never overwhelmed in any way when it came to using Expr3ss!

E. What has your experience with the in-house LiveChat team been like?

D. In addition to our weekly catch ups, anytime I had a question in between it was as easy as jumping on LiveChat or emailing Customer Success and they were straight onto it, providing the guidance I needed. And that has never changed, even now whenever I have a question or a request, the team is there every time I need them.

**E. How often do you receive proactive contact from the Expr3ss! team?**

D. You never have any doubt that the team is there for you when you need them. I always receive updates as new features are released or perhaps an update is provided for an existing feature. In addition to that we have the monthly Webinars to get me up to speed with using any new features that have recently been released or to provide a refresher for any features I might not use as regularly as some others.

E. What has the level of help and assistance from the Expr3ss! team been like?

D. Being so hands on in my role at Next Gen, when I first started I thought it would be challenging needing to learn a completely new system and get up to speed asap, but it was actually completely the opposite, largely in part to the amazing support you always get from Expr3ss!.

E. What has your experience with Expr3ss! technology been like so far?

D. I'll give you a perfect example. I was working from Queensland for a couple of weeks and I get to Queensland and realised my laptop was still sitting on my desk at work. Luckily I had remembered to pack my personal laptop and as a result I was able to easily login to Expr3ss! remotely and continue my normal recruitment process as though I was still in the office. I've even been able to work
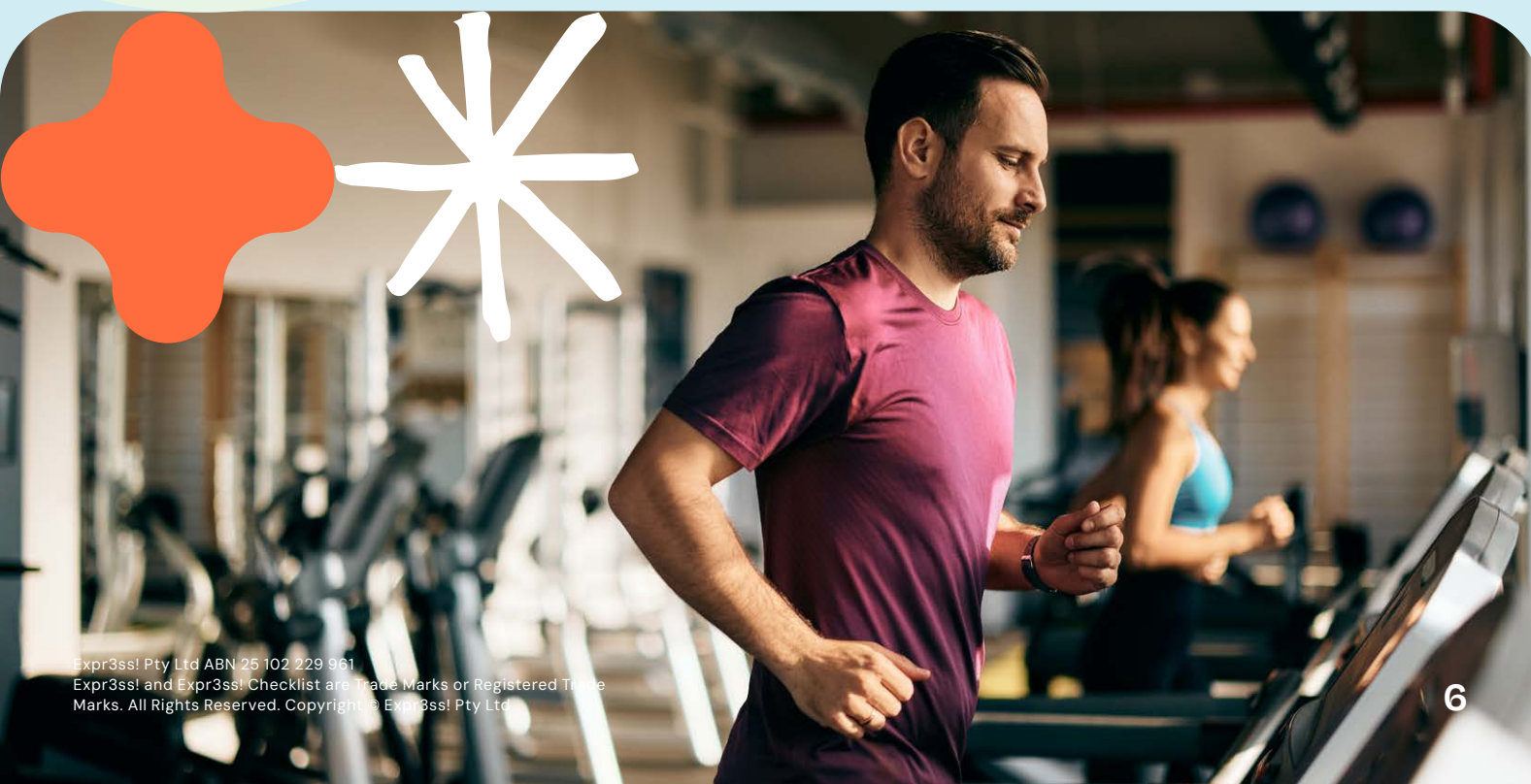
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remotely whilst on holidays in Fiji in the past, because our Expr3ss! Platform is web-based I can login anywhere, anytime.

