

I love nothing more than observing people as they have a 'moment of clarity', either about themselves or someone they work with.

Elaine Gosden
Director & Owner
Blue Gnu Consulting



**What our clients
really think
about us**

BLUEGNU
CONSULTING

NUFFIELD HEALTH

What we do for them:
Insights Discovery
& Facilitation
Support Partner



Elaine's just got bags of energy, more energy than anyone I ever known and she delivers it in the right way - very sensitively – it's heart-warming.

Naomi Armitage
Head of L&D



How have you worked with Blue Gnu?

We first worked with Elaine for Insights Discovery and her expertise. We wanted to be able to offer it to enhance the development of our people. Elaine also accredited some of our own employees so that we could roll it out ourselves. She's facilitated a lot of big events for us where we need somebody with that extra bit of pzazz or real in depth knowledge as opposed to the basics. Elaine is a Guru in that area!

How does working with us make you feel?

Elaine makes sure that she really does understand the client, the organisation and the deep-rooted culture – this helps her recognise the shifts and changes that need to be made. She brings so much energy and enthusiasm, as well as engaging people that she works with.

A few years ago Elaine did a 'train the facilitator' session with the L&D team and gave us loads of confidence. She's engaging, encouraging, brings confidence to what you're doing and gives great feedback - both constructive and positive. Elaine makes it so easy.

You can give a brief overview of the organisational or team issues and Elaine will do the factfinding and needs analysis of the learning session – she will tailor and deliver exactly what's required and always exceeds expectations!



What would you say to someone who has never worked with us but is thinking about it?

They won't regret it - it will add value! If it was something that Elaine felt that she wasn't going to add value to, then she would be honest about that too. And she would add far more value to any work that she does with an organisation than would be expected. Anybody that she works with will always remember that session - it would stay with them. She's very memorable.



How did you come to work with Blue Gnu?

Being a consultancy, our teams work on projects at such a fast pace with pharmaceuticals and biotechs, so to get it right, we have to have very strong teams in place. We invest in the teams by developing them. We offer tools like Insights Discovery for them to really excel in what they do. But for me personally, from an HR perspective, it is critical for us to make sure that we are able to offer something that can not only educate but allow our people to leverage their relationships for the benefit of their roles and their own career planning.

What feelings are you left with, either personally or professionally, when you're working with Elaine?

The first thing that comes to mind for me is a sense of achievement. When you walk away from a session with her it's like, wow, things are clear! I've got direction and I know what I need to do. Elaine brings energy but she's so wise. I love the way she listens. She's very observant. She gets what you want to say and if she's not sure, she will ask the question. Her intention is always for the customer to walk away with a solution. She is not a one trick pony – she offers a full suite. I think she is also

very flexible in how she operates. She's appreciative that we might not be one of her biggest clients, but she treats us like we are. So you'll always get that sense of customer care. I never feel like I'm having to chase and I am treated exactly like a bigger corporate client.

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What would you say to someone who has never worked with Blue Gnu but is thinking about it?

I would strongly encourage them to get in touch! I'm a huge ambassador! Not only have I got to know Elaine in terms of credibility and what she brings, but it's as simple as why haven't you worked with her!? You're going to miss out! Get on board and start working with her because there's a wealth of opportunity whether you're a small business or large business - it doesn't matter. It's so important to me to maintain strong relationships with my providers – and I have that with Blue Gnu.

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It's almost like she's been working with us for donkey's years. She asks the right questions, she really takes the time to get to know a business. She is super supportive and always available for questions which naturally, we do come up against when people are a little bit nervous. It's been a pleasure working with her but more importantly, I think the way she manages not just the client relationship, but also the subsequent workshops that she does - it really settled people. It really embeds the Insights Discovery work that we do. We've even taken one step further, whereby we've partnered with Blue Gnu to develop Team Wheels for us and that is fantastic because we use these with our project teams. I trust her, she is very much appreciated by the employees and compliments our team.

What do you enjoy about working with us?

I love the fact that Elaine is very proactive in sharing Insights infographics with us, whether it be on LinkedIn or with us as an HR team. It supports keeping the Discovery messaging alive in the business. Elaine is also very pragmatic and a complete pleasure to work with.

How does working with Elaine make you feel?

