

Business DNA Case Studies:

Leadership Development - Individual



THE CHALLENGE

A worldwide IT business appointed a young highly qualified COO from the external market place with a view to significantly improving the service provided to some of the biggest corporations in the world. His brief was to shake the business up. Knowing this mandate could potentially cause significant interruption to a business that had to be on line and available to worldwide business 24/7 the corporate office suggested he retain the services of an executive coach to support him in the transition into the business.



The COO quickly understood the value of using an executive coach not only to provide a neutral space for him to assess what was happening to ensure quality decisions were made, but the executive coach also brought a level of people management experience to the coaching relationship from which the COO could draw.

THE PROBLEM

The new COO though highly skilled and capable of carrying out his significant brief was overwhelmed by the degree of hostility and resentment from the previously acting COO. It manifested itself in argumentativeness and openly challenging business and strategic decisions in front of more junior staff. The COO realized that the business could not afford to lose the expertise of the hostile individual at this juncture nor could his behavior be allowed to penetrate any more deeply into the business. This employee was a star performer making it imperative for the COO to understand how to build a relationship with him for the good of the business.

THE BUSINESS DNA SOLUTION

The DNA Behavior group used the DNA Behavior Discovery & Performance Process with the COO and the mentor to ensure the mentor was a right fit with the COO.

Using the DNA Behavior Process to uncover the core talents, behaviors and potential obstacles to the COO role the mentor was also able to expose whether or not the COO's style of leadership had constancy of purpose, consistency in standards and clarity of communication without which this could be adding to the potential to develop a breeding ground for difficult behavior.

IMPLEMENTATION AND STRATEGY

Using the outcomes of the DNA Behavior Discovery & Performance Process the mentor worked with the COO to help him understand how best to engage this difficult employee who clearly thought himself smarter than the COO and wanted all to acknowledge his superiority by speaking with great authority and thinking they had all the right answers. The COO -

- Chose particular times to acknowledge the difficult staff members superior knowledge
- Accepted suggested courses of action from him and then asked his opinion on how to build a further course of action on his suggestion
- Appointed him to chair staff meetings where his particular skill set would prove most effective
- Demonstrated openly to all staff his approach to working co-operatively with this staff member whilst still retaining his COO authority to veto suggestions when necessary.

As the staff began to witness the COO's leadership style they quickly fell into a pattern of waiting to hear what the COO had to say. Slowly the difficult employee's hold over other staff and their opinion weakened.

The next step suggested by the DNA Mentor was for the COO to discuss with the employee the strategy he had applied to understanding how to work with him and to be transparent in discussing with him how the DNA Behavior Discovery & Performance Process had helped him and to suggest he complete the process so they could show a united front to the business. The employee agreed.

OUTCOME

The previously difficult employee through understanding his and the COO's behavioral and communication style began to work effectively together – the employee becoming the COO's greatest advocate. The Corporate office saw such an improvement in the business and the management team that they authorized the DNA Behavior Discovery & Performance Process be completed by all senior and middle management.