

Case Study

Improving Communication with Inscape Publishing Products

- *Everything DiSC® Classic Facilitation System*
- *DiSC® PPSS*
- *DiSC Classic Group Culture Report*
- *idXready™*

Karen Stacey, president of Kreative Learning Solutions, was contacted by an independently-owned convention-marketing company in Southeast Massachusetts. The recently appointed CEO had identified problems that he wanted fixed. The client was concerned that “communication between management and staff was too nice and ineffective.” During her initial conversations with the HR manager, Stacey found this stemmed from lack of trust — people avoided addressing conflicts, choosing to ignore issues. She also discovered that middle management and some senior management had little or no formal leadership training. Adding to the issue was growth: staff had quadrupled, from 30 to 130, over five years. “The more people, the more problems,” commented Stacey.

Stacey started with a needs assessment, analyzing performance and developmental gaps with the HR manager, and identified goals and desired outcomes with senior management. Using the *Everything DiSC® Facilitation System*, Stacey created a learning program to address their needs. The program would help build the foundations of frontline management, including how to transition from peer to leader; the basics of effective communication and leadership; how to hire and develop the right people; and how to make effective decisions. The program would also focus on building a cohesive and collaborative leadership team, one that “grows and supports the organization’s culture, vision, and mission through others,” explained Stacey. Finally, they have a Senior management team.

Stacey first addressed the senior-management team with a foundational curriculum. While the senior managers recognized that they had some communication issues, they didn’t think their problems were all that bad. The CEO disagreed. Using the PPSS assessment, Group Report, customized *Everything DiSC* modules, and DVD, participants learned about DiSC styles, and how personal style affects behavior in conflict. “DiSC was a real eye-opener for them. They learned that different isn’t bad. Different is just different,” Stacey said.

Next, Stacey met with the middle-management team for its foundational curriculum. Middle managers went through a similar program, with additional focus on areas of leadership, communication, and performance management — key areas identified as skill gaps. Stacey included coaching partner sessions where individuals were paired with different styles. Feedback from the PPSS report was woven throughout the topics.

After both management tiers received training, they recognized the company needed more. “They realized they wanted a learning program that would change behavior and corporate culture. And they really saw the effectiveness and usefulness of DiSC.” Stacey worked with management on a top-down approach to incorporate DiSC into every department.

In the next 24 months, all 130 employees and any new hires will go through Stacey’s training. She’ll implement DiSC training for each work tier: clerical, entry-level, administrative, and tech teams will receive training focused on listening, teambuilding, communications, and customer service, using a combination of *Everything DiSC* and three *idXready* programs. “The edgy humor used in *idXready* resonates with the younger teams — really engages them,” Stacey said.

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The biggest challenge Stacey faces is time. The nature of the convention industry means that her client is booked from September to May. All of Stacey's training takes place in the summer. She meets with her client several days a week for four-hour sessions. During the other nine months, Stacey's client keeps the momentum going through monthly DiSC-focused meetings. The HR manager keeps Stacy in the loop on new developments and progress.

Even with the time constraints, Stacey's client is already seeing results. The HR manager reports that the company and the employees have both grown. "There's one employee who was especially tough. She had had run-ins with everyone. She pulled me aside and said, 'I can't tell you how much my life has improved since I started this class. I'm communicating on a whole different level.'"

When Stacey first met with the new CEO, the goal was to make communication more effective and build trust in the teams. Now, the CEO is seeing bigger outcomes on the horizon. Stacey's client is no longer content to maintain the business; he wants to make it grow and sees Stacey's program as a way of doing that. Southeast Massachusetts is an isolated community, with a very limited talent pool. White-collar industry in this area is also limited, but it's an important part of the economic balance. Stacey's client hopes that by changing the corporate culture, they'll be able to keep the talent they have and grow the business, attracting new talent.

Stacey and her client aren't alone in seeing the importance of cultivating and retaining talent. Recently, Stacey's client was awarded the Massachusetts Workforce Training Fund grant, which is dedicated to the development and retention of talent, available for companies who hire employees within Massachusetts. After hiring a grant writer and spending over 40 hours working on the application process, Stacey and her client are thrilled with the outcome. "The competition was stiff. To be awarded the grant is pretty amazing," she said.

Now, Stacey can concentrate on the next 24 months. Stacey is happy with her client's progress and is excited about what's to come. Instead of spending her time creating new content, Stacey was able to craft a solution using *Everything DiSC* and *idXready* programs. "You have to know your client and know your product. I used to spend so much time re-creating the wheel. I've been using *Everything DiSC* since it came out. And I was all over *idXready*. My client thinks it all belongs together. It's seamless."