

Case Study

Cookie Time

How Whole Brain® Thinking helped Cookie Time renew its recipe for success



“Integrating Whole Brain® Thinking into our business has had a really significant impact in terms of how we’ve been able to transform our company into what it is today,” says CEO Lincoln Booth.

Every entrepreneurial company reaches a stage in its life when it needs to take a giant transformational step. And sometimes it needs a little outside help. When New Zealand's iconic snack food company, Cookie Time, decided to lift its game, it turned to Herrmann New Zealand and its partner eTime. Using a Whole Brain® approach they helped Cookie Time articulate its vision and values in a way that everyone in the company could relate to.

In the beginning ...

Cookie Time today operates out of a modern factory and head office in Templeton, just south of Christchurch. But like many entrepreneurial companies the story begins closer to home. In 1983, 21 year-old Michael Mayell is in his kitchen, in a one bedroom flat in Christchurch, smashing up blocks of chocolate as the smell of home baking fills the air. He loads up his van and delivers his first batch of giant cookies to Christchurch dairies.



The Challenge

Over the next two and a half decades the company added 80 staff, introduced new product lines, and extended distribution to where it now has 42 franchises. However, it became apparent that, while the original recipe was still delivering the taste that customers loved, the organisation itself wasn't capable of sustaining the growth.

CEO, Lincoln Booth, describes it as realignment; “Everyone needed to understand what the business was about and why we were the way we were. We needed to innovate and to introduce specialised functions. But we didn't want to lose the special characteristics that we valued. To do that we needed a common language. Herrmann® Whole Brain Thinking was the perfect way of bringing everyone together as one. It helped people understand why everyone did what they did.”



Impassioned innovation is at the heart of Cookie Time's success, from the original chocolate chunk cookie to the Smart Cookies approved by the National Heart Foundation and the revolutionary One Square Meal, with its nutritional balance by design.

Defining the need

Cookie Time had its first experience of the HBDI® (Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument®) in late 2006 when eTime profiled members of the senior management team. Guy Pope-Mayell, one of the two brothers who started the company, had seen Whole Brain Thinking in action and learned the benefits of profiling.

Now the company faced a bigger challenge; transforming the entire business. It wasn't good enough just to introduce a new structure and explain to people what their role would be. What Cookie Time needed was a total cultural transformation. "We needed a lot of change management so people could understand where we were heading and how they could play their part.

"We wanted to adopt a new strategic approach and develop an organisational structure to support it. But at the same time we had to make sure that what we did was embedded into our cultural values. So we integrated Herrmann Whole Brain Thinking alongside the process we used to define our cultural values."

The vision

The vision was to create New Zealand's most loved snack food brands by winning the hearts and minds of consumers. Articulating it was a defining moment for the company.

"I have seen before how frustrating it can be when you're trying to transform an organisation if someone doesn't see the bigger picture," says Lincoln. "It's often just because they're not wired that way. Now, understanding how they think, we can play to their strengths.

"The key was having a common language that supported all we wanted to achieve. The Herrmann model helped us to articulate our

vision, values and guiding principles so people could then understand how they fit together."

Herrmann provided the underlying language for communicating the vision, values and guiding principles, and the modes of thinking preference represented by the four coloured quadrants also suggested a way of exploring and elaborating on different elements of the culture.

