



Aligning Sales with the Way Your Customers Buy!

Know How Your Client Thinks

Have you ever had a conversation with a client or employee about a topic and you felt that you were never communicating? That is very common and the reason is simpler than you might imagine. This situation happens in client relations every day and it may not be that the attorney, manager or sales rep is incompetent or is not an effective communicator. The real issue is that there may be a brain quadrant conflict or disconnection.

You say “What?” That’s right, a brain quadrant disconnection. Ned Herrmann PhD, pioneer of brain research, was a physicist and a musician – now that’s an odd combination. He was head of leadership development for GE in the 1970s and began to research what science was saying about the brain and the way people think. Using EEG, Ned mapped out the brain into four quadrants in terms of where information is processed and how people think. His research has been validated by many others using surveys, PET scans, MRI and EEGs. For more information on Ned Herrmann, go to Herrmann International. www.hbdi.com.

The brain has four quadrants and processes different types of information in each quadrant. The upper portion of the brain is called the cerebral. The upper left portion, A Quadrant, is referred to as the “rational self” and processes facts and data, does analysis, is logical and rational, quantifies, knows about money and is realistic. The upper right portion of the brain is the D Quadrant and is called the “experimental self” and it synthesizes information, integrates and sees the big picture, imagines, speculates, breaks rules, and wants to have fun.

The lower part of the brain is called the Limbic portion. The lower left quadrant, B Quadrant, is called the “safekeeping self” and is procedural, sequential, takes preventive action, is controlling, gets things done, is reliable, orderly or neat and is timely. The lower right portion of the brain, C Quadrant, is the “feeling self” and is where you connect with people. It is sensitive to others, likes to teach, intuitive related to people, is supportive, emotional and expressive and feels.

Everyone uses these four quadrants differently based upon their genetics and environment. Some people use more of their cerebral portion such as CEOs, research scientists, or entrepreneurs. Others use more of their limbic portion such as teachers, project managers and administrative assistants. Lawyers tend to be more left brain thinkers and sales reps, artists and entrepreneurs prefer more right brain thinking. Where communication challenges occur is when a person is thinking and communicating from a



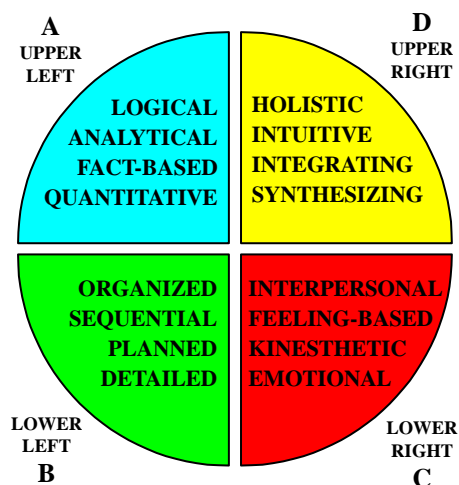
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specific quadrant or section of the brain and the listener is thinking in another quadrant. The greatest challenges are when the quadrants are diagonal such as upper left, rational and facts, trying to communicate with lower right, feelings and expressive. The lower right wants to connect and use feeling whereas the upper left wants to discuss things in a logical sequence with facts. The facts person sees the other as irrational and the feeling person sees the other as cold.

The same challenge is for the lower left, detailed, safekeeping, trying to communicate with the upper right, enjoys risk and likes the big picture. The upper right brain thinking person is thinking to himself “This person is killing me with the details; why don’t they get to the point.” The lower left is actually getting to the point, but they have to deliver the point in a detailed, sequential process.

The image below is from Herrmann International’s *Start Thinking* course on Whole Brain Thinking.

WHOLE BRAIN® MODEL



Start Thinking

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Another way to describe the brain’s four quadrants is with four P’s and the questions someone would ask from that quadrant.



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<p>Purpose Where are we now? What are our goals? What are our challenges?</p>	<p>Possibilities Vision of the future? What are the key trends? What changes do we foresee?</p>
<p>Process How do we get there? What processes do we need? What are we accountable for?</p>	<p>People Who needs to be involved in what? Who else do we need? What about customers and key stakeholders?</p>

Here are a few examples that I have seen or personally experienced related to the legal field.

Entrepreneurs and many lawyers seem to be at odds with each other. I have seen two lawyers “fired” because they never could put a deal together and were always advising the entrepreneur on what not to do instead of advising him on what he could do. Here was the issue from a brain preference standpoint. The entrepreneur was a right brain thinker and very risk tolerant (upper D quadrant) and was willing to take risk to capitalize on a window of opportunity. The lawyers were very A and B quadrant focused – facts, details and very risk adverse. Every time the entrepreneur had a new idea, instead of discussing it in terms of how to make it work, the lawyers shot it down with statements like “too much risk or that will never work.” They never tried to make it work for they did not see that as their job. Needless to say, they frustrated the entrepreneur and were fired. He found a lawyer that was more right brain thinking and willing to advise on how to make the deal happen.

