



## The Big Blue Box Ltd

### Adapting To A New Culture

#### The Background

C is a very bright young, high potential manager, with an international background. She has recently moved into this large complex organisation after her early formative career in a global brand. Her role puts her in contact with internal clients.

Her manager described the background.

*'C is perhaps not settling. ...We have a conflict avoidance culture... Her interaction with others is good but she is seen as being 'loud' about it, larger than life, and 'in your face' ....She always seems to be running from one thing to the next, but her clients are not seeing delivery. ...She has a difficult client but she just seemed to miss a trick when she had the opportunity to engage him.'*

#### The Process

In our first meeting we discussed what C would like to achieve through the coaching sessions. The impression created by the objectives was somewhat 'defensive' – how to cope, how to adapt, to manage, rather than aspirational and 'moving towards' an exciting goal.

Our conversation then moved to look at her story to date. C had a number of experiences in her life and career that had significantly shaped her approach. She had a sophisticated home background but had been bullied, received counselling and experienced redundancy.

Her most recent employment history had been within a powerful culture.

*'I was driven to achieve, it had very overt leadership, a continually rising bar for performance – it was a very powerful influence on my style'.*

The influence of her previous employment and experiences in her life and career were clearly shaping C's style.

*'I'm not using my full skill set, I feel the need to use it, it's been months of torture. I'm wondering if I should go back to my previous employer as I am beginning to question my adaptability, flexibility and effectiveness.'*

The difficulties that C was experiencing were clear, and the importance and urgency was emphasised by the tears.

*'I'm finding that my colleagues are talking about me behind my back, I don't want to be perceived as arrogant.'*

There was a clear sense of history repeating itself, that C was trying hard – too hard, but not being effective, that this was increasing the stress which made her style even less flexible.

As the conversation continued so C began to reflect.

*'My style is definitely Red! GO GO GO!...Do I need to be more patient? ...Should I pull back?... Perhaps I need to go easy on myself?'*

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Contact: 1 The Laurels, Oatlands Drive, Weybridge, Surrey. KT13 9LF

Tel: voice/fax: 01932 843933 [www.thebigbluebox.co.uk](http://www.thebigbluebox.co.uk)

Registered Office: Suite 1, Concept House, 23 Billet Lane, Hornchurch, Essex, RM11 1XP

Registered in England No: 4401635

## **Adapting To A New Culture**

### **The Outcomes**

By the end of the first session C had begun to explore how others may be seeing her, preparing to work on her 'self-awareness', to recognise her own drives and behaviours – to know and manage herself - before she could be effective with other people.