



Case name: A Whole Brain Approach To Solving a Customer Problem

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Company name: Large Commercial Printing Company

The challenge: A major (\$4 Million), long term client of this printing company had experienced problems over a 6 month period. The printing company had repeatedly attempted to resolve the problem with no success and was unable to figure out what was causing the issue.

Purpose:

Use the Whole Brain model to help a team better diagnose a solution to a seemingly “unsolvable” customer problem.

Existing conditions:

A team had been assembled to study the customer’s problem. The three person cross-functional team included a representative from sales, operations and customer service, the departments most affected. The group gathered to assess the service issues, develop improvement goals and define a means to measure their success against those goals. This meeting and subsequent work resulted in a recommended set of procedures intended to resolve the recurring customer quality issue.

The recommended procedures were implemented, but the customer quality problems continued. Finally, the customer indicated to a Senior Group VP that 6 months of continuing problems had reached their limit: the problems had to be solved or the company risked losing this \$4 million account. The OD department was asked to facilitate the resolution of this dilemma.

Desired outcomes:

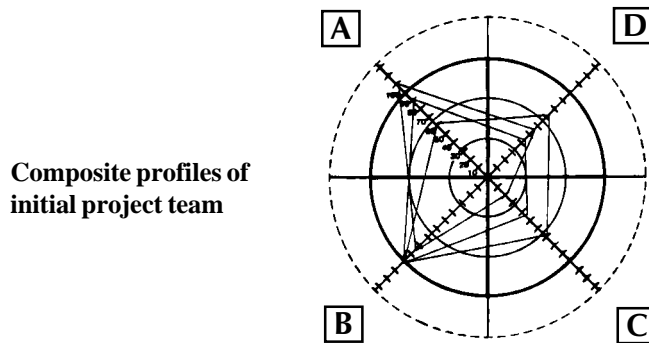
Short term: Uncover and resolve as quickly as possible the cause of the recurring quality problems and thus preserve the customer relationship and account.

Long term: Provide the effected group with tools to resolve future issues of this type.

Whole Brain interventions, processes, and strategies:

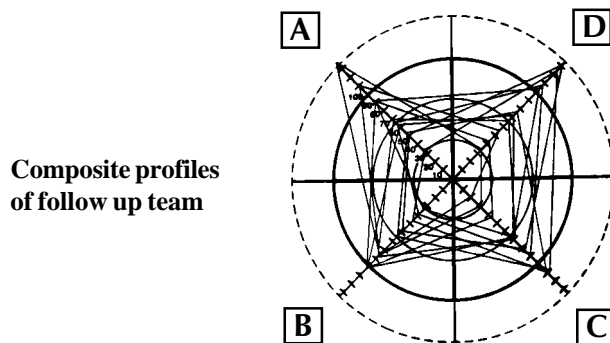
The initial group of three were profiled and it was revealed that they all shared similar thinking style preferences, with a tilt in the A and B quadrants (analysis, implementation, procedures, organization). After spending time learning the Whole Brain model, the initial recommendations were diagnosed using the four quadrants. The analysis resulted in a startling revelation: the mental tilt of the

recommendation mirrored the groups primary preferences: 14 of the 16 recommendations were B quadrant oriented, 1 was tilted toward the A quadrant and 1 tilted toward the C quadrant.



The next strategy was to expand the team and make it more heterogeneous. The initial members were coached to seek out people with different thinking styles than their initial groups' preferences: "Seek out someone who really thinks out of the box, big picture and strategically; Try to find a good 'numbers' person; How about someone who is really good with people? etc,"

Once formed, this team was also profiled and introduced to the whole brain model. The profiles revealed a heterogeneous, Whole Brain group.



The group was facilitated through a brainstorming session, "walking around" the four quadrants as a technique to provide different perspectives on the issue.

Questions included: What is the data? What does the analysis tell us? (in the A quadrant). When does the issue occur specifically? What can we learn from the sequence of events? (in the B quadrant), Who is involved? What are the people issues? (in the C quadrant), and Why might this be occurring? what is the big picture? What have we not thought of? (in the D quadrant). This initial phase resulted in the decision to do some analysis, collect data, create some visual graphs and matrices of the issues broken into segments, explore people issues and look for trends.

Summary of outcomes:

At first, this data did not provide any "breakthrough" understanding but the group persevered. The

second pass around the four quadrants however provided some fascinating insight. While exploring the C quadrant issues, the team decided to gather more people oriented information about shift changes, personnel issues etc. New visuals were created showing the occurrence of issues by day and by person and suddenly new information emerged: clearly problems were occurring on a specific day, consistently with one individual-one of the company's *best people*. This surprised everyone! Further interviews and research revealed that this individuals' weekly poker game occurred the evening before every quality issue consistently occurred. It was determined that the person on the following shift had been covering for this individual and consequently was incorrectly blamed for part of the problems. The group revised the shift schedule, the immediate quality issues were resolved, the client was retained and the department became totally error free within three months.

Optimizing the results:

Short term: The problem was uncovered and resolved to client satisfaction

Long term: The group learned a methodology to apply to other issues and problems that arise.

Success measurement criteria applied:

The four quadrant success measurement process provides for up to 100 points to indicate the level of success attained in each of the four different aspects of the project. The success measurement results area as follows:

A quadrant: The issues were successfully diagnosed

B quadrant: Changes were implemented

C quadrant: Through a "people perspective the solution was discovered

D quadrant: The problem was solved through an innovative new Whole Brain Methodology.

