

Developing Leadership Presence - Case Study

By demonstrating confident leadership, an individual can transform how they are perceived and exert far greater corporate influence

Business Context

As a Director of a global manufacturer of pharmaceuticals and consumer products, the client was involved in influencing and shaping the regulatory environment for medicines in the UK. The role called for a confident and communicative approach to leadership. In order to enable our client to fully grasp the purpose of his role and exert the desired level of influence required on key stakeholders, it was felt that he would benefit from a coaching programme to clarify both his purpose and intention. The client's line manager stated that she wanted him "to start to believe what I see in him and to show it to the rest of the organisation".

The Challenge

An initial 360° feedback process was implemented to pinpoint key strengths and weaknesses, during which several principal figures in the business were openly consulted about the client's management style and personal approach. He was perceived as quiet, distant and sometimes uninterested. We therefore needed to devise a coaching approach that would bring the client's introverted personality more to the fore and give him more effective methods of acting and thinking that would enable him to extravert his personality more. By demonstrating the characteristics of a confident leader in his communication, it was felt that he would more effectively influence others and pull people together. The main aim of the coaching was to enable the client to project energy into any group he was working within and learn how, and when, to input into meetings - enabling him to achieve a greater impact and better results.

Coaching Approach

Our approach focused on connecting the client with the emotional context of what he wanted to achieve, both in relation to himself and to the people he needed to influence:

- A series of monthly sessions were focused on **engaging him both mentally and physically** in helping him build relationships, projecting a confident and inspiring presence, and changing people's perceptions of him
- He was actively encouraged to **challenge his own perceptions** about work to instil a more confident and energetic approach
- Critical interactions with significant individuals were discussed in advance to **prepare him to build connections** with people and to identify, create and grasp key opportunities
- The client's **methods of making personal connections were challenged**, shifting focus from background, experience and technical skills to the human factors which would enable him to truly engage people
- Positive conscious actions were implemented and encouraged in order to **develop new desirable unconscious habits** over time
- The coach sought **regular feedback** from the client's colleagues throughout the coaching process and this was fed back directly to the client to demonstrate and reinforce the positive impact his development was having.

Developing Leadership Presence continued

Business Impact

By developing the client's leadership presence and encouraging him to demonstrate the characteristics of a confident leader in his communication, he developed a far greater influence over people and decision making, and the ultimate motivation of his team members. The impact on the business as a result was significant, with the client seen to:

- Exert a far greater, longer-term influence on policy change in the UK
- Act in the capacity of visionary and motivator, bringing new thinking to provide a different strategic direction for the organisation
- Keep key people across the globe on-side, focused and motivated to initiate the required change
- Keep major topics front of mind and high on personal agendas.

As a direct result of his increasing presence and his power to influence key stakeholders, the client was promoted to Senior Director level within a few months of the end of the coaching programme.

Client & Colleague Perspective

The client stated at the end of the coaching programme that:

"I'm still amazed at the progress we made in a relatively short period of time. I really enjoyed the coaching; in particular the style that doesn't involve any ready-made solutions...but is tailored to the customer needs and own style. I'm really convinced that the changes and improvement I've achieved have a much more significant business and personal impact, and have a much better chance to be sustainable."

His business partners, colleagues, peers and management within the client company observed:

"He takes business ideas he's executed in one area, analyses them and strategically places them in conversations to influence efficiency in other areas of the business."

"He is an efficient networker whose speedy engagement and utilization of company knowledge and resources helps to drive processes and accelerate decision-making."

"He effectively networks within the external regulatory environment on key issues and policies, providing strategic insights."

A Sponsor Perspective on the Sustainability of Coaching

One year on from the coaching programme's completion, the client's sponsor was asked for their observations on how the client had changed.

"I saw a phenomenal transformation in that he really understood as an introvert (which is his comfort zone) that in the working environment he had to develop the ability to tap into different energy sources. He was handed the role of site lead for the larger organization because, as well as me, my boss also recognized the changes in his leadership style. He is now the most senior person on this site for regulatory affairs and is a role model for all the other site leads. They come to him for support and advice. He is seen as a mentor."

This feedback demonstrates both the immediate impact of coaching and also the power of the coach's work to enable long-term client self-sufficiency and sustainability of learning.

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