

National Australia Bank Builds Trust in Teams and Leaders with the MBTI® Assessment



CASE STUDY AT A GLANCE

COMPANY OVERVIEW

National Australia Bank Group is a financial services organisation with over 12,000,000 customers and 50,000 people, operating more than 1,750 stores and Service Centres globally, including in Australia, New Zealand, Asia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

THE CHALLENGE

To create trust in high-performance teams and build ongoing development programs for leaders and teams.

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

Over 500 employees participated in development sessions incorporating the MBTI® assessment. This has resulted in ongoing requests to further apply personality type to improve trust, team functioning, change leadership, and skills relating to emotional intelligence, communication and conflict management. The MBTI® instrument and related development sessions continue to support National Australia Bank's employees, teams and leaders achieve greater levels of performance.

“ Classification does not explain the human psyche. Nevertheless, an understanding of psychological types opens the way to a better understanding of human psychology in general. ”

C. G. Jung,
Psychological Types

STARTING WITH TRUST

A centerpiece of any successful organisation is the level of trust between its employees. Reema Singh, who is part of National Australia Bank's people and development function, is focused on developing high-performance teams within the organisation. After being introduced to Patrick Lencioni's team framework in *'Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team'*, Reema and her colleagues identified the importance of building a foundation of trust in high-performance teams. Reema explains, "Our team is focused on continuously developing to become a high-performing team by overcoming Lencioni's five dysfunctions of a team." Reema adds, "Lencioni references the MBTI® tool in building trust within teams as it enables better understanding of interactions amongst individuals."

This led National Australia Bank (NAB) to offer its employees an opportunity to learn about their personality type through participation in introductory sessions using the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*® (MBTI®) instrument. More than 50 years of research and application have demonstrated how Carl Jung's personality type framework, measured by the MBTI® instrument, contributes to improved outcomes for individual employees and enhances the performance of teams.

INTRODUCING PERSONALITY TYPE IN NAB

Reema describes the process of how the MBTI® framework and its application was introduced in her team. "The initial rollout included five full-day MBTI® team debriefing sessions including type-related activities. The sessions comprised



The people development people.

cpp

approximately 20 to 30 people.” A key learning for Reema and her team of NAB certified MBTI® facilitators was the importance of conducting these sessions with members from intact teams, as opposed to a random selection of attendees.

Reema adds, “It was from here that we began to get internal requests to run the sessions for other teams within the organisation. The nature of these offerings came in three forms: (1) a two-hour individual debrief; (2) a full-day team debrief and activity; or (3) a half-day team debrief and activity. The team debriefs and activities were generally held offsite—away from the day-to-day environment individuals work in.”

LEADER BUY-IN

Reema explains that involvement by managers in the team sessions was critical for success. “We ensured that each session was led by the leader. During the opening of each team session the leaders laid out their expectations of the team and the session and then closed the loop at the end of the day.” Reema observed the positive impact of the sessions for the teams. “We received feedback that people were beginning to practise new behaviours and language to improve their interactions and understanding with each other.”

BUILDING AND SUSTAINING A COMMON LANGUAGE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Over the course of the year Reema and her colleagues facilitated more than 500 MBTI® debriefs with staff. Reema shares, “The momentum of running so many sessions in a short period of time resulted in a buzz on the floor about the personality type results. Suddenly there was a common language that people could understand each other by.”

The foundation Reema and her colleagues offered through the introductory sessions with the MBTI® instrument created interest and demand from participants to apply their learning further. Reema explains, “We are now moving towards offering development programs for leadership teams. This forms a second-tier offering of the MBTI® tool. Once participants have completed the introductory MBTI® sessions, we move from a basic understanding of the tool by connecting the applications of the MBTI® personality types to specific topics, such as emotional intelligence, communication, change and conflict. The choice of topic is dependent upon what is happening within the business and how relevant the topic may be to

“ In combination, the four preferences determine type, but the traits that result from each preference do not combine to influence an individual’s personality by simple addition of characteristics; instead the traits result from the interaction of the preferences. ”

Isabel Myers,
Gifts Differing

that particular team. These are the topics that exist currently; however, my team is open to designing and developing workshops based on demand.”

Reema explains how the introductory sessions have also enabled NAB to apply the personality type theory at a deeper level, by demonstrating the dynamic interaction of the preferences of each personality type. “Incorporated within these sessions is an understanding of type dynamics and how this can strengthen the application of the tool. Each session is approximately three to four hours long, covering both theory and practical application. Commonly, teams are going through a four-part program, where they commit to focusing on one topic every quarter over a year. In between the sessions, they actively engage, discuss and practise new behaviours to embed the learning and maintain the commitment and momentum.”