What I like about Elaine is you don't just go in thinking that you're going to get a notepad and a pen. You walk away with a stress ball, sticky notes, crayons, a blow up dolphin and a box of cookies - that's the experience with Elaine and I love it!

Lizanne Sampaio
HR Business Partner

PRMA CONSULTING

**What we do for PRMA:
Insights Discovery
Partner**



DB SCHENKER

What we do for them:
Insights
Discovery
Partner



How did you come to work with Blue Gnu?

I've worked with Elaine in two different businesses. I first met her when I worked for Nuffield Health. Since then, I've moved to DB Schenker and I'm pleased to be working with Elaine again. What prompted us to get in touch was the interest in Insights Discovery. We were looking for a programme to do with our managers - mainly self-awareness.

I know that I'm going to get good feedback from Elaine's workshops. She brings credibility to the HR team because we are measured on our delivery to the business - she's our recommendation and therefore, she's seen as part of our team and boosts our credibility.

Debbie Mansfield
HR Director

How does working with Elaine make you feel?

Elaine makes me feel very confident in her knowledge of her subject area. Also, she has such a great sense of humour! It just makes you feel amused and happy and really quite confident that she is going to be able to deliver a good programme!

What wellbeing changes have you noticed as a result of working with Blue Gnu?

We used Blue Gnu to run our Resilience Programmes over the winter period. We've had feedback that "the wellbeing programme you ran in the winter saved my life", which is amazing. It's hard to tell whether that person attended Elaine's course because we did a lot of other things over the winter period. That person could have attended a whole number of different things, but she was part of a programme that led to that type of comment.

What would you say to someone who has never worked with Elaine before but is thinking about doing so?

Elaine did a 'train the facilitator' session with the L&D team and gave us loads of confidence. She's engaging, encouraging, brings confidence to what you're doing and gives great feedback - both constructive and positive. Elaine makes it so easy, everything around her interactions, her humour and everything else - it's all positive. Our measurements are very much more about just that - the quality and quantity of the feedback you get from the people attending the courses, and then how the teams interact with those managers.

I've never had any poor feedback! So I guess the measure of success is that regular positive feedback that I receive from the business. She's recently helped me develop one of the team into a practitioner, which helps me from a retention point of view. The team member feels that they're learning something new and something different in their role, which is positive! I thought it was particularly good this year that Insights created the resilience modules and Blue Gnu were able to deliver the online courses during COVID. The fact that they were able to switch their way of doing things to meet the COVID world was very good and the courses they designed (like working in a remote world) were fantastic. It will be good to see what Insights offer to keep evolving and yes, absolutely I would always go to Elaine for it. If I moved from DB Schenker to go to another company, I would certainly introduce Blue Gnu again.

DB SCHENKER

What we do for them:
Insights Discovery
Partner



Elaine is somebody who believes in it, she feels passionate about her work, which then becomes contagious for the participants!

Elena Price
L&D Manager

Tell us about your working relationship with Blue Gnu?

I'm a big fan of Insights Discovery - I think it's great! What I find really interesting about working with Elaine is that she is continuously looking for how to branch Insights out into other aspects, be that Sales, Leadership, Communication or Working Under Pressure.

Has working with Blue Gnu saved you anything or improved anything?

It has saved me time! I don't think for a moment as a freshly trained facilitator, that I would do the workshops just as Elaine does. I also really enjoy the infographics that she sends regularly. I send this out to the company and receive really positive responses from the people. It also prompts further enrolments into workshops which is exactly the idea. People who have attended Blue Gnu workshops have gained insight into why certain things happen in a particular way, or why people behave as they do. And if somebody demands this or that, then it's not that they're being awkward or purposefully difficult - it's just their preference.

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What difference has working with Elaine made to you and what does it mean for your business having Elaine on board?

When you buy or buy into Insights Discovery, having somebody that you can absolutely trust to do a really fantastic job is so important. I would have no worries to bring Elaine in to a team of frontline workers or an executive team, and know that she would be able to engage with whatever team she was put in front of.

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Would you work with Elaine again in a similar capacity?

I would love to continue working with her! I've not just bought into the model, I've bought into Elaine and for us, Elaine's delivery works very well.”

Have you noticed any wellbeing or other changes in the team as a result of working with Blue Gnu in a Remote World?

