

thenewmanpartnership

COACHING CASE STUDY

Group CEO, implementing a major direction change in a multinational b2b

Background

This client was parachuted in to a long established business which was perceived to have lost its way. An outsider, with a background in consulting followed by VC-style executive experience, and from outside the standard cultural 'anglosphere', our client had to turn the ship around.

Gap Analysis

Our client was a man in a hurry, with a clear diagnostic of the problem and an equally clear plan to fix it and, beyond that, a vision for growth. The city responded extremely positively: the man, and his plan, were at the highest level of credibility, and the sheer force of his energy and intellect ensured total buy-in from the board and his senior leadership team.

The gap was around the engagement of the business as a whole and globally; second, third and fourth tiers of managers and workers who in many cases felt a deep emotional connection with the history and former trajectory of the business, and who were left feeling bewildered and sidelined in the incoming CEO's brave new world.

Coaching Programme

Our coaching programme began by helping the CEO understand the depth of emotional connection to 'the old'. From this, we were able to help him see that unless he matched and supplanted this with a powerful emotional connection to 'the new', the operational transformation of the business would remain frozen.

We developed extensive role play interactions for our client, in every case moving him from his default position of seeking only a transactional result from an encounter (typically, compliance with a directive and acceptance of a target/timetable), to seeking a parallel relationship result based on emotional connection at both a personal level, and at the level of connection to his programme for the future.

We also challenged our client to stretch his own cultural comfort zone and engage on sympathetic terms with the very different cultures he encountered in a global workforce predominantly based in Europe and the Americas.

At the same time, we worked with our client's HR team to get him to face up to some difficult choices on the need for turnaround or replacement of several senior leaders who were seen as change blockers.

Result

Employees felt respected, and began to see themselves as co-developers of the future rather than as embattled defenders of the past. The turn around, at first faltering in its delivery (triggering a profit warning), finally began to build internal momentum. We continue to support the CEO and his renewed top leadership team for significant internal and external interventions, ranging from leadership conferences to Capital Market Days.

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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