

## Brainpower

# Do Business in Style

*People in business can utilise a new 'human technology' to improve their work performance and job satisfaction, explains Barbara Prashnig in this extract from her first book, DIVERSITY IS OUR STRENGTH.*

The slogan 'Work smarter not harder' has been a guiding principle in business for many years. Although it sounds great, people are still puzzled about the meaning behind it and often have no idea how to put this into action. What it really means is that we need to use more of our amazing brainpower. We can enhance performance and increase productivity by:

- Knowing more about ourselves
- Understanding and accepting diversity
- Learning more about brain functions and applying mental techniques to speed up information intake.

### ***Outsmart Any Competition***

As Harry Alder in his very useful book *The Right Brain Manager* suggests, managing is a thinking business, so to outsmart any competition, managers need to excel in how they think. He advocates that managers these days need to be more right brain, holistic, intuitive thinkers who revel in a climate of calculated chaos as there is 'plenty of analysis, plenty of rational decision making, more than enough left brain thinking structured into every part of the operation'

If organisations could only develop the confidence to make intuitive decisions, they will almost always be proven right in the long run.

### ***Creative Block***

Individual managers or team leaders who are using their creative skills in their daily work are appreciated, but often seen as 'over the top', 'unusual', even 'weird' and they usually have a hard time convincing their superiors that the way they do their work is OK. The results these creative thinkers get are often outstanding, but the price for achieving them can be too high.

How left brain dominance and analytical, bottom line thinking can block creativity and seriously undermine job satisfaction in employees is evident from the statistical data we have gathered by using our Working Style Analysis over the past three years, not only in New Zealand but also in Scandinavia, the USA and Australia.

Although we are only at the beginning of our international field study, the features shown in the inset are clearly emerging.

The implications of these findings are simple:

1. Over-organisation leads to 'mindlessness' in right brain thinkers, is often stressful and seriously counterproductive;
2. The harder these people try to stick to the rules, the more stressed, frustrated and unproductive they become;
3. Nothing in the world will make people motivated and productive if they can't or don't want to work under strictly organised conditions;
4. If they are encouraged to combine imagination and intuition with careful analysis and reasoning logic, the results can be astounding and benefit the whole organisation as well as the individual;
5. When in the right environment with matched conditions, right brain thinkers can become true change agents, great visionaries, or charismatic leaders;
6. Women tend toward a more nurturing managing style. As management guru Tom Peters has said, given the rapid transformation underway in the workplace, 'the only question is, will there be any jobs left for men by 2010?'

Do Business in Style. Cont'd

### ***Only Time Will Tell...***

There is ample evidence that most women display a different management style – using more intuitive or right brain thinking that stresses creativity, sensitivity and values based decision making, more so when these women are business owners. But many men also have strong right brain thinking traits, as we have seen in the responses to our Working Style Analysis.

It seems, however, that these males are deliberately not applying their right brain abilities because they often don't fit into the strict left brain thinking style of their organisations, which have a strong emphasis on analysis, methodical information processing and developing logic strategies and procedures.

So, what does the future hold? Will it be the 'Feminisation of Management' which the recent cover story in the US *Training* magazine describes, or will acceptance of diversity in thinking, managing and leading remain lip service for years to come because the old structures and systems in business are so ingrained? Time will tell...

### ***No More Burnout***

Although this might sound 'over the top', but the more you know yourself, understand the people you work or live with, accept their individuality and experience their diversity, the more you will appreciate it is fruitless to get agitated or upset about how people handle tasks differently from what you expected. No one should get so totally stressed out at work, they get sick and need time to recover. There is no justification for wasting human potential just because we do not understand what human diversity and style differences really mean. Although we all are supposed to be equal, we are not the same. See the '*How to Handle Stress with Style*' brochure in this edition.

## ***Is This Your Style?***

People who show a strong right brain dominance:

1. Seem to be less organised and find traditional time management strategies (making lists, prioritising and scheduling activities) confining and non-stimulating;
2. Are more creative than their analytic counterparts even if they are often not aware of this skill;
3. Are often non-conforming, resenting rules and regulations when they can't see the sense behind them;
4. Tend to live and work in 'creative chaos', only follow through if they have to, and find it hard to be consistent in their performance;
5. Prefer to use their imagination and intuition and have difficulties using logic all the time;
6. Need variety, social interaction and fun in their daily work as they get easily bored with routine;
7. Are more often found among females although many women also show strong left brain abilities which seem to be more learned and acquired than natural.