

TRANSFORMING ORGANIZATIONS USING THE ENNEAGRAM: A LAW FIRM CASE STUDY

Rachel Weeks and David Burke

Abstract

Private enterprise has traditionally been concerned with the issue of financial performance and the appropriate management of staff and other resources to achieve maximum profitability. There have been numerous studies into the way in which various management techniques can be used to improve resource allocation and to recruit, retain, and motivate staff to achieve this goal. This article provides an overview of a business intervention that tested:

- whether the Enneagram framework and theory could be used to anticipate employee behavior and likely causes of organizational tension, which contributed to less than optimal financial performance; and
- whether Enneagram-based strategies could be used to manage such behavior, thereby improving the overall financial performance of the organization.

Introduction: The Application of the Enneagram in Human Resource Management

The Enneagram of personality is a powerful tool for understanding ourselves and the other people in our lives. In this system of nine personality types, the Enneagram provides a wealth of information about the human personality, different ways of learning, and paths for personal growth. The Enneagram describes nine distinct character types, each with its own particular point of view, patterns of thought and behavior, and patterns of work and relationship.

While the source of the Enneagram is the subject of much debate, it has been used extensively throughout the West, and particularly the United States, since the early 1970s, as a tool for psychological development. In more recent years, the Enneagram has moved beyond the field of psychology and become a powerful tool for managers, consultants, and human resource personnel. Used appropriately, the Enneagram can provide a basis for developing strategies to manage, motivate, train, and retain staff (Hebenstreit, 2008).

This article provides a case study of the application of the Enneagram framework by a boutique consulting firm specializing in the Enneagram to a leading national law firm facing the kind of challenges that may be found in enterprises and organizations across the globe. These challenges included issues associated with changes in technology, the onslaught and demands of Generation Y, a

legacy of management staff who had been with the firm for more than 20 years, and the beginning of the global financial crisis.

The aim of this study was to measure the effectiveness of various human resource interventions based on the Enneagram personality system, by assessing personality types, developing hypotheses regarding behavior based on personality theory, then developing and implementing strategies, for dealing with this behavior and measuring the impact of such strategies by reviewing any changes in the financial performance of the organization.

The results of the intervention appear to indicate that where the Enneagram-based strategies were implemented, there was a change in the financial performance of that group for the better. This can be contrasted with groups who did not elect to implement the strategies, and experienced no significant changes in financial performance over the same period. This study appears to provide support for the use of the Enneagram as a tool for increasing personal and group effectiveness in the workplace.

A detailed explanation of the context of the intervention, the implementation of the methodology, hypotheses, strategies, and findings, is set out below.

Context of the Business Intervention

The study involved a review of staff performance in a leading national law firm that operated as four key divisions, each of which comprised two or more specialized “practice groups” within each division. The data set out below is divided into these four key divisions:

- Commercial
- Property & Insurance
- Commercial Litigation & Industrial Relations
- Business & Construction

The firm employed approximately 250 staff, with 30 partners, 90 lawyers, and over 100 administration and support staff. The law firm was experiencing high staff turnover in excess of 30% per annum, and the senior partners in the firm were concerned at the level of tension and intense competition between the practice groups within the firm.

The firm partnership requested this intervention with the aim of identifying the possible underlying causes for the levels of turnover and internal tension within the firm that was having an impact on the firm’s financial performance, and developing strategies to address these issues and thus improve the financial performance of the organization.

Methodology

A five-step process to gather and analyze the relevant information and provide management strategies based on Enneagram theory was implemented as follows:

Step 1: Determination of the Enneagram personality type of the individuals working in various practice groups within the firm through clinical interviews using a standard set of questions.

The purpose of the first stage of the study was to gather benchmark information regarding the personality demographic of the firm, including all professional and administrative and support staff, and to measure the levels of satisfaction and morale with respect to remuneration, leave entitlements, performance incentives, key performance indicators, promotion and advancement policies, and leadership and recruitment practices, on the basis that all of these factors could impact on the financial performance of both the individual and the firm.

To this end, it was critical that the composition of personality types operating within the firm, and within each of its practice groups, was accurately determined. Accordingly, a series of 30 minute interviews were held with all professional staff within the firm (including all lawyers and partners), using clinical interview protocols established by the Australian Institute for Enneagram Studies, to accurately determine personality type. The interviews involved a standard set of questions designed to trigger various responses depending on the personality type of the individual in question, and included observations regarding factors such as nomenclature and speech patterns, body language, and interpersonal communication behavior.