Those who attended the Resilience workshop definitely enjoyed it. It gave them some practical tools, suggestions and ideas. Also, I think it shows them the company cares they are considered as an individual and they want to make sure that wellbeing is looked after. So yes, it is great, but in order to see serious behaviour changes, what we've done is a drop in the ocean. We need more and more and more!

What feelings are you left with personally when working with us?

Incredibly positive. Elaine is a person that you can talk to openly and I like her no-nonsense approach. I feel that I can say to her, if there is something I'm not 100% happy with or if I have any question marks, then I can always say it.

How does working with Blue Gnu make you feel and what impact is it having?

It's been amazing. Honestly, it has been brilliant! We did talk to other providers as well during our search for the right L&D partner but, what always put Elaine head and shoulders above everybody else was just how accessible she was. The others were so corporate but Elaine was interested in MarketOne and how she could help! I also felt that Elaine's personal style was just so much more down to earth. It was really important that the person we were working with understood MarketOne and the people on the team. I felt there was a great deal of learning that our managers can benefit from. Elaine provides that and she does it without patronising or dumbing it down.

What feelings are you left with when you're working with Elaine?

I'm excited! I'm really looking forward to continuing with the Leadership Programme and seeing the end results. I'm confident they will be great and it's already making a difference to us. I'm really confident it will continue to give us the tools we need and I want to do more. I see our relationship with Blue Gnu not ending at the end of the programme. I think there's loads more we can do together!

What difference has it made for your business?

It's opened up relationships within this Senior Team between people who didn't always gel so well. Two in particular are now understanding each other more than they have ever done before! That's the difference that it's made. Everybody's under pressure, meaning relationships were strained. I think it's opened people's eyes. We're much more **connected** together as a team and that's just the Insights Discovery element – plenty more to come!

What would you say to someone who has never worked with Blue Gnu but is thinking about it?

Elaine makes everything easy to and fun to learn. She really connects with people and how this can really impact on our day to day, working life. As a person, she is just a pleasure and a joy to have in the team. She has become like one of us – a part of our management team!

I wanted to use Elaine as if she were one of our team and that is how we are working with her. We're all really open with her and I share so much with her - we trust her implicitly and she's just so lovely!

Stephanie Wheeler
HR Manager

MARKETONE INTERNATIONAL

**What we do with them:
Leadership Development
Partner**



“We are in a very exciting transformation as a team and as a business. There are lots of things going on for the better and lots of change for the good. The Leadership Programme has facilitated that and a lot of that is down to the managers, how they see the business and how they're communicating with one another now with a common language.”

THE STORY

How we work with them: Insights Discovery Partner



Insights Discovery has opened up a two-way channel and I can now give feedback to my team very openly - I can use the language and I understand how to bring out the best in them. As a manager, I love reading my direct reports Insights profiles and understanding where I can help them improve.

Alex Smith
Managing Director

Tell us how you came to work with Blue Gnu?

I was prompted to get in touch with Elaine from an old friend. He was so evangelical about what she had done for his business – he said it was transformational and it was instant. As we were struggling with open communication, I was excited to get in touch with Elaine and am now too, completely sold on Insights Discovery and how it's changed our team's communication.

What feelings are you left with having worked with Elaine?

Elaine as a person is very uplifting. It's difficult to come away from her sessions feeling anything but energised, excited, and inspired! Her energy is infectious, and she is so passionate about Insights – you can't but take it seriously. You become an ambassador for it just by meeting her. Working with Elaine has made us more emotionally strategic about how we work with clients too – which is incredibly positive.

What did your business look and feel like before you worked with Elaine?

We've worked with Blue Gnu twice when the business was in two quite different shapes. The first in 2016 was with new team members and we were at a crossroads going from being a small business, to being ambitious about growth. We wanted to work out how best to integrate a very established Senior Team and a newer Junior Team and how to bridge the gap. The second in 2020, as we came together after making significant staff changes due to the pandemic. One of the best things that came out of our sessions was having the language to give the team more direct feedback – this is something we've really struggled with as most of us lead with sunshine yellow and find it very uncomfortable to have difficult conversations. Elaine's sessions instantly gave us a language to be able to discuss those feelings and it empowered everyone to be honest about their mood that day. For example, "I'm having a cool blue moment, I don't understand what you're asking" or "I'm having a sunshine yellow moment, I need someone else working with me on this as I'm finding it really boring". It allowed us to communicate as a team openly and honestly using a language we all understand.

