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COACHING CASE STUDY

Divisional HR Director preparing candidacy for Group HR Director role, FTSE 100 multinational industrial group

Background

Renowned as a brilliant fixer of tough employee and union issues, this client's talents had been tested and proved through a series of complex M&A activities followed by challenging restructuring and rationalization programmes. His success in ensuring good feelings and minimum disruption to business had been held up as exemplary even by the former owners of the acquired businesses.

Gap Analysis

As so often, the perceived strengths of an individual were also, viewed from another angle, weaknesses. Our client's hands-on immersion in the multiple cultures and contexts of the business were widely applauded and seen as key to his success; those same qualities raised questions in some minds about his ability to delegate, to achieve results by indirect influence, to be more a strategic leader than a street fighter.

Coaching Programme

Key to developing this client was the development of a high-level personal narrative / 'elevator pitch' based on his fundamental, and transferrable, strengths and insights. This enabled him to begin to create a perception of himself as holding a consistent and strategic position rather than moving rapidly between reactive situational positions. This, in turn, helped create the confidence in which he felt better able to delegate and influence: once his basic 'personal compass' was better articulated and understood, he felt able to trust others to navigate in sympathy with it.

At the same time, the coaching programme emphasized new dimensions of personal impact: gravitas, slowing down his interventions, working on breathing and posture, introducing a level of control over how he came across in everyday interactions.

Result

Somewhat to his surprise, our client found that the coaching programme had enabled him to free up his time and considerably reduce his travel diary, leading to a better work/life balance which he hadn't expected and hadn't even realized he needed. Within the workplace, he achieved a notable shift from being seen as a fixer, to being seen as a wise counselor, without losing the credibility that comes from being known as a man with his ear to the ground. Narrowly losing out on the Group HR role on grounds of age/experience, he instead transferred to head the function in the biggest and most strategic division of the business.

The Newman Partnership offers confidential personal coaching for leaders and their teams, with UK and international clients across the worlds of business, politics and sport. Based in London, we also have representation in Tokyo and Beijing.

Martin Newman, who heads the partnership, is also Director of The Leadership Council (www.theleadershipcouncil.co.uk), a nonprofit UK based network of senior leaders which regularly researches and publishes on topical issues around leadership.

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