



## The Big Blue Box Ltd

### **Finding Time For Reflection**

The impact of coaching isn't always immediate, the effects can be delayed and can ripple out beyond the individual to affect team performance. Coaching for an individual may cause - or require - change in the surrounding structures. Sponsors should be prepared for unexpected outcomes.

#### **The Background**

M had recently been promoted in to her current role within the senior leadership team. She was responsible for several customer facing teams, geographically dispersed within a retail business environment.

M had been promoted from within the organisation where her experience of managing a local team had given her operational and supervisory experience. Her style of managing people and operations was very 'hands-on'.

#### **The Process**

The coach was unfamiliar with the particular business and wanted to take the opportunity to hear about the business from M's perspective. A key part of the coaching plan was to have a 'walkabout' tour of her business units, giving the opportunity for the coach to understand the background and establish the working coaching relationship. The process of asking simple questions about the business, and other factors, - of seeking to understand - was important in establishing trust, openness, understanding and good communication in the early stages of a coaching relationship. M was able to see her area of the business objectively, and the actual performance of her teams became obvious.

Continuing the observation together we 'Mystery shopped' the competition to see how they performed in direct comparison. We were able to establish a bench mark for comparison. Any potentially defensive behaviour from M during this phase was minimised, facilitated by questioning, listening and reflecting, and because the coach was objective and independent, non-judgemental and allowed M to own the process.

Several days later, after this initial coaching session, and finding time to relax, M reflected upon the 'walkabout'. There was a quite sudