



Welcome to the latest edition of Australia-wide Business Training Pty Ltd's (awbt) *Real People Real Business* newsletter and it is a great pleasure to feature another exceptional individual, Ms Tizzy Vigilante, National Manager – Wealth Management for IRESS Wealth Management (IRESS).

Tizzy Vigilante works in one of the most mature, consumer focused, innovative, highly regulated, and technically advanced financial services marketplaces in the world.

In fact, very few industries have experienced, in such a relatively short period of time, the extent of change from product development and delivery, to the provision of professional advice by financial planners, as that of the Australian financial services marketplace.

In the past two decades, well known and long established brands such as National Mutual, Colonial Mutual Life, Prudential, Legal & General, etc have disappeared with the major Australian banks now significant providers of investment, retirement and protection products and services.

However, it was the Australian Federal Government's introduction of the Financial Services Reform Act (FSRA) which came into effect in March 2002 that had the greatest impact. The FSRA brought the provision of financial services and products under a single licensing arrangement and introduced a new disclosure regime for financial products and established a code of conduct for financial services providers.

In such a highly geared, technically focused industry, the success and growth of IRESS can be attributed to its organizational structure and framework that facilitates and responds to needs of its users, i.e. financial advice providers, dealer groups, research providers, manufacturers and institutions – and to the multi faceted role of the IRESS national network of account executives headed by Tizzy Vigilante.

IRESS account executives are a team of highly skilled, service focused individuals that address and service the technical and training needs of financial adviser clients and also, provide the all important user feedback that ensures software improvements and enhancements are incorporated into new products or upgrades.

Through investment in professional development with conferences, in house L & D initiatives and encouraging account executives to further their formal qualifications, IRESS enhances its reputation with clients and ensures that its competitive advantage is maintained.

It is this commitment to people development that has assisted IRESS to export its technical expertise, knowledge and insight overseas through offices in New Zealand, South Africa and Canada.

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Empowered staff – business leaders and managers of the future

Tizzy Vigilante's financial services career began in 1987 when she joined a small suburban financial planning practice and this was followed two years later by a role in the ANZ financial planning division at the time, ANZ McCaughan.

A restructure at McCaughan's saw the financial planning division break away to become Lonsdale Financial Group Limited, a dealer group that would grow to support a network of financial services practices across Australia.

Tizzy was appointed Associate Director of Lonsdale, where she worked in the dealership area that developed and provided software solutions for the financial services market.

Her strengths in this area, coupled with a desire to broaden her knowledge of financial services industry, saw Tizzy move in 1999 to independent financial services software company, IWL Ltd.

IWL was still in its infancy and this presented a remarkable opportunity for Tizzy to become involved in many different areas of the business, including research, financial planning software, sales and marketing.

Tizzy spent eight years with IWL. Four years into that time, her innate understanding of what constitutes good client service saw her take up the role of Executive General Manager, with specific responsibility for the Business Partnership Division. The focus of this division was on business development, servicing and support.

In any service based organisation it is crucial to be passionate and clear about what constitutes good client service. Central to Tizzy is her belief that client service is fundamentally about building relationships based on respect.

To achieve this, both the internal and external face of the business needs to reflect and work in unison to ensure the attainment of a common goal.

Many companies say that they empower their staff – however, for Tizzy the commitment to empowerment has been the foundation for allowing them to attain their potential as industry professionals and individuals.

Empowered staff – business leaders and managers of the future (continued)

Tizzy has always regarded her role as a manager is to facilitate the development and growth of her staff; to ensure that they are not confronted by roadblocks that hamper operational efficiency; to challenge their skills, insight and abilities; to involve them in attaining the business's vision and goals – and in doing so, build a productive cohesive and energetic team.

Empowering staff is one of the top priorities for organisations seeking to create and develop a quality culture.

Those organisations that encourage staff involvement perform and operate better over the long term and morale is improved when staff can contribute in a positive manner to the decision making process of a business.

In 2007, IWL's VisiPlan Financial Advisory Software division was acquired by IRESS Market Technology Limited (IRESS). IRESS is an ASX listed company and core supplier of financial services software in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

It was IRESS long standing strong client service culture that had the strongest influence on Tizzy's decision to transition with IWL to IRESS.

In her new role, Tizzy is responsible for the client facing divisions of the IRESS Wealth Management business stream. IRESS is a dynamic company with a demonstrated commitment to growth.

Furthermore, by being part of a much larger organisation that has a constantly growing and evolving financial services software offering has provided Tizzy with new challenges and opportunities to apply her extensive business, industry and HR knowledge and experience.

The most challenging aspect of Tizzy's national management role revolves around managing and communicating consistent client services values to a large team spread over multiple locations across Australia.

To ensure that IRESS Wealth Management maintains its competitive edge and reputation, Tizzy is committed to an internal framework of open communication that values the feedback and input of her account management team and encourages them to enhance and develop their business and problem solving skills in order to properly service their respective clients.

But above all, Tizzy is committed to the professional growth and development of her team with programs that bring the team members together to network and share their knowledge, experiences, and insights; to learn from business, industry and lifestyle professionals and to identify and nurture the skills and talents of the next generation of IRESS leaders and managers.

This is a constant work in progress that keeps Tizzy challenged and motivated.

continued page 4



Empowered staff – business leaders and managers of the future *(continued)*

Key qualities for success

- Have a strong client ethos.

- Demonstrate good personal values, based on honesty, integrity and organisational commitment, when dealing with staff, clients and suppliers.

- Build strong relationships internally and externally to promote increased and recurring business.

- Take on different roles and learn about all aspects of the business.

- Co-ordinate ongoing professional development for staff. This increases job satisfaction levels, from which both the individual and the organisation reap the benefits.

- Empower the team - liberate people to reach higher levels of contribution and satisfaction.

- Maintain open communication channels with all business divisions to promote increased productivity and break down barriers.

- Strive to take the organisation to the next level.

- Look for new challenges.

- Work with executive coaches and develop leaders.

- Be keen to increase your responsibilities - want to be successful.

- Move with the pace of the organisation and don't be afraid to change it.

- Motivate yourself by working in a dynamic company.

- Surround yourself with experienced professionals, who believe in what they do and are committed to the success of the business.
