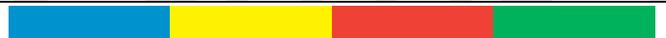


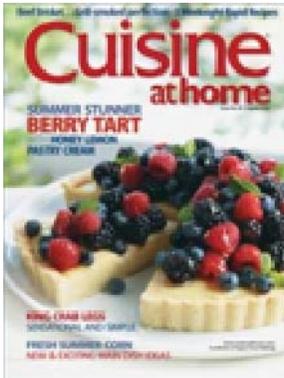
Case Study

Revenue's Skyrocket After
Magazine Aligns with How
Readers Think



Challenge:

Dee Peters, a certified Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI™) practitioner, had a clear goal when she began working with August Home Publishing (AHP) – to improve readership and increase revenues for one of the company’s publications, Cuisine at Home, a magazine that simply wasn’t performing up to its potential.



AHP had experienced strong growth over the course of its 25-year history, publishing five award-winning magazines since 1979 and being recognized twice by Inc. magazine as one of the 500 fastest-growing privately-

owned companies in the country. However, the company’s overall performance was being hindered by the flat performance of Cuisine at Home.

Donald Peschke, founder of AHP, speculated that the incompatibility of the magazine’s staff was contributing to its lack of growth. He saw the staff as being divided into two profoundly different groups often in opposition to one another. One group included the creative minds: writers and photographers who were imaginative and playful. The other group consisted of accountants and editors who were organized, analytical and procedural people who “paid attention to details, numbers and deadlines.” Both groups were integral to the success of the magazine, but the two just couldn’t collaborate successfully. Peschke asked Peters to help him unite his staff and help develop an action plan to improve the magazine’s performance.

Action:

Peters herself took a Whole Brain® approach to her consulting process with August Home Publishing in that she approached the challenge from the point of view of the various “audiences” the project would reach. In looking at the issues the magazine was facing, she and Peschke decided that applying Whole Brain Thinking principles to solve the problems the team was experiencing might only uncover half of the information needed to truly make changes at the magazine. They decided to also apply the same analysis to the readership of the magazine in order to make a “Whole Brain” shift in practices.

Peters set out to assess the market value of the magazine by conducting a formal comparison of the content and design of Cuisine at Home and four competing publications. A thorough examination of the magazines’ verbal and visual components helped Peters create a brain dominance profile of each publication. Peters also conducted focus groups with representative readers to measure and plot their thinking preferences and to find out what they valued most in the magazines. Peters then measured Cuisine at Home’s profile against what the readers valued.

To tackle the personality conflicts within the organization, all employees (approximately 100 people) completed the HBDI™, and Peters provided feedback about their individual thinking styles. The individual and common group profiles were openly shared and discussed among the employees.

“The HBDI™ profiles and the principles of



Whole Brain® Thinking helped create a cul-

tural climate in which staff members were motivated to improve their working relationships," explains Peters. "We didn't need to convince employees to participate once they were profiled and understood the concept because they were as invested in the outcome as we were."

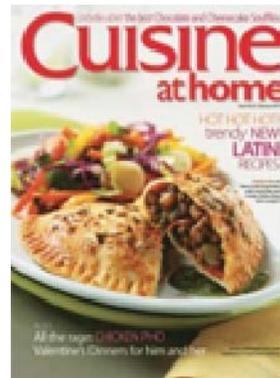
Results:

The magazine and reader analyses helped the staff understand how the magazine communicated with readers, and which elements the readers wanted. Based on Peters' findings, the staff made significant editorial and design changes to cater to readers' preferences. Peschke says they "started paying attention to how the readers related to the magazine." They decided to "open up" the magazine, adding more white space and eliminating many of their hallmark bounding boxes. They also altered their use of photos and reduced the step-by-step instructions that served them well in their other publications.

After completing the HBDI™, the employees finally understood why their two groups were so different. As they shared their own individual thinking preferences, they started to recognize and value each other's strengths. Their new awareness gave employees a common language in which to communicate and cooperate as they explored their differences and similarities.

Peschke credits Whole Brain® Thinking and Peters' analysis for better teamwork and improved morale at August Home Publishing. With her readership evaluation, Peters also laid the groundwork for ongoing monitoring of new content for the magazine. The magazine's whole-brained team worked together to increase the annual revenues of Cuisine at Home from \$80,000 to \$450,000, during a two-year period.

Since working with August Home Publishing, Peters has applied these lessons to other work groups and has been able to achieve equally measurable results. In fact, she is redesigning her consulting business this year based on the model she created while working with



August Home Publishing. Her goal is to focus not only on applying Whole Brain® Thinking principles to work groups but also to the customers they serve.

"Since working with Herrmann International, I approach and interpret everything and everyone I encounter on a daily basis with brain dominance at the forefront of my thinking," says Peters. "Whole Brain® Thinking will be the driving force and primary focus for my redesigned consulting practice."



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