

HBDI® technical questions & information

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Responding to technical questions

This provides information on technical questions sometimes posed by participants. It is not your role to be an expert in psychometric assessment. However, it is important to understand the question and provide an appropriate response for your participants.

The following is a list of questions participants may pose that refer to the technical elements of the HBDI, including validity, reliability and scoring.

What is an HBDI® Profile?

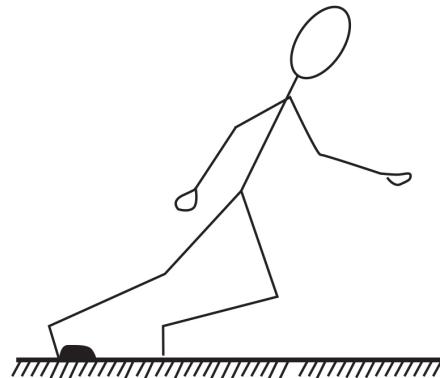
The HBDI is a profile utilising graphic and numerical representation to provide an indication of a person's thinking preferences. The HBDI Profile is like looking in a mirror because it is a self-reporting tool rather than a deep-seated internal mental construct, as for example an intelligence test may be. It is like a photograph rather than an X-ray.



Representation of the HBDI

The assessment is frustrating to complete, why can't I choose all options?

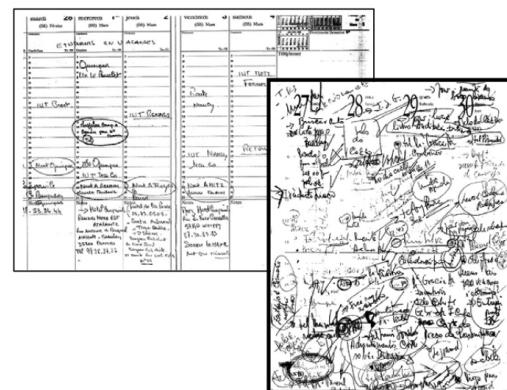
The HBDI is a preference-based instrument, not a competency assessment. Its intention is to measure thinking preferences and assumes that we prefer to think in all four modes to varying degrees (low – strong). The instrument is specifically designed to measure this preference and therefore forces you to choose. Just as you would be forced to choose a leg to catch your fall if you were falling forward, the instrument forces you to choose in a similar way.



Example of forced choice

Is my profile right or wrong?

The HBDI is a preference-based instrument rather than normative assessment. Preference-based tools would tell you things like which hand you prefer to write with – you are either left handed or right handed, there is no right or wrong only response. Norm-based assessments use a bell-curve and tell you where your position is relative to a 'normal' population. Measuring your height and understanding where your height lies in comparison to the general population would be a 'normed' assessment. The HBDI does not do this. The HBDI simply identifies your preferences.



There is no wrong profile, just the consequences of your preferences

Can my profile change (is it reliable?)

Repeated reliability estimates measure how consistently a person answers the instrument over time. Estimates suggest the profile is a reliable indication of thinking preference (Bunderson, 2000), with repeated reliability estimates (A-A = .937; B-B = .915, C-C = .940, D-D = .932). However your preferences may change over time if there is some reason for it. The change can be based around life circumstances, time, willingness to change, a significant life event or the initial pattern of your profile.

Responding to technical questions (continued)

Furthermore, reliability is not a sufficient indication of whether the HBDI is a useful indicator. A tool must be both a reliable and valid measure. Reliability is not sufficient for validity. A brief statistics lesson will explain why.

This concept relates to the HBDI in a similar way. We want the HBDI to be reliable (that is consistent) but also hit the mark (that is, measures our thinking in the four quadrants of the Whole Brain® Model). Validity studies support that the HBDI is reliable and does 'hit the mark' or is valid.



Explanation of reliability and validity

How do we know it's true? (Is it valid?)

There are a number of ways we can check if an instrument is true – these are different types of validity. Two types we will cite are 'face validity' and 'construct validity'.

Full studies on the reliability and validity of the HBDI can be found in the Practitioner Portal.

The HBDI has very strong face validity. One way to gauge this type of validity is to compare a participants 'draw your own profile' with their actual profile, the more similar the guess is to the HBDI results the higher the face validity for a participant. The image on the left shows an orange reflected as an apple in the mirror. However, the image does not represent reality, therefore the mirror cannot be considered valid.



Mirror is not valid

The HBDI is considered to have face validity because the general consensus of participants is that their profile is representative of their thinking preferences. The orange is represented as an orange.

Remember that it is the individuals themselves who look into the mirror (or their profile), so the question is whether the profile provides an accurate representation to them. It is not the facilitator's job to decide whether the profile is correct or is not. Remember there is no right or wrong profile. There are some situations when we may not see face validity. This may be because:

- participants misunderstood language or question
- participants manipulated the assessment for a desired outcome
- the mood of the participants may have affected their reporting.

How did they decide what questions to ask and know they are working?

Statisticians use a process called factor analysis to measure whether the questions are working and this then supports the construct validity of the tool. Construct validity refers to whether the HBDI measures the four-quadrant Whole Brain® Model. The answer is: Yes!

Research has found that:

- the questions when combined with the scoring protocol strongly relate to a person's thinking preference patterns
- there are four clusters of preference or avoidance measured by the HBDI.

When the HBDI is used correctly and debriefed proficiently, research has found that four stable and discrete clusters of preference exist:

- The four clusters are compatible with the Whole Brain® Model outlined by Ned Herrmann
- The scores derived from the instrument are valid indicators of the four clusters
- The scores permit valid inferences about a person's preferences for each of the clusters of mental activity

Full validity studies can be found at Bunderson: *The Validity of the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument® (HBDI)*.

Comparing assessments

Database research

The following is anecdotal research carried out using the HBDI® Global Research Database.

