



# CASE STUDY

Professional  
Services Firm

# CASE STUDY:

## Developing Creative Thinkers as a Competitive Differentiator

**How an international professional services firm is helping people stretch their thinking to solve client problems and strengthen loyalty.**



### OBJECTIVE:

*To determine whether a Whole Brain® approach improves outcomes for managers engaged in leading and decision making in emergency situations.*

This international professional services firm provides industry-focused assurance, tax and advisory services, with expertise in corporate accountability, risk management, mergers & acquisitions, and process improvement. In Australia it employs almost 5,000 people and provides services to 90 of the country's top 100 companies.

The firm in Australia realized that its growth and success for the future would depend on attracting not only the most competent talent but also employees who can develop creative approaches to client solutions and successfully cultivate diverse long-term client relationships.

The firm wanted to develop and implement a training program that would foster the kind of innovative thinking crucial for its long-term success. In addition, since it had such a rich history of innovative recruiting programs, it was decided that the training program could serve to further differentiate the firm from the competition in terms of offering meaningful programs for new hires.



## CHALLENGES:

*To help highly analytical, technical thinkers build their creative thinking muscles.*

As it took inventory of its recruiting and training programs, the firm noted that it regularly hired individuals with very logical, analytical, organizational, technical and quantitative skills—no surprise since this skill set is critical for much of the work in the industry.

But these highly analytical thinkers would need to learn how to stretch their thinking to be able to conceptualize more creative and holistic solutions for clients. This would require a kind of thinking not typically taught in many business schools, so most of the professionals on staff would need new training, insights and skills to help the firm achieve its objectives.

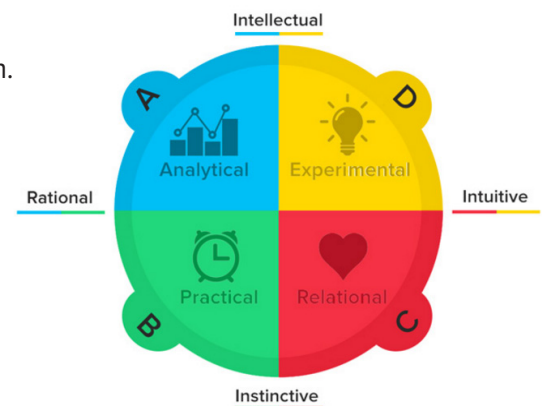


## SOLUTIONS:

*Using Whole Brain® Thinking as the unifying concept for the firm's graduate training solution.*

The firm partnered with Herrmann International to help them develop and implement the graduate training initiative, using Whole Brain® Thinking as the unifying concept. The solution has three audiences: graduates, participating management and participating clients.

The first step was to integrate Whole Brain® Thinking into the training program. Since approximately 450 employees graduate from this program each year, it seemed the natural place to start. Over the course of several years, the training program was crafted into an ongoing program that lasts approximately three months. At the beginning of the program, all participants complete the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument® (HBDI®) assessment, which defines and describes a person's preferences for thinking across the four quadrants of the Whole Brain® Model. At the outset of the training, all participants are made aware of their own and others' HBDI® profiles and are given tools for understanding how one's thinking preferences can affect job performance and the ability to work with others on a team.



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The program was built around the theme of innovation and also aimed to provide graduates with critical skills and knowledge that they would need to succeed in their early years in the industry. It was structured to be implemented as a series of workshops in which participants are placed in teams.

In these workshops, teams are given a current business problem and are challenged with solving the problem with an “out of the box” solution. To enable them to do this, the program teaches graduates creative thinking techniques linked to their HBDI® profile results. To broaden graduates’ business acumen, the program also includes workshops that help sharpen presentation and writing skills.

As the training program evolved, the firm and Herrmann International continually refined it to ensure that it also provided a networking opportunity for new employees. This networking opportunity is a benefit that is now sometimes reported as one of the most useful aspects of the program. Participants are matched with a Team Buddy and a Sponsor throughout the program. Team Buddies are second-year graduates of the program, and Sponsors are senior-level managers. The networking component of the program is specifically aimed to strengthen the interpersonal relationships and interactions between employees at various levels in the company.

In developing and refining the training program, the firm and Herrmann International sought to make the program a professional and personal journey for all employees. Participants recognized that the training program has a start and end date, but as a journey, it doesn’t really end because of the relationships developed from it.

## **RESULTS:**

*Stronger teams, increased appreciation for and application of creative thinking, and an approach to solving client problems that has become a competitive differentiator.*



After more than five years of program implementation, the firm has reported several tangible results. First, the firm’s employees at all levels have extolled the program to be an excellent team-building tool and an invaluable way to learn the scope of the business. This enhanced understanding has helped employees stay connected to the client focus of the company and has reinforced the company’s global “connected thinking” brand message to its clients.

In addition, the firm underwent a cultural transformation. In recognizing that one of its greatest challenges was to foster an environment where employees could develop creative approaches to client solutions, the need for attracting and keeping creative, expressive, intuitive thinkers became essential to the firm’s future success. Integrating Whole Brain® Thinking into the training program gave the firm a tangible way to show appreciation for more interpersonal and conceptual thinking, and to develop those skills in all graduates.

But perhaps the greatest achievement of the program is the cumulative effect the knowledge of individual thinking preferences and Whole Brain® Thinking has had on the company. The program has begun to build a critical mass of employees who have learned about their thinking preferences through the HBDI® and who have developed the skills to think outside their thinking-preference comfort zones. This has helped build a more whole-brained organizational approach to client service, which has, in turn, helped differentiate the firm from its chief competitors. In fact, an increasing number of the firm's clients have even sent their own selected graduates to participate in the program.

## **UNLEASH THINKING POTENTIAL**

Herrmann International combines powerful psychometric tools with learning programs to prepare your workforce for a complex and volatile environment. Learn more about our assessment tools, explore our learning programs, or talk to a Whole Brain® Specialist today.

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## CLIENTS

Herrmann International clients, for whom better thinking has become integral to their business culture, include:

