

## AAH Pharmaceuticals

Pharmaceuticals wholesaler AAH distributes healthcare products to doctors, hospitals and chemists throughout the UK. The company makes over 100,000 deliveries every week, with the help of more than 3,800 employees in 20 different locations.



### Project background

As the healthcare industry becomes increasingly challenging, with suppliers competing to keep up with change and flux within the health service, AAH realised that they need to take steps to maintain their position in the market.

With this in mind, AAH looked at what made their organisation stand out from its competitors. What became clear was that the people that formed the backbone of the business were the real differentiator when it came to providing excellence, enthusiasm and dedication in all that they did.

AAH's Training and Development Team had already been using the MBTI tool for some years, but felt that its benefits were not fully

appreciated. Knowledge of the tool was superficial, and it was being used ineffectively as a way of justifying entrenched behaviour rather than streamlining working relationships and improving performance. There was also a danger that it was being used to stereotype people, rather than nurture a culture that appreciated and benefited from differences.

AAH wanted to combat this trend and to build on its employees' existing knowledge of MBTI type. Their goal was to open a more constructive dialogue that would fit in with organisational behaviours and priorities, ultimately influencing the company's position in the marketplace.

### HEALTHCARE SECTOR

#### Business needs

- Market differentiation
- Communication
- Decision-making
- Energising leaders
- Embracing change

#### Psychometric tools used

- MBTI Step I
- MBTI Step II

#### Benefits

- Effective and efficient communication between colleagues and customers
- More flexible approach to change and difference
- Better-quality decisions

“AAH has seen a direct return on investment from the people development work we have done – this is what helps us be more successful than our competitors.”

*Elizabeth Timms*  
Management Development  
Manager

## The solution

AAH decided to invest in its people, with a far-reaching programme of performance-enhancing training and development. The MBTI instrument was chosen as an accessible framework that allowed people to take control of their own development, and to easily translate their learning into practice. This provided a springboard for the organisation to energise its leadership team, empower its employees and ultimately to differentiate itself from the competition.

Buy-in began at the top, and endorsement was quickly given by Board members for an organisation-wide reinterpretation of the MBTI framework, and for a structured plan to turn the initial ideas from Training and Development into concrete improvements in the way people interacted.

The expertise that OPP brought to the table enabled Elizabeth Timms, AAH's Management Development Manager, to convince the Board of the credibility of the MBTI tool. OPP's consultant engaged with senior leaders using language and frames of reference that resonated with them. The senior management team was won over by the idea of making people not just more self-aware, but also more productive in real terms, in a way that would show a clear return on investment by meeting the needs of the business.

Working alongside OPP's consultant, Elizabeth was able to engage the target audience, to the extent that they were really energised about the possibilities the MBTI tool could open up, and spoke enthusiastically about it to the managers reporting to them. This cohort of 24 senior managers then, in turn, became ambassadors for the ideas.

Complementing this growing enthusiasm, a series of four 90-minute sessions was introduced, focused first on getting a true understanding of the MBTI framework, then applying this knowledge to the four core business needs: leadership style, decision-making, approach to change, and communication.

In order to support an MBTI-centric approach across the organisation over the long term, members of AAH's Training and Development team were trained to run the MBTI modules themselves. This successful transfer of knowledge from OPP to AAH was an essential part of the cultural shift within the organisation towards internalising the MBTI framework, enabled by ongoing support from OPP.

"I don't think I would have got to this place without working alongside OPP," explains Dean Pearson, Training and Development Manager. "Working in

tandem with them in the early phases gave me the confidence to really convince people of the business benefits of using the Myers-Briggs framework. Its success is driven by people within AAH, but we couldn't have done it without OPP."

## Results

AAH has seen visible benefits from running their programme. The process has fostered a genuine energy and enthusiasm, with people seeing the direct, fast and positive impact that understanding personality can have in the workplace. Communication with colleagues and customers is more streamlined, better decisions are being made encompassing more viewpoints, people are better equipped to adapt to shifting contexts and priorities, and the leadership of the organisation has a real focus and energy.

Managers amongst the original cohort who took the MBTI modules are using the learning in everyday situations such as meetings, interactions with different colleagues and via the performance and development review process.

"We have created a successful recipe for people wanting to take the knowledge down to their teams and transfer it across different programmes," says Elizabeth.

So impressed is AAH with the far-reaching versatility of the MBTI tool that it has now begun a programme of MBTI Step II development. Elizabeth concludes, "We continually strive to do what we do really well – now the MBTI is firmly on the agenda as a business tool, and we are building on this as part of our overall development plan across the business. This means that we are working as a whole organisation, not only as functional directorates, and are positioned to continue to succeed, however tough the industry gets."

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This portfolio supports high-impact results for unlocking business potential and personal development, including team and leadership development, improving communication, building resilience and conflict resolution.

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