

Case Study

Using the *Team Dimensions Profile* with a Homebuilding Company

The Client:

A large homebuilding company wanted to improve its organization's innovation process. He had been exposed to the *Team Dimensions Profile* during one of my regular speaking engagements and wanted to introduce the Z-process to the company's executives.

The Business Need:

The company wanted to figure out how to build houses faster to increase their profitability. Management wanted to create innovation teams in order to brainstorm new initiatives, but they needed to learn how to follow through on the innovation process — not just come up with great ideas that never got started. The division presidents and their staffs had to learn how to implement a process for innovation.

The Solutions:

I used the *Team Dimensions Profile* to introduce the Z-process for innovation. Participants learned through activities about the problems created by team imbalance. We also discussed how to strive for balanced innovation teams in their organization.

The Delivery:

The participants completed the profile in advance and submitted the results to me. Because of this, I was able to set up small groups for the seminar. I purposely created some balanced teams (in terms of the four roles—Creator, Advancer, Refiner, and Executor) and some unbalanced teams. That way, I was able to open the seminar with a group activity and immediately talk about the impact of unbalanced teams.

We ran a full-day seminar with the organization on the profile. To begin, I asked the groups to brainstorm for 30 minutes ways that their organization could build homes faster — their ultimate goal. Within the 30-minute timeframe, the groups needed to brainstorm some ideas, choose the best one, and then develop a plan for implementation. The activity covered the Creator and Advancer portions of the Z-process. At the end of the activity, each group reported their results to the rest of us. In this instance, one of the small groups had only Creators, and true to form, they spent 29 minutes brainstorming ideas! Another team didn't have a Creator and couldn't even get started (I eventually felt so badly for them that I sat in to share a few ideas).

The best part of this activity is that we didn't tell the group that some of the teams are unbalanced. My partner is great at predicting behavior from individuals' *Team Dimensions Profiles*, and sometimes he'll make a prediction about how groups will do in this activity. He'll seal his prediction in an envelope before the activity begins. It's a little risky, and you have to make it like a newspaper horoscope — specific yet vague. But the shock value is worth it when people realize that we can predict a team's behavior based on the members' roles in the Z-process. It gets their attention and they realize how powerful the profile is.

After the activity, we debriefed on what happened and talked about what the participants have learned. At this point, we'd demonstrated the power of the profile, so we gave the participants their completed profiles to review. We spent two hours talking about how roles work in a team. The group reflected on the role they played in the brainstorming activity, especially since participants with high Refining or Executing powers didn't have the opportunity to use their strongest talents.

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The Results:

I first conducted this seminar for the senior executives; they asked me to follow up by introducing the concepts to the divisions. The company reduced the amount of time it takes them to build a home by half. The *Team Dimensions Profile* can't claim all the credit, but the results were made possible through the ideas the employees' had developed for using more effective teams. Now, every time the organization acquires a new company, the first thing they do is have their new employees complete the *Team Dimensions Profile* to make sure they capitalize on individuals' natural strengths and talents. In addition, I was asked back for customer service training with their job site supervisors, so they've become a great customer for us.