

Case study: the leadership team of a nuclear site



“The penny dropped”

How the executive team of a nuclear site caused the director to reassess the psychological safety, using the AEM-Cube®*

The challenge of the company

After working with the company about three years before, they reapproached our partner: a few months ago, following the nuclear site recruiting, a new station director was put in place. During the three years prior, changes had taken place in the executive and leadership team. Although the company’s site is performing well, over the next few years they are driving towards being the global benchmark for the company’s sites. Therefore, they had a great need to drive improvement, and a need for cultural and organisational change: very exploratory elements. However, some of that has been unsuccessful in the past, and the new site director was determined to understand why that was the case.

Why did the company choose the AEM-Cube

When working with the leadership team for the first time, our partner chose Human Insight specifically for the AEM-Cube assessment tool. Three years later, the HR director of the company did not want to use a completely new tool for the leadership team because the business would see a lot more disruption than needed. Another, yet equally important, reason for using the AEM-Cube was that the company learned how to position their team for a better change and more long-lasting change in the future. Therefore, the AEM-Cube specifically was suited.

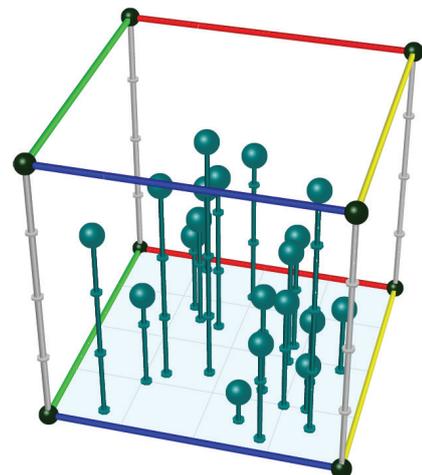
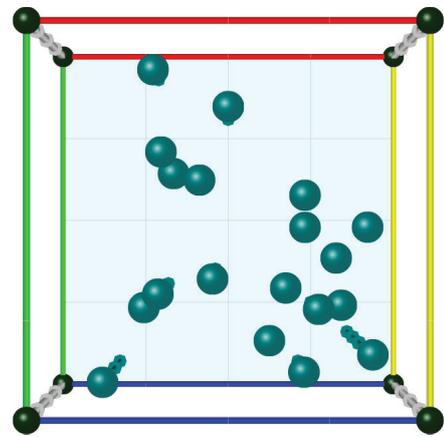
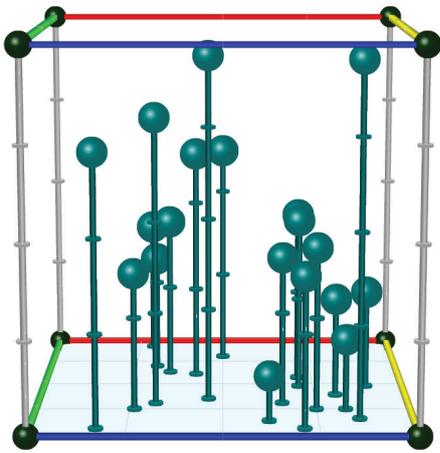
**This business case had to be anonymised due to the client’s privacy wishes*



Insights for future growth

After everyone completed their AEM-Cube questionnaire, it turned out that the leadership team's profile was slightly different to what you normally see in these types of businesses. Of the nineteen employees who participated in the AEM-Cube questionnaire, ten had an exploratory preference, and seven of these ten had a particularly strong exploratory preference. Although they did not show this on the work floor, the site director found it very interesting to see a predominant exploratory lean in the leadership team. However, that made him wonder: why are we having these challenges regarding transformation and change in the first place? If I have a predominance in the leadership team that is actively encouraging and seeking change, how come this company seems to suppress change and actively look the other way when we need to look at new ways of meeting these challenges?

From the one-on-one sessions that our partner did with the team, it became clear that this company is one where people tend to work for a long time, if not their entire career. As a result, many employees were institutionalised in their way of working. Working within a company that operated under a very demanding and controlling leadership style formed them as individuals. Therefore, they were not able to show their exploratory nature, as indicated by the AEM-Cube results. The company's psychological safety was the problem: they had a psychological preference for exploration but masked that in their work environment. In their opinion, they did not get the chance to tackle the challenges they were facing or drive change and innovation.



How AEM-Cube insights impacted results

There are no clear results within the company's culture yet because they used the AEM-Cube so recently. However, the results from the AEM-Cube assessment had an immediate impact: they really understood. The results also gave insight into the fact that these people behave this way because the culture prevents them from behaving differently, rather than these people behaving that way because they are.

The results of the AEM-Cube showed that this team is fundamentally different from how they act as a collective.



"I have worked with Human Insight for about seven years. Two or three years ago, when I had only done the AEM-Cube workshop, I may have struggled to understand the AEM-Cube results from this particular business. However, because I have also done the Quality of Interaction workshop and others, it made me see that it is actually the culture within this organisation that drives low levels of psychological safety, which creates a team that walks, talks and acts like this but is in nature actually very different. Therefore, the AEM-Cube is an excellent tool because it led us to a data point that we would not have had otherwise."

Greg Elton

Managing Partner at Day-2

