

Case study

Black Country Chamber and Business Link Director Development Programme

The management and leadership skills of owner managers, partners and senior directors have a direct impact on the successful performance of a business. The Black Country Chamber and Business Link have introduced a dedicated programme of support for Black Country directors.

Directors are given a mentor to provide one-to-one coaching and development, impartial advice and guidance to identify, plan and evaluate the development needed to achieve business goals.

Business Link uses Thomas' Personal Profile Analysis (PPA) as part of this process.

PPA assesses an individual's behaviour in the work environment. It can answer questions such as - What are their strengths and limitations? Are they self starters? How do they communicate? What motivates them? The PPA enables people to become more self aware, which in turn gives them the means to consolidate their working strengths and compensate for their limitations.

The PPA is a series of 24 questions on a forced choice "first impressions" basis, taking no longer than seven minutes to complete. The answers are charted on a graph under the four headings of Dominance, Influence, Steadiness and Compliance (DISC).

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Fred Bentley, Head of Workforce Development, comments "We found PPA both easy to use and widely applicable. The programme demands that a certain level of personal interaction needs to take place between the mentor and director to ensure the objectives of the programme are met and their goals properly identified. PPA ensures that this interaction takes place. The other main benefit is that it is personal. Many other tools look at company skills whereas this focuses on the individual. The assessment enables the directors to get a much better understanding of themselves. Are they a risk taker? Are they task driven? Do they get on with people?"

"PPA gives them a clear understanding of the impact their behaviour has on the people who work with and for them. Part of the feedback highlights how they work under pressure. One of the directors we were working with had never really given this any consideration before and looking at the graphs really got him thinking about how he impacted others around him. It gave a solid base to move forward."

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“PPA also brings up issues around which coaching can be given. If the person is a High D (driven, competitive, assertive, goal orientated) it might be difficult for them to let other people do some of the work, to delegate, as they feel the need to retain control to succeed. If on the other hand they focus on facts and figures you can begin a discussion about the impact this style has on the business, would a different style of work produce different results?”

Each director is assigned a mentor who visits them and uses PPA as part of the diagnostic process when setting the Personal Development Plan.

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“It is extremely important for us to demonstrate that a debate has taken place, that there is no question that the directors have gone through a learning experience.”

One of the directors who went through this process was Ray Bereza, Advice and Guidance Director at Job Change in Wolverhampton. Job Change is a registered charity and helps around 700 people a week to access training and get back into work. As a result of the training needs analysis carried out by his mentor, as a result of which he identified that he wanted to do an MBA. Ray Bereza commented “This is a win-win situation for both myself and Job Change. The MBA will help me with the strategic, planning and financial aspects of my job. It also gives me the opportunity to broaden my horizons and feel personally fulfilled.”