

Using NeuroPower to drive high-performance cultures

A paradigm-changing framework is having impact on the business performance of leading organisations, writes BRAD HOWARTH

The past few decades have delivered a veritable torrent of management theories and leadership programs – many of them based on little more than the charisma of their spruikers.

But a new framework is promising to turn the tables on traditional thinking with an approach that integrates the study of human behaviour with the latest research into the brain itself and how it operates.

Called NeuroPower, the framework is the culmination of 20 years of study and observation by the author and strategist Peter Burow. According to Burow, few of the management philosophies that have been developed to date match up with the way the brain actually functions. Hence many people are ultimately left feeling inadequate when they are unable to adapt such theory into real life situations.

“We’re looking at how you are going about work and whether or not the approaches that you are taking make sense at a neuro-scientific level,” Burow says.

He describes NeuroPower as having been designed to provide organisations and

their leaders with an understanding of human behaviour. This leads to increased cultural agility, improved strategic alignment and sustainable competitive advantage. According to Burow, all this adds up to a high-performance culture.

“NeuroPower is having its greatest impact on the business performance of some of Australia’s leading organisations,” explains Burow. “The system provides an integrated, holistic platform with common language for Management, which copes with complexity, Leadership, which deals with change, and Transformational Leadership, which breaks down the resistance to behavioural change.”

Six Intelligence Centres form the building blocks of the framework

The framework identifies six Intelligence Centres that Burow describes as the fundamental building blocks of human behaviour and personality. They include the empathy and authenticity centre, the feeling and adaptability centre, and the pattern recognition centre as just three of

the six. Burow says that throughout life people tend to develop a preference for some functions over others, giving rise to different personality profiles.

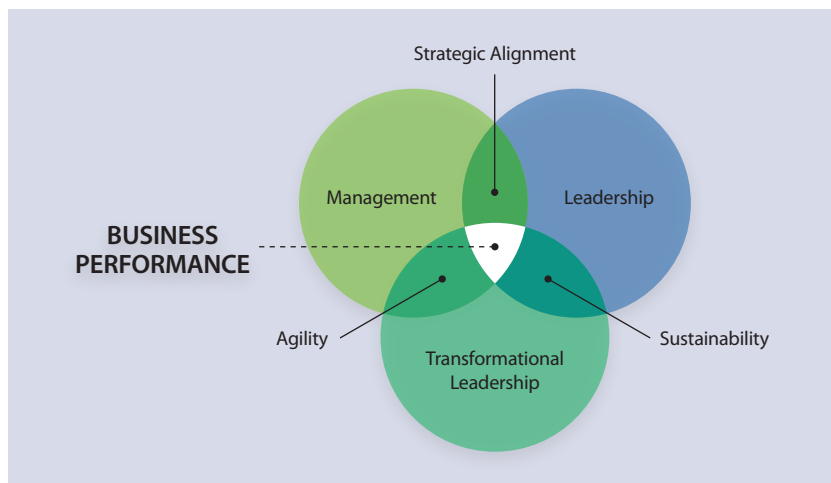
The goal of NeuroPower is to educate people to identify these profiles through analysing their own behaviour and those of people they interact with, and then to be able to observe these behaviours objectively.

According to AMP’s head of growth and research, group strategy, Matthew Ayres, who has been familiar with Burow’s work for more than five years, the application of NeuroPower has the potential to assist in the renewing of corporate Australia.

“To understand your own patterns is very important, but then to understand the patterns of the people you are working with is also very important – how you can trigger them or settle them down,” Burow says.

The framework is delivered via a series of interactive, simulation-based Strategy Maps, which aim to translate the theory into action. In the same way that a beginner pianist effectively reprograms their brain as they learn to play their instrument, so the framework seeks to reinforce and ultimately change the behaviour of participants.

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Left: NeuroPower drives business performance through an integrated offering which breaks down the resistance to behaviour change

Right: The results of one Generation 7 program which was used to fast-track a new financial team to high performance

“We’ve gone through process efficiency and it’s worked well but its time to move beyond that,” Ayres says. “This (NeuroPower) helps organisations see things differently and lead in a different way, by understanding people at a deeper level. It’s part of helping organisations grow and change in a way that is going to be a lot more sustainable than has been available in the past.”

NeuroPower gaining a foothold in Australian organisations

The NeuroPower framework has already found numerous supporters within Australian industry.

