



The Big Blue Box Ltd

Exceeding the Brief

Sometimes the coaching brief indicates a set of expectations regarding outcomes, but the coaching conversation often creates the time and the opportunity to explore issues more deeply, such that the initial sponsor's brief is superseded. And in this 'turn round' case, the potential that is released from this individual has strategic and reputational benefits for the employing organisation.

The Background

The briefing from K's 'sponsor' indicated that K was not performing. He had a number of difficulties at work, at home, with his colleagues, was underperforming against his previous assessments and not achieving his potential. There had been frank conversations specifying how K could achieve the higher grading he was seeking. In the honesty of the briefing conversation K's manager said:

'K has done some good work in the past ...but it may be time for him to move on, I'd really like you to help make sure that if he does leave that he leaves in a good way, with a good reputation... He's thinking of leaving and changing his career ...so see if you can help him...we'd like to look after him'.

K had worked for the organisation for most of his career and had become the 'expert' in his area, and had provided industry leading solutions in his subject area. But the competition had now caught up and K was not providing the innovation to retain his organisation's position and reputation in the market.

The Process

Our coaching sessions explored K's immediate career history and the current situation. As trust developed so we were able to open up some more sensitive areas, such as his private life and relationship, family situation, his other interests and the complexity of his life.

'My relationship is breaking down....Actually, work is a refuge from my home life!'

His openness allowed him to explore his real feelings, and take long hard look at his situation. Slowly the complexity began to open up and opportunities to make decisions to simplify his life were taken, this created some 'space', to 'push back' and to take control.

We turned our attention to K's job, and found him taking on too much, doing it all himself, not sharing, delegating, negotiating or pushing back. In short he had been trapped in a series of tasks with no spare capacity and little planning. We explored and identified the variables and the opportunities to create flexibility. There was a moment of insight and K's energy levels rose as he began to see the benefits.

Later, a shared session was facilitated with his managers and where the relationship was 're-contracted'. Such was the change in K's motivation that together they were able to identify a

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significant opportunity that would enable K to apply his specialist knowledge and reputation into a new area. Coaching support was continued.

The Outcomes

Meeting with K to conclude the series of sessions we were able to assess the impact. So significant had the 'new opportunity' been that K's reinvigorated expertise, creativity and reputation had enabled him to develop and implement a strategy that was 'industry leading'. As an outcome of this success K has developed his role as an expert, a speaker at industry conferences and positioned his organisation as the sector leader, regaining its premium rating reputation in this market.

Here is K's report on the coaching.

"I have benefited from Chris' coaching on two occasions over the last six years and now am with him for the third.

The first time Chris worked with me to understand feedback on certain aspects of my leadership style. This was handled very objectively and the action plan put together turned out to be very successful.

The second intervention in 2011 was handling a more difficult situation as I was in a very difficult place due to issues in my private life – caring for an aged parent, a relationship breakdown, health problems as well as career issues.

Chris helped me work on a personal plan so I could see all the pressures I was under and advised me to look at those demands on my time that I could exit from, so I could concentrate and focus on the more important issues

Chris brings a willing ear to listen to you and does not have his own agenda and therefore is focussed on you, not forcing his views on you. Suddenly there will be an incisive comment that etches itself on your brain The "no one will step up until you step down" was momentous.

I didn't implement all of Chris' recommendations – on one particular case I didn't feel mentally strong enough- in retrospect it would have been easier for me if I had."

Reviewing the 'turnaround' in K's situation, in summary his manager reported:

'I think K is in a very good space indeed, and I think his coaching has been a significant part of that. Thanks for your continued work with K - I think it has really paid dividends.'