



# CASE STUDY

## The Australian Public Service Context

By Deborah Nanschild  
Centre for Leadership Excellence

[deb@leadershipexcellence.com.au](mailto:deb@leadershipexcellence.com.au)  
[www.leadershipexcellence.com.au](http://www.leadershipexcellence.com.au)

## The Australian Public Service Context

As we move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge era marked by rapid change, the rise of the digital age, the increasing speed of communication and the need for knowledge generation, organizational learning is becoming increasingly vital. The key to organizational learning begins with the individual followed by the quality of interaction with their work team. The essential message that I foster as a consultant is that to thrive in changing environment, we must learn to manage ourselves and our relationships with others. This process begins with understanding 'who we are and how we operate'.

It is in the pursuit of this knowledge that I have used the array of Team Management Systems (TMS) tools to facilitate personal mastery and team learning in the Australian Public Service (APS). For 5 years now, I have been using the Team Management Profile (TMP) as a teambuilding tool and for aligning the work of the team to business outcomes within the Australian Public Service (APS). Such teams have spanned HR Departments, Library Sections, respective work units located in government agencies and the senior executive service. The recently updated version has strengthened the insights gained by individuals as they transfer their learning from the workshop to the workplace, resulting in more harmonious interactions and greater understanding and awareness of individual preferences and strengths as well as more successful project management. Some of my observations follow:

### The TMP – Team Management Profile

Firstly, people express relief when the functions of work are explained. In the APS, there is an assumption that public servants are meant to be 'good at everything'. They are encouraged to be generalists rather than specialists yet their experience informs them otherwise. For example, they are expected to respond to respective Minister's requests often at short notice and it is the specialist expertise that enables them to fulfill these obligations under pressure. When the concept of work preferences is presented through the TMP, 'the lights on' in their thinking. It is their preferences that are most often practiced that have led to their specializations. Ahhh!

Secondly, the fact that they each have preferences in work functions explains much of the tension that is present in the workplace prior to our workshop. Combined with their people preferences, the TMP allows for individuals to share aspects of their Profile that are important to them and that they would like their team to know. The process then focuses on the dialog that surfaces on what really happens in the team and the misconceptions that abound. Of course it also explains why some things (and some people) 'click'.

# The TMP – Team Management Profile



An example here is in the Library Services aspect of the APS. They have predominantly Concluder-Producer preferences, being more introverted in their energy flow and with a focus on getting the task completed and 'out there'. They are a sector that doesn't promote itself or market what their services can do, resulting in several libraries being closed. I became aware of a library that this happened to. Let's call it Library A. This organization has not understood the contribution of the work of this sector and thought it could be replaced by technology. The irony is that the organization is now seeking to purchase the services of another government library, Library B, which has already provided services to a number of agencies. This library has an Explorer-Promoter and Creator-Innovator at the helm and, in contrast to Library A, is prepared to become the 'whole-of-government library' if the opportunity arises. The staff in this section do in fact cover the whole Team Management Wheel.

Thirdly, the gaps within a team that are identified through applying the Team Management Profile Questionnaire (TMPQ) to team members highlight areas of weakness that need attention. Specific strategies are developed to address these gaps with one strong outcome for all being the need to communicate and share the portfolio. This had additional benefits in encouraging collaboration and knowledge sharing. As an external consultant, I dialog with the Creator-Innovator of my client group to explore the range of possibilities that a team might use

for problem-solving; I seek out the Thruster-Organizer when I have meetings and workshops to organize; and I utilize the Concluder-Producer to be sure that my manuals and workshop materials, for instance, will be completed on time.

The media has a strong influence in the public sector through the various Ministers' offices. The work portfolio of one of my client groups is reported in the newspapers almost daily, resulting in high pressure and a chaotic work style that eventually 'burns' people out. They are so busy that they often do not know what their colleagues are working on, let alone have an opportunity to reflect on best work practice. Using the Team Management Profile, one of these groups deliberately changed the way work was distributed so that it more closely matched individual preferences. Instead of a silo isolating operation, they reported a greater sense of being part of a team, resulting in higher work satisfaction and increased collaboration. The Director took more responsibility for managing media inquiries and team members were able to plan time off which was previously impossible without feeling guilty.

