

C&M Ford Client Success Story

About C&M Ford

C&M Ford is a trusted new and used car dealership in Hallock, Minnesota serving the Red River Valley and beyond. C&M's work with People Acuity helped them identify themselves as, "family owned neighbor driven." This motto acknowledges their view of everyone as their family friends - their neighbors. It still guides the actions of employees today, who are renown for providing hometown personal service that is not available at corporate or most other dealerships.

C&M's Burning Need

Paul Blomquist, owner of C&M Ford in Hallock, Minnesota, knew he had a good team working for him. Sales were reasonable and the dealership was an okay place to work. But after experiencing People Acuity's initial assessment of the proactivity, teamwork, trust, and engagement of his people, he began to wonder if there was much more was available to them. Specifically, he was most looking for more collaboration between divisions and among individuals, and more engagement for staff as ways to increase business performance. In the end, the data revealed that attending to these foundations would lead to the highest levels of customer satisfaction they had ever seen and to increased sales, service and overall growth.

Partnering with People Acuity

People Acuity is not a quick-fix/one-workshop experience, but is a process of creating steady, lasting transformation over time which leads to sustainable results. The direction for change does not come from People Acuity, but from within the organization as individuals learn and apply newly learned tools and strategies. This also ensures that the learning stays closely connected to the insights and goals of individuals and of the business.

In the hands-on, participatory experiences, Paul's staff learned about creating interdependence through effective strengths use and intentional purpose alignment. This had an instant effect on Paul, who quickly realized that his independent approach to leadership was disempowering others and preventing their growth. He wanted to identify more leaders in his organization and trust them to lead with him through interdependence. Within weeks he had identified others who began their leadership growth journey through additional live and virtual People Acuity experiences, including one-to-one and group coaching. He hoped that these up-and-coming leaders would be able to engage others in coach-like ways and cause a positive ripple effect. His theory proved to be not only right, but the most efficient way to ignite larger-scale change.

For example, Josh Whitlock, Finance and Insurance Manager, found that People Acuity's Interdependent Leadership toolkit allowed him to increase trust with his co-workers, which quickly translated to their increased performance. He describes how his Self-Leadership foundation first helped him increase his ability to see, respect, and leverage his own potential and that of others more accurately. He was surprised at how this significantly improved his use of time and decreased a lot of energy-sucking drama. As he got better at applying his new-found skills to his work, it seemed to reveal new ways to help others similarly increase their Self-Leadership. Little by little the energy the performance of the entire organization seemed to improve.

Josh and Paul both noticed that as staff learned to trust each other more, they became more open to each other's ideas. They were quicker to align roles based on strengths, and to lean into each other when they felt uncertain or weak. This significantly contributed to their ability to find solutions to some of their most difficult challenges, including time allocation, perpetual relationship challenges, and collaborative project management.

As individuals working next to each other became engaged in sophisticated teamwork, the sense of C&M as an interdependent community increased. **"We always cared about each other,"** said Mona Dietrich, Business Manager, **"but this experience deepened our ability to work together in new and different ways."** She learned the many ways that people backed her up, both in her work and in her relationships with them.



Outcomes

First year performance results linked to C&M's work with People Acuity:

- Sales tripled (and then continued to for three consecutive years)
- Employee Engagement increased 14 percent
- Customer Satisfaction increased up to 96 percent, placing them in Ford's top 5 percent of dealerships for customer satisfaction.

If you were to talk to Paul Blomquist today, he would tell you how pleased he is about the level of excitement and engagement that continues throughout his organization even years after their work with People Acuity. Since that time, C&M has been a Ford President's Award winner multiple times, which is Ford's highest award for customer satisfaction. Recently, they were also ranked #1 in the nation for sales expectancy for Ford dealerships.