

CASE STUDY

Two is better than one: Understanding of cognitive differences allows husband and wife team to build on one another's strengths

SITUATION

We were contacted by a family firm that was experiencing some operational difficulties. Part of the issue was overlapping job responsibilities (among staff and management) and lack of clarity in internal role responsibilities. Two members of our firm made an initial contact and after we started our work with the firm it became apparent, (with their guidance), that a 3rd issue was also causing difficulties. With the additional problem, some of the confusion resulted from the very different operating styles of the owners (a husband and wife team). Unfortunately those issues were also spilling over into their family life which exacerbated the business difficulties.

OUR FACILITATION

In attempt to address both the business and interpersonal issues, the two owners took the Pondera Virtual Advisor (PVA), which they did in order to learn about and understand each others' operating style. One outcome with the use of the PVA was to begin coaching that was focused on having the two of them understand and appreciate their strengths as well as value and work constructively with their differences. One result was that we begin to focus our work (especially coaching) with them in a way that their individual styles could best be utilized in terms of both their business and their marriage. This enabled them to clarify personal and work related boundaries in order to eliminate overlapping job responsibilities and clarify internal role divisions. Interestingly, once this started to work their employees began to function more effectively and with much less internal confusion.

OUTCOME

Throughout the coaching process, the husband and wife began to see and accept their differences and began to focus on their strengths. By being aware of these ideas and issues they were able to clarify workplace boundaries which decreased their interpersonal conflict and eliminated confusion for their staff. They did a wonderful job of taking what they learned about role clarity and differentiation in their operating styles and successfully applied it to both their business and their marriage. As a result, the company has become more productive, efficient and has experienced substantial growth.