

Achievable Alignment

The Financial Director of a leading Power Generation organisation found it difficult to deal with an under performing Finance Manager. Here's how Rialto helped him to develop the skills needed.

The Challenge

Rialto was approached by a leading Power Generation organisation to assist their Financial Director who was having challenges in managing a Finance Manger's performance.

The Finance Manager's behaviour of doing his work in his own time frame and to his own priorities meant that key financial information that needed to be provided to Group Finance and the Board of Directors by specific deadlines, frequently did not get provided on time.

In order to meet deadlines it would require the Finance Manager to work the necessary hours in order to achieve this. However this cultural norm was not achieved and the Finance Manager regularly left the office at 5pm, leaving deadlines un met

Rather than raise the matter of continually missing important deadlines and take an approach that reinforced that the level of performance was unacceptable, the Financial Director would accept the excuses given by the Finance Manager and would do the work himself often working until ten o'clock in the evening to ensure company deadlines were met.

When the Rialto coaching team first met the Group Financial Director he was clearly showing signs of visible stress.

The Solution

There were two sets of objectives agreed with the Financial Director for alignment coaching which were:

- To coach the Financial Director to be able to communicate a number of difficult messages to the Finance Manager in order to help him understand his lack of performance and its implications.
- To work with the Finance Manager through the following 3 stages of the alignment process:

Self-understanding and self-assessment
Exploration of options and development of a business case for:

Option 1: Re-contracting the current role against agreed performance and/or behavioural objectives.

Option 2: Re-engineer the existing role or agree to move internally into a new role which suited to their capabilities.

Option 3: To leave the organisation without severance.

The Rialto Executive Coach worked with the Financial Director, in order to help him communicate a number of difficult messages to the Finance Manager about his performance and behaviour.

The outcomes included:

- Enabling the Finance Manager to better understand and accept the areas that he needed to improve and how his current performance did not fit the role expectations.
- Communicating the message that the status quo cannot continue, but there will not be a possibility of compulsory redundancy and redundancy payment.

Due to the lack of a positive relationship between the Financial Director and the Finance Manager, it was agreed that the Financial Director would meet the Finance Manager over the next 3 to 4 weeks.

The Rialto Executive Coach worked with the Financial Director intensively over the next 3 weeks, to help him prepare for these meetings and coached him on how to manage these meetings and handle the Finance Managers predicted responses.

This involved the coach helping the Financial Director to:

- Develop a job description for the role that the Finance Manager currently occupies in the new organisation structure.
- Prepare for the meeting with the Finance Manager to communicate this job description.
- Prepare for and communicate difficult messages, by providing a framework and process for communicating these difficult messages.
- Identifying examples of critical incidents which are factual and accurate, which were used to support these difficult messages.

- Anticipate and manage a range of emotional reactions to the messages.
- Develop the use of necessary active listening, questioning skills and non-verbal communication skills.
- Be able to challenge the Finance Manager in a non-directive way to accept how his current behaviour and attitude is contributing to the situation

In order to achieve these outcomes, some of the methods used required the coach to develop the skills of the Financial Director in delivering solutions for various situations. In some cases role playing and talking through the planned meeting with the Finance Manager provided the Financial Director with the necessary techniques to overcome any challenges that may arise in the meeting.

The Results

The Financial Director was successfully coached to develop new skills, techniques and messages. As a result, the situation changed dramatically from the first meeting that had taken place with the Finance Manager.

Prior to the intervention there had been minimal performance messages delivered to the Finance Manager by the Financial Director. The delivery of consistent messages about performance led to the Finance Manager recognising he could no longer continue his prevailing performance. Therefore, he quickly conformed to the expectations of the role in terms of behaviour and performance.

Due to the outstanding results of phase one of the Rialto alignment process i.e. achievement of the role performance expectations, it was not necessary for phase two to be carried out.

For further information regarding Rialto services contact us on:

Telephone: +44 (0)20 3043 8652 Email: jsmart@rialtoconsultancy.com

www.rialtoconsultancy.com