

CASE STUDY

A self-made success, this IT manager was struggling in his latest promotion to a very senior role. The CIO had great expectations for this manager yet his first 6 months resulted in poor 360° feedback results and low morale within his team. Four months of intensive counselling, as the first part of an extensive coaching program, transformed this manager from "problem-child" to "star".



Senior IT Manager - Global Investment Bank

"No one ever told me what a manager's supposed to do !"

Understandable ambition and pride lead people to seek success in their careers. Particularly when the rewards, including prestige and wealth, can be so attractive.

This self-made manager was without formal qualifications yet was able to rise up the ranks of this organisation's IT department to his very senior position. A promising career as a footballer was cut short due to injury so this manager channelled his ambition and hyper-competitive energy into his professional career in IT.

Coupled with a very high desire to please, proving to himself that he could succeed, this manager's energy and drive served him well, resulting in promotions and the accompanying rewards. He took full responsibility for the outcomes of his team and held himself and others to very high standards. "When you are around I know that everything will work well" was the praise his CIO had given him and was the main reason for his latest promotion.

However, whilst highly successful in getting the best from himself, as a manager he was unable to get the best out of others.

This manager was known for poor delegation and aggressive behaviour. He was caught in a self-perpetuating cycle of distrusting his team and therefore he completed most of the work himself and only distributed minor tasks to the team. He was progressively infantilising¹ his team. They were never allowed to work things out for themselves and learn to take on more responsibility before this manager jumped in to "save" the situation. Like children who are never allowed to make mistakes because their parents are highly protective, these employees never 'grew up' into their roles.

Counselling began with a psychologically-based assessment of the true motivators for behaviour. Once it was established that this manager's distorted, self-perception were at the root of his desire to over-satisfy his superiors

(to the detriment of his team), I set about changing his self-identity. Simultaneously I provided carefully modulated steps in behaviour change using an action learning approach. The aim was to build his self-esteem through cognitive therapy (intensive counselling to alter self thought). Then to build his confidence through guiding him to successfully implement daily tasks with his team.

After 4 months of weekly sessions and intensive work this manager was rewarded with the ultimate confirmation of successful progress. The CIO, on one month's vacation, appointed this manager as acting-CIO.

There is much more work to do to embed and extend the initial progress made but this first intensive period of counselling has laid the important ground work for lasting behaviour change. He is well on the way to becoming a real leader, able to lead in any circumstance and any role.

¹ to keep in or reduce to an infantile state, to treat or regard as infantile or immature - Dictionary.com