

## Building trust in teams and their leaders for higher performance

A centerpiece of any successful organization is the level of trust between its employees. Reema Singh, who is part of National Australia Bank's people and development function, is focused on developing high-performance teams within the organization. Seeing a lack of trust within the teams, how could Reema make the high-performance dream teams a reality?

After being introduced to Patrick Lencioni's team framework in *Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, Singh and her colleagues identified the importance of building a foundation of trust in high-performance teams.

Singh explains, "Our team is focused on continuously developing to become a high-performing team by overcoming Lencioni's five dysfunctions of a team." She adds, "Lencioni references the MBTI® tool in building trust within teams as it enables better understanding of interactions amongst individuals."

### Solution

This led National Australia Bank (NAB) to offer its employees an opportunity to learn about their personality type through participation in introductory sessions using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®) instrument.

Singh describes the process of how the MBTI® framework and its application was introduced in her team. "The initial rollout included five full-day MBTI® team debriefing sessions including type-related activities.

### Business Challenges

- Creating trust in high-performance teams
- Building ongoing development programs for leaders and teams

### Company Profile

National Australia Bank Group is a financial services organization with over 12M customers and 50,000 people, operating more than 1,750 stores and Service Centres globally, including in Australia, New Zealand, Asia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

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The sessions comprised approximately 20 to 30 people.” A key learning for Singh and her team of NAB certified MBTI® facilitators was the importance of conducting these sessions with members from intact teams, as opposed to a random selection of attendees. Singh adds, “It was from here that we began to get internal requests to run the sessions for other teams within the organization.

The nature of these offerings came in three forms:

- (1) a two-hour individual debrief
- (2) a full-day team debrief and activity; or
- (3) a half-day team debrief and activity.

The team debriefs and activities were generally held offsite— away from the day-to-day environment individuals work in.”

Singh explains that involvement by managers in the team sessions was critical for success. “We ensured that each session was led by the leader. During the opening of each team session the leaders laid out their expectations of the team and the session and then closed the loop at the end of the day.” She observed the positive impact of the sessions for the teams. “We received feedback that people were beginning to practice new behaviors and language to improve their interactions and understanding with each other.”

Over the course of the year Singh and her colleagues facilitated more than 500 MBTI® debriefs with staff. She shares, “The momentum of running so many sessions in a short period of time resulted in a buzz on the floor about the personality type results. Suddenly there was a common language that people could understand each other by.”

The foundation offered through the introductory sessions with the MBTI® instrument created interest and demand from participants to apply their learning further. “We are now moving towards offering development programs for leadership teams. This forms a second-tier offering of the MBTI® tool. Once participants have completed the introductory MBTI® sessions, we move from a basic understanding of the tool by connecting the applications of

## Solution

- 5 full-day MBTI team debriefing sessions held offsite with intact teams
- Team managers involved in sessions
- Specific training around emotional intelligence, communication, change and conflict
- Specific program, focusing on one topic per quarter per year

“ The flexibility of the MBTI® tool illustrates to me the power it has in connecting to so many different topics and people. Those that have connected to the tool have come from diverse backgrounds, ages, and experiences, even though everyone works for the same organization.”

**Reema Singh,**  
People and Development, National Australia Bank

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the MBTI® personality types to specific topics, such as emotional intelligence, communication, change, and conflict.

The choice of topic is dependent upon what is happening within the business and how relevant the topic may be to that particular team. These are the topics that exist currently; however, my team is open to designing and developing workshops based on demand.”

Singh explains how the introductory sessions have also enabled NAB to apply the personality type theory at a deeper level, by demonstrating the dynamic interaction of the preferences of each personality type. “Incorporated within these sessions is an understanding of type dynamics and how this can strengthen the application of the tool. Each session is approximately three to four hours long, covering both theory and practical application.

Commonly, teams are going through a four-part program, where they commit to focusing on one topic every quarter over a year. In between the sessions, they actively engage, discuss, and practice new behaviors to embed the learning and maintain the commitment and momentum.”

Singh adds, “We began with one-off workshops for teams, and now teams are going through an ongoing journey with the tool, continuing the learning and application, informally, in their own time outside of the classroom.”

Work teams at NAB also continue to build their effectiveness through the application of personality type. “There is a team development program focused around Lencioni’s Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team. Overcoming the dysfunction ‘absence of trust’ sits under the entire program, enabling the connection to the MBTI® tool in each session.

## Results

- Each person identified one behavioral area to work on over a three month period
- Change Leadership program developed to help senior leaders better manage the change process
- MBTI tool and training have “taken off” as a professional development offering and provide favorable results across different teams

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There are four sessions in total:

- Conflict
- Commitment
- Accountability
- Results.

The order of these sessions is dependent upon how the team rates themselves at the beginning of the program based on a survey in Lencioni's book."

## Results

"As trust is embedded within the dysfunctions, the MBTI® tool and each individual's results are addressed in each session. The learning from the sessions was evident in the feedback received from participants. One team manager shared, "The team provided such relevant and specific feedback that this session, whilst very difficult and 'out of the comfort zone' has enabled each person to identify one behavioral area they will commit to working on improving over the next three months" says Singh.

NAB's leaders have also benefited from understanding how different personality types prefer to be motivated and led by exploring the type data of their teams. She elaborates, "We have an offering which is focused on getting the most out of the personality type data from the type table.

A senior leadership team invested four hours understanding several different type tables with data on their own and wider teams. This provided information on not only the type of people each leader had in their own team, but then enabled them to begin to identify similarities and differences each team had with the other, strengths each team held and also areas to leverage from others." Singh adds, "It opened up a forum for leaders to challenge and question each other, but also share, support, and help each other overcome current team challenges."

She also shares how they have applied the MBTI® assessment to further equip their leaders with organizational change initiatives. "Another example of a leadership team's journey is that of developing change leadership. The Change Leadership program is a four-part program focusing on enterprise change leadership tools and evaluations. Included within the program is an introduction to the MBTI® personality types (through an opportunity to complete the assessment and debrief) and then consideration of type dynamics to understand

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how individuals manage, overcome, and deal with change. Four leadership teams have begun this Change Leadership journey. A manager leading his team through the program commented, “The addition of the Myers-Briggs® tool to the Change Process Model is very powerful and will no doubt be of great benefit to our team.”

Singh and her colleagues at NAB continue to build on the foundation offered to their staff by demonstrating how the MBTI® assessment and development sessions can be applied in new and relevant ways. She explains, “Overall, the MBTI® tool as a professional development offering within our business unit has really taken off and provided favorable intangible results across different teams. What started off as a reactive approach to a request for the workshops has turned into a specialized, team-based, led-by-the-leader offering, customized and tailored to the needs of each team.”

She also adds, “The flexibility of the MBTI® tool illustrates to me the power it has in connecting to so many different topics and people. Those that have connected to the tool have come from diverse backgrounds, ages, and experiences, even though everyone works for the same organization.”



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