Interviews were then held with all support staff (including secretarial, administrative, finance, and operational personnel), using the same interview technique.

Initial conclusions regarding personality type were then tested and validated through participation in workshops and panels subsequently held within each of the divisions.

In all, this step involved 165 hours of interviews.

Step 2: Development of hypotheses based on Enneagram theory regarding the likely causes of tension amongst individuals and practice groups and other obstacles that could be affecting financial performance.

On the basis of the information collected regarding Enneagram personality type composition within each practice group, and within the firm as a whole, a series of hypotheses were developed regarding possible issues affecting morale, communication, and the workplace in general, as well as for the financial and other performance of the individual groups.

These hypotheses were developed after 142 hours of collating, editing and verifying the raw data obtained through the interview process, and were based on the anticipated behaviors of different personality types in light of their focus of attention and current environment. Hypotheses included, for example:

- the likelihood of intense competition between practice groups comprising a high level of type 3;

- anticipated “silos” of information and a lack of communication among practice groups with a large number of types 5, 6 and 7;
- a likely emphasis on process and discipline where there was a presence of types 8 and 1.

Examples of actual hypotheses and behaviors are set out in greater detail below.

Step 3. Comparison of these hypotheses to actual behavior within the practice groups, as reported by individuals working within those groups.

The hypotheses developed in Step 2 were tested against actual behavior by comparing them with verbal feedback obtained from staff regarding the level of morale and their attitudes affecting retention and staff turnover, sources of conflict and competition between the different practice groups, and staff satisfaction with the firm’s work practices, infrastructure, and support resources.

Additional information was obtained through 12 Enneagram workshops run for each of the practice groups. These workshops involved panels of each type using exemplars from within the firm to demonstrate each of the personality types. They not only provided staff with an overview of the Enneagram framework, they also encouraged feedback from staff, which could be used to test the hypotheses referred to above.

Step 4: Development and implementation of strategies based on Enneagram theory that aimed to manage and address the “maladaptive” or “low side” behaviors identified.

Reports were prepared for the partnership on the results of the study outlining the possible explanations behind the current morale and performance levels of the different practice groups.

The reports also made a series of recommendations and strategies that involved changing the parameters of the current workplace environment for different individuals and practice groups (such as remuneration, performance incentives, communication, sick pay, and leave entitlements), based on the likely reaction of the different personality types within those groups. On the basis of Enneagram theory, the reports predicted the likely outcomes in the event that these changes were made, in the context of workplace morale, productivity, staff turnover, and the firm’s overall financial performance.

Step 5: Comparison of the financial performance of the organization pre- and post- the implementation of those strategies.

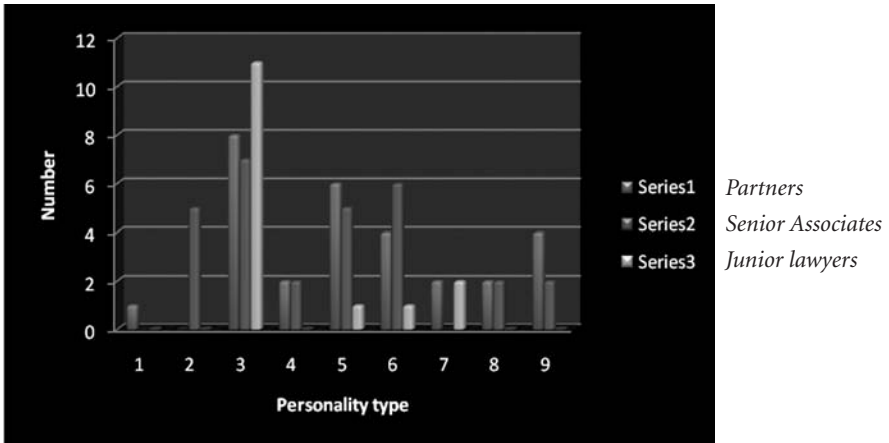
Law firms are well placed to measure changes in levels of production and resource utilization that impact on financial performance, due to the fact that the billable productivity of its professional staff, resource allocation (including costs of recruiting, retaining, and losing staff), leverage, work in progress (WIP), aged WIP, debtors, and non-billable time are often recorded and measured by way of 6 minute intervals on daily timesheets.