What difference has working with Blue Gnu made for your business?

We now have a very strong language where we can talk about behaviours and preferences internally. We've also started informally profiling our clients to help us turn up the different energies where needed. All of that stuff is brilliant for casting teams to work with a whole range of clients – and that's something we would have never had before. As a company we invest quite heavily in coaching and training. We wanted something fun but useful to do on an away day. We got more out of it than we thought we would.

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Would you work with us again?

YES – we would 100% work with Elaine again. The first problem she solved was “re bonding” the team after working for a year apart. If we were to go 100% remote, we might do an annual check in – or if we were to make changes in the team again, Elaine will be the first person we call!

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THE STORY

Continued...



Our business was quite task focused before and now we are much more emotionally intelligent about working with each other.

Alex Smith
Managing Director

What impact did our work together have during the workshops themselves?

We were learning stuff instantly! The fact you get your profiles in the sessions and you have got genuine new views of yourself was amazing. I found it really motivating and it's enabled me to be honest about how I might feel on one day vs, the next. I've always felt that I was a Cool Blue in a Sunshine Yellow industry! Insights has allowed me to be honest. We are not trying to build a company of all the same types of people – it's important to have a variety and now the team can communicate in an honest and easy way too.

What would you say to someone who has never worked with us before but is thinking about it?

You need an external expert to help your team overcome different differences and difficulties. Insights Discovery is a brilliant way of opening-up internal dialogue and understanding more about your colleagues. Elaine's sessions offer this and have been worth their weight in gold for us.

What helps you justify your investment with Blue Gnu?

Seeing how everyone is really opening-up and benefiting from having an external partner – that is so worth it to us. It's not like we spent X thousand pounds and expect X in return. Seeing our people grow as a manager is enough – we understand that it does not work overnight. Our sessions with Elaine

allowed us to see and learn completely different things about the team. We've never been able to be that honest before – Elaine's session unlocked that. As we are client services, we often have frustrations and tensions because we all have different levels of experience. Often someone more senior might say, "well why can't that person just quickly do that piece of admin for me, or just quickly do that task?" and Elaine has given us the environment to say well actually, they may find it difficult to focus when not in an office or when they don't have a good structure. It's made us stop force fitting our people into this "perfect person" model and celebrate the unique skills they do have - and possibly putting them forward for a project that's better suited to them.

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What performance impact have you noticed in the team?

The team are certainly more engaged with each other and whilst working remotely it has been difficult to feel that. I felt before we did Elaine's session that we were not as engaged or connected as we could be. The session got everyone buzzing and it was a great time to reconnect and remind everyone that we are a team – regardless of working remotely during the pandemic!

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Why did you want to work with Blue Gnu?

We had the experience of working with Blue Gnu in the past. So for me, because we knew the quality of the work that they would do, we knew how people felt about their delivery from the feedback of our managers, and we knew that they were going to provide some really useful interventions. It was a no brainer really in terms of reaching out for Blue Gnu's support, because of the model that they used and what we were looking for in developing our managers. They use the Insights Discovery tools and that's been a massive eye opener for our managers to be able to see themselves individually, and how their individual styles can impact on others!

Was there something at Discovery UK that prompted you to get in touch with Blue Gnu again?

We got some feedback from our managers to say, this is what we're thinking of doing and Elaine's name and Blue Gnu came up from a number of our managers that had met her before. This is not about me, this is about what our managers want. Everything that Elaine could provide as part of the programmes that she delivers was what we wanted - it's that personal touch and the way she made people feel – connected.

What difference has working with Nicola made for you and what does that mean for the business?

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Have you noticed any performance changes in the team?

Yes, I would say that our managers following the first session were really on a massive high and this was because of Nicola's approach / personality and how she engaged with colleagues on those calls, and in those sessions. Going into the rest of the modules, colleagues were expecting that same level of energy and that same level of kind of support. Unfortunately, we decided to work with another training provider for phase 2 and their delivery / personality in general was quite different to Nicola's, so the team were left feeling a little flat – they wanted Nicola back!

