



AS FEATURED IN *BUSINESS IN FOCUS*  
MAY 2014

# Entertaining EDUCATION



*MRWED Training and Assessment is Australia's leading provider of trainer training – training people to train others. CEO Marc Ratcliffe founded the business in 2000, after he recognized a gap in the market while working as a teacher.*

## Written by Claire Suttles

"I was involved in adult education and saw an opportunity around supporting the development of trainers," he recalls. "I saw it was an unmet need, because most of the programs that were available for professionally developing trainers were long, expensive or both."

After fourteen years of successful growth, MRWED has dedicated training centres located throughout Australia in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Newcastle. The team also conducts regular training throughout Asia, Africa and North America. Since its inception, the business has delivered more than one thousand public courses, conducted hundreds of customised programs for corporate clients, and has had over 22,000 students successfully complete a qualification.



MRWED trains trainers in the skills they need to teach others. "We help them to prepare sessions, to build confidence in front of the group and assess their candidates," Mr Ratcliffe explains. "Our programs provide the foundation for being a great trainer." Graduates will go on to train other people in their own field of expertise – whatever that may be.

---

**"Our programs provide the foundation for being a great trainer."**

---

The company delivers courses that support the growth of beginning trainers, senior trainers and training managers through the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE40110) program, Diplomas of Vocational Education and Training (TAE50111), and Training Design and Development (TAE50211). MRWED also ►►

▶ strongly supports the development of self-paced learners through progressive RPL programs, correspondence study and online learning, all of which are backed by a dedicated learning support team.

MWED is also the exclusive Australian licensee for Bob Pike's Train-the-Trainer Boot Camp, which is one of the world's most respected and popular train-the-trainer programs, with over 100,000 attendees globally. "It is a very exciting program and it really helps both new and experienced trainers add a whole new host of techniques and tricks into their kit bag," Mr Ratcliffe says. "In that particular program we share, model and participate in 102 alternatives to lectures over two days."

This type of innovative training is the company's specialty. Mr Ratcliffe uses the phrase "edutainment" to describe all of the company's offerings. "We truly believe that we can learn through having fun. The content itself might be serious, but it

doesn't mean that we have to take ourselves seriously. You can have some fun with the delivery. You can use sound, you can use visuals, you can get people involved and moving around."

---

### **"We truly believe that we can learn through having fun."**

---

While there are certain requirements that must be met to obtain a certificate, the process "doesn't have to be boring," Mr Ratcliffe insists. "Education and entertainment aren't the antithesis of each other. They can work really well in harmony."

He points out that, as a general rule, education is stuck in the past. Even with all of our modern advancements, learning almost always involves "a teacher at the front of the room and a whole bunch of students sitting in rows. So, whilst the rest of the world has advanced incredibly, education is still almost the same as it was four hundred years ago."





It is high time that education caught up with modern times, Mr Ratcliffe says. "We need to capture their imagination and keep their focus." Under his guidance, MRWED is turning this vision into a reality. "We have content to cover and information to share, but we are going to do it in an inspiring and engaging way to hold that attention."

He likens teachers to performers who must compete for their students' attention, particularly in our modern age of smart devices, mobile phones and internet. "If we are creating unique experiences in the classroom and online, where [students] are engaged, then their experience is going to be so much more productive."

MRWED's innovative approach goes beyond its teaching methods. "We think it is important to not only engage our students in the classrooms, but also our employees," Mr Ratcliffe says. "The more we invest in them, the happier they are and

the more productive they become. We think our strategy for success is first and foremost looking after our people."

**"Our strategy for success is first and foremost looking after our people."**

The company's strategy is evidenced in its new, state of the art headquarters in Caboolture, Queensland. The building is designed to create a positive work environment and to facilitate innovation. "When you walk in the door, you've got forty-six different places you can choose to work for that day," he reports. "There are no fixed locations. You use the resources that you need when you need them. Certainly, places like Google are doing things like this on a regular basis, but it is possible to be done on a smaller level as well." ►►

**Our mission is to help our clients deliver successful projects**



Management  
Training

"Our entire leadership team participated in a 2 day project management workshop provided by ETM, and it has helped to completely transform the way we approach, manage and discharge projects. We will never look at project management in the same way again"

*Marc Ratcliffe, CEO, MRWED Training and Assessment*



powered by  
**MINDSHOP**

**Call us now** if you need help to deliver successful project outcomes. **+61-3-95561407**

**[www.etmmanagementtraining.com](http://www.etmmanagementtraining.com)**



► Mr Ratcliffe says that many companies the size of MRWED don't think that they are capable of providing an innovative work space or regular staff incentives. "I think a lot of organizations think that this idea of delighting and surprising your staff is expensive. But it doesn't take big bonuses and billiard tables and so forth. You can do some really simple things to engage your own team, and it makes a profound difference."