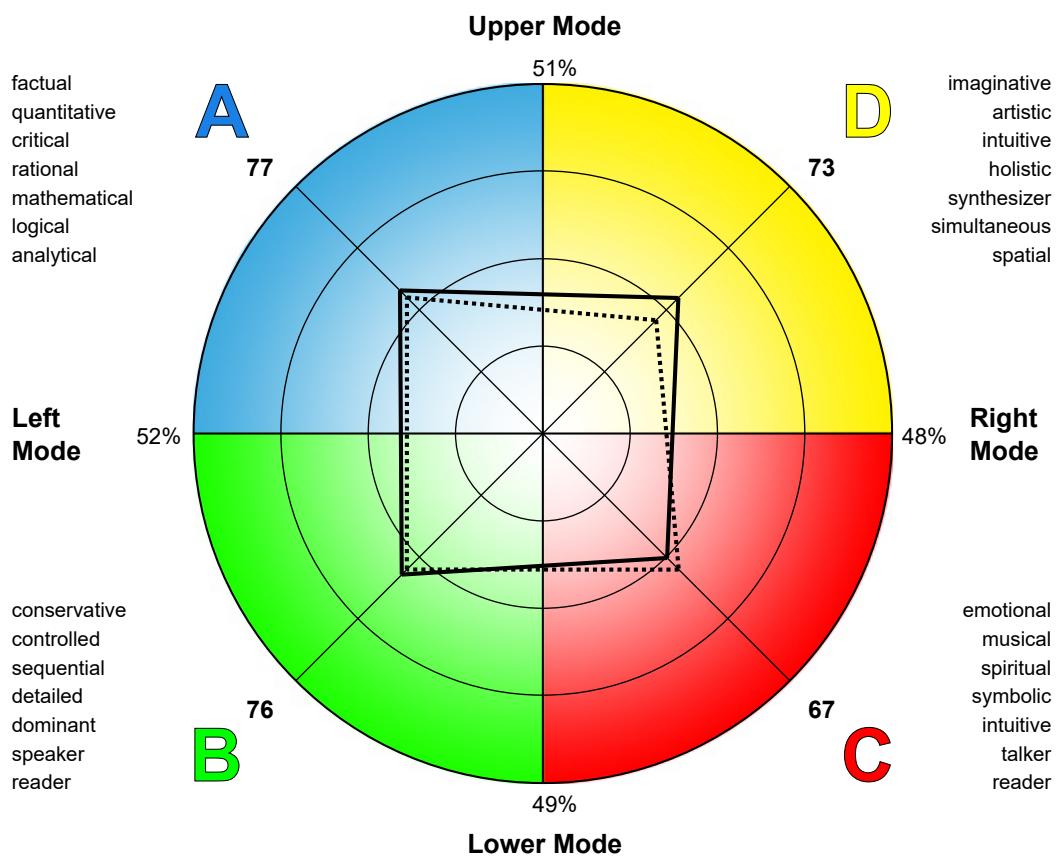
Average profile of global HBDI database

N: 1,317,715 profiles



Average of the whole HBDI Database –
1317715 profiles: 100% on a population of 1317715 profiles

Average	77	76	67	73
Min	8	11	8	9
Max	155	179	155	189



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HBDI® Basics

What is the HBDI

The Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument® (HBDI®) is a highly validated diagnostic survey. Your answers indicate your thinking style preferences. Scoring results are free of value judgment and cultural bias. Most people immediately recognize their results as accurate. The HBDI Profile is available in a variety of formats: the paper package includes a full color profile, an accompanying interpretation booklet that explains the profile and scores in detail and a discussion of the implications your results have for business and personal life. The HBDI App for smartphones and mobile devices gives you quick, easy access to your HBDI results anywhere, any time, to reinforce and continue the learning and application process.

Is the HBDI validated?

Yes, the HBDI is strongly validated and validation studies have been conducted for more than 35 years. The earliest research was conducted in Berkley, California, in the late 1970 using a dual EEG apparatus and the first Mind Mirror used in the US. Validation studies supervised by C. Victor Bunderson, formerly Chief Scientist of WICAT and Vice president for Management Research at Education Testing Service, followed. An additional study was conducted in the early 1980s by Schkade and Potvin of the University of Texas. Updated studies have been performed since on a regular basis. A literature review, available upon request, includes a wide range of doctoral dissertations and studies by students and researchers who have based their work on the HBDI. Continuing validation studies are also conducted as part of the Herrmann International's own research and development efforts. For copies of the validation studies and more information, visit <http://www.thinkherrmann.com/practitioners>.

What are the four HBDI preferences?

The HBDI® is based on the Whole Brain® Model, a metaphor for how people tend to use their brains in relation to how their thinking works. In the Whole Brain® Model, thinking falls into four preference clusters of equal importance that everyone has access to:

- The Upper Left Blue A Quadrant specialises in logical, analytical, quantitative, fact-based thinking.
- The Lower Left Green B Quadrant focuses on details and specialises in planning, organizing, and sequencing information.
- The Lower Right Red C Quadrant places a priority on feelings and the interpersonal, emotional and kinesthetic aspects of a situation.
- The Upper Right Yellow D Quadrant synthesizes and integrates information and is more intuitive and holistic in its thinking.

Is a preference the same as a competency?

No, a preference for a given activity and the competency required to perform that activity are not the same thing. A good way to separate the two is to think back to a subject that you really, really loved when you were in school. Your boundless interest would be more like a preference. Having that interest did not necessarily mean that you developed skills and competencies--just that you were interested and that your mind engaged easily and tended to be energised when you were involved in that type of activity. Now think of a subject that you really hated or disliked. Imagine that you found yourself in a job that required competency in that subject area. You may have developed a competency in that area, but a considerable amount of energy and motivation were probably required. Our research shows that we can all develop competencies in areas of lesser preference, but that it may require more effort or energy than skills in an area of greater preference.

Is the basis of my preferences more to do with nature or nurture?

It is both. However, we hold the opinion that, for most of us, nurture represents the greater impact and opportunity. Research shows that we are born with genetic predispositions and that throughout the course of our lives, our brains naturally adapt and are influenced by our environment and the choices we make. The brain is, by design, malleable and subject to the influences of our development and interaction with the world. While there will always be exceptions, Ned Herrmann felt that, on average, nurture can represent up to 70% of who we are compared to as low as 30% for nature, due to the profound influence of parenting, schooling, friendships, work and life experiences that shape our thinking preferences, which, in turn, lead us to do what we do the way we do it.

Even if the impact of nature is as low as 30%, this bodes well for all of us as we seek to grow, change and learn. If we

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can change what is happening to us, we can—if we choose—also change ourselves. Observation and feedback from many thousands of participants in our programs clearly demonstrates the capability of people to change their behaviors if they wish to do so, without necessarily changing their preferences.

What are the modes? What's the difference?

There are four modes: Upper, Lower, Left and Right. The Upper mode is typified by abstract and reasoned ways of thinking. In contrast, the Lower mode represents the grounded, gut-level ways of knowing. The characteristics of the Upper and Lower modes are just as important in establishing a person's distribution of thinking preferences as the differences between the better-known Left and Right modes are. The Left mode is more structured and analytical, and the Right mode is more free-flowing and intuitive.

How were the mode percentages determined?

- Upper mode adds together A and D quadrant raw scores and determines the percentage it represents of the total of all scores.
- Lower mode adds together B and C quadrants to determine the percentage.
- Left mode adds together the A and B quadrants to determine the percentage.
- Right mode adds together the C and D quadrants to determine the percentage.

Is there an ideal profile?

Absolutely not! There is no such thing as a good, bad, right or wrong profile. One of the most appreciated aspects of the HBDI® is that it shows us you can be “great” whatever your profile. People often think that being “whole” (1-1-1-1) would be ideal, but, like any profile, it may have its disadvantages as well as its advantages. When you discuss this profile with those who have it, they often say they are kind of a “jack of all trades” but sometimes regret not being specialised in any one area. Every profile has some positive qualities and some challenges associated with it. What's most important to focus on is how your profile is working for you in your current situation, and how can you improve your effectiveness, given what you now know in the information about your profile.

The HBDI® is a tool provided to encourage us to understand our strengths, weaknesses, preferences and avoidances. We can then, if desired, find strategies to learn and develop competencies in those areas of lesser preference or weakness. By doing this, we widen our scope for using different modes without compromising our preferences. Since we can all shift beyond our preferences when needed, the HBDI® Profile should never be used as a “cop out” or an excuse for behavior.

Can my profile change?

