

## Case Study

# BUILDING AN ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE

*How a national nonprofit serving educational institutions used behavioral science and experiential learning to shift its culture, and measure the change.*



## AT A GLANCE

### ORGANIZATION

National nonprofit · 50+ years · 100+ employees

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### SECTOR

Educational services — HR, payroll, insurance, risk management

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### PARTICIPANTS

58 directors and senior leaders

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### PROGRAM

3 CognitivePlay™ sessions + Symeta SENSE & Team Health assessments

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### OUTCOME

Measurable improvement across all three targeted team culture behaviors

## THE CLIENT

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For more than 50 years, this national nonprofit has served schools, parishes, and universities across the country, providing HR, payroll, insurance, and risk management to hundreds of institutions that depend on them to operate. With over 100 employees and a mission rooted in service, they have built a reputation for reliability and operational excellence.

That reputation was both their greatest asset and their emerging constraint.

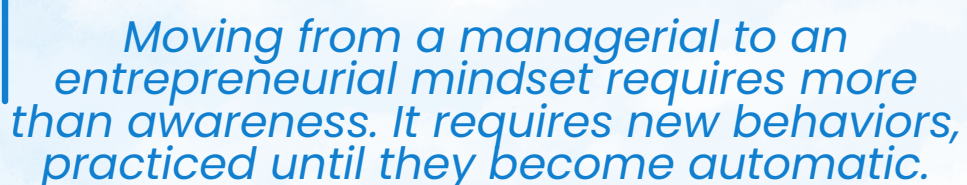
## THE CHALLENGE

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Leadership recognizes what behavioral scientists sometimes call the paradox of successful cultures: the habits that carry an organization to success can quietly become the habits that keep it from evolving. As the organization entered a new stage of strategic growth, it needed something the culture hadn't fully developed: an entrepreneurial mindset capable of sitting alongside and sometimes overriding, the instinct to protect and preserve.

The symptoms were visible. Through an internal initiative designed to elicit business innovation, teams generated over 70 ideas, but leadership was challenged to act on them with urgency. Communication was warm and collegial, but rarely direct under pressure. Disagreements were avoided rather than resolved. Decision cycles were careful in ways that had hindered progress. In a sector reshaped by workforce shifts, technology, and competitive pressure, this pattern carried real strategic risk.

The goal: build an entrepreneurial mindset and culture, one that starts with "How do we make that idea work?"



*Moving from a managerial to an entrepreneurial mindset requires more than awareness. It requires new behaviors, practiced until they become automatic.*

## THE PARTNERS

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Two organizations brought this program to life. Each contributed something the other couldn't.



Taking Flyt works with organizations to build creative, adaptable, and collaborative cultures. Drawing on over 40 years of entrepreneurial experience and a methodology grounded in neuroscience and improv, Taking Flyt's CognitivePlay™ program helps teams rewire how they think and work, not through lectures, but through structured experiential practice designed to create lasting behavioral change.



Symeta is the first behavioral intelligence platform built specifically for entrepreneurial and intrapreneurial teams. Symeta Behavior Science builds teams capable of moving at the speed of change. Built by entrepreneurs for entrepreneurs on a foundational meta-analysis of over 1,000 studies in organizational science, Symeta measures what people do, individually and together, not who they are on a static personality profile. Its two instruments give organizations an evidence-based picture of their people before, during, and after a development program.

## HOW THE ASSESSMENTS WORK TOGETHER

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Understanding a team's ability to behave in a more entrepreneurial way requires two levels of insight: who the individuals are, and how the team functions together. Symeta addresses each separately, and by design.

### SENSE Assessment

Maps individual behavioral composition across four levers — **Thinking, Relating, Operating,** and **Adapting** — and the twelve gears that mesh within each one. It answers, how does each person on this team show up? Where do the gears turn together to create momentum, and where do they grind?

### Team Health Assessment

Measures how the team functions together, nine components of culture in three areas: **Awareness** (trust, cohesion, safety), **Balance** (role clarity, shared mental models, alignment), and **Collaboration** (conflict management, agility, communication). Answers: How does this team perform in action?

SENSE reveals the raw material, the behavioral patterns each person brings to entrepreneurial work. The Team Health Assessment reveals how that material is being put to work. Together, they give decision-makers a complete picture, and a precise target for development.

## WHAT THE DATA REVEALED

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### The SENSE Profile

The SENSE assessment was administered to the leadership cohort at the start of the program. The group profile surfaced a team with meaningful strengths and a predictable pattern of constraints that the culture had likely reinforced for years.

#### Strengths Identified

- ✓ High resilience - rapid recovery from setbacks
- ✓ Strong pivot tolerance - adaptable when required
- ✓ Elevated optimism - belief that challenges can be overcome
- ✓ High emotional awareness - genuine care for colleagues

#### Patterns Developed

- ✓ High resilience - rapid recovery from setbacks
- ✓ Strong pivot tolerance - adaptable when required
- ✓ Elevated optimism - belief that challenges can be overcome
- ✓ High emotional awareness - genuine care for colleagues

## THE TEAM HEALTH BASELINE

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The Team Health assessment confirmed what the SENSE data suggested from the team level rather than the individual level.

The organization's Awareness scores — trust, cohesion, and psychological safety — were strong. These were people who genuinely liked and trusted each other. That foundation matters enormously, and it's not something every organization has.

