



Herrmann
International Asia

CASE STUDY: SERENDIS LEADERSHIP CONSULTING PTY LTD

By Maud Lindley, Founder and Director

Serendis runs some of Australia's most complex mentoring programs

INDUSTRY: Consulting and executive coaching

PROJECT: Cross-industry mentoring programs

Among its suite of executive leadership and coaching services, Serendis manages and facilitates two large-scale structured mentoring programs — primarily designed for banking and property clients.

“Participating organisations put forward mentees and mentors, we look after the group for a period of six months, and match appropriate mentees and mentors across different organisations,” explains Serendis founder and director Maud Lindley.

“These programs have been developed to support and enhance gender diversity at senior leadership levels,” Maud says. “Our mentees are female executives who are looking to progress their career to higher levels of leadership within their organisation. We match them with male or female mentors — successful senior leaders in the same industry.”

Maud and her team match each mentee with a mentor from a different organisation

who is more senior in experience. The idea is that this person can bring a new and useful perspective on the direction and trajectory of the mentee’s career.

Often, the goal is to help the mentee bridge the gap between management and leadership.

“Throughout... we facilitate group sessions on a monthly basis to foster momentum, but also to give mentees tools to enhance their leadership awareness and skills.”

Mentees reflect on various aspects of leadership development in a group setting and can then take that knowledge to a more personal level with their mentor.

“Mentors also attend group sessions to develop their mentoring skills and discuss how, as senior leaders, they can influence the development of greater gender diversity in their own organisations,” Maud says.

“Whole Brain Thinking brings context for them to define an agenda that they bring to their mentoring sessions.”



About Serendis

Serendis is a Sydney and Perth based leadership development group that works with organisations throughout Australia to develop and enhance executive leadership talent and performance.

Serendis also develops and facilitates sophisticated cross-industry mentoring programs, including the highly regarded Women in Banking & Finance Mentoring for Success Program and the Property Council of Australia’s Women in Property Mentoring Program. These are designed to support the progression of women to senior leadership roles in these industries.

Serendis regularly works with organisations such as AMP Capital, ANZ, Citi, Deutsche Bank, DEXUS, IFM Investors, Investec, Macquarie, Mirvac, NAB, The GPT Group and Westpac.

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What is Whole Brain® Thinking?

Research has shown that thinking styles directly affect behaviour, performance and results.

Whole Brain® Thinking acknowledges that while different tasks require different mental processes, and different people prefer different styles of thinking, organisations will get better results when they can strategically harness the diversity of thinking available — analytical, organisational, strategic and interpersonal.

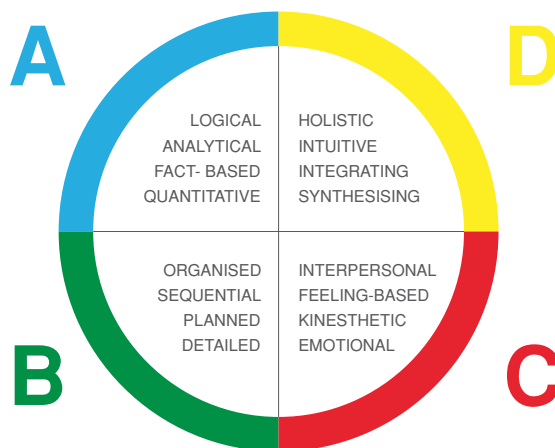
These are the four quadrants of thinking preferences as depicted in the Herrmann Whole Brain® Model.

By applying Whole Brain® Thinking, people and teams can learn to leverage their thinking preferences more effectively and think and act outside their preferences when necessary.

The Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument® (HBDI®) is the 120-question thinking styles assessment at the core of the Whole Brain® approach, that reveals an individual's thinking preferences in the form of an HBDI® Profile.

Because its premise is that we all have brains, we just use them differently, the HBDI® assessment doesn't pigeonhole people or put them into 'types'.

Instead, it shows participants that while there are some areas they may be less comfortable with, they aren't limited in what they can do. It also reveals how teams and groups can work together in the most productive way by drawing on their cognitive diversity to better tackle specific tasks and problems.



The mentoring and coaching challenge

Maud explains that when she began facilitating these mentoring programs in 2010, she realised that a key challenge was the process of matching mentees with appropriate mentors.

She immediately perceived that the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI®) offered exciting potential to not only accelerate the process, but improve the quality of mentor-mentee matches and thus the quality of the program's outcomes.

Maud was already familiar with HBDI® and had become a Herrmann Certified Practitioner in 2009, and describes

HBDI® as "a really good self-awareness tool to start with in executive coaching."

"I saw [HBDI®] as a really fantastic way to understand an individual's thinking style to match them with the appropriate mentor," she says.

And it works.

One mentor reports: "The matching has been perfect, allowing me to effectively support my mentee through this important step in her career whilst playing on my own strengths to help her."

Another says: "The pairing has been excellent, I've really enjoyed the process

so far and my mentee seems to be very engaged and is very thoughtful with her self-assessments and insights."

