



Capgemini: taking the MBTI® framework to the next level

Background: a large public-sector contract

Capgemini is one of the world's foremost providers of consulting, technology and outsourcing services. It aims to collaborate with businesses in order to improve performance, using their expertise in information technology and different business models to do so.

Capgemini is responsible for delivering services for one of the UK government's most challenging online projects. The management team responsible for the IT architects working on this project wanted to improve their internal communications and succession planning, and having already used the MBTI® instrument to help different personality styles work together effectively, invited OPP to help them take this to the next level, to find tangible strategies for better communication within the leadership team.

By bringing in an outside party, Keith Rounding, head of HR for this area, hoped to trigger a more open dialogue within the leadership team that would be the catalyst for a shift in their patterns of behaviour.

How OPP helped: facilitating a mutual understanding

The approach

OPP's consultants started by working diagnostically with Keith to identify what specific business issues needed addressing, set objectives and design a solution that would fit with the leadership team's culture and experience. Keith reports a positive experience of planning the development: "OPP were not averse to taking a fairly open view on where we went with it; we mutually understood the boundaries of our work together, and there was a good level of understanding by OPP of where we were in our own work with this leadership team. OPP adopted a collaborative approach to discovering what it was we wanted – even when we weren't entirely certain ourselves!"

The objectives identified were to enhance trust and communication; promote an understanding of differences in behaviour across the team; address sources of competitive tension and find a way of using this more constructively; and to improve the consistency of messages from the leadership team to the architects. Ultimately, Keith hoped to help the team improve the way they worked to allocate architect resources across competing project priorities, by encouraging a more streamlined approach to problem-solving.

As the leadership team were already familiar with the concepts raised by the MBTI framework, OPP's philosophy was to build on this interest, applying what the team already knew about each other's types in order to produce lasting improvements in the way they communicated and made decisions.

The structure of the development

The first step was for one of OPP's consultants to observe the leadership team in a natural setting. This involved the consultant sitting in on a real one-day working session, where the team had tasked themselves with determining the priorities for the following year, and allocating roles and responsibilities. This was followed by a period of planning between Keith and OPP based on the outcomes of the observation. They identified competition over the architects resource as a source of tension, and put in place a series of development activities that would get to the heart of this issue.

To start, OPP led a structured team development day using a series of MBTI exercises based on real-life business examples. This included exercises where participants positioned themselves around the room according to how they would choose to resolve different business issues, and a session where each participant prepared a monologue about their own strengths. OPP also ran some individual coaching sessions to help participants assimilate the learning. As Keith explains, "some people were absolute opposites on every axis. Seeing this represented visually really helped us to understand why someone behaves and works in the way they do – and to reconsider the value of their standpoint."

Feedback was generally positive, and the participants felt the exercise both credible and thought-provoking. As a result, a follow-up day was arranged to focus in more depth on the core elements of problem-solving.

During this second team day, the participants concentrated on using the improved communication skills, which they had already started using in their everyday work, to address the issue of business planning for the coming year and to talk about how resources would be allocated.

A platform for tangible results

One year on from the start of the development, and Keith describes how the sessions OPP ran still stick in the minds of the participants: "People still talk about the first team day in particular, and the lessons that came from it. The awareness it has given us as a group of the motivators and drivers of people in the team has really helped our ongoing discussions."

For example, the language of the MBTI instrument has 'stuck' – team members talk openly using MBTI terminology as a way of referring back to what they learnt. This linguistic framework has helped them recognise where differences really lie, what they really mean and how to use differences constructively to deliver better business results.

Another example of the development's success include the weekly phone call that happens with the team. "This has got easier and shorter!", says Keith. "This seems to be because people are much more receptive to other points of view, showing an acceptance of the stance their colleagues are taking. Instead of competing, they show more collaboration in their discussions."

This openness extends to conversations about succession planning. According to Keith, the team are showing themselves to be much more receptive to the idea of the tier below them securing the future of the company after them, rather than experiencing this as a threat. This is seen as indicative of the more trusting culture that is beginning to develop within the architects group.

Essentially, using the MBTI tool as a framework for change within the leadership team has made them conscious of the importance of collaboration and viewing differences constructively as vital pillars of a leading business – and laid the groundwork for realistic succession planning to happen, inspiring confidence on the company’s ongoing success.

For more information about using MBTI Step I and II in your organisation for individual, team or leadership development, please contact our Sales Team on +44 (0)845 603 9958 or by email at enquiry@opp.eu.com.

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