The Collaboration scores told a different story. Conflict management, collaborative agility, and communication under pressure were the weakest areas in the profile. Teams hesitated to raise friction. Decisions moved carefully. Collaboration was warm but not always fast.

*Two assessments. One coherent picture: a team with the right foundation and the wrong velocity for entrepreneurial growth.*

The SENSE data explained why. This was a group high in emotional awareness and trust, but also high in conflict avoidance and uncertainty aversion. People don't raise tension when the culture rewards harmony. They don't move fast when the culture rewards care. The data didn't reveal a character flaw. It revealed a cultural pattern, one that could be changed.

## THE ACTIVATION

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With a clear behavioral baseline established, Taking Flyt designed three 90-minute CognitivePlay™ sessions targeted directly at the Collaboration gaps the Team Health Assessment data had identified.

### Session 1

#### **Embracing Uncertainty and Change**

Building comfort with ambiguity, adaptability, and quick pivots, the direct antidote to the uncertainty aversion the SENSE data had flagged.

### Session 2

#### **Strengthening Communication**

Enhancing empathy, active listening, and the kind of direct, collaborative communication that makes decisions faster, not more cautious.

### Session 3

#### **Fostering Creativity and Growth**

Cultivating innovation, thinking and the resourcefulness to act on ideas, not just generate them.

## WHY IMPROV WORKS — THE NEUROSCIENCE

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CognitivePlay™ is a neuroscience-driven system for behavior change. It uses improvisation, entrepreneurial practice, and strengths-based development to create the conditions where new ways of thinking and acting take hold.

Adults don't change behavior by being told what to do. They change by practicing under the right conditions that trigger genuine learning. Neuroscience identifies the four conditions that make new behaviors stick, the gates of neuroplasticity:

**Novelty**

Unexpected, engaging experiences that capture attention and spark curiosity

**Emotion**

Safe but energizing conditions that deepen memory and motivation

**Focus**

Task-based activities that anchor learning to real situations

**Repetition**

Consistent practice that transforms insight into habit.

Improv activates all four simultaneously. The foundational technique "Yes, and..." - accepting what someone offers and building on it, rather than deflecting or redirecting - directly targets conflict avoidance and cautious communication under pressure. It is not a metaphor for collaboration. It is a practice of it.

Participants described the sessions as engaging and enlightening. Many highlighted how understanding the neuroscience behind the activities made the behaviors easier to adopt because they understood not just what they were practicing, but why it was changing how they worked.

## THE RESULTS

Symeta administered the Team Health a second time at the close of the program. The results showed measurable improvement across all three Collaboration components, the areas the program had specifically targeted.

| Dimension           | Start | End  | Impact                               |
|---------------------|-------|------|--------------------------------------|
| Conflict Management | 3.70  | 3.88 | Increased ability to manage conflict |
| Agile Performance   | 4.02  | 4.20 | Faster response to change            |
| Team Communication  | 4.54  | 4.67 | Better alignment on complex work     |



## What These Numbers Mean

In the behavioral sciences, teams don't move easily, and the closer a score is to the ceiling of a 5-point scale, the harder it becomes to shift. When teams are already performing well, you aren't correcting a deficiency. You are disrupting the habits of people who believe their current approach is working.

That's why an increase of a 0.15–0.20 increase is meaningful; it reflects a shift across many individuals—not just one or two outliers. In organizational research, shifts of this magnitude represent real, significant change, the kind that compounds over time and shows up in how the organization performs.

A meaningful shift in how a team communicates, navigates conflict, or moves under pressure doesn't happen in a quarter, and it doesn't show up as a dramatic leap on a chart. It shows up as *consistent, measurable movement in behaviors* that were holding the team back.

*The team didn't just learn new behaviors.  
They practiced them until they became  
automatic.*

What makes these results especially notable: they were achieved across just three 90-minute workshops. No multi-week offsite. No year-long coaching engagement. Three structured sessions grounded in neuroscience and delivered through CognitivePlay™ produced measurable, data-verified shifts in team behavior. That speaks directly to the power of the methodology: when learning is designed to activate the brain's conditions for change (novelty, emotion, focus, repetition), transformation doesn't require volume. It requires precision.

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## What Comes Next

The data identified clear opportunities for continued development, particularly in reinforcing Collaboration behaviors through additional CognitivePlay™ sessions and in broadening SENSE participation to enable more complete individual-to-team mapping. The goal is sustainment: making entrepreneurial behavior not a training outcome, but a cultural norm.

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## ABOUT THE PARTNERS



***Building creative, adaptable, and collaborative cultures.***

Drawing on 40+ years of entrepreneurial experience and a background in neuroscience and improv, Taking Flyt's CognitivePlay™ program helps teams and individuals rewire how they think and act, turning entrepreneurial mindset from aspiration into practiced behavior.

[takingflyt.com](http://takingflyt.com)  
[jwightkin@takingflyt.com](mailto:jwightkin@takingflyt.com)



***The behavioral intelligence platform for entrepreneurial teams.***

Built by entrepreneurs for entrepreneurs on a foundational meta-analysis of over 1,000 studies in organizational science, and hundreds of popular press & media case studies, Symeta measures what people do individually and together. For founders, investors, and enterprise leaders building what's next, Symeta turns people decisions from instinct into intelligence.

[symeta.science](http://symeta.science)  
[info@symeta.science](mailto:info@symeta.science)