

LEARNER PROFILE

KATIE TOWNSHEND



LearningWorks
HE KURA WHAKANGUNGU

PROGRAMME: **FIRST LINE MANAGEMENT (LEVEL 4)**
EMPLOYER: **FAIRFAX MEDIA (DOMINION POST AND STUFF)**
FACILITATOR: **KARI**

“Be prepared for the next opportunity”

“You didn’t get the job but we still want to invest in you.” That’s how Katie Townshend’s employer broke the news to her that she wasn’t going to be the new Chief News Director at the Dominion Post. That investment turned out to be a place on a LearningWorks First Line Managers course in 2018. Katie has always taken opportunities to develop her management skills alongside her journalistic ones, regularly stepping up and filling the shoes of the Chief Reporter when he was sick or had a day off.

Katie has worked for Stuff since graduating from University of Canterbury’s Journalism programme in 2006. After experience working on a small community newspaper in Wellington, then on to the Manawatu Standard for several years, Katie’s big break was the opportunity to work as reporter for the Dom and Stuff.co.nz, eventually covering the Wellington City Council and becoming a senior reporter. Now in her 10th year at the Dom, Katie has moved full time into management, gaining the position of News Director in 2015.

Although she loved having her name on the front pages, she also loves the satisfaction she gets from a busy day “on the desk”. Katie credits her LearningWorks course with giving her the knowledge she needs to manage the difficult conversations and strategic planning that comes with running her team of writers.



Photo courtesy of Kevin Stent/Stuff

“More than anything the face to face sessions were the real benefit - getting to talk through different scenarios and also your own work scenarios with people who are at a similar stage in their career. It makes you realise it’s not just you dealing with these things – these interpersonal issues happen in offices everywhere and to be given some skills to manage these is really helpful.”

The First Line Managers training course was suggested by Katie’s editor as a chance for her to get the skills to go further up the ladder in the future. Completing the course helped her to feel like she was still moving her career forward. “I have always had the attitude that it’s what you do with the next opportunity that shows your true character.”

“I am still being given opportunities and I am still making the most of them.” Katie regularly deputises for the chief news director whenever she can – **“The course gave me the confidence to know that I have the skill set to handle whatever comes my way when filling in. Now when I need support I don’t just ask for help – I outline the different courses of action we could take and ask my managers to help me choose.”**