Accordingly, the subject firm was able to compare changes in these measures both before and after the study was taken.

Results

Stage 1 – Identification of personality types

The interviews revealed patterns of personality types between partners, lawyers, and support and administrative staff, and patterns of personality types among practice groups.



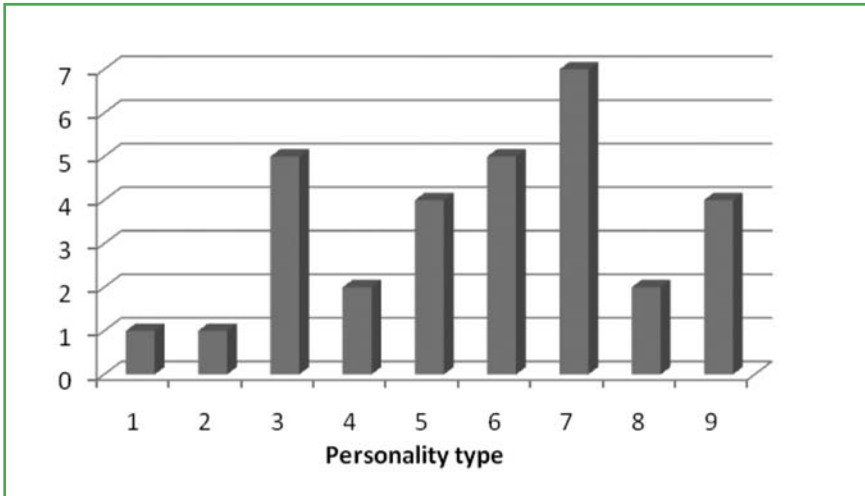
In terms of personality types, a demographic analysis of the results of the interviews revealed clearly a predominance of types 3, 5, and 6 among the 30 attorney partners, while at the non-partner lawyer level of 90 individuals, there was a dominance of types 2, 3, 5, and 6. At both the partner and lawyer level, there was a striking absence of type 1, and very few types 4 or 8.

As one looked at the patterns among the younger lawyers and new recruits, there was a significant rise in the percentage of type 3 being recruited, compared to, for example, types 1, 2, 4, or 8. It appeared that graduate recruitment was heavily skewed to specific personality types (11 of 16 newly recruited lawyers were type 3).

In addition to the patterns of personality types that appeared among the senior management (i.e. partner level) and more junior professional legal staff, it also became apparent that there were patterns of personality types among different practice groups. In other words, the cultures of certain practice groups were conducive to certain personality types over others. These are examined in more detail below.

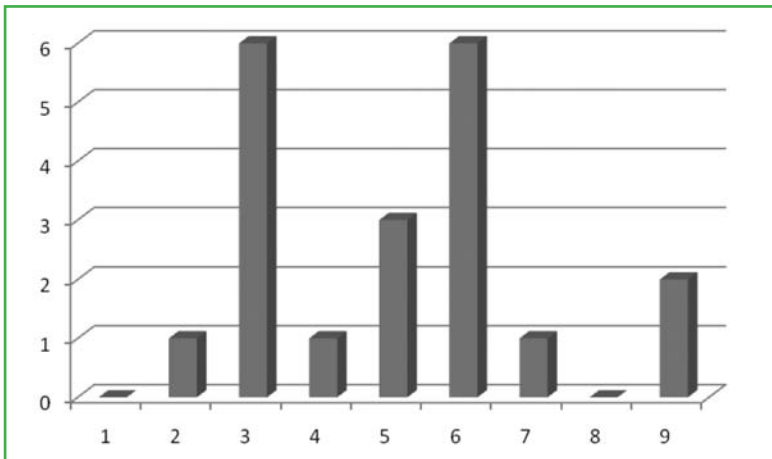
Commercial Division

Thirty lawyers were interviewed in the Commercial Division.



