



The Big Blue Box Ltd

A Game-Changing Moment

B felt under real pressure and had considered postponing the coaching session but decided that he could use a few minutes for himself. These few minutes would prove to be a game changing moment!

B's business had only been recently acquired by private equity but already, just days later the impact of change was being felt. We met as he was beginning to consider how this change of ownership would affect him, his team and his function.

His regional role meant that his performance and leadership would be critical to the new owners. There would be monthly reviews of performance instead of quarterly, the language had changed, costs and headcount were being reassessed against given ratios and alignment would be required.

B understood that he would be required to present his plans in the near future and was concerned to focus on preparing his business plan.

'I need some ideas on preparing a business plan – I bought some Business Planning software but it seems to have such incredible detail in it, I don't think it's right for what I want to do. What format should I use for the plan?'

B was straight into the detail and he has already begun to adjust the numbers on the existing plan. The discussion immediately highlighted another problem.

'We have no process that reports on the measures they are requiring, we are all about turnover and they want EBITDA, and they are also pushing P & L responsibility downwards and we don't do that.'

It was clear that we needed to take a different approach.

We stopped, and reflected on the 'big picture' and considered the matter from the owner's point of view. Why had they acquired the business, how did it fit into their portfolio, who were they and what else had they done, what was the experience of their other acquisitions? Had anyone listened to what they had been saying? And so on!

A few challenging questions had given B an insight. The business plan was the last thing to do! He knew nothing about the new owners, their method or ambitions. He and his colleagues had been fighting a defensive campaign to protect their business, colleagues and interests. B now began to see what he needed to do.

We broke for a cup of tea.

'That was a bit of a game changing moment, I would have gone down a very different path. I've got a lot to do! I need to'

And so an action plan was developed that would enable B to gather the necessary intelligence to write the appropriate business plan for the new situation.

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