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The feedback that Nicola and Elaine (Nicola in particular), had gathered from each of the sessions was fantastic and this was so that she could decide whether she needed to make any inflight adjustments.

We did a session review at the end of Nicola's first module and it was exactly what we had expected. The feedback about Nicola's personality, delivery style, the way that she listened and her approach to the presentations was fantastic. Much of this was from colleagues who had worked with Blue Gnu before so they were expecting Elaine, but Nicola suggested she join us for our launch meeting which was a great chance for everyone to meet her and that set the tone straight away. Nicola didn't sit back and wait for questions to be asked, she came straight in and said “this is who I am, I work with Blue Gnu, and this is what I can do to support you”. So, she straight away immersed herself in the meeting with our managers and it was well received from the very beginning.

There is no question about working with Blue Gnu again at all. And I say that on behalf of all the senior execs as well, because I know that they, even from the first time that we worked with Elaine when she was in the office, I remember there was this kind of air of excitement in the office - there was this buzz going on!

Paul Chorley
Training & Development Manager

DISCOVERY UK

What we do for them:
Leadership
Development Partner



Nicola Blackmore
Blue Gnu Lead Facilitator for
Discovery UK





Nicola Blackmore
Blue Gnu Lead Facilitator for
Discovery UK



To deliver via a virtual platform, it's very very difficult to get that engagement, buzz and that same kind of feeling from people. But Nicola has done that because of the feedback that we've received through the surveys! We've also had verbal feedback as well regarding how much people liked her and responded to her.

Paul Chorley
Training & Development Manager

What was your business justification for spending the money on developing your managers?

We felt starting with Insights Discovery allowed managers to reflect on who they are, where they are, what their style is and that was the whole purpose of our programme. If we didn't get this first 3 modules right, then the rest of the broader programme is going to fail. As a 'not for profit' organisation, we haven't got pots and pots of money to be able to spend so we were very open and honest with Elaine when we first approached her and we appreciated her open and honest response – explaining what she would provide to meet our needs and budget. It was through this initial conversation that Elaine suggested we work with one of her Associates and that was Nicola – who was fantastic! I'd be happy to work with Elaine or Nicola in the future because it's been a fantastic experience for us all.

What opportunities has working with Blue Gnu created?

It's opened up opportunities for our individual managers to be something else and something more than they were before. That's because the purpose of what Nicola delivered was for them to see who they are as an individual, their delivery style and how that impacts on other people. We love that the programme has allowed us to question our own delivery styles, our own abilities, our own attitudes, our own personalities, and our characters. For a lot of managers, they have a 'work mode' and an 'out of work' mode and in work, there's no harm in bringing in some of that 'out of work' mode to your style. Bringing that compassion, understanding and recognition of people and that's been when many of the changes have happened .

What would you say to someone who has never worked with Blue Gnu before but is thinking about it?

Do it, there's no question about it – it's as simple as that! If you have uncertainties or questions, speak to Elaine and have a frank / open conversation. She's so open / honest, if you're on the fence, just drop all the barriers and say "this is what we want – tell me what you can do". Elaine is brilliant at that - that's what I found with her. She was very open and honest with what she could or couldn't do and I don't think there was anything that she couldn't do! For anybody that's thinking about it, just stop thinking. You're thinking too hard about, just do it, because you won't be disappointed.

Would you work with Nicola and Blue Gnu again and are there any future problems you can think of that we might be able to help solve?

I'm quite sure there will be things that we're going to be looking at in the future. We will certainly reach out to Elaine and Nicola for support with that. Sadly and as much as I hate this, it always comes down to a little bit of money – what have we got available in the budget. I'm hoping as much as this whole situation (COVID-19) has been so bad across the world, as an organisation, we've made lots of changes and I think a lot of those changes are going to stay! Hopefully this should bring us in a little bit more money to invest into programmes like these. Another little win is the chocolates that Elaine gives out as well which was a lovely welcome surprise!

Did you measure the success of your programme with Blue Gnu?

Nicola was conducting feedback polls after each session to make sure that her style, pitch and the content was right each time. Nicola ran a total of 9 days for us, 3 instances of 3 different modules, and after each session the feedback allowed her to adapt and tailor the session to our team's style.