The TMP allows a common language to be used within the workplace. When projects are being planned, people's preferences can be considered and actions/tasks can be appropriately allocated. Knowledge of the group's profile can assist to have 'the right people in the right jobs at the right time', the main challenge for CEOs globally today.

## Windows on Work Values

Another critical issue for organizations is the retention of their workforce. I have been using the Window on Work Values (WoWV) since it was developed to help facilitate understanding about the values of people and the values of the organization they work in. In general, where there are values alignment, retention is easier than when value priorities differ.

**FIGURE 1: Window on Work Values**



I was first drawn to the WoWV as a tool for dealing with conflict in the workplace, a situation that I had become increasingly aware of recent through my consulting work. I am accredited in several psychometric instruments but none of them went to the heart of where the issue lay. I needed a tool to not only surface people's

thinking but to surface the subconscious values and beliefs they held which influenced their behavior.

The results were profound. In one instance, an individual clearly realized he did not fit in the Department of Defence culture of values and decided to leave but now had the information he needed through his WoWV Profile to make a wiser choice for employment. He went to another department that more closely aligned with his values.

The WoWV has enabled people to recognize where the main issues lie and to decided on a course of action. I have used the WoWV in two ways: as a one-day workshop to explore organizational and personal values alignment and as a two-day workshop to explore the value priorities of a team.

**FIGURE 2: Team Values Charter**



The most rewarding outcome I have experienced is with a team from the Department of Family and Community Services whose major values closely aligned with each other as well as with the department. They developed a Team Values Charter displayed as a wheel so that no single value could be regarded as higher or lower.

Their decisions are now made according to their value priorities regardless of where they are positioned in the organization's hierarchy and their values are prominently displayed in their work area. Their computer screensavers, for instance, scroll through their agreed value statements.

Our FaCS team holds most strongly to the value types of  
**Equality, Empowerment and Collectivism.**

We also support the value types of Independence and Individualism, which encourage team members to meet their own needs while supporting one another to achieve the team goals.

The work I have been doing on values through the WoWV has led me to focus my PhD research to examine values-based approaches to leadership development and the implications they hold for organizational change. This is also the first time in history where four generations are in the workplace who bring with them potentially different core values and value priorities, an addition fact discovered initially through using the WoWV model.

## In Summary

The TMP and WoWV enable emotionally safe and meaningful dialog between people through focusing on who they are and how they operate in the workplace. They are tools that facilitate personal growth, teambuilding and organizational learning, which are necessary to thrive in a changing environment.



# About the Author

*Deborah Nanschild  
L, M E Consultant*

*New South Wales, Australia*

*Tel: 04 0849 6622 - Australia  
Tel: +614 0849 6622 - International*

*Email: [deb@leadershipexcellence.com.au](mailto:deb@leadershipexcellence.com.au)  
Website: [www.leadershipexcellence.com.au](http://www.leadershipexcellence.com.au)*

Deborah Nanschild is a Management, Education and Training Consultant with nearly 30 years experience in private enterprise, universities, and the public sector nationally and internationally. She is highly innovative and creative with an extraordinary breadth of life experience and can focus on the possibilities that lie ahead, for both organizations and their people. Her commitment to lifelong learning and leadership that accelerates human potential underlies her outstanding ability to motivate people and her capacity to implement theory into best practice, which she does with individuals, teams and organizations.

Deborah is accredited in several global-best psychometric instruments which she uses as tools for understanding oneself in response to change, personal creativity, problem-solving, communication style and working in diverse teams. She has received 6 state and national awards, including an award of merit from the Prime Minister, for her innovative programs, project management and business solutions. Deborah has recently completed a Research Doctorate *Values Inquiry into Leadership Development in the Australian Public Service*, and holds an MA, Grad. Dip., B.Ed., Dip. T. and Outdoor Leadership qualifications.