Yes. Longitudinal studies of hundreds of HBDI® participants indicate that change can take place if there is a reason for it. Change seems to take place over a long period of time with an individual's desire and willingness to change, or with a change in their life's circumstances, or as result of a significant emotional event. Profiles do not change casually; rather, a dramatic change in the person's life is required to cause a change. Profiles often change when there is an event, or series of events, that has value-shifting impact. Examples include a major change in the family (e.g., birth of a child, death, divorce), a major career change, going back to school, engaging in a completely different field of study, or maybe even going off to war. Changes to the profile in a 5% range can fairly easily occur, but usually the shape of the profile remains the same. However, if nothing has happened to the individual, and they continue to do the same things in the same way, then the profile will remain stable.

Are there any 2222 or 3333 profiles?

No. Such a profile has never emerged and would represent a contradiction to the essential purpose of the HBDI®, which is to identify primary thinking preferences. Everyone has at least one primary preference if not two, three or four.

Should I be concerned if my score is low in a quadrant?

Absolutely not! Remember, there are no bad or good, right or wrong profiles. Also remember that your profile shows your preferences, not your competencies. Many people perform excellently in quadrants for which they have a low preference. A lower score simply indicates a lesser preference compared to the other quadrants.

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I am very strong in one of the quadrants, but not all of the descriptors describe me. How does this work?

Each quadrant is made up of several clusters of specialised thinking, which are represented on the profile by the key descriptors and work elements and other data provided by the question responses. Having preferences for any of the clusters within a quadrant does not necessarily mean that every item or area in that cluster comes easily to you. For example, many people who have a very strong preference in the D quadrant protest that they are not particularly artistic, but this does not in any way weaken any of their other preferences within that quadrant, such as conceptual thinking or holistic approaches. Looking at the concept of clusters is also valuable for those people wanting to access a less-preferred quadrant. Sometimes a way to develop greater ease within a particular quadrant is to look at what you already enjoy doing or do successfully in that quadrant and put more time, effort and energy into those tasks. More information and a visual model of the clusters in each quadrant is available in the Information provided with the profile and in the HBDI® App.

What are clusters and how were the clusters determined?

A preference for a quadrant indicates an inclination for some or many of the items in that quadrant. We refer to items that are somewhat similar in the way they are processed as “clusters.” Each quadrant has many. A preference for a quadrant does not mean that you have a preference for everything or all of the clusters in that quadrant.

The brain is naturally specialized by design. Since this model is a metaphor, the clusters model was developed as research from the HBDI® over time showed that there were subsets of specialization that frequently clustered together in the data being collected. For example, a selection of “logical” was frequently associated with a selection of “rational.” That also explains why some of the words appear in several clusters, where there were multiple associations occurring for that term. In some cases, words that are used in the assessment but not provided on some of the models appeared to be associated with some of the clusters. In other cases, some words appeared in more than one cluster. See the HBDI® App for more about identifying and understanding your clusters.

Why is it important to know about clusters?

Clusters help us differentiate between two individuals who have similar preference scores or codes but may be quite different in how their profile shows up or was developed. An individual may only prefer one cluster in a given quadrant. Another individual with a preference for that quadrant may prefer a different cluster, while another prefers many of the clusters. It can be useful to explore the clusters where you have skills versus those you have a preference for. It is particularly interesting to focus on clusters when comparing your profile with another person’s profile to further define how our preferences come to life.

My favorite hobby wasn’t listed. Does that affect my profile?

Not in any significant way. Hobbies are scored not on the characteristics of the hobbies, but rather the characteristics of the people who engage in that hobby. People are inclined to choose their hobbies in line with their thinking preferences. Since the profile is an aggregate “trend” picture of all of the preference data, the absence of hobby data does not affect the overall outcome in a significant way.

Is this profile a reflection of me or of how I want to be?

Even with the imperfection of self-knowledge, our research has shown that the process of having you respond to specific questions about your thinking and then reporting them out in the form of the profile is a more accurate depiction of your thinking preferences than a description from an outside party would be. In other words, it is more accurate than, let’s say, a 360-degree approach conducted by a second party whose observations are influenced by their own preferences. So the HBDI® is a snapshot of who you are at this point in your life. The questions are designed in such a way that we ask similar questions again and again to neutralize any things that might not be specific to today’s situation or that are influenced by how you would prefer to see yourself. The test-retest studies we have performed demonstrate that even if you answered the questions in a slightly different way, if you were to retake the assessment two times at any given moment, your overall profile would be similar within a 5-point range in each quadrant, showing great reliability of the profile results.

What if I am surprised by the results of my profile?

Keep in mind that you provided the data, which resulted in your profile. The HBDI® is essentially just taking your responses and calculating the degree of preference for each quadrant based on them. If you are surprised by the results, start by asking yourself what you expected and why. As you learn more about the Whole Brain® Model, you will

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better understand how the selections you made correlate to the profile outcomes. Most important is for you to use your awareness of your preferences to be more effective. The specific numbers, especially if they are closely bunched, are less important. There is no right or wrong profile. Think of the profile as a rubber band that can stretch to fit situations. Ask yourself how your thinking best supports your goals and objectives and where you might want to stretch to better suit the needs of the situation.

In some cases, it may be important to check your understanding of each of the quadrants to ensure you deeply comprehend what the data actually reflects to clear up any misunderstandings or assumptions you may be making.

I am worried that my HBDI® profile may not reflect my thinking. Should I take the assessment again to get it right?

There is no right or wrong in the HBDI®. Keep in mind that you provided the data in response to the questions, which resulted in your profile scores. The HBDI® is essentially just taking your responses and calculating the degree of preference for each quadrant based on them. If you are surprised by the results, start by asking yourself what you expected and why. In some cases, it may be important to check your understanding of each of the quadrants to ensure you deeply comprehend what the data actually reflects to clear up any misunderstandings or assumptions you may be making.

If you still feel uncomfortable, consider whether your feedback may have been affected by the conditions under which you completed the survey. The survey should be completed as honestly as possible, without thinking that a response could be right or wrong. If you feel that you completed the HBDI® inaccurately—meaning, you did not represent how you really think and feel—then you might want to consider completing it again. For most, when completing it a second time, even when they answer the questions differently, they will get a similar profile, within 5 points of their first completion. But if you feel the data is not reflective of your most honest choices, complete it a second time.

How does introvert/extrovert work? Same as MBTI?

Different from the derived data that appears on the MBTI (Myers Briggs Type Indicator), your self-placement in the introvert/extrovert scale on the survey is replicated on the report. In very general terms, introverts tend to be more left mode oriented; extroverts more right mode oriented. Nevertheless, each quadrant may have its own continuum of introvert to extrovert and, thus, its own interpretation and impact:

- A Quadrant: Introvert: quiet, serious, very focused; Extrovert: debater, often funny, driven
- B Quadrant: Introvert: controlled, a doer, often keeps to self; Extrovert: dominant, organiser of events and people
- C Quadrant: Introvert: expressive through writing or nonverbal mechanisms, caring in a quiet way; Extrovert: talkative, interested in bringing people together, sharing
- D Quadrant: Introvert: off in own world, does own thing, loner; Extrovert: constant flow of ideas, loves to experiment with others, has fun

Do I have a different profile at work or at home?