In fact, Mr Ratcliffe remembers how sceptical his own accounting team was of his bold, new ideas. "It was difficult for me to sell some of these reforms," he admits. The investment has more than paid off, however. "I've got a much more engaged team. People are taking less sick leave. People are inspired to help drive the company forward." Best of all, the staff is developing new concepts to make MRWED trainer training programs even better. "They are coming up with new ideas and, because they are in a creative space, they are able to explore those ideas. That has a genuine effect on success."

The company's efforts have not gone unnoticed; in 2013, MRWED was named among the top ten Australian Best Places to Work by the Great Places to Work Institute and BRW magazine. It was the company's fifth consecutive appearance in the top twenty. The company was also named one of Asia's best employer brands in 2011.

**"In 2013, MRWED was named among the top ten Australian Best Places to Work by the Great Places to Work Institute and BRW magazine."**

"We are both a national and international employer of choice," he points out. "We've been getting external recognition that investing in people and creating a great place to work delivers a better experience for employees and customers." The end result, he adds, is "an improvement in the success of the business financially."

MRWED already has a strong presence throughout Australia and, even though the company's qualifications are Australian based, the business also delivers training to twelve additional countries. The team is eager to grow the company's geographical footprint even larger. "We are always looking at international options," Mr Ratcliffe says. "It is the nature of globalization that our boundaries are diminishing. We've got to recognize that our customers aren't always in our backyard, and be courageous enough to go out there and see what other opportunities there are."

Embracing international opportunities has already had tremendous benefits. "That helped us get through the global financial crises," he says. The company's product line is quite





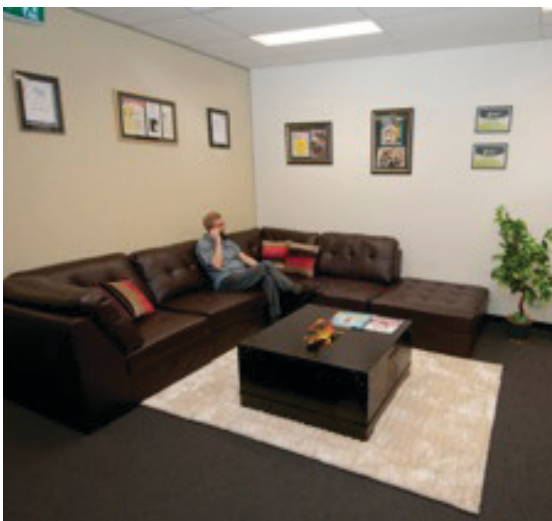
by assessing each market's unique needs and tailoring its approach to meet those needs. The company has also had to modify its prices. "In many of those marketplaces the price point is quite low, so we've had to be quite creative," Mr Ratcliffe points out. "We have to look at scale in those areas because it is costly for us to go in."

The effort has yielded results, however, and the team has managed to adapt to varying market needs and price points. "I'm really proud to say that our international strategy is definitely on track." And, the payoff will only increase, he believes, particularly as many economies around the world continue to improve.

The company's expansion is also motivated by the team's eagerness to share MRWED's innovative and effective approach to even more people. "The reality is that a lot of those countries that we go into, particularly in Asia and Africa, have workforces that require trainers to get out there and up-skill their team," Mr Ratcliffe explains. "So it is a really exciting path for us to be on in this industry. There is just so much need out there." ■

narrow – it only trains trainers – so the team couldn't rely on diversification to survive the rocky economy. Instead, having a foothold in multiple locations saved the day. "Because we are in so many different marketplaces, when things are bad, we can drift toward those [marketplaces] that are unaffected," Mr Ratcliffe explains. "That's true both domestically and overseas."

MRWED has been able to build success in multiple locations





**MRWED Training and Assessment**

PO Box 325

Caboolture QLD 4510

**P:** 1800 287 246

**F:** 1800 333 082

[www.mrwed.edu.au](http://www.mrwed.edu.au)

PROJECT SUPPORTERS



[www.etmmanagementtraining.com](http://www.etmmanagementtraining.com)

.....

