

Increasing effectiveness in an uncertain environment

Issue

Ian was HR Manager in a large international services company. He had been told confidentially that he was the preferred candidate for the HR Director's role which was due to become vacant when the current Director retired. The coaching process covered a 6 month period during which the client needed support to deal with the uncertainty this posed.

Action

The coaching focussed initially on helping Ian to be proactive and position himself positively with the board. He believed that the director's role should be more strategic and wanted to sell the role in a way that would add most value. The decision was made to appoint him but the existing director was finding it hard to accept he was leaving and was resistant to changes being proposed.

Throughout the process Ian needed help to manage positively through the uncertainty and the difficulties posed by the previous director. The coaching helped him to diffuse his emotions and channel his energy productively giving him a greater sense of control. It also gave him some tools and techniques to be able to distance himself from the events that caused him most stress and he was then able to focus on the things that were important.

The coaching provided a sounding board to help Ian clarify his own ideas about the proposed role and about his vision for the company. The coach probed him to test his thinking and then helped him think about other people's views and how he could positively influence them. This prompted him to ask for more feedback from people and helped him shape an important presentation in a way that would address the issues the company was facing.

In preparation for the new role the coach challenged him on areas that may need further development. Personality testing was used to help this process and it became clear how important it was to be prepared to take a stand even when this felt uncomfortable. Bearing in mind the bigger vision he was striving for Ian found that as he became aware of when he might be holding back then he naturally spoke up to make sure his views were heard.

The Outcome

He demonstrated to key people how the HR department could help the company achieve its strategic objectives and created a powerful role which led him to have a major impact on the leadership of the company. He was well prepared for the role, with a clear vision, the ability to focus on the important issues and the confidence to do something about them.

Comments

From Coach:

Ian had a powerful vision which could have been diluted by the history of the company and the interference from the previous director. Being able to talk this through enabled him to clarify and refine it and then plan how to implement it without being drawn into unhelpful politics.

From Client:

In uncertain times, it is often difficult for a manager to turn to colleagues for guidance, particularly when this may be viewed as a sign of weakness. Rachel provided an impartial view, and gave me the necessary reassurance and encouragement to test my ideas.