



A Case Study: Medical Biologics and NeuraPoints

Collaborative Thinking, Problem Solving and Communication Across Company Divisions

Updated Feb 2025: This study originally referenced the product under its former name, "Thinking Points". With permission, references have been updated to use "NeuraPoints" to reflect the company rebranding. The new name applies to the same product formulation and is intended for the same uses as described throughout the study.

Background

The case study was completed with a medical biologics company that develops, markets, and diagnoses products used to assess coagulation disorders. It prides itself on having a corporate culture that maximizes the contributions of all members of the organization. It seeks to engender an enduring commitment to the company and a sense of shared responsibility for the company's success. Interactions between and among company members are designed to encourage innovation from all sectors of the organization.

In 2008 and, again, in 2010, the Company was named one of the top 50 places to work in Canada, chosen primarily for its policy of open communication and its profit sharing approach. The Chairman and CEO, explained the company's vision in this way, "The company's vision of success incorporates the idea of creating value for customers, shareholders, and employees simultaneously."

Wanting to continue to avoid what the CEO described as the more typical "command and control" approach to organizational dynamics, the company decided to explore the use of NeuraPoints - as a common, visual language for communication, knowledge creation, problem-solving and decision-making, throughout the organization. Recognizing that the challenges the company addressed were complex in nature and required the ability of company members to transform information into actionable knowledge, the CEO initiated the introduction of the NeuraPoints language into the company culture. He and others at the Company were attracted by the potential NeuraPoints held for helping to:

- Achieve greater capacity to communicate the full range of simple to complex ideas to others clearly, efficiently, and thoughtfully
- Promote, improve and transfer thinning processes across the organization
- Enhance thinking abilities, creativity and perspective taking
- Develop effective and sustainable solutions using a common language
- Build capacity to define, analyze and anticipate problems before jumping to decisions
- Provide a platform by which all employees could work through challenges and develop unified, integrated, inter-departmental goals



After training and implementing the NeuraPoints language at Precision, the CEO was asked to reflect on its initial impact, as observed by him and others. His reflections follow below.

Discovering Visual Thinking

Reflections on using NeuraPoints in a business context

By the CEO

Our Company is a 55-person firm making specialized blood testing products used in major hospitals across the US, Canada and Europe. We were first introduced to the concept of visual thinking tools about four years ago, when two NeuraPoints consultants visited our company. The introduction intrigued members of our staff, who are always interested in learning useful new tools. In June, 2009, we organized a two-day training session for about 30 people at the company. The consultants gave a thorough background on the theory behind visual tools & NeuraPoints, and showed us how we could apply them in everyday business situations. The response of our staff was overwhelmingly enthusiastic. Over 90% of the participants described the tools as “very useful” or “extremely useful” in the post-training feedback surveys.

Since that time, we have been using NeuraPoints in an increasing variety of ways, including:

- Gathering broad input into decisions affecting the company
- Assessing product development priorities
- Thinking through alternative approaches to expanding our facility
- Designing and conducting planning sessions
- Understanding obstacles to achieving desired outcomes
- Engaging in “difficult conversations” on personnel matters

People across our company – in sales, marketing, R&D, operations, and administration – have found the tools to be extremely effective. After a few short months of usage, it is quite common to hear questions such as “have you used NeuraPoints to look at this issue?” or “can I see your [NeuraCode] on that?” What is it that makes these tools so attractive to people working in a business setting? In our experience, they have a number of compelling characteristics:

1. **They are extremely efficient.** NeuraPoints are quick to execute; they provide a clear record of the thinking that has taken place; and they are easy to communicate to others. Instead of relying on notes or minutes from a meeting, NeuraPoints provide everything that is needed. In fact, they offer much more than notes or minutes, since they can be understood within seconds, and they clearly describe the whole process, not just the conclusions. There is no danger of misinterpretation or editing by a “middle man” taking notes. Furthermore, if a meeting is interrupted, it is easy to pick up the thread later by referring to the NeuraPoints from the meeting. If new information subsequently comes to light, it can be incorporated into the original thinking and shared with everyone. So decision steps are embedded in a coherent process without risk of becoming disconnected.
2. **They provide clarity.** The process of creating NeuraPoints clarifies issues by encouraging multiple perspectives, and the resulting visual pictures are completely transparent – available for both meeting participants and others to see. Using NeuraPoints requires participants to consider how best to think about an issue: they force people to discover the right question. In developing the NeuraPoint [patterns], it quickly becomes obvious if another question would be more appropriate – and a shift can readily be made. This frequently leads to new insights that were not obvious at the outset – the tools open doors to ways of looking at things that cut across people’s preconceived ideas and prejudices.
3. **They ensure relevance.** Many ordinary business meetings risk going off on a tangent and are subject to being “hijacked” – either deliberately or through lack of discipline. Meetings that rely primarily on verbal exchanges often leave ideas and emotions hanging, unresolved. There is no meandering when NeuraPoints are used as the focus of attention: it is almost impossible not to focus on the chosen topic. This focus enables good questions to emerge, and calls on all participants to put their mind to the issue at hand. Because the tools are flexible, it is easy to refresh the view and consider relevant alternatives.
4. **They are engaging.** One of the most powerful things about NeuraPoints is the way they engage people in evaluating situations and making decisions. NeuraPoints are inevitably collaborative, since all perspectives are invited. Everyone naturally gets engaged when the points of view that make sense to them are incorporated. NeuraPoints are even-handed and balanced. They focus on issues, not personalities – they are not based on win/lose, and they leave no room for power politics. In using NeuraPoints, people quite literally “get on the same side of the table” and wind up “on the same page.”

