

# ACHIEVING BEST PRACTICE

CEO of Victorian agency Fletchers, **Bradley Brown**, speaks to *Real Estate Business* about the group's recent accomplishment as REIV's Large Residential Agency of the Year and the reasons behind their success

Story / Steven Cross

## FIRSTLY, WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON FLETCHERS WINNING THE AWARD?

It was very exciting to be there in Canberra with my wife, Sally, and two of my fellow directors (who were also nominees on the night) and their partners. Fletchers having been a finalist last year for Australian Large Residential Agency of the Year and not taking home the title kept my hopes in check, as I realised the competition at this level is outstanding. When I heard them say, "and the winner of the Australian Large Residential Agency of the Year is... Fletchers", my reaction of pure joy and satisfaction was as natural as a fight or flight response. For Fletchers, the current back-to-back Victoria winner of the same category, to be recognised by the REIA as the best large firm in our great land is just an awesome feeling – not just for me, but for the 180 dedicated people in the Fletchers Group and our vast network of amazing suppliers.

## HOW HAS FLETCHERS GROWN TO ACHIEVE THESE AWARDS?

Fletchers are 94 years old this year – a fourth generation real estate firm – but our path to these awards began 11 years ago when directors Tim, Rob and Marilyn Fletcher had the foresight to recognise that if Fletchers was going to continue to prosper well into the next millennium, it would be with professional management as an essential ingredient. That is where I came into the picture, when I was engaged to be a director and the firm's first CEO. We began the process of seeking out leading agencies and agents throughout Australasia to provide inspiration for us to create our own truly best practice methodologies for conducting our business, which we labelled 'The Fletchers Way'. Over the past

decade we have continued on this same path, totally committed to ensuring everything we do at Fletchers – the way we service our clientele, lead our team and relate to our suppliers – is 'best practice'. This single idea has led us to the recognition we received.

## TIM CREDITS YOU AS THE REASON THE COMPANY HAS DONE SO WELL OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS. WHAT WERE SOME OF THE CHANGES YOU MADE?

I am a big believer in a holistic approach to leadership and leading change. So, in other words, everything that can be changed and should be changed continues to be looked into and where necessary, evolved to ensure we achieve our vision of "best practice in everything we do".

We started our work in 2002 by mapping out where we wanted to be in 2012, and then began the process of building 'The Fletchers Way', module by module. Everyone in the Fletchers Group received comprehensive training on it and has full access to our intranet, Mavim (Methodical Approach to Information Management). Mavim provides them with all the steps, supporting tools and training reinforcements they need to deliver outstanding service to their clients, whether they be in sales or property management.

The second major focus for us was to create a team-based culture that thrives on people supporting people. I am a strong believer in the 'total quality service' (TQS) philosophy. My favourite part of it is, "if you are not servicing the client, you need to be servicing someone who is". This aspect of TQS has led us to having an outstanding service culture whereby our people work together in an almost seamless way to provide excellence to our clients in

a way which continues to reinforce the aim of having an amazing team environment.

The next major reason for our success is 'Fletchers Leadership Mentality'. We truly believe that by having as many people in the company as possible focused on being successful leaders in whatever their role at Fletchers may be, we will continue to achieve the maximum positive results. This starts with our directors group, a truly gifted and committed group of people focused on ensuring that Fletchers always strives to be the best it can possibly be.

## WHAT WAS YOUR ROLE BEFORE JOINING FLETCHERS?

In the two years before joining Fletchers I ran my own consultancy practice, primarily working with technology, large legal and major accounting firms to provide strategic, human resource and service strategy to the leaders of these companies. Prior to that time, I spent 11 years in senior roles in two leading law firms in Melbourne, and six years as CEO for a top 10 firm. My start in the business world was working with Arthur Young (now Ernst & Young) in a number of roles in the USA and Australia, from audit to human resources and general management. I have had outstanding learning opportunities during my career, which have provided me with the skill set I have needed to lead Fletchers over the last 11 years.

## AS A NON-PRACTITIONER YOURSELF, HOW HAS THIS HELPED YOU AS A CEO IN REAL ESTATE?

Well, to lead people and have them truly follow, you need to immerse yourself in the environment you are in. So I don't think of myself as a 'non-practitioner'; I work as hard as anyone at Fletchers to understand at a micro level what we do in every area of our firm. It is then my job to bring out the same passion in others around me and that is the only way I know we have 180 passionate people who believe in "The Fletchers Way" as much as I do. That is why we are the Australian Large Residential Agency of the Year.

## HOW DO YOU PLAN TO GROW FLETCHERS IN THE FUTURE?

In the same way we have in the past – with a commitment to relentlessly ensure we are reinventing ourselves as needed to be best practice. By providing leadership for our people with the assistance of our leadership group, by having a strong and committed vision for the firm and seeing to the flawless execution of whatever changes are required to achieve our vision. ■



# BRADLEY BROWN

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