This scenario was a personal experience from an attorney friend. He shared this after I explained whole brain thinking and communication one day over lunch. He said that he met with the prospective client and laid out a logical, detailed presentation of why they should hire him for this particular project. He gave all the reasons and logic of why it made sense. At the end of the meeting the decision maker, i.e. the company president, says “I’m not feeling it” and got up and left the room. My friend said he was shocked. It made total sense and there was no reason that the president should not have accepted the proposal. What my friend learned was that the president needed an emotional connection to help make the decision but never received it from my friend. My friend made a left brain presentation to a right brain thinker and did not win the business.

Another example is a client who specializes in technical equipment in the public safety arena. Their trade show booth was very technical and data intensive. After going through the whole brain learning process, they realized that they were mainly attracting left brain



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people, data and process oriented people to their booth, i.e. the safety manager or a technically minded manager. But, most upper management will also ask right side of the brain questions, “Where will this take me and how will affect my people?” My client changed their trade show booth to incorporate information for all four quadrants resulting in better, more qualified leads from the trade show. The emails sent as a follow up to the trade show were also shortened and designed to be whole brain. They reported a 30% increase in email responses.

The good news is that people do not just prefer to use one quadrant in their thinking. Most people use all four quadrants, but in varying degrees of preference or emphasis. In a few cases, some people may actually avoid thinking in a quadrant; this can happen especially when someone is under stress. For instance, I have worked with a Sr. Vice President of a large food company. His job is to analyze data and develop the right product mix for each market. He is comfortable to be with and easy to talk to, but he is not a “talker.” Under stress, he has a significant shift in his thinking process. He shifts to a very analytical mode looking for more data and wanting to process the information – a very left brain function. In the stress mode, he drops off communicating with others and is very quiet. He literally avoids engaging the lower right quadrant, the feeling quadrant. A conflict would be if the sales rep who calls on him has a high preference to engage in the lower right, feeling, people connecting quadrant and does not respect the VP’s need to analyze.

Another example is where I worked with a manager who liked ideas and always wanted to discuss problems and was willing to try things new. A few months after I had ended my engagement with her company, I dropped by to say “Hello.” She was not very talkative and was very focused on her work which was unusual from my experience. Shortly after that, her team took the Herrmann Brain Dominance Survey and I saw her report. Under normal circumstances she is very task oriented, lower left brain, but, under stress, she shifts to upper right brain wanting to look at new ideas and new ways of approaching a problem. When I was working with her on a regular basis, it was a stressful time and she desired to look at new approaches. When I dropped by, things were normal so she was operating out of her preferred mode, lower left which is more task oriented.

To ensure good communication, it is recommended that people running meetings, doing business development or even talking with a jury learn to talk and present in whole brain mode, that is providing information and discussion that engages all four quadrants. Once you find that a person prefers a certain quadrant, adapt to their thinking style.



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Adapting to a person's style will close more sales. Recently, I was contacted by a CEO for sales training. This CEO is very detail oriented. I knew this from working with him in a volunteer organization and also knew that he had the most input in their website design. The website was very fact-based, very few pictures and lots of organized data. The CEO included the VP of Sales in the discussions. I immediately connected in communication with the VP of Sales. Both of us are right brain thinkers. After some discussion and agreement upon the goals, the CEO left developing the sales training plan up to me and the VP of Sales. We developed the plan over two sessions. I did a review of the proposal with the VP of Sales before presenting it to the CEO. This review took about 20 minutes. When I presented the training proposal to the CEO, the review took 1.5 hours. I knew it would take much longer because the CEO wanted to discuss every detail. I had designed the proposal outline with him in mind. We walked through each point while he wrote notes on each point. After going through the whole thing he said "This looks good; I approve it."

Since the VP of Sales had reviewed the proposal in 20 minutes, if I had become impatient with the CEO and tried to close the deal before he was ready, I would have lost. Also, since I knew he was detailed oriented, I wrote a factual, detailed proposal with him in mind.

Sales people who consider how their audience thinks and then present in that fashion will sell more and sell faster. Communication delays will be reduced and trust will be built. Communicating in a person's preferred mode builds rapport and trust.

I have also profiled a sales team, two VPs and eight sales managers. It was interesting to see how the group made decisions. Even though they were very people oriented, their preferred quadrants were facts, processes and ideas. They made communication with their team a low priority. Do you see potential problems with this team? After I profiled them, the Sr. VP recognized why one of the initiatives was six months behind. They had failed to communicate with the users and the lower echelon of reps. From what they learned in having themselves and team profiled with the Herrmann Brain Dominance Index, the sales managers used the information to improve coaching their reps and also in helping their reps write proposals. Whole Brain Thinking should be used in any situation from proposals to sales training.

Other examples – web page, trade show booths, proposals, standard response emails, and job descriptions



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So, is Whole Brain Decision Making right for you and your team? Ask AT&T, Microsoft, Coca-Cola, General Electric, the US Navy, IBM, Proctor and Gamble or Vanderbilt University. It works for them.

To learn more about whole brain communication and a business development course based upon this science, contact Bill Hart at bill@billhartbizgrowth.com or 205-982-5534 or for more articles on whole brain thinking go to Herrmann International www.hbdi.com.