Reema adds, “We began with one-off workshops for teams, and now teams are going through an ongoing journey with the tool, continuing the learning and application, informally, in their own time outside of the classroom.”

SUSTAINING TEAM TRUST

Work teams at NAB also continue to build their effectiveness through the application of personality type. Reema shares, “There is a team development program focused around Lencioni’s *Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. Overcoming the dysfunction ‘absence of trust’ sits under the entire program,

enabling the connection to the MBTI® tool in each session. There are four sessions in total, focusing on Conflict, Commitment, Accountability and Results. The order of these sessions is dependent upon how the team rates themselves at the beginning of the program based on a survey in Lencioni's book."

Reema adds, "As trust is embedded within the dysfunctions, the MBTI® tool and each individual's results are addressed in each session. The learning from the sessions was evident in the feedback received from participants. One team manager shared, "The team provided such relevant and specific feedback that this session, whilst very difficult and 'out of the comfort zone' has enabled each person to identify one behavioural area they will commit to working on improving over the next three months."

LEADING THROUGH THE LENS OF TYPE

NAB's leaders have also benefited from understanding how different personality types prefer to be motivated and led by exploring the type data of their teams. Reema elaborates, "We have an offering which is focused on getting the most out of the personality type data from the type table. A senior leadership team invested four hours understanding several different type tables with data on their own and wider teams. This provided information on not only the type of people each leader had in their own team, but then enabled them to begin to identify similarities and differences each team had with the other, strengths each team held and also areas to leverage from others." Reema adds, "It opened up a forum for leaders to challenge and question each other, but also share, support, and help each other overcome current team challenges."

LEADING CHANGE THROUGH THE LENS OF TYPE

Reema also shares how they have applied the MBTI® assessment to further equip their leaders with organisational change initiatives. "Another example of a leadership team's journey is that of developing change leadership. The Change Leadership program is a four-part program focusing on enterprise change leadership tools and evaluations. Included within the program is an introduction to the MBTI® personality

types (through an opportunity to complete the assessment and debrief) and then consideration of type dynamics to understand how individuals manage, overcome and deal with change. Four leadership teams have begun this Change Leadership journey. A manager leading his team through the program commented, "The addition of the Myers-Briggs® tool to the Change Process Model is very powerful and will no doubt be of great benefit to our team."

CONTINUING THE DEVELOPMENT JOURNEY AT NAB

Reema and her colleagues at NAB continue to build on the foundation offered to their staff by demonstrating how the MBTI® assessment and development sessions can be applied in new and relevant ways. She explains, "Overall, the MBTI® tool as a professional development offering within our business unit has really taken off and provided favourable intangible results across different teams. What started off as a reactive approach to a request for the workshops has turned into a specialised, team-based, led-by-the-leader offering, customised and tailored to the needs of each team."

Reema adds, "The flexibility of the MBTI® tool illustrates to me the power it has in connecting to so many different topics and people. Those that have connected to the tool have come from diverse backgrounds, ages and experiences, even though everyone works for the same organisation."

REFERENCES & FURTHER READING

- Lencioni, P. (2006). *Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc. USA
- Myers, I. B. (1980). *Gifts Differing: Understanding Personality Type*. Mountain View, CA: CPP, Inc. USA
- Myers, K. D., & Kirby, L. K. (1994). *Introduction to Type® Dynamics and Development: Exploring the Next Level of Type*. Mountain View, CA: CPP, Inc. USA

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to Reema Singh, of National Australia Bank, for her invaluable contributions and insights for this case study.

ABOUT CPP ASIA PACIFIC PTY LTD

CPP Asia Pacific is a publishing, training and distribution organisation. Our primary focus is to contribute to the productivity and profitability of client organisations, whilst enabling the individuals within them to grow and develop personally. We accomplish this by providing training, world-renowned psychological instruments and innovative consulting solutions to our customers. By qualifying to purchase and use our instruments you gain commercially valuable skills that you can apply in your client organisations. Among CPP Asia Pacific's world-renowned brands and services are the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®), Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation™ (FIRO®), California Psychological Inventory™ (CPI™), CPI 260®, Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI), Strong Interest Inventory® instruments and a range of related psychometric products. CPP Asia Pacific provides services throughout Australia and the Asia Pacific Region. CPP Asia Pacific Pty Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of CPP, Inc.

For more information on CPP Asia Pacific and the MBTI® and other professional development instruments, please visit www.cppasiapacific.com.