"The right pairing is the really tricky question," Maud continues. "[It's] the one I'm being asked all the time. The intrinsic success factor in our large-scale mentoring program is the matching, the pairing of the mentee and the mentor. If you are paired with a mentor who you don't relate with, who's not as senior as you'd like, who's not bringing that expertise that you need, who you can't really develop the right conversation with —that's not going to go anywhere."

Faster, more effective pair matching

Maud explains that last year alone, Serendis managed more than 250 participants across its different mentoring programs.

“It’s really a heavy lifting exercise to get to know everyone,” she says. “And HBDI® is a fantastic tool for me to understand, in a snapshot, how this person prefers to think.”

Not only is it fast, it’s also accurate.

“Often I’m asked: ‘Would you match mentees and mentors who have similar profiles, or do you match them with opposite profiles?’.”

She says that it’s a crucial question.

“The answer is neither,” Maud explains. “I try to match people who will have a common ground, a similar approach to thinking and learning so that they have

a successful exchange. So clearly I don’t match people with diagonally opposite strong preferences because I know that it will be very difficult for them to establish that respect and rapport and fluency of conversation.”

“However, I always try to match a mentee with a mentor who is going to bring that different perspective.”



Maud Lindley, Founder and Director, Serendis

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An invaluable tool for consultants, and clients

Maud describes HBDI® as invaluable to her consultancy and to her clients.

“We use all the tools but I’d say that HBDI® is the one that applies to most of our clients,” she says.

The HBDI® personal profile is one of the first things Maud analyses with her clients during the initial workshop.

“That’s a great icebreaker as well,” she continues. “Because at their first conversation with their mentor, both mentor and mentee can bring their profile and exchange notes.”

She describes an example of a mentee who is a ‘green’ quadrant (organised)

thinker and how she matched them with someone with a common preference for the ‘red’ (kinesthetic) quadrant but also has a strong preference in the ‘yellow’ (intuitive) quadrant.

“Then they can discuss what that means. [They can talk about] what you really do when you think in the yellow quadrant, and how does that add to your conversations with your clients.”

She says that the purpose is to bring a different perspective to the way you think, interact and communicate — to better understand how they might think differently to those within their environment.

One program mentee says the different perspective is extraordinarily helpful. “My mentor has challenged my thought processes to think outside the box,” she says. “This is exactly what I was hoping for.”

Another reports: “The match is great. There are also good differences in personality which add another dimension to the discussions and extend my thinking on issues.”

Maud says: “[It’s] about understanding your strengths and valuing your own profile and the gifts of your own profile... to challenge your thinking.”

HBDI® and the art of leadership

Maud explains that, for her mentoring program clients, HBDI® is also a powerful tool for developing more influential leadership skills — or successfully transitioning from management into leadership roles.

“It’s a very difficult, very subtle transition between being a manager of projects and a leader of people,” she explains. “Leading people requires influencing, engaging, inspiring others.”

“For that, you need to have an intrinsic, really subtle understanding of how to appeal to someone else’s perception of the world and HBDI® is a really, really powerful tool to achieve that.”

“HBDI® has been an epiphany for me,” one mentee reports. “Knowing how to get the most from the people I work with has been incredibly useful.”

Maud says that many of the aspiring leaders who come through her programs find HBDI® a pragmatic and easy-to-

understand framework of reference.

“They think about [questions like]: ‘What is this person’s preference of thinking?’, ‘What [style] do they prefer to think in?’, ‘How do they communicate?’ ” she explains.

“And that helps the leaders communicate more effectively with their reports, influence them and be perceived more effectively.”

One mentee reveals that she gained a promotion up the executive ladder shortly after completing one of Serendis’ mentoring programs.

“I couldn’t have asked for more perfect timing of the mentoring program and a more suitable mentoring match,” she says. “His coaching and advice, from when my manager resigned through to the interview process, was just invaluable. It really gave me additional confidence and an ‘edge’ over my competitors for the role.”



A key success factor for Serendis

“There are lots of other features that we added to the program over time,” Maud says. “So I wouldn’t say that the success of the program is 100% linked to the introduction of HBDI® but I would say that our program is incredibly successful — people are incredibly happy with their experience. And I definitely would attribute HBDI® a big, big portion of that success.”

Program evaluation statistics bear that out.

Maud reports that 91% of mentee participants from 2010 to 2014 have rated the quality of their match with their mentor as either very good or excellent. Similarly, 84% of mentors over the same period rate their match as either very good or excellent. That’s across 35 different organisations.

“[The HBDI® Profile is] a really powerful conversation to have during that first training with the mentees and the mentors,” she finishes. And it’s a huge help to match people appropriately — which as I said... is a key factor of success.”



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Statistics derived from 366 mentor and mentee evaluations across 4 programs using HBDI® matching. Rating on a 1-6 scale with 5 being Very Good and 6 Excellent. Period evaluated: 2010-2014.