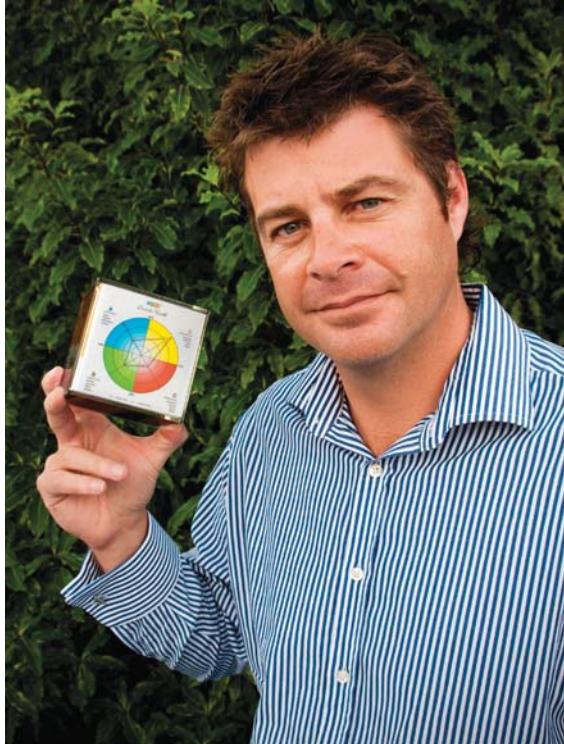
"When we factored in a new value in support of our vision, we conducted a Whole Brain walk-around," says Lincoln. "We worked through each quadrant in turn and decided what contribution each type of thinking could bring to that value. The common element in our approach is respecting everyone and recognising the contribution they can make. That's teamwork."

Whole Brain® Thinking on display

To reinforce the message, Cookie Time placed Whole Brain Thinking literally and physically alongside its vision, mission, guiding principles and cultural values. It developed a colourful cube to help its people remember the company's core values and guiding principles. The device can be seen on every desk at Cookie Time and on the company's website <http://www.cookie-time.co.nz>. Each person has their own profile displayed on one face of the cube, with Cookie Time's vision, mission, guiding principles and cultural values displayed on the others.

"Now Whole Brain Thinking is always in the back of people's minds," says Lincoln. "Whatever they do, someone is always there to remind them of our vision and values. It becomes a self-managing tool. Integrating Whole Brain Thinking into our business has had a really significant impact in terms of how we've been able to transform our company into what it is today."

“The key was having a common language that supported all we wanted to achieve. The Herrmann model helped us to articulate our vision, values and guiding principles so people could then understand how they fit together,” says CEO Lincoln Booth.



CEO, Lincoln Booth with the inspirational cube that helps people remember Cookie Time's vision.

A better business

As a result, the business is far healthier and more robust. “Financially we’re in a better position than we were, and we have better rounded programmes for our people. The outstanding growth we’ve enjoyed since we did that comes back to Herrmann Whole Brain Thinking as a starting point and the adoption of our vision and values.

“We can now manage and coach people better because we understand their way of thinking,” says Lincoln.

“Decision making happens a lot more quickly when you dance around the quadrants, picking up all the nuances and making sure that all the different elements of a problem are covered.”

It’s also about getting the right people to contribute in an area. “Take strategy; only a small number want to, or are able to contribute to, developing a strategy. Most are happier to know how they can contribute once it’s defined. You need to get the right people in the room in the first place. Then you need to get the right people to follow through on it.”

Whole Brain® Thinking every day

The company uses Herrmann Whole Brain methodology every day. “If we know a person’s strengths and thinking preference we adjust for that. It’s not about someone being ‘right’. That’s just the position they take. It’s about not trying to put square pegs in round holes.”

For its part, eTime has conducted follow up workshops on practising Whole Brain Thinking and applying it to problem solving.

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As part of a team analysis and development programme, eTime is looking at the profile of teams to maximise the impact of Whole Brain Thinking within each team. For instance, if one team doesn't have sufficient interpersonal or analytical skills, they will try to redress the imbalance when hiring or redeploying staff.

Herrmann helped communicate and extend the company's vision and values, making them real.

“Once we'd published the vision and values, we needed to help people adopt and internalise them. Herrmann provided the perfect tools to do that. It helped us share how we got there by giving them the right context. And it helps us push whatever we do back to vision and values. The vision drives everything.

“Integrating Herrmann Whole Brain Thinking into our vision and values has turned the business around,” says Lincoln. “It has helped us lay a great foundation for the business. Our people have adopted and embraced our values and now we are all working together to achieve our vision.”

The Herrmann Certified Practitioner for this case study was Mr Chris Le Cren of eTime.





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