E. In what way has your use of Expr3ss! changed the way you and your team do recruitment?

D. Expr3ss! has allowed me to keep our heads of Department more accountable when it comes to recruiting by really thoroughly reviewing candidates via the information that the system provides for them. We now have the ability to have a stringent recruitment process in place that sees each candidate screened thoroughly, timely communication provided for each applicant with our bulk email and messaging capabilities. I'm in contact with each hiring manager at least once a week to make sure they are reviewing their recent candidates, short-listing their top candidates, providing the appropriate communication for each candidate, who they are bringing in for interview, do we need a Visa check for a particular candidate? Do we need reference checking for a particular candidate? And all of this is so easily managed direct from Expr3ss! with the click of a button.

I make sure all of our team are using the system more than what they ever had before and our applicant experience is the benefit of this. I don't want applicants going to the effort of applying and wanting to work for Next Gen only to never hear back from us. That's just rude and at the end

of the day it's our brand awareness and reputation that benefits from the smooth applicant communication Expr3ss! provides us.

And so from a People and Culture perspective this is a perfect example of changing the culture and behaviours of how our managers recruit for the better and I find that very rewarding.

E. What has been the percentage drop in staff turnover since adopting Expr3ss!?

D. I can't provide an exact figure off the top of my head but there has definitely been a significant drop in staff turnover since using Expr3ss! A big factor in this also is the fact that I now gate-keep the system and make sure our hiring managers are getting the most from the system everyday.

Getting to know and use Expr3ss!

Expr3ss! features

E. What Expr3ss! features do you like most and why?

D. I love them all! Specifically though I love the Dashboard, I can see all of my most important data in real-time all in the one place. I love the star ratings and the applicant summaries, so when I'm viewing all applicants for a role I'm seeing my most suitable applicants instantly based on the star rating, their availability and their salary expectations.

There are just so many "WOW" moments where you realise the features within Expr3ss! are going to make your life so much easier.

E. Which features remove the time wasted on recruitment?

D. Without a doubt the bulk applicant communication features of Expr3ss! Being able to provide personalised updates to hundreds of applicants at once if needed. The free Visa checking feature is so easy to use and now with the addition of Essential Reference checks, they can pretty much come in over night which is amazing and a massive time saver.

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E. Which features speed your time-to-hire?

D. I mean it's instant! You make a job live and you have candidates coming through so quickly. I can also see within the system if a hiring manager is actively managing their roles which again allows me to be able to maintain an efficient recruitment process.

E. Which features help you identify the quality applicants?

D. The star ratings for sure. Being able to quickly identify my most suitable applicants for each role I have live via the Dashboard, the Applicant Summary Reports. These are my go-to's to quickly identify my quality applicants.

E. Do you use Talent Pool to find talent prior to advertising? Or do you use it for other purposes? If so, for what purpose is it used?

D. Well we've created a massive talent pool, so we can keep track of our applicants who may have only missed out on a previous role due to circumstance, we can then easily identify where they might be suitable for a future role before advertising.

E. Do you use any of the integrations from within Expr3ss!? (e.g. Interview Calendar, Online Referencing, Job Family Psychometric Assessments, Visa Checking, AI Telephone Interviewing, Seek Self Service, Onboarding). How have these improved your processes or aided your applicant selection?

