

Case Study

“I think therefore I am (Red, Green Yellow or Blue)”

by Robin Elliott

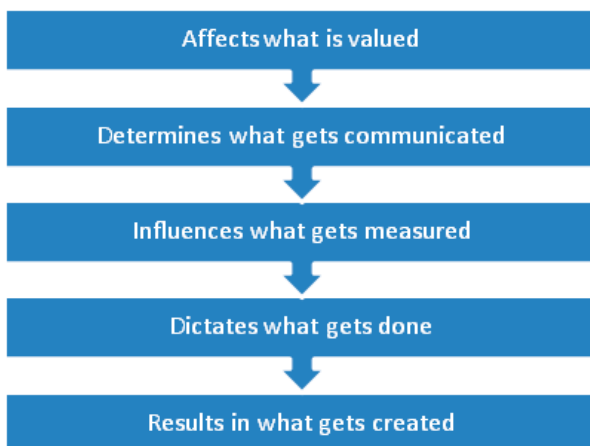
Introducing Whole Brain® Thinking into a global marketing services company



Background

When Descartes first uttered his famous quote “I think therefore I am” he not only birthed Western philosophy, he highlighted the role of thinking and its effect on all that we do, as a legitimate area of study.

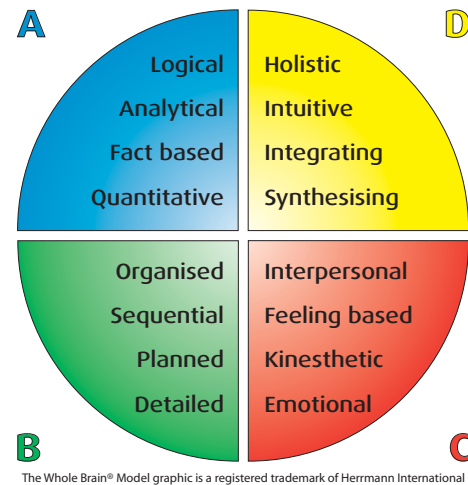
As an experienced HR Practitioner, with a bent for observing human behaviour, I’ve long been fascinated with the way organisational cultures are created and the role of the individual within that culture. An organisation’s culture is the sum of many parts, and is a direct result of the way people think and act. It goes like this, the way people think:



So if individual thinking is the foundation for the way an organisation behaves, how do we begin to dissect the way we think? How do we begin to understand the mechanisms of our thinking and, perhaps more importantly, if our thinking is not getting the results we want, how do we change?

We can begin by examining a person’s thinking preferences and there is one tool that I have used for many years which I have had great success with—the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument® (HBDI®)—the foundation of Whole Brain® Technology.

The beauty of the tool is that it is very simple, and is easily applied. The HBDI identifies an individual’s preferred approach to emotional, analytical, structural and strategic thinking and uses 4 colours (blue, green, red and yellow) to represent each style of thinking.



So how does thinking from a Whole Brain perspective improve business performance?

Because understanding your thinking preferences, and importantly those areas of thinking that you don’t prefer or may even avoid, greatly enhances your ability to understand another’s position. It allows you to stop seeing difference and start seeing similarities, because ultimately it takes all preferences to run a business and build a successful culture.

The Business Challenge

When I was first employed in an HR capacity for the Australian arm of a global marketing services agency I was struck immediately by a subtle division within the organisation. The qualitative researchers, those whose work involved observing human behaviour and interaction to gain insight on buying preferences and product use, were invariably described in friendly derogatory terms by their quantitative counterparts. The quantitative researchers

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used facts and complicated statistical analysis to decide how companies should develop their product lines and business. A common conversation went like this: “The ‘quallies’ never think about the numbers and they can’t manage their projects within budget”, while the ‘quallies’ shot back with “You ‘quantities’ stifle our creativity by only thinking about the numbers”.

What I was witnessing, in plain view, was an argument between the left and right sides of the brain.

The solution

I introduced the HBDI as a way to make the conversation conscious and facilitate teamwork by helping people understand differences in working style and decision making.

The HBDI can be an invaluable tool to understand the many complex relationships that we all experience at work. It helps to depersonalise those relationships and diffuse tensions, enabling a shared commitment to building better team relationships and ways of working.

All staff received training that integrated the HBDI within the first 3 months of their employment.

Results

Within a year business metrics had improved across the board:

- ◆ engagement scores rose 20%
- ◆ sales increased 15%
- ◆ turnover reduced from 15 to 8%.

The qualitative and quantitative teams decided they needed and liked each other so much that:

- ◆ they integrated their teams into one. The language in the organisation changed, people regularly joked “You’re just being blue”, or “We need to think green here”, or “What colour is the client?”
- ◆ meetings were coloured coded to ensure that all four quadrants were being addressed, because people knew that it took all four quadrants to make a fully functioning team and a fully functioning business.

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better results through better thinking

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Frito Lay		



The Originators of Whole Brain Technology® and the Creators of the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument® (HBDI®)

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