The HBDI® asks questions that are related to both home and work situations and seeks to represent your total self. Many people state that they are pretty much the same person at home and at work but may focus on different aspects of their preferences in each of those situations—for example, someone with a left mode profile (strong A- and B-quadrant preferences) may draw on their analytical thinking more at work and their organizational preferences in their home life. For others, there may be a strong influence by work demands that draws most on their primary preferences, while at home with family and friends they seek complementary activities drawing more on their quadrants that provide balance in their lives, and/or may align with a family member's preferences. Either situation is "normal." Keep in mind that you have access to all of the four quadrants and can draw on them in any situation as needed. Many find that home or free-time-related activities are a great opportunity to practice stretching their thinking, trying something out of their typical thinking comfort zone or exploring new ways to enjoy their preferred thinking preferences in their leisure activities. What is most important is making sure that your approach is working for you in the given situation and, if not, shifting your thinking to get the results you desire, both at home and at work.

How do I shift modes?

You have access to all four quadrants and, therefore, to all four modes (upper, lower, left and right). To get more comfortable shifting, it's helpful to practice shifting into a particular mode in the context of something you love. One place to start is with a free time activity that is a passion, for example, something family related. Find ways to apply the different mode to this passion:

- If you want to practice going into the left mode as someone who loves to spend time with your family, you can look for ways to be more structured or organised within the family context or develop technical skills with others.

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For example, you might take charge of planning a vacation in detail and using an app to help. You might also do research on your location.

- If you want to be more in the right mode, you can look for ways that you, as a family, can play together or discover together, listen to music, or do something spontaneous that your family will love.
- If you want to practice the upper mode, you can look for ways to explore new knowledge with others and process things together in a more abstract and reasoned approach.
- If you want to practice the lower mode, you can find ways that, as a family, you can share your emotions and create rituals that bring joy and ground you as a family.

See also: What could I do to develop greater comfort in a quadrant?

What could I do to develop greater comfort in a quadrant?

Find ways to practice shifting to another quadrant while you're engaged in an activity that you enjoy. By "stepping into" the thinking style of one of your less-dominant quadrants while enjoying your favorite activity, you can feel the stretch while still appreciating the overall activity you enjoy.

Examples of how you can get a "mental stretch":

- If you like to scuba dive because of the adventure and discovery of the world under water, and you have a low preference in the A quadrant, you might choose to do the compressed air and decompression calculations for the dive yourself.
- If you love to sail for the physical exhilaration of it, and you are low in the B quadrant, you might decide to engage in planning and commanding a sailing trip so that you have to take care of all the details and decisions.
- If you love golf, but have a low preference in the C quadrant, you might use the social aspects of golfing to pay more attention to getting to know your playing partners on the course and at the 19th hole.
- If you love collecting and are low in the D quadrant preference, you might find new ways of collecting or creatively displaying the collections.

When I am out of my preferred modes, how might I gain more comfort with those tasks?

You might take learning programs, work with someone else who has skills, practice doing the type of task in a leisure activity you really enjoy or do the work in short spurts. It is best to engage in the challenging activity at the time of day where you have the most energy (We often do the work we least prefer at the time of day when we have the least energy.). Here's an example: An individual who had a lower preference in the A quadrant and really struggled with what she had to do at work in that quadrant decided she needed more skills with numbers, so she signed up for a training class. She also found ways outside of work to practice working with numbers, so as she prepared for each of her scuba dives—one of her favorite passions—she practiced analysing the numbers.

You might also consider partnering with someone else at work or at home to take on the tasks you enjoy least, getting some training to build better skills, or practicing in the context of a favorite activity outside of work.

If a team or a group has a low HBDI® preference in a particular quadrant, does the team need to recruit someone with a strong preference in that quadrant?

Just because a team is low in a particular preference doesn't mean that it lacks competence in that area. Remember, preference doesn't equal competence. The key is for the team to pay particular attention to the activities associated with that low quadrant and to be aware of activities it may unconsciously avoid or fail to do. If the team does, in fact, lack the competence required for the activities of a particular quadrant, it might consider enlisting help from someone outside the team or adding a team member who has that expertise.

What does the dotted line mean on the graph?

The dotted line on the graph is a representation of the scores of the adjective pairs in the survey and represents a potential shift in your thinking under pressure or stress. You were asked on the assessment to choose between adjective pairs that represent different quadrants. Making these selections places pressure on you to make a choice, so the resulting scores represent your quadrant preferences when "push comes to shove"—under pressure or, for many, stress. The dotted line is presented on the graph so that you can compare your base preference state to your preferences under pressure/stress. It's important to compare your under pressure/stress profile to your regular profile.

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HBDI Stress Profile / Under Pressure

Your pressure/stress profile may match more closely with what you guessed your profile would be prior to seeing it. This happens because when people guess their profiles, they often think of where their thinking goes when forced to make a choice rather than the more flexible day-to-day approach that is representative of your base profile.

For more on how to best leverage your thinking in these situations, see the HBDI® App, which has a very useful section on how to be most effective under pressure/stress.

See also: Should I be concerned if my stress/pressure profile is the same or different from my profile? How was the pressure profile calculated? How do the adjective pair scores work?

Should I try to change my profile or stress profile? If so, how?

No, but you can change your behaviors if desired. The purpose of the profile is not about changing your preferences, your profile or stress/ pressure profile; rather, it's about looking at the implications of your profile—looking at the behaviors and effects of the behaviors on others and the situations you face at work and at home. You may want to look at how your preferences drive the behaviors you use when interacting with others and how that can make you more effective. Also, the awareness of your profile will help you be more effective in how you use your thinking to accomplish what you want to accomplish—for example, by paying more attention to what other people need or by paying attention to what the situation requires.

Should I be concerned if my stress/pressure profile is the same or different from my profile?

Absolutely not! What is most important to take into account is how any shift affects your overall effectiveness. The pressure/stress information gives you context for how and where you go under pressure or stress so that you can manage the situation more effectively. For example, it can be useful for others to understand where your thinking may shift in pressure or stress situations so that they are not caught off guard. In addition, think about others you work with and how their thinking may shift, and how you can best respond for the greatest effectiveness.

For more on how to best leverage your thinking in these situations, see the HBDI® App, which has a very useful section on how to be most effective under pressure/stress.

See also: What does the dotted line mean on the graph? How was the pressure profile calculated? How do the adjective pair scores work?

How was the pressure profile calculated?

You were asked on the assessment to choose between adjective pairs that represent different quadrants. Making these selections places pressure on you to make a choice, so the resulting scores represent your quadrant preferences when “push comes to shove”—under pressure or, for many, stress. The dotted line is created using an algorithm and presented on the graph so that you can compare your base preference state to your preferences under pressure/stress. It's important to compare your under pressure/stress profile to your regular profile. Your pressure/stress profile may match more closely with what you guessed your profile would be prior to seeing it. This happens because when people guess their profiles, they often think of where their thinking goes when forced to make a choice rather than the more flexible day-to-day approach that is representative of your base profile.

For more on how to best leverage your thinking in these situations, the HBDI® App, which has a very useful section on how to be most effective under pressure/stress.

How do the adjective pair scores work?

This was the section that forced you to make a choice between two conflicting adjectives (e.g., rational vs. emotional, creative vs. safekeeping.) These scores can be as low as 0 (no selections made) and as high as 12 in each quadrant. This forced choice pushes you to select where you shift under pressure or stress and results in your dotted-line pressure profile graph. For more background and practical tips, see the HBDI® app section on stress.

See also: What does the dotted line mean on the graph? Should I be concerned if my stress/pressure profile is the same or different from my profile? How was the pressure profile calculated?

What does energy level mean?

