

thenewmanpartnership

COACHING CASE STUDY

CFO preparing for transition to CEO role, FTSE 100 manufacturing business

Background

With an acute strategic mind and a firm grasp of finance, our client was clearly identified as the preferred, but not assured, internal succession candidate to the current CEO. What personal development did he need to explore in order to cement his position?

Gap Analysis

The shadow cast by our client was one characterized by brilliance, dismissiveness and worry. His own evident brilliance was much on display, leading others to feel undermined and 'lesser' in his presence; paradoxically he also conveyed a sense of concern and worry, his active and unrelenting focus on problems translating transparently into a pre-occupied, internalized, frowning manner as he sat around the leadership table or walked the corridors of the business.

Gifted businessman though he undoubtedly was, his personal impact was lacking in some essential qualities: the ability to create positive energy, and to create a sense of confidence in others.

Coaching Programme

Frequently asked by clients about 'the charisma thing', we are extremely wary of 'charisma' as an attribute to be pursued by leaders. Charisma, in our experience, can lead to a kind of blind followership which infantilises a business, increasing risk and crippling succession planning. A central tenet of our coaching approach is to encourage leaders to understand that 'confidence' comes not from trying to be the tallest person in your encounters, in fact quite the reverse: real confidence starts as an act of generosity, a display of confidence in those around you, the ability to make others feel that they can walk tall. The very best leaders know how to combine this ability to empower and show confidence in others, with a proper sense of holding others accountable.

We worked with our client to help him understand, role play, and put into practice this sense of generosity plus accountability.

More superficially, we worked with him to help him see and take control of the negative sense of worry betrayed by his tone and body language.

Result

Our client is now seen as a far more rounded contender for the leadership of the business. We continue to work with him on critical meetings and messages as he prepares for the moment of succession.

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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