



Case Study:
Leadership Development
The Route to Managing Director





Sales Director, Robert , was uncertain about stepping up to the role of UK Managing Director. His organisation selected Rialto to produce a customised Leadership Development programme which would assist Robert in recognising his talent and develop his leadership capabilities

THE CHALLENGE

Robert was considered a top performer for the UK operation of a business service provider. Members of the Group Board could see his potential and his ability to lead the UK division. Robert was not convinced about stepping up to the role of UK Managing Director for a £20 million turnover division. It meant leaving his comfort zone and a very successful track record as a Sales Director who delivered. The board wanted him to be convinced of his own potential and have the desire to embrace the position of MD.

THE SOLUTION

Key stakeholders were asked to provide an assessment of Robert's potential and what capabilities he could contribute to the new role. The results demonstrated that Robert was innovative and extremely client focussed. He had established concrete long term relationships with key clients and was able to interpret their needs to ensure that products and services met their requirements.

Robert was straight talking and prepared to challenge the status quo. He would not accept "no" and would find ways internally and externally to overcome challenges.

On the other hand his very open, straight talking nature meant he did have a tendency to unwittingly upset employees as well as team members within the organisation.

His frustration and impatience were apparent and these behaviours had a negative affect on others. He had a high IQ but his EQ did not match it.

Robert was asked to consider his career options and the different routes he felt were open to him. He also agreed to explore his emotional intelligence and how his way of working impacted on those around him.

It was important that all concerned were communicating clearly about their objectives and that these were aligned to form the agenda of Robert's customised coaching programme. It was agreed that:

1. Robert would define a future role in the company that would achieve the organisation's growth targets and fulfil his career aspirations. The UK operation was the largest single component of the global business and the organisation was going through difficult times in the economic downturn. It was therefore paramount that the UK division was a success.

2. Robert and his Rialto coach would explore and define his leadership style. What were the leadership qualities of a Managing Director and the potential gap in skills, experience and style that he faced? How would he adapt to the demands of the MD role and different expectations on him?

What were the benefits of changing his interpersonal approach and understanding the emotional landscape better? The coaching programme would support this exploration and learning process through access to contemporary research, leadership thinking and thorough reflection on Robert's own skills and experience.

3. Investigate the potential of a future role on the board and whether the Sales role or the MD role would better serve his career in the future?

Rialto utilised a range of specialist profiling tools to help Robert better understand his way of seeing the world especially his introvert nature and how it impacted on his decision making. Leadership models such as Kotter, Adair and Rialto research were used to examine his leadership capability versus other approaches.

His coach explored how Robert operated as a leader in his organisation, how he struggled with delegation and allowing his sales team to take over contact with clients.

Our coach then helped him to understand the wider demands of the MD role in his business and how his leadership might need to change in terms of team selection, delegation, setting expectations, managing performance and clear communication.

Also assessed were the benefits and potential risks that the move to MD would bring him personally. This in-depth exploration allowed Robert to understand his leadership style, the value he brought to the organisation and the areas of weaknesses needed to improved through his coaching programme.

The programme allowed Robert to see that the challenge of the wider remit and the potential to lead his own team. This was a great motivator for him and he recognised that he did have the potential to grow into the MD role.

THE RESULTS

Robert stepped up as MD at a time when his skills and energy were just what the organisation needed.

The Rialto coaching programme was extended to support his assimilation into the MD role to ensure he had the support and chance to succeed.

Robert has created an excellent team in the UK and increased employee engagement and performance. This was due to his team working together with a shared vision and driving to succeed in very challenging economic circumstances.

He set out a clear vision for the UK organisation and communicated this through team meetings around the UK. His straight forward style became a strength as he communicated business strategies and results in ways the team had not experienced before which increased employee engagement.

His honest leadership style was welcomed. He focused on product quality and providing maintenance service which improved customer satisfaction.

His inspiring and innovative leadership style was recognised by the Board who then asked him to take on additional responsibility for another part of the business in Europe.

Robert has embraced the change and is enjoying the new challenges. The UK operation has won new clients and is now leading the global business in terms of performance.

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