Generally, people who are left mode dominant are frequently more “morning people” or “day people.” Right mode thinkers are often more “night people.” However, this can be greatly influenced by life circumstances and is not predictive, nor does it greatly influence your overall scores.

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Other HBDI Questions

Does my mood when I took the profile affect my profile and this graph?

We've found that while mood does not impact the profile and the overall direction of your preference, it may slightly increase or decrease its overall size; however, the shape is not affected. If you are in a great mood, the overall scores may be higher and thus the graph slightly bigger, and if you're in a bad mood it may be smaller, but the shape doesn't change. This should not affect your degree of comparative preference for each quadrant or the interpretation of your profile.

Is there a correlation between my job and my HBDI® profile?

Many think about whether their profile fits their job. Keep in mind that your professional profile could be different than your preferences—as we can all perform in different roles even if the role is not a perfect fit with our preferences. If your profile is different than what is typical for your role or field, you may really enjoy that challenge, or you may want to look for ways to get greater satisfaction from your job by finding aspects of the job that best fit your preferences.

There are some typical occupational fields, based on the profiles of individuals with strong thinking preferences in these quadrants. For example, A quadrant occupations include scientific, technical, financial; A/B include legal, managerial, accounting; B include supervisory, administrative, quality; B/C include service, customer relations; C include supportive, social, educational; C/D include expressive, communications, developmental; D include entrepreneurial, strategic, artistic; A/D include troubleshooting, physics, research. See the information provided with your profile for more.

If you do not have the typical profile of your occupation, you may engage with the work somewhat differently than others as a result. For example, think of a lawyer who works in social law defending people who otherwise would have no funds for defense. Her profile could have a much stronger C red quadrant than the typical legal profile. In this case she practices law in service of her preference in C, but still had enough of a preference in A and B, combined with her skills and motivation, to get through law school. For more information and tips to get greater satisfaction on the job, refer to the HBDI® App, or The Whole Brain Business Book, 2nd Edition.

Does the HBDI® stereotype? How do I use this model without oversimplifying it?

We know from our data that 95% of the population is multi-dominant in their preferences, so referring to people as if there were only one quadrant or color just doesn't give the full picture. There's always a tendency to oversimplify when we create shorthand language to describe situations or other people. Keep in mind that just because we have some preference for a quadrant does not mean we prefer everything in that quadrant, and that a low preference does not mean a lack of skills. Think of a person you know who probably has a similar profile to your profile. Is he or she exactly the same as you are? Probably not. For example, two people may share a strong D yellow preference, but one's preference might be for artistic aspects while the other's is more for conceptual and metaphorical aspects.

See also: What are clusters and how were the clusters determined?

Do siblings have different HBDI® preferences from each other? Different from their parents?

Siblings will often have different preferences from each other and their parents. It is, however, common for one child to have preferences more similar to one parent and another sibling to more resemble another parent.

At what age do HBDI® preferences develop?

Preferences grow during our developmental years and well into our 20s and beyond as we experience continued brain development, learn different subjects in school, develop areas of interest, experience initial work activities and make career choices. Our preferences will "settle in" and remain stable if our life situation and career remains stable. While the objective is not to change our preferences, they can change when a significant life change occurs such as a major career shift, family changes or value-shifting life experiences.

See also: Can my HBDI® Profile change?

When is the best time to do challenging work or work with others?

When you schedule meetings, tasks and activities, think of the time of day when you are most mentally alert. That is often the optimum time of day to pursue activities that may require you to stretch your thinking or work with others.

HBDI – technical questions and information

FAQs

Is it better to work with someone with similar HBDI® preferences or different preferences?

Both situations can be advantageous. What is important is to recognize the similarities and differences and how they impact communication and effectiveness.

Is it wise to share my HBDI® with others?

Herrmann International honors your privacy with respect to the HBDI® data, but we encourage you to share your profile with others for your benefit. Sharing profiles makes it possible for individuals who work together frequently to maximize their working relationship and their communication. Sharing profiles among team members allows teams to devise strategies for meetings, document development, sales and communication that take advantage of the preferences of the team.

How can I get an HBDI® profile for a colleague or my team?

There are a range of options available. Visit www.thinkherrmann.com or email info@thinkherrmann.com for details.

Should we use the HBDI® to screen job applicants?

The HBDI® is NOT a screening tool. It measures preference and degree of preference; it does not indicate competency. For example, a person may have a high preference for the blue A quadrant in their thought process. This does not mean they will be competent in a technical career. It just indicates a preference for that type of thinking.

Who sees the HBDI® data —my personal profile?

Herrmann International collects the data to validate its database, but an individual's personal data is not seen by anyone other than that individual and a HBDI® Certified Practitioner who debriefs it with the person. When using group data or HBDI® Team Profiles, the feedback plots for the team are anonymous, with no names attached—just numbers, such as "Profile 1," "Profile 2," etc. You are free to share your data with others; however, the choice is yours alone.

How have organizations applied the HBDI® and Whole Brain® Thinking?

Organizations typically apply the Whole Brain® Model and the HBDI® to specific thinking- and people-related initiatives that require identifying the thinking available and understanding the thinking—and potentially the shift in thinking—required to meet the needs of that situation.

Some examples include:

August Home Publishing: One of August Home Publishing's magazines, Cuisine at Home, had been lagging behind the company's other publications in sales. By using the HBDI® and Whole Brain® Thinking programs, August Home Publishing aligned the content and style of Cuisine at Home with the thinking styles of the magazine's readers, resulting in a quadrupling of revenues in just two years.

Bendigo Bank: Bendigo Bank delivers retail banking products and services to more than 1.4 million retail customers throughout Australia via a national network of 400-plus branches and agencies. The bank used Whole Brain® Thinking as a learning and customer service framework, contributing to such results as: 13% net growth in customers, 20% net growth in retail deposits, and 21% increase in after-tax deposits due to growth in customers and deposits, along with lending approvals.

Brown-Forman: Global liquor giant Brown-Forman applied a Whole Brain® approach to ideation, creative thinking and innovation to develop "killer" marketing ideas that directly led to increased merchandising sales and double-digit brand growth.

US Navy Command Site: As part of a downsizing effort, the U.S. Congress had mandated the merging together of the U.S. Navy's Aviation Supply Division in Philadelphia and its Ship and Submarine Parts Operation in Mechanicsburg, PA, into one physical entity. Using the HBDI® and Whole Brain® Thinking as a foundation for moving forward with a common language and culture, the command successfully integrated the two cultures, realigned work, improved interactions and improved work effort and morale.

Coca-Cola Great Britain–London 2012 Olympic Games: Coca-Cola has sponsored the Olympic Torch Relay since the Barcelona 1992 Olympic Games. For the London 2012 Games, Coca-Cola Great Britain used the HBDI® and Whole Brain® Thinking as the foundation, skills and tools to enable a diverse, rapidly growing team to come together in a short timeframe and flawlessly execute on a highly complex initiative involving 1,000 towns and 8,000-plus miles over 70 days.

HBDI – technical questions and information

FAQs

InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG): Using the HBDI® and Whole Brain® Thinking as a framework for complex project delivery, IHG developed a project management approach more aligned with its corporate culture of creating “Great Hotels Guests Love,” improved collaboration between project managers and team members and stakeholders, and significantly increased its ability to manage project risk.