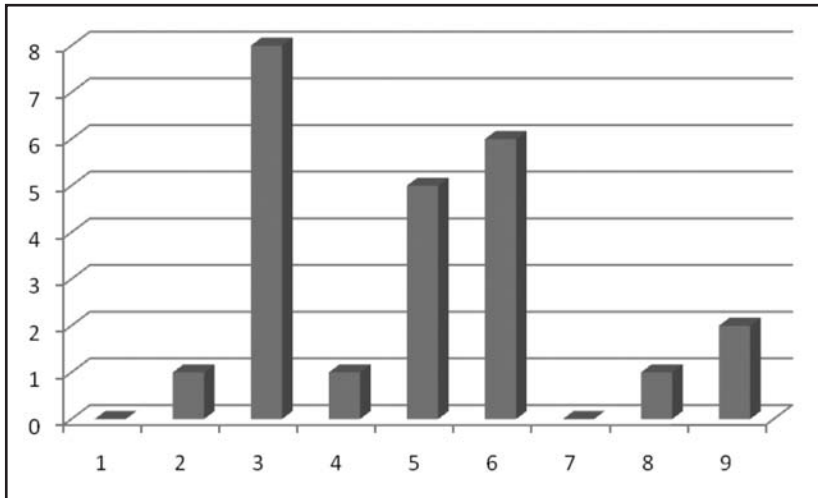
The results of the interviews indicated that there appeared to be a “skewing” of personality types towards 3, 6, and 7, with only token representation from the other types. Of the five type 6s, two were counter-phobic 6s.

Property & Insurance Division



This division comprised both property (20 lawyers) and insurance (5 lawyers) practice groups. An assessment of the personality types established that there were significant numbers of type 3s, type 6s, and type 9s, with no types 1 or 8, and minimal representation from types 2 or 4, across both groups.

Commercial Litigation & Industrial Relations Division



This division comprised the Commercial Litigation (11 lawyers) and Employment & Industrial Relations (13 lawyers) practice groups.

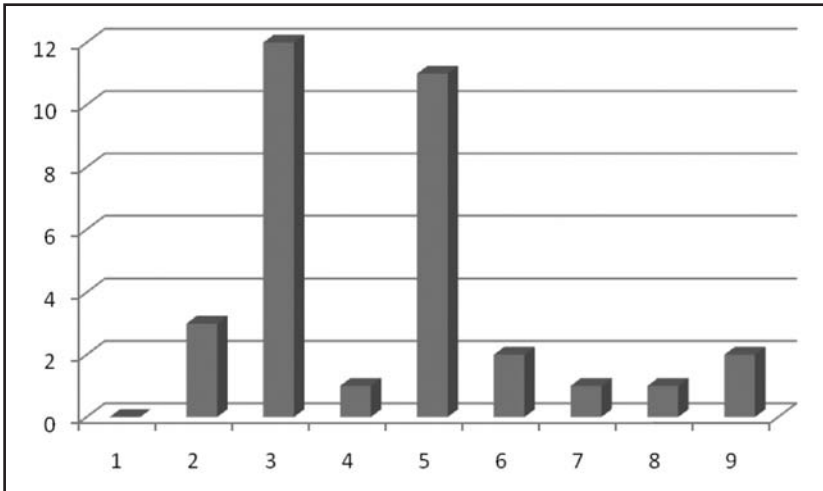
The key feature of the Commercial Litigation group was the high number of feeling types (2, 3 and 4), and the absence of any body-based types (8, 9 or 1). Added to this was a strong intellectual and argument bias as evidenced by higher numbers of types 5 and 6. There was one counter-phobic 6 among the 6s.

In contrast, the results of personality assessment in the Industrial Relations group indicated there were a significant number of transactional types (3, 6 and 9), and body-based types, 8 and 9, a fact that was compounded by their senior leadership positions within the group. Like Commercial Litigation, there was a large number of mental types, featuring both the intellectual rigor of the 5 and the argumentative tendency of the type 6. One of the 6s was counter-phobic and also in a senior management position within the Industrial Relations Group.

There were no type 7s in either group.

The key point of difference between Industrial Relations and Commercial Litigation was the strong presence of body-based types in Industrial Relations, and the dominance of feeling types (types 2, 3 and 4) in Commercial Litigation.

Business & Construction Division



This division incorporated the Business Group and the Construction Group. The analysis revealed the following characteristics within the group as a whole:

- a high number of types 3 and 5 personalities;
- almost no body-based types (types 8, 9 and 1).

Stage 2 – Develop hypotheses regarding likely behavior

On the basis of the patterns of different personality types within the separate divisions, a series of hypotheses were developed regarding likely behavior and potential causes of conflict and tension, based on Enneagram theory.

