

Case Study

The United States Naval Command
Enlists Herrmann International's
Thinking Preferences Methodology
To Bolster Mentoring Program



Challenge:

In 1990, the U.S. Naval Command launched a formal mentoring program at its Philadelphia site as part of a comprehensive “human capital” strategy. The new program - complete with a graduation ceremony – was designed to develop future leaders, provide overall career mentoring and fill the potential gaps in expertise and leadership created by the retirement of valued employees. When the program was launched, 120 participants immediately enrolled. Those working on the program quickly saw the need for a trustworthy system for appropriately matching mentor with mentee that would allow open communication outside the chain of command. They were also searching for a matching mechanism that would foster the quickest way for mentors to pass along crucial workplace knowledge gleaned from experience.

Action:

Herrmann International had been a partner with the U.S. Naval Command since 1982, so the Whole Brain® Thinking model inherent in Herrmann’s work had been successfully leveraged on previous U.S. Naval Command projects. Whole Brain® Thinking is the ability to think and act outside of one’s preferred thinking style. After evaluating several options, the U.S. Naval Command selected the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI®), Herrmann International’s 120-question assessment tool, as the primary mechanism for matching mentors and mentees in the program. The HBDI® measures the strength of preference for each of the four thinking quadrants of the brain.

The U.S. Naval Command began administering the HBDI® to all participants early in their involvement in the program. Since getting mentees “up-to-speed” in the fastest manner possible was a major objective of the program, they were matched with mentors

whose thinking preferences closely aligned with their own. They were matched according to thinking preference similarities in hopes that these similarities would allow for quick bonding and easier communication and coaching. Consideration was also given to ensure greater opportunity for strengthening lesser-preferred quadrants by carefully examining profiles and potential outcomes. The use of the HBDI® enabled mentor and mentee to quickly establish a common language early in the mentoring process. In fact, in many cases mentors and mentees were on a parallel path for leveraging their preferred thinking styles, and expanding their less preferred quadrants. These factors helped to facilitate trust and open communication outside the chain of command.



Results:

Mid- and end-of-year evaluations allowed HBDI® matches to be monitored throughout the course of the program. Responses to HBDI® matching techniques have been overwhelmingly positive. In fact, the compatibility between mentor and mentee is such that many continue meeting well beyond formal participation. Out of 800 matches made, only five participants declared a mismatch, a 99% success rate. Long-term studies and analyses indicate that over one-third of early participants in the U.S. Naval Command’s employee mentoring program have risen to higher-level managerial positions.

The U.S. Naval Command’s innovative mentoring program was deemed a great success both quantitatively and qualitatively. In fact, mentoring program administrators across federal sectors in other locations throughout the United States and Japan have been trained on using HBDI® matching techniques for their programs.

better results through better thinking

Clients

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

American Express

Bank of America

BB&T

Blue Cross Blue Shield

BMW

Boeing

Chevron

Cintas

Cisco

Coca-Cola

Columbia Business School

Disney University

DuPont

Gardian Life

GE

Global Lead

Harris Corporation

HBO

IBM

Johnson & Johnson

JP Morgan Chase

Kaiser Permanente

Limited Brands

Microsoft

Milliken & Company

MTV Networks

National Semiconductor

Nortel Networks

North Carolina Courts

Novartis

Perdue Pharma

Proctor and Gamble

Rogers Communications

St. John's University

Schering-Plough

Shell Oil

Target

Telus Mobility

The Clarion Group

Tommy Hilfiger

3M

University of Pretoria, S. Africa

US Navy

Vanderbilt University

Victoria's Secret

Wharton Business School

Weyerhaeuser Corporation

Xerox



The Originators of Whole Brain® Technology and the Creators of the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI)®
794 Buffalo Creek Road. Lake Lure, NC 28746. Phone: 1-828-625-9153 or 1-800-432-hbdi Fax: 1-828-625-2146

www.hbdi.com 03-09