CLP India: One of the largest foreign investors in the Indian power sector, CLP India used the HBDI® and Whole Brain® Thinking as a unified launching platform for changing mindsets, building the desired culture, developing Whole Brain® leadership skills, and improving collaboration in all areas of the organisation. Results have included increased employee engagement, a culture that embraces different thinking and appeals to younger employees, and innovative thinking that has led to CLP India’s status as one of the few power companies in India currently focusing on both conventional and renewable energy.

Microsoft’s Good Science Studio—“Kinect Adventures”: To develop “Kinect Adventures,” the set of games included with Kinect for Xbox 360, Microsoft’s Good Science Studio used the HBDI® and Whole Brain® programs and tools to help the team improve its innovation and design process, capture and analyse customer feedback, and make product decisions based on the thinking preferences of a broad consumer market. The process resulted in a 40% reduction in overall development time compared to the typical game development process.

Telecom New Zealand: Telecom New Zealand implemented a Whole Brain® Thinking solution in its call centers to help the team pick up clues over the phone and adapt their approach to customers’ thinking preferences. The approach led to increased customer satisfaction scores within weeks of implementation, with independent auditors determining that for every \$1 they invested in the program during the first year of the initiative, they made \$12 in return.

Whole Brain® Thinking

What is Whole Brain® Thinking and why should I care?

Have you ever asked yourself: “How can people be so clever and so dumb at the same time?” We have all met people who are very bright and capable in a given area or skill, but seem totally incapable of something much simpler. The “absent-minded genius” is a good example: Scientific theory is no problem for this person but socialising at a party is. In business you often find a strategic, “big picture” specialist who never seems to notice details. How does this happen? Research on the brain has led to an understanding that each of us has a preferred way and mode of thinking that affects the way we take in and process information. The awareness of one’s own thinking style and the thinking styles of others, combined with the ability to act outside of one’s preferred thinking style when the situation requires it, is known as “Whole Brain® Thinking.”

How do the Whole Brain® Model and the HBDI® profile relate to the physical brain?

The Whole Brain® Model is a metaphor for how we think. Although originally developed using an actual testing of brain activity, the HBDI® profile does not purport to represent the actual synaptic activity of the physical brain at any given moment. It represents a picture of your thinking preferences. Research shows that we all have access to our whole brain and are constantly activating many different areas simultaneously. Over the course of our lives we develop patterns of usage that ultimately result in our thinking style preferences. The HBDI® profile is designed to provide a picture of that array of preferences, giving you a way to understand and describe your preferred “clusters” of thinking and how those preferences impact your effectiveness and choices, as well as how they may differ from those you live and work with.

How did the Whole Brain® Model get developed?

Ned Herrmann, the developer of the Whole Brain® Model, became curious about the nature and source of learning and creativity. His research made clear to him that the source of creativity and learning was the brain. Pursuing that “aha” led to the Whole Brain® concept and the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument® (HBDI®), which he developed in the early 1980s while he was head of management education at General Electric’s Management Development Institute at Crotonville. His dual profession as an artist and educator gave him the opportunity to apply his new understanding to Whole Brain® Thinking, management, creative thinking and learning. In subsequent years the Whole Brain® Model and HBDI® have been used across the globe, translated into 28 languages and used by 9 out of 10 Fortune 100 organisations, helping millions of thinkers worldwide get better performance and results through better thinking.

What are the four preferences of the Whole Brain® Model?

The metaphor divides our thinking into four separate quadrants, recognizing that we all have access to all four, irrespective of our preferences. Each quadrant is different and of equal importance:

- The Upper Left Blue A Quadrant specializes in logical, analytical, quantitative, fact-based thinking.

HBDI – technical questions and information

FAQs

- The Lower Left Green B Quadrant focuses on details and specialises in planning, organizing, and sequencing information.
- The Lower Right Red C Quadrant places a priority on feelings and the interpersonal, emotional and kinesthetic aspects of a situation.
- The Upper Right Yellow D Quadrant synthesizes and integrates information and is more intuitive and holistic in its thinking.

I've heard of left brain/right brain, but how do we get to Whole Brain®?

The oversimplified notion of left brain-right brain, which could even imply that we use only half of our brains, is not an accurate depiction of how the brain actually works. Research has shown that the notion of brain specialization is valid, with these specialized areas being massively interconnected—so we are “hardwired” to be whole. The brain is physically constructed so that specialized areas of processing can collaborate with other areas of specialization even though we have developed preferences for certain mental activities over others. The Whole Brain® Thinking concept uses this structure as the basis of its metaphoric description of how we think. The four-quadrant Whole Brain® Model allows us to differentiate and accurately describe the array of preferences we each have for each quadrant, while recognizing that we have preferences for some over others. The organizing principle of the brain sets us up for wholeness.

How will Whole Brain® Thinking (WBT) help me personally?

Applications of WBT include: communication, problem solving, decision making, career development, management development, creativity, teaching and learning, and strategic planning. WBT makes you more aware of your style and preferences. With that awareness, you can create an action plan to modify your behavior in the areas that are beneficial to you and to others around you. The first step is to understand your own preferences and the way in which thinking preferences affect how people behave, what they pay attention to and how they go about getting things done. The second step is to pick up clues to other people's preferences. Then you can use that knowledge to be more effective and efficient about how you approach people, problems, decisions, processes and specific tasks and situations. In communication, for example, using Whole Brain® Thinking techniques and tools allows you to communicate with others using their preferred style. The result is a reduction in the barriers that impede effective communication. All of this saves time and frustration and removes judgment from the equation. People who have used WBT often say that the “aha” elucidates why previous supervisors and managers acted the way they did. The typical response is, “That explains why we never got along. It's just how we think.” It often changes the way you observe other people in the communication process. One thinker put it this way: “In the past, I would have quit listening, cut the person off or been in total agreement and harmony with them. Now I continue to listen and let the other person finish their statement because I recognize what is going on.”

See also *The Whole Brain® Business Book, 2nd Edition*, for a variety of applications and exercises to help you apply and benefit from Whole Brain® Thinking.

What do the color designations for each quadrant of the Whole Brain® Model mean?

The upper left A quadrant typifies logical processing, and therefore, the color chosen to represent this quadrant is cerulean blue—clear and to the point. The lower left B quadrant—the structured and organized quadrant—was designated as green because green suggested groundedness. With its emotional, feeling and interpersonal orientation, the lower right C quadrant was assigned red because of the emotional passion implied by the color. The upper right D quadrant, with its imaginative qualities, was assigned yellow because of that color's vibrancy.

How can I determine the preferences of others, such as my boss?

Once you become familiar with the quadrants in the Whole Brain® Model, you may be able to make a fairly accurate guess of what your boss's preference might be. But remember, it's only a guess; preferences and degree of preference may not be clear. Additionally, preference can change. Also, it's important to keep in mind that every person has the ability to use all quadrants, and you should be careful not to label someone as one quadrant or another. Finally, keep in mind that, most people use a combination of quadrants, with some dominance in one, two, three or all four. See the HBDI® App for an activity that will help you think through others' preferences.

FAQs

I manage a team of people. Should I “guess” at their thinking so I can understand them better?