Commercial Division

Enneagram theory (Palmer, 1991) suggested that the high number of mental types (types 5, 6, 7) in the Division, which comprised 50% of the lawyers within the group, might lead to a situation in which there was a high level of intellectual activity and consideration of “difficult” law, but also a potential tendency toward not completing tasks, anti-authoritarian behavior, and resistance to quality assurance and effective resource management.

In practical terms, this could lead to a situation where the group did not operate as a single entity, as Enneagram theory indicates that mental types may tend to subvert central management control and could place less emphasis on the importance of policies and procedures, particularly in relation to quality assurance. It was also theorized that as a result of the dominance of these three

mental types, there could be a likely lack of communication and sensitivity in dealing with difficult emotional or stressful issues within the group.

As studies suggest that mental types are also known to be more “itinerant” than the feeling or body-based types, there was a high level of doubt about the long-term commitment of the mental types to the Corporate Advisory Group, particularly from the type 7s.

In addition, with a high number of type 3s and 7s within the group, Enneagram theory would suggest that the group would tend to be generally positive and enthusiastic, while at the same time focused upon the rewards that come from working in the Group. There was a risk, however, that this could also lead to a certain level of superficial or shallow attention being given to quality issues or complex and time-consuming aspects of legal work.

It was further hypothesized that the low numbers of body-based types (8, 9 and 1), especially type 1, could result in a lack of quality assurance processes and procedures, and the accountable use of resources within the group. Body-based types are known for the importance they place on organized structure, lines of authority, and accountability in resource management. Their absence could result in a deficiency in these areas, and could also lead to an absence of calm during periods of stress and conflict, especially in light of the fact that many of the junior lawyers were immature and inexperienced in complex and stressful corporate transactions.

Property & Insurance Division

The research indicated both groups lacked any significant representation of body-based types (types 1, 8 and 9). It was therefore theorized that there was likely to be a lack of emphasis on order, organization, compliance, personal responsibility, and discipline.

In addition, the high level of type 3s could lead to a focus on personal success at the expense of the team or the firm. Where success is not shared, this could lead to a loss of morale and productivity.

In addition, the high number of type 6s within the groups could theoretically have created a highly political, potentially paranoid, and endemically cautious group.

In addition, it was important to note that there were no type 7 lawyers in either the Property or Insurance groups. The absence of this type, which is known to be positive and optimistic, could lead to an overly serious environment with limited (or the complete absence of) “fun” and celebration of success.

Finally, it was hypothesized that the absence of feeling types such as types 2 and 4 within the two groups could lead to a lack of sensitivity and an unnecessary “wearing out” of the lawyers in question.

Commercial Litigation & Industrial Relations Division

The nature of the work in both Commercial Litigation and Industrial Relations was by nature similar, in that they both focused on dispute resolution, argument, conflict, and litigation. The makeup of personality types within both groups, however, was different, and it was assumed that this would result in a different style and focus in practicing what would otherwise seem to be a similar legal practices.

Commercial Litigation had a significant number of feeling types within the group, with two of the feeling types holding leadership positions. On the basis of Enneagram theory, it was anticipated that feeling types would be focused upon their relationships with their clients and in pursuing a successful outcome – in this case, in “winning a case.” There could also be a heightened level of emotional intensity expected with a high number of feeling types, especially with so many holding senior positions within the group.

Again, as there was an absence of body-based types in Commercial Litigation, it was thought that this could result in a lack of calm and order. Compounding this issue was the presence of a counter-phobic 6 in the mix, which added a potentially unpredictable influence within the makeup of the group’s culture.

This situation may be contrasted with that of the Industrial Relations Group, which carried on work that was similar in nature to Commercial Litigation. The culture and therefore the focus of the group, however, was different. The Industrial Relations Group was characterized by a large number of type 3s, who are theoretically less emotionally intense than types 2 and 4. Type 3s’ emotional intensity is reportedly usually focused upon success, performance, and competition.

As there were a number of body-based types types in the group, two of whom were in senior leadership positions, it was hypothesized that this group’s culture would be calmer than that of Commercial Litigation.