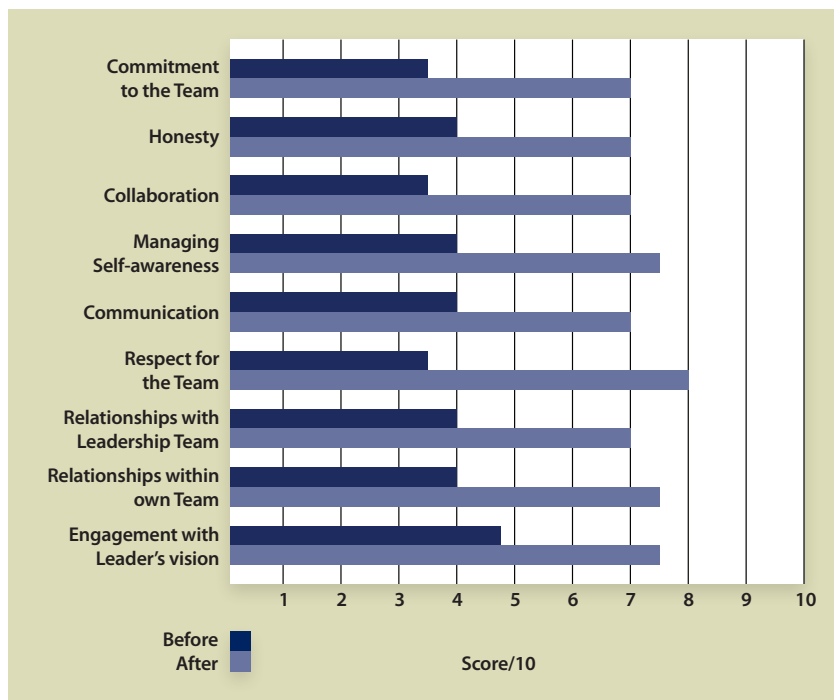
At **PricewaterhouseCoopers**, the director of performance, Sophie Crawford-Jones describes how the intelligence of NeuroPower has provided “an extraordinary leap forward” for the work she’s done with her national team. “The teams that worked together everyday shifted gear in terms of the way they worked. The framework has created a language for the family that is the team, and it’s used in a really consistent way.”

Crawford-Jones is now investigating how it may be used in the broader business with the six intelligence centres as the base platform with people trained in a consistent fashion.

NeuroPower has also been used with the equity derivatives group within **Westpac**. According to the head of equity derivatives, Stephen Richards, when he joined the group three years ago it was characterised by poor leadership, which had resulted in a fractious environment that was impacting customers.

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Richards describes the outcome of applying the NeuroPower framework as fantastic, as it took employee satisfaction from 54 percent to 94 percent in just 12 months and had tangible business performance results.



“Given that we were more aware of different people’s personalities and styles of thinking, it gave people some concepts they could use to better their communication,” Richards says.

The manager of the customer connection program at **Queensland Rail**, Darren Ramia-Topp, says he has been working with Burow for the past seven years, and is utilising it in his current role in human resources to assist with a transformational leadership program and the creation of a customer-focused culture.

“It’s creating a level of self-disclosure and trust which is rarely achieved by senior leadership teams, because they are too focused on day-to-day managing,” Ramia-Topp says.

Although only eight months into the 12-month program, Ramia-Topp says the leaders that have been trained are now asking to have their own managers trained. He says Queensland Rail is also investigating ways of further embedding NeuroPower into the organisation to become part of the executive development program and succession planning.

Ramia-Topp says he has also been impressed by how the NeuroPower framework delivers actual business outcomes.

“It really allows you to focus on the outcome you need, and provides a pathway to get there,” Ramia-Topp says. “The team can really form around a common language that the NeuroPower frameworks provide.”

The framework is also being adopted on an individual basis. The head of business development at **Sensis**, Markus von

der Luehe, says he has been using the framework day-to-day in his management of a team, as well as in his personal life. In working with his team, von der Luehe says he has been able to use the profiling system to better understand where people fit in.

Stephen Richards, head of equity derivatives Westpac, describes the outcome of applying the NeuroPower framework as fantastic, as it took employee satisfaction from 54 percent to 94 percent in just 12 months and had tangible business performance results.

“It helps me a lot, especially as I am doing a lot of partner negotiations,” von der Luehe says. “By being focused on my own objectives, I understand where people are coming from and feed that into the discussion.”

Toni Scoble of Core Insight and Tim Rossi of Symphony Leadership are consultants who use NeuroPower in their corporate development work.

“Generation 7 is one program we offer which is a high-impact, action-oriented leadership and teaming intervention which has spectacular results,” comments Scoble. “In this current business environment, organisations want to fast track and energise their people to be adaptive and competitive, but with heart. NeuroPower gives enormous scope to deliver on that.” ■