Once you become aware of the different thinking preferences, it can be a challenge not to try and guess. The danger is that we all have tendency to pigeonhole or stereotype others. Just because you assume a person may demonstrate some of the characteristics of a certain quadrant does not mean that this is an overriding preference. Most people use a combination of quadrants, with some dominance in one, two, three or all four. Sharing your actual HBDI® data is the best way to learn about and apply your understanding to improve effectiveness. See the HBDI® App for an activity that will help you think through others' preferences.

Can I use this model with my team if they haven't completed HBDI® themselves?

Only certified HBDI® Practitioners are qualified to teach others about the model, facilitate a full workshop and debrief profiles.

How can I use this information to increase sales, close deals faster, improve team performance, pick up market share, improve customer loyalty, etc.?

If you can take an educated guess about what your client's preference is, then you can then “connect” with that person in that quadrant. For example, you may have a client who prefers to know all the details about a project. They like lists and checkpoints, and you may find them to be very organised as well. This is indicative of a preference in the green quadrant. But let's say you prefer to think from the yellow quadrant and pay little attention to details or checkpoints. You could focus your behaviors to be more “green” or B oriented to better communicate with the client. It may be a challenge, but it could lead to better communication or even gaining more of the client's respect. Knowing who you are dealing with and what their preferences are will help significantly in your communications with your clients and colleagues. The HBDI® App has tools you can use to think through and diagnose your clients.

For more information on sales applications, see *The Whole Brain® Business Book, 2nd Edition*.

In what ways might my thinking preferences cause me to misunderstand others?

Your preferences can, under certain circumstances, create “blind spots” that can cause you to be a “prisoner” of your own preferences. Pay attention to those situations in which you have to work with others you do not like working with, are caught off guard or surprised by a situation, feel that you are not being heard, experience conflict, can't get things moving or feel your input is not valued.

Those may be situations in which your preferences are a barrier to effective communication and interaction with others. Stop and think about which quadrants you may not be hearing or what you might be misinterpreting. What quadrant is the other person using? How might you stretch your thinking to meet them where they are?

See the HBDI® App for more on how to be more effective in your communications with others.

Are there advantages to “whole-brained” teams?

Yes, especially when the team is tasked with complex problems or projects. A six-year study focused on factors that increase the productivity and efficiency of teams found that: a) teams that are balanced in terms of thinking preferences (i.e., have diverse thinkers represented) are more effective; they consider more options and make better decisions; b) whole-brained were 66% more efficient (i.e., did things right); and c) 70% or more of the teams that were whole brained were “successful” (versus 30% or less when not). From “How to Improve Group Productivity: Whole-Brain Teams Set New Benchmarks,” by Charles G. DeRidder and Mark A. Wilcox.

Are there advantages to teams made up of people with similar thinking preferences?

Teams made up of members who have similar thinking preferences will typically come to agreement much faster than those with diverse preferences represented, so they can be more efficient and effective when the question or issue at hand is simple and requires a quick decision.

In what ways does the way we think impact how we listen (or don't listen) to others?

Since we think at a speed of 400-600 words per minute and only listen at 125-150 words per minute, it's no wonder we hear “voices in our head” that get in the way of listening. Active listening may be required to focus on the content of another person with a different preference.

HBDI – technical questions and information

FAQs

How does Whole Brain® Thinking apply to creativity and innovation?

The creative process is inherently the Whole Brain® Thinking approach, benefiting from each quadrant in different stages of the creative process.

See *The Whole Brain Business Book, 2nd Edition* for extensive background, tools, techniques and exercises for applying Whole Brain® Thinking to creativity and innovation.

To what extent is the work on Whole Brain® Thinking and the HBDI® documented?

Over 200 doctoral dissertations and masters theses document this work in a variety of theoretical and practical applications. In addition, more than 200 books and magazines make references to the HBDI® and Whole Brain® Thinking in a wide variety of applications. Over 2 million individual profiles and thousands of group analyses and interpretations are in the current database. Hundreds of articles around the globe have been published, and a comprehensive literature review is available upon request.

What are some additional broad applications of Whole Brain® Thinking?

Applications of Whole Brain® Thinking include:

UNDERSTANDING OF SELF: Relationship with Others, Thinking Styles, Learning Styles

COUNSELING: Educational, Career, Job, Clarifying Relationships

MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP: Understanding of Management vs. Leadership, Roles/Styles, Staff Development, Communication, Planning, Strategic/Operational Planning, Inclusive Leadership, Changing/Integrating Culture, Developing Vision and Values, Spearheading/Fostering Innovation, Leading Teams, Managing Differences, Managing Diversity, Managing Change, Alignment of Corporate Issues, Creative Climate Building, Improving Productivity

THINKING AGILITY: Emerging Leader and Manager Development, Problem Solving, Decision Making and Communication, Establishing a Climate of Agile and Inclusive Thinking, Unleashing Thinking Potential

SALES AND SERVICE: Needs Assessment, Communication, Customer Service Improvement, Call Center Training, Customer Service and Sales Training

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION: Measuring Diversity of Thought, Managing Whole Brain® Teams, Strategic Organizational Development, Creativity and Innovation Practices, “Diverse by Design” Teams, Inclusive leadership Development

TEACHING & LEARNING: Instructional Design and Delivery, Evaluation, Presentation Materials, Training Trainers, Participant Selection/Groupings

COMMUNICATION: Writing, Formatting, Designing, Facilitating, Training, Clarifying, Presentation of Materials, Interpersonal Interactions

PERSONAL GROWTH: Education/Training Direction, Career Direction, Job Choice, Personal Creativity, Job Satisfaction/Fulfillment, Creative Problem Solving

TEAM EFFECTIVENESS: Team Management, Conflict Resolution, Communication Techniques, Process Flows, Decision Making, Problem Solving, Focus and Alignment

CREATIVITY & INNOVATION: Understanding Innovation and Creative Process, Whole Brain® Approach to Creativity and Innovation, Establishing a Climate for Creativity and Innovation, Unleashing Creative Potential

DESIGN: Educational Courses, Meetings, Presentations, Learning Materials, Publications, Sales and Marketing Materials, Advertisements, Job Design and Structuring, Process Flows

DIAGNOSIS: Occupational Profiling, Thinking Styles, Learning Styles, Organizational Structure, Organizational Culture, Management/Leadership Style, Key Leadership Issues, Job Mapping, Processes.

Has the Whole Brain® approach ever been used in schools or universities?

Yes. Over the past 35 years applications have been carried out in elementary schools, secondary schools, colleges and universities. One significant application was at the University of Toledo School of Engineering. Not only was the Whole Brain® Thinking concept applied to the teaching of creative problem solving, but also all incoming freshmen and outgoing seniors were profiled as the basis of diagnosing the impact of engineering education on their HBDI® profiles over the course of their four years at the University. The project showed that incoming freshmen had, on average, a more whole-brained profile that progressively shifted to the left (a more typical engineering profile) over the four years of study in that program. Students who chose to leave the program to change majors were all right mode oriented.

Another current application is in executive education and MBA programs across the country. The MBA program at Franklin University conducted pre and post-testing using the HBDI® and built a curriculum around the Whole Brain® Model in order to ensure that it taught a Whole Brain® approach to management. Other schools and universities using the HBDI® and Whole Brain® approach include Stanford University Design School, MIT, Vanderbilt, INSEAD, Queens University, University of Maine and Yale College Wales (UK).

FAQs

Why would I want to become more “whole brained” in my thinking?