Business & Construction Division

It was thought that the presence of a large number of type 3s could lead to a perception of the group as very “busy.” However, there was a concern that a high level of productivity may not necessarily result in profitability. In addition, the presence of so many 5s led to a hypothesis that the group culture would tend to be independent, intellectually elegant, and original, and that the work undertaken by the group would require a significant amount of intellectual muscle and creativity.

The combination of intellectual rigor offered by the type 5s and the type 3s natural ability to market, seemed to be a good indication of the likely financial success of the division. However, there was a risk that the presence of so many type 5s could lead to a highly compartmentalized and autonomous group within the firm.

Further, as type 6s report an “us versus them,” backs-to-the-wall, rooting for the underdog tendency, it was anticipated that, combined with the independence valued by the type

5s, the group could display a certain degree of hostility towards outside interference or leadership from outside the group.

What was also significant in this group was the lack of body-based types in either the subordinate level of the group or the leadership. While there were a number of type 9s in support roles, they were not in a position to directly influence the leadership provided by the lawyers, and so reinforced rather than balanced such leadership.

The absence of body-based types among the lawyers was also conspicuous. Under stress, Enneagram theory suggests that types 5 and 6 may be suspicious, defensive, argumentative, and anti-authoritarian. It was theorized that body-based types could have had a tendency to reduce the intensity of this highly defensive focus of attention and calm the group down.

Also absent within the group were types 2 and 4. It was anticipated that if they had been present, their influence would generally lend a softening, sensitive, albeit slightly emotionally intense experience to the culture of the group.

In addition, the absence of type 7s, who are known for being optimistic and fun-loving, could potentially have led to a culture of hard work without hard fun.

Stage 3 – Compare hypotheses to actual behavior

General Comments

During the interviews conducted with partners and lawyers, the staff generally reported that within the firm generally:

- there was low morale and high levels of discord and conflict;
- “silos” had developed and the formal authority within the firm had been undermined, with certain practice groups appearing to operate completely independently of other practice groups and the firm as a whole; and
- clear channels of communication had become confused, particularly between the senior partnership and more junior legal professionals.

The impact of the dominance of certain personality types appeared significant within the culture of different groups, which had an impact on their long term strategic performance. For example, where there was a dominance of type 3s among a practice group, there was a tendency to focus on efficiency and productized documentation, rather than complex legal analysis, and a tendency to emphasize personal success at the expense of the team or the firm.

For practice groups with few or no body-based types (types 8, 9, or 1), there tended to be a lack of order, organization, compliance, personal responsibility,

and discipline. In addition, where types 2 and 4 were absent, there appeared to be a lack of empathy or emotional commitment to the firm.

Interestingly, for the one practice group in which there was a dominance of the type 7 (the Commercial Division), which also had a strong representation of types 5 and 6, although the intellectual stimulation and accomplishment of complicated legal transactions was high within the group, the staff reported a lack of sensitivity in dealing with difficult emotional issues, and intercommunication within the group was poor. Boring and repetitive tasks were often delegated to others, and there was little feeling of long-term commitment to the firm.

Commercial Division

The feedback from individuals within the Commercial Division revealed that many of them reveled in the excitement of the type of transactions that the group specialized in – namely, capital raisings and stock exchange listings, takeovers, and corporate raids. There was a high degree of competition among younger lawyers to participate in project teams involved in these kinds of transactions, and once a transaction was successfully completed (for example, a company was listed on a stock exchange or merged with another business), office celebrations were held. It was difficult, however, to retain staff, and there was often tension among professional and support staff regarding workload, as these transactions by their very nature were extremely stressful.

We found that there appeared to be a lack of emphasis on emotional intelligence, so that, to the extent possible, any emotional, interpersonal issues, or conflicts were delegated to the HR Department, rather than lawyers personally dealing with the issues themselves.

It also became apparent that boring and repetitive tasks were often avoided or delegated to others. From the outside, this could make personnel within this group appear uncaring, rushed, or superficial. This may have been attributable to the high number of type 7s and 3s within the Division, who tended to focus on achieving the transaction as quickly as possible.

Type 3s reported that they tried to take shortcuts to deal with difficulties by, for example, using precedent documents without checking to confirm whether the law had changed or the precedent needed updating. Similarly, type 7s appeared to have difficulties with “completion,” especially with “bread and butter” corporate tasks, which actually constituted the core service of the group. At the end of a matter, the type 7s reported that they tended to lose all interest in the file and disregard the tidy up - they were interested in “the deal,” not the detail. As a result, files were left unordered, invoices were not issued in a timely fashion, and documents that were required to be lodged were sometimes left on someone’s desk for weeks.

