

CASE STUDY

Performance Coaching

This Provost was struggling in his most senior role to date. He was uncomfortable wielding power leading to poor outcomes and a slow change process. Coaching provided a new confidence and advice on how to manage peers as well as wield power more subtly and diplomatically. As a result, Executive team relationships strengthened



Provost - G8 University

Leading change requires growth of oneself

As a person from humble beginnings, the considerable success this Provost had achieved in his academic career was a source of great pride. In addition, he believed in hard work and assumed that all others in a similar role to his to be of like mind - responsible, interested in the good of the institution above personal interests and ultimately making decisions for the benefit of all, even if it conflicted with self-interest.

It was therefore a rude awakening when he was confronted with colleagues and subordinates who did not behave according to these values. For 12 months this Provost had persisted in his previously successful leadership style of providing total commitment to the organisation, respectfully consulting with colleagues and being an exemplary role model in negotiation and compromise.

As the Vice Chancellor's second-in-command he was charged with driving the university change program in key areas. This required working across portfolios and facing tough choices about staff and practices across the university.

There was minimal cooperation from leadership team colleagues, especially on the major changes. And whilst the Vice

Chancellor was supportive he was too often dealing with external issues and stakeholders, unable to persist with the detail to fully support the Provost in his decisions.

Progress was occurring but it was slow, arduous and cumbersome. The Provost was beginning to become demotivated by the drawn out nature of every key decision, too much landing in his inbox for attention and too little for others to manage.

Frustration with the slow pace of change led the Provost to seek coaching from Ryk, hoping to discover some, as yet untried technique, to drive change through the organisation.

Coaching began with an examination of the relationship between the Provost and his job. The Provost's interpretation of the role was challenged as to whether it was appropriate for the circumstances. Also questioned, was whether the Provost's expectations regarding the behaviour from colleagues was realistic and whether it was right to expect the Vice Chancellor to intervene in every issue or to mediate in every dispute.

Ryk carefully unpicked the Provost's relationships with the role demonstrating how he was taking responsibilities too personally and therefore unable to objectively

assess outcomes and options. He was also taking too personally any resistance received from executive colleagues. This emotional over-investment clouded his judgement delaying action and allowing others to grab the initiative on key change proposals.

The biggest challenge for this Provost was to learn how to wield power effectively and diplomatically but with the appropriate assertiveness to get timely results. The Provost needed to also understand that a more assertive, without being aggressive, style would not compromise his values nor his commitment to the organisation and allow him to more effectively apply his skills.

Coaching worked to redefine the Provost's relationship with his role, establish more realistic goals to achieve and supported change in leadership style that was more assertive, yet more diplomatic.

An action learning approach to coaching was vital to the success of this coaching program, as day-to-day experiences were used to slowly but surely refine behaviour to deliver better decision results.

The Provost was reinvigorated for the challenges ahead, able to achieve results faster and build a more cohesive leadership team

PERSONAL USE ONLY
NOT FOR GENERAL DISTRIBUTION