Whole Brain® Thinking gives you the opportunity to improve your work performance, your communication, and your effectiveness, both in one-on-one and group situations. Have you ever finished a project or task, realised you missed something in the process and thought, “Why didn’t we think of that?” Or have you ever thought, “This person and I just don’t communicate. We just don’t get each other.”

Using Whole Brain® Thinking means being able to draw upon and use the thinking available to us all in each of the four quadrants, irrespective of our preferences. In problem solving and decision making, at an individual level and in teams, it enables you to take a comprehensive view of any situation and look at it from a variety of perspectives. As a result, you will have literally “thought of everything,” eliminating blind spots and surprises, reducing risks and increasing innovation. In terms of communication, each quadrant has its own language, which is the product of its thinking preferences. Typically, when someone is “speaking a language” we don’t understand, we tune out. Whole Brain® Thinking provides you with a framework for listening and better understanding as well as more effectively getting buy-in from other people as you communicate with them. It enables you to “hear” what others are saying even when they think differently from you and to present your ideas in your listener’s preferred style. The result is an opening of the lines of communication.

How can I become more agile in my thinking?

We define thinking agility as the ability to deliberately and consciously shift your thinking when the situation requires it. An important application of Whole Brain® Thinking is the ability to “stretch” into lesser preferred quadrants for improved results. A useful metaphor is to think of your preferences as having natural elasticity, like a rubber band, that can easily expand into an area of lesser preference as required. Stretching into different modes will expand your thinking and allow you to approach your problem, decision or situation using your entire brain so that you can be more agile and adaptable to the task at hand.

To start your “Whole Brain® Thinking stretch,” look at your HBDI® profile and identify those activities you find the most challenging. Which activities do you tend to skip or run out of time and energy to do? Which quadrants do they fall into? Next, think about the times of the day when you have the greatest and lowest mental energy. If you are a “morning person,” schedule challenging tasks in the morning when you are the freshest. If you are a “night” person, give yourself a boost by working on your least preferred tasks later in the day or at night when you have the most mental energy. You’ll find that the mental effort required to do even the most challenging tasks will be significantly reduced if you work on them when you have more mental energy.

Another way to develop your thinking agility is to stretch yourself to go deeper into a quadrant by actively seeking out the input of people who naturally prefer to think in that way. Spend time with them to learn how they think through a situation. Additionally, if you are struggling to determine how a given quadrant would approach an issue, think of a person you know who thinks that way and ask yourself: “How would _____ handle that situation?”

Additionally, find resources that can provide specialised input (e.g., books, websites, journals and training) that you may not have known about or have disregarded in the past. Another way to develop your thinking agility is to adopt Whole Brain® Thinking as a framework that guides your approach to tasks and projects in day-to-day situations by “walking around” the quadrants. Start your task by asking, “What do I need to do to make sure I engage each quadrant?” End a task by asking yourself, “Have I considered all four quadrants?” Be aware of the quadrants you usually don’t get to, and start with those first. You can easily create a four-quadrant Whole Brain® WalkAround to do action planning by dividing a piece of paper into four boxes and filling in each box as needed. Practice improves this agility-building process and allows you to become more comfortable with the stretch. Even if you naturally have strong preferences in all four quadrants, it is possible to improve your thinking by using one of Herrmann’s Whole Brain® ThinkAbout tools, such as the ThinkAbout Pad or the Deskflip. The HBDI® App is a great reinforcement tool to help remind you of how to use Whole Brain® Thinking every day.

While thinkers who have multi-dominant profiles are more naturally agile in their thinking and are more likely to consider all quadrants in their day-to-day thinking, they may encounter some challenges when a situation requires them to “go deep” into any one quadrant. Consider some of the following ways to “go deep”: for the A blue quadrant, conduct an in-depth analysis of the data; for the B green quadrant, develop a highly detailed project plan and timeline; for the C red quadrant, facilitate a highly emotional conflict resolution discussion; for the D yellow quadrant, develop a long-range forecast that goes out 10 years. *The Whole Brain® Business Book, 2nd Edition*, has additional exercises for building thinking agility and expanding beyond your thinking comfort zones.

See also: How do I shift modes? What could I do to develop greater comfort in a quadrant?

In what kinds of situations can Whole Brain® Thinking be used?

Any situation that requires thinking that goes beyond a given quadrant’s specialised mode can benefit from Whole Brain® Thinking. To ensure that each quadrant has been explored in a given process, an approach called a “WalkAround” is used. Many examples of a Whole Brain® WalkAround are in *The Whole Brain® Business Book, 2nd Edition*. Here are four examples of frequently used applications of Whole Brain® Thinking:

HBDI – technical questions and information

FAQs

Decision making: Most decisions benefit from a thought process that includes the review of multiple options and perspectives. A typical example is the purchase of a car. A quadrant thinkers look at information on the actual performance of the vehicle. B quadrant thinkers read a consumer report to gather research on the vehicle's reliability and practical features (e.g., trunk size, safety records, etc). C quadrant thinkers test drive the car to see if it "feels" right. And D quadrant thinkers focus on the aesthetics, color, styling and innovations each model offers. Using Whole Brain® Thinking contributes to a better choice and avoids unpleasant surprises. Overlooking even one quadrant can result in a less than ideal outcome. Imagine someone who falls in love with a car because of the look, drive and feel, but neglects to check the trunk size—only to discover after the purchase that his golf clubs don't fit in the trunk!

Problem Solving: Every problem situation can benefit from an A quadrant review of the data and facts, as well as an analysis of the real problem at hand; the D quadrant "big-picture" context and possible creative ideas; the C quadrant viewpoint of the "customer" of the problem and how the problem affects others; and the B quadrant step-by-step process to solve the problem and implement the solution.

Improving Team Interactions and Performance: Most teams are formed to make the most of the differences among team members. But very often those differences stand in the way of the team living up to its potential. Whole Brain® Thinking can help a team recognise and acknowledge the differences among team members in a non-judgmental way and then use those differences to make the most of the ideas of each team member. In addition, once a team knows its preferences, it can use that knowledge to enhance its communication with other teams and work groups that may have quite different thinking preferences.

Communication: The objective of most communication is to convey an idea, transfer information or persuade someone. How many times have you experienced the frustration of delivering a message only to realise that the other person "just didn't get it"? In order to communicate effectively, it's important to understand the "language" and mindset of the person(s) you are communicating with. A Whole Brain® Thinking diagnosis of the audience can provide the critical planning information you need to tailor your language and presentation to the audience. When the audience's preferences are in doubt, taking a Whole Brain® approach to communication ensures that you've covered all the "language bases." This reduces the possibility of miscommunication and improves the chance that your message will be successfully received by the audience.

See also: How have organizations applied the HBDI® and Whole Brain® Thinking? What are some additional broad applications of Whole Brain® Thinking?

Isn't all this brain stuff just a flash in the pan? Won't it just pass?

In early Egypt, valued organs of the deceased were preserved in canopic jars; the brain was discarded. In 1989 the US Congress and President H.W. Bush declared the 1990s the Decade of the Brain. It took 6,000 years for the brain to be recognized as the central organ of the body. Considering the rapid increase in worldwide attention being given to the Whole Brain® concept, this technology will no doubt continue to be a major foundation for understanding the nature of human beings. Recently, the US government decided to invest in research allowing us to thoroughly map the brain—so the research will continue for decades. There is still a lot to learn.



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