D. Essential Referencing, free VEVO Work Rights Checks, Seek self service and of course the Expr3ss! Checklist.

E. What features would you like to see added to Expr3ss! and why?

D. I still haven't been able to think of something that Expr3ss! doesn't already do. It was almost like a challenge! I wanted to find something that Expr3ss! didn't do so I could have a new feature implemented "just for me" but every time I would think of something the Customer Success team would inform me "good news, the system already does this" and "more good news, the system already does that, too!".

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Getting to know and use Expr3ss!

Expr3ss! benefits

E. What benefits do you experience from using Expr3ss!?

D. Definitely the time saving aspects. Being able to identify my most suitable candidates so quickly.

E. Has your cost of paid job board advertising reduced?

D. I tend to prioritise using the free job boards which are available to me via Expr3ss! first and if I feel like we need an extra resource for a particular role, say after having a role live on the free job boards for a week or so, then I will post to Seek after that. So in that way we definitely save on advertising costs by taking advantage of the free job boards.

E. How is the use of Benchmarks benefiting your hiring?

D. We do use a number of custom benchmarks as they provide additional relevance to particular roles we advertise within the business, however I mainly use a number of the standard benchmarks within Expr3ss! as they suit the majority of our role requirements really well. It benefits our hiring because we are seeing an accurate insight into whether a candidate has the particular qualities and attitudes we know lead to success in a particular role.

E. How is the use of the Screening Questions and Video Questions benefiting your hiring?

D. With the screening questions we are able to straight away identify those applicants with the "Can Do" skills, the "must haves" we need for them to be successful in a particular role. The Video Questions provide us an additional insight into how that person presents themselves, do they speak clearly and concisely for example if we are hiring for a customer facing role etc. You can get so many valuable insights from the Video Interview.

E. How is the use of the Interview Priority Stars benefiting your choice of who to first interview?

D. As I mentioned earlier this is one of my "go-to" Expr3ss! features that I reference constantly to know where I should be focusing my attention early on in regards to most suitable applicants to progress to the next stage.

E. How is the use of the Behavioural Interview Questions benefiting your hiring?

D. This is an area I'm probably not utilising enough however is on my "to-do" list to incorporate more frequently.

E. What unexpected benefits do you experience from using Expr3ss!?

D. As we continue to build our talent pool, having that resource available to keep track of our previous applicants for our future roles was definitely a benefit that I didn't expect.

Expr3ss! also allows us to maintain a transparent recruitment process with each of our hiring managers able to access their applicants individually whilst all following the same process and procedure.

In your experience

E. How reliable are CVs?

D. CVs offer a good insight into an applicants background or work history however Expr3ss! allows us to see the applicant behind the CV.

E. How reliable are reference checks?

D. Reference checks are an essential part of our recruitment process however you always keep in the back of your mind that a reference is only as reliable as the person offering that reference.

E. What do you see as the biggest dangers in relying upon CVs for talent acquisition?

D. At the end of the day a CV is a marketing document, a good CV really comes down to how good that person's business writing skills are, how well they sell themselves. So whilst it does provide a good work history summation for an applicant you cannot rely on a CV alone when making hiring decisions.

E. How reliant is your applicant attraction on paid job boards?

D. Not overly reliant. As I mentioned I will more often than not utilise the free job boards which are available to us through Expr3ss! firstly and if I feel we require an additional resource for a particular role then I will look to go out through Seek.

E. Is it more difficult to hire quality staff today than 5 years ago?

D. Yes. I think good people are in the jobs they want to be in and it's very hard to lure them away. Quality applicants are rarely on the market just waiting for an opportunity to come up because if they are a quality applicant people with snap them up, hence why using a range of free job advertising services is so important to reach the widest possible diversity of applicants

E. What do you believe you will need in functionality to assist your hiring in 2021?

D. Well we will be undertaking a bulk recruitment drive in 2021 as I mentioned for our new Melbourne club so for me I will be looking to rely even more on the Smart Shortlist to pinpoint my most suitable applicants for me in addition to using the Essential Referencing, Onboarding and interview features I already use regularly.

E. Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

D. I use Expr3ss sometimes hourly! At the very least I'm literally in the system everyday without fail. First thing everyday I'm checking the status of all of our roles via the Dashboard and driving our recruitment process accordingly.

I would absolutely recommend this system to anyone across any industry that needs an all-in-one recruitment and onboarding system. I'm just continually impressed by it.

Expr3ss!
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Just imagine how much better your life and business would be with absolutely awesome staff in every role.

Click for a web tour