



Case Study

appetite

The client

Appetite for Business provides consultancy and training services for clients across a wide range of industry sectors on Microsoft products including SharePoint, Office 365 and automated business processes. It also provides Microsoft software training, along with training in other software such as Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign. The company also offers technical assistance when organisations lack resource or in-house skills and works with clients all over the United Kingdom, Europe, USA and Asia Pacific.

Putting people and relationships first is a critical element of the business, with the team interacting with clients at a number of different levels and abilities within each client organisation.

The challenge

Sheryl Newman, MD of Appetite for Business previously worked with Nicky Carnie when they were both at a well-known Big Five oil & gas operator. She says, "I've also seen Nicky speak at a number of Women in Business events in Aberdeen, and that sparked my interest in bringing her into the business to work with my team."

As a business, the company had been conducting a holistic review, top to bottom, because of the success it was experiencing. "I wanted to ensure that we had the right processes and procedures in place to be able to carry the team forward to be able to manage the next phase of our business's growth," says Sheryl.

"I have also just recruited a colleague, someone who is the complete opposite to me. This challenged me to look at how I work, which I have really enjoyed. I wanted the rest of the team to have a similar level of self-awareness so that we could all work together more effectively and understand our clients even better.

"Inevitably, we don't all work in the same way and I believe it's really important that everyone in the business understands that this can be a real strength. I recognised that what Cognition Coaching offers was an opportunity for the whole team to understand its productivity. I wanted to develop people's strengths as much as I could, rather than have round pegs in square holes; I wanted to enhance everyone's abilities and aptitudes because it would create additional value across the business and for our clients."

The solution

Sheryl says, “We’re a small team and so we did the C-Me session together. It was delivered as a morning workshop, although we all did the profiles in advance. It was a really profitable exercise because we could see really clearly how we all work. There was a dominant colour within the team – which didn’t surprise me at all - but for the staff, it gave them an opportunity to have a better understanding of themselves and how they all fit together within the team.

“I think the profiling was interesting, because at first glance, the questions are so similar that you may not realise the nuance in each question. You may also identify with some of the topics more than others. People were quite surprised by their own responses and we could all realise the traits in each other and recognise that we need all of those qualities to make the team more effective.

“Staff responded really positively. I want people to feel valued and feel they’re able to try some of the approaches we used in the workshop. Now we understand far better where each of us is coming from, and that some of us in the team need a different approach. For example, some of the team require more detail from me, which has been a really valuable discovery. The more information I can provide the better for all of us and it’s really important to me and for the business that we can embed these good practices in our daily business life.

“Some of the team had done the Insights programme previously. C-Me is similar but there are some differences, and it was good to see our adapted behaviour versus our natural selves. I’ve also noticed some of it is translating into my home behaviour, so that’s probably a good thing too.”

The outcome

Sheryl believes the investment in her team has been beneficial for everyone. She says, “I think there’s been a positive outcome. I am more aware of my own approach, both in my own work and with my team. I am trying to moderate the way I work to accommodate the needs of the rest of my colleagues and I can see that the whole team is trying to be more receptive to each other’s needs.

“I would totally recommend this to any growing business. We all don’t work the same way, and in any business, one of the continuing dynamics is always about trying to balance the team and the way you bring new people into the business. When we recruit someone new, we will repeat this exercise so that we have a clear understanding of how we all work when the team situation changes, so we can all work more productively.

“Recognising that someone behaves in a certain way means you can adapt and support them. It also prevents anything from becoming a bigger issue. It’s also good for the team’s understanding of client behaviour; understanding how you can better manage your client relationships.

“This investment is helping us service our clients better. If we’re not developing ourselves, we can’t help others to be better at what they do either. I think Nicky was very good at facilitating that development and understanding. She asks apparently soft questions to help you see things you’ve not considered before. She has that way about her that makes you trust her and puts you at their ease; this is psychology at its most valuable.”