Staff also reported a lack of an organized reporting and accountability structure within the Division, where lines of authority were often “worked around,” and there was little accountability in respect of outlays and expenditure. Discussions with staff also indicated that during times of large, complex transactions, where staff experienced significant stress, deadlines were intense, and there was a tendency to panic. This could have been due to the fact that there were so few body-based types within the group, who would naturally focus on order, structure, and discipline, more so than the mental and feeling types.

Property & Insurance Division

During the interview process, it was evident that staff were unhappy with what they perceived to be the lack of leadership by the partners, and they believed that there was a lack of clarity about what needed to be done to achieve promotion within the firm. There were complaints about the level of workload expected and the stress accompanying so many transactions.

The staff within the Division reported that:

- leadership within the two groups was lacking, resulting in a corresponding lack of purpose, morale, discipline and commitment;
- the lack of strong leadership also resulted in a non-alignment of the vision of the two groups with the greater vision of the firm;
- there was an emphasis on the pursuit of individual success at the expense of the group as a whole;
- the absence of strong body-based types led to a lack of clear processes, structure, and procedures;
- there was a lack of alignment of resources and commitment of these groups to the macro-objectives of the firm;
- there was a significant morale problem within both groups, leading to a lack of discipline, loss of productivity, and the misallocation of physical and human resources.

These factors may have been due to the high number of type 3s (who focused on achievement and personal success), and the low number of body-based types (who might have emphasized order and resource management), within the Division.

Commercial Litigation & Industrial Relations Division

The feedback from interviews indicated that tension and stress levels within the Commercial Litigation group were high, and staff believed that there was a focus on achievement and performance. There was also a strong sense of competition within the group, and high levels of elite performance and the pursuit of success also featured heavily in the focus of attention of this group. This may have been due to the higher number of feeling types within the Division.

In the Industrial Relations group, the feedback was similar, although the team seemed to be very tightly knit and to work very effectively together. There was also a heavy emphasis given by the head of the group to intellectual creativity and originality, rather than performance. The end result of such a combination seemed to work very effectively. However, the absence of type 7s, type 2s and type 4s within the Industrial Relations group appeared to have resulted in a work-focused, but insensitive and exhausting culture.

Business & Construction Division

The culture of this group tended to focus strongly on performance, successful outcomes, and high visibility in achieving such outcomes. To the rest of the firm, the practice groups were seen as very “busy.” In addition, the groups seemed to operate independently from the rest of the firm, and there was a strong focus on loyalty to the group over loyalty to the firm as a whole. This may be attributable to the higher number of type 3s and type 5s within the Division.

It seemed apparent during the interviews that there was a strong focus on loyalty to the group over loyalty to the firm as a whole. This may have been attributable to the role of the type 6s in the Division, especially the head of the Division.

There also appeared to be a reluctance to enter into conflict within this Division. The high level of Type 5s may have led to a situation in which the group operated autonomously from the rest of the firm and portrayed a sense of suspicion towards the other groups within the firm and the firm’s general leadership. Coupled with the absence of sensitive feeling types, the lack of 7s also appeared to have helped create a culture that was “wearing” and tiring, rather than celebratory and opportunistic.

Stage 4 – Development of strategies to address and manage behavior

Once the personality types within each Division were accurately assessed, the level of performance and issues of tension within the firm identified, and explanations provided for this situation based on the Enneagram personality framework, strategies were developed with a view to improving the firm’s level of morale and performance

The information that was gathered through the process outlined above was summarized together with the feedback received through the interviews and provided to each of the individuals who had been involved in the study and to the partners of the firm. In addition, presentations were made to each of the Divisions, and Enneagram workshops were held for each of the practice groups, providing an overview of the Enneagram framework and incorporating panels of each type using exemplars from within the firm to demonstrate each of the personality types. The purpose of these workshops was to increase awareness of the way in which different personality types operate and to demonstrate how this could impact individual and group performance.

The analysis and possible reasoning behind the then current morale and performance levels of the different practice groups (as summarized above) was incorporated into reports for the partnership and discussions held regarding the actions to be taken.

A series of recommendations were made to the partnership that involved changing the parameters of the current workplace environment for different practice groups (such as remuneration, communication, leave entitlements, etc.), depending on the Enneagram personality type composition of each group. On the basis of the Enneagram framework, the recommendations included not only the actions to be taken, but also predicted what would occur in the event that these changes were made, in the context of workplace morale, productivity, and staff turnover.

The key recommendations made to the firm included the following:

Issue	Recommendation
Lack of communication	Weekly meetings of each practice group were encouraged as a means of improving staff interaction, communication, and morale. Internal firm workshops were also encouraged to promote cross-selling and sharing information, ideas, plans, goals, and successes between the various practice groups.
Failure to complete all elements of a transaction (eg. Failure to confirm legal position or lodge documents)	Work teams within different practice groups were “reshuffled” so that work teams were created comprising equal levels of mental, feeling, and body-based intelligences.
Lack of acknowledgement and management of conflict	Implementation of techniques for the daily management of heightened difference of opinion that would naturally flow from diversity within the group.
Lack of awareness regarding the impact of one’s own personality on others	Establish a comprehensive 360 degree feedback program for all professional staff to enhance personal visibility and awareness, reduce conflict, and enhance productivity.

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Issue	Recommendation
High levels of stress and pressure to succeed at work	Establish a cycle of social events during the year to renew and support staff, and increase staff morale.
Lack of authority, order and organization	Set out clear lines of authority and communication within the groups to establish strong leadership and bring alignment of human and material resources to the objectives of the firm.
Lack of policies and procedures regarding use of resources and responsibilities	Establish clear policies and procedures, precedents, work routines and resource accountability within the groups
Lack of diversity in personality types within Divisions	Diversity is only possible where individuals are able to demonstrate sufficient levels of maturity to deal with the difference of opinion and focuses of attention. To this end, development of retention strategies with regard to training, authority, accountability, job satisfaction, and remuneration. Review of the recruitment practices to increase diversity of personality types.

Stage 5 – Comparison of financial performance pre- and post- intervention

As indicated at the beginning of this article, law firms generally have systems in place to measure changes in levels of production and resource utilization. Many firms have automated systems that measure all elements of the provision of legal services, including the billable productivity of its professional staff, resource allocation (including costs of recruiting, retaining, and losing staff), leverage, work in progress (WIP), aged WIP, debtors, and non-billable time.

Accordingly, in order to determine whether the implementation of the recommendations outlined above had any impact on the firm’s performance, a review of the financial indicators of each Division was done both before and after the intervention.

For the purposes of this review, the primary financial indicators focused on:

- billable productivity of staff; and
- staff retention (and the costs of any turnover).

The Commercial Division and the Property & Insurance Division implemented all of the recommendations outlined above.

The Commercial Litigation & Industrial Relations, and the Business & Construction Divisions, did not choose to implement the recommendations.

Six months after the Commercial Division and the Property & Insurance Division implemented the above recommendations, the firm's financial reports revealed an overall 14% increase in productivity, and a 30% decrease in staff turnover for those Divisions. No significant changes occurred in measures of the Commercial Litigation & Industrial Relations, or the Business & Construction Divisions.

While the firm acknowledged that there may have been a number of factors that had an impact on these results, the partners in the Commercial Division and the Property & Insurance Division reported increased staff satisfaction and morale following the six-month implementation program. These results seem to suggest that properly crafted strategies addressing the behavior and focus of different personality types can have an impact on not only individual success, but organizational performance as well.

Conclusion

The system of personality types described by the Enneagram offers profound insight into human functioning and provides a foundation to support personal and professional transformation. It offers a framework to guide and support a paradigm shift, an expansion of the set of assumptions we have about how we see ourselves, our relationships, and the world in which we participate.

The Enneagram assists individuals in recognizing the assumptions and mindsets that their particular personality type generally adopts, and the way in which their personal needs and perceptual distortions can interfere with creating successful relationships and effective working environments. Used accurately, the Enneagram can be a powerful tool for accurately identifying, explaining, and predicting the challenges and business performance of an organization.

This case study indicates that Enneagram theory may provide organizations with a tool through which its personnel may become aware of and able to adjust their personal paradigms and the assumptions they make about themselves, their relationships, and the world in which they participate. In doing so, they can contribute to the success of the organization in which they work.

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