



CASE STUDY

Practera powered Job Smart program helps USyd Business School improve international student employability outcomes by 300%



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY
BUSINESS SCHOOL





THE CHALLENGE



HOW DO YOU EFFICIENTLY DEVELOP STUDENTS' PRACTICAL EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS ALONGSIDE FORMAL STUDY?

As Manager of the Careers office for the University of Sydney Business School (USBS), with more than 8500 international students per annum and a small team, Lucinda Crossley-Meates had a challenge – how to efficiently engage and support students in developing practical employability skills alongside formal study. Lucinda said,



“Developing employability skills, experience and connections around study is incredibly important to all students, but in particular to international students to support their career aspirations either here in Australia or on return to their home market”

In 2015, the Careers & Employability Office managed a traditional, face to face career preparedness program with an engagement challenge – too few international students commenced the program or completed it. It was also resource-intensive to manage. Students were unaware of the program, couldn't see why it was relevant, or didn't consider it a priority compared to study.

THE SOLUTION



USBS INVESTMENT IN JOB SMART

To meet this challenge, USBS invested in Job Smart – USBS own brand of premier employability skills accelerator program to support international students. The initial goals were to lift student engagement with the program and handle higher volume without increasing costs.

Student focus groups identified the key priorities for the program:



Branding



Gamification



Mobile technology
(24/7 accessibility)



Communication



Incentives



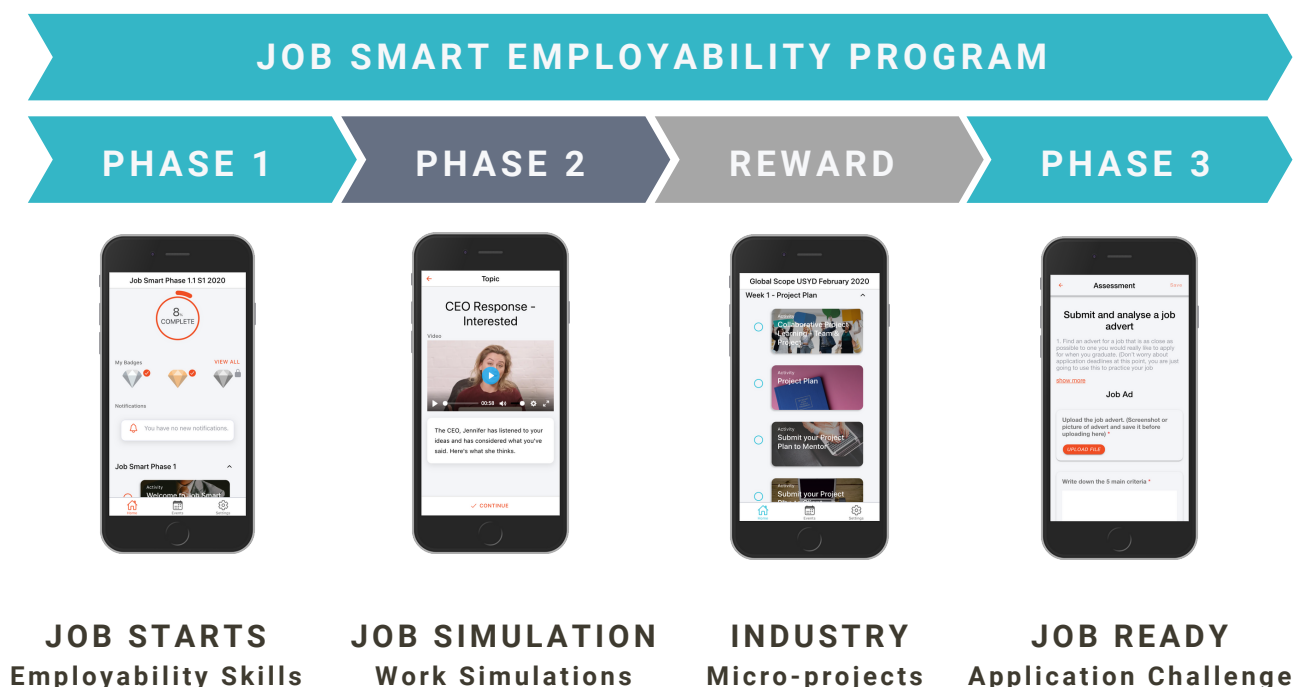
USBS selected Practera as a design and technology partner to help achieve these goals. The program provides students with the opportunity to build their employability awareness, personal qualities, skills and career assets around real-world activities.

Through the program they can:

- ✓ Gain advice from career experts
- ✓ Mingle with industry professionals
- ✓ Undertake exciting workplace projects, volunteer and internships

BRINGING THE PLAN TO LIFE

Since 2016, Practera has partnered with the University of Sydney Business School to step change the scale, engagement and outcomes of their Job Smart program. USBS designed and built a series of proprietary modules on the Practera platform to support the development of employability skills through experiential learning across the student journey.





PHASE 1: JOB START

A combination of online and practical experiences that enable students to:

- ✓ Discover the secret of what employers look for in hiring
- ✓ Start building a professional brand including a CV and LinkedIn profile
- ✓ Develop key skills needed in the workplace

Mobile app delivery, use of selfies & videos, gamification, event ticketing, incentives and personalised 'nudge' communications on the platform help lift engagement with both the digital material and in-person events.

With more than 12,000 students engaged over 5 years, the technology has helped increase engagement with the program consistently by over 700% from pre-existing levels.

PHASE 2: JOB SMART

A virtual team-based **work simulation** based on one of four selected graduate attributes:



Resilience



Influence



Negotiation



Cultural
competency

Participants are put through a series of decision making and consulting tasks for a simulated company that result in various outcomes based on their choices and performance. Students gain teamwork experience, develop crucial employability skills and receive feedback from either careers staff or industry professionals. Outcomes have been positive, at thousands of student scale;

- ✓ 98% completion
- ✓ 99% student satisfaction
- ✓ 65% of industry mentors believe students improved communication skills across the case study
- ✓ 95% of students felt they developed real employability insights



REWARDS & INCENTIVES

Phase 1 and 2 of the program unlock real-world experiences, including freebies & vouchers, access to premium networking events, team industry projects, mentoring and premium internships. While the program aims to build students intrinsic motivation towards enhancing their employability, these extrinsic motivators, that are part of the point incentives, are a crucial aspect of the program's success.

Practera offers a 3-week industry digital project experience as a key reward milestone. This is accessible by hundreds of students per annum for completing previous levels and scoring highly.

Job Smart students work on 'Global Scope' – a NSW Government supported 'real business challenge' with clients such as the NSW Police, Allianz, EY or the Sydney Children's Hospital. More than 1500 students have successfully gone through these projects with;



93% student satisfaction



86% industry client satisfaction



98% of students enhanced their social & professional connections

PHASE 3: JOB READY

The third and final phase of the program is comprised of online activities to coach students through all stages of the job application process, including: CV writing, job interviews and aptitude tests.

Students select a target job advertisement, self assess their fit & aptitude for the role and build their career assets, personal narrative and a simulated application towards it.

Students go through a simulated assessment process and receive quick feedback from careers staff. The final stage is their engagement with a meaningful and personalised careers interview, a valuable activity that will aid the transition to graduate employment.

More than 1500 students have gone through the experience.



RESULTS



ENHANCED STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Cindy Yan is a recent University of Sydney Masters of Professional Accounting Graduate, who completed all available Job Smart activities, events, projects and placements through the Practera platform.

Cindy says,



"Job Smart has been my most remarkable experience at Uni. It offered precious industry knowledge which allowed us to learn and enhance multiple skills in the workplace. Feedback from industry mentors and additional supplementary resources both inspired and enabled me to reflect and develop my real-world skills. I highly recommend Job Smart to future students. It definitely helped me secure my graduate role as an Assistant Accountant with Jurisbridge Legal!"



INCREASED ENGAGEMENT AND SCALE

Lucinda summarised the impact of the Practera partnership,

"Since 2016, we have worked with the Practera team to digitally enable Job Smart. Practera has delivered customised, gamified apps to help scale Job Smart to thousands of students, promote learning, and increase engagement – without increasing budget.



300% IMPROVEMENT IN EMPLOYABILITY OUTCOMES

Lucinda continues,

"The key test of whether Job Smart has delivered a return on Investment for the Business School and for our students is in its impact on employability. We have seen the impact face to face – ranging from an improved mindset and resilience, to increased confidence to enter the Australian workforce, to increased job and internship opportunities. The difference is clear - 41% of program completers have jobs at graduation, as opposed to 14% of non-participating students."



AWARD WINNING

Job Smart was recently recognised with a prestigious 2019 Australian Financial Review Higher Education Summit Award for Employability.



It was also a finalist in the Global Edtech Digest awards under the Professional Skills development category.



FLEXIBLE

Job Smart was designed as a blended program, with an end-end mobile-first experience wrapping around in-person activities. The flexibility of this model and the Practera platform allowed USBS to rapidly adapt the program for online-only, multinational delivery in 2020 to cater to international students impacted by COVID-19 travel restrictions.

Lucinda finished,

“Practera has not just brought innovative technology – they have been a knowledgeable and responsive business partner that understands our space and delivered on our requirements flexibly, on time and on budget. They have helped us improve the program and the technology over time and respond with agility to budget adjustments and external shocks like Covid19. The Practera team have been great to work with.”

Let's Connect

The team at Practera is happy to connect and discuss how our design services & technology can help you deliver world-class experiential learning programs.

Whether you have an existing program or if you're creating one from scratch – let's connect and discuss how we can help you successfully launch a digitally enabled program that achieves both your university goals and meets your students' needs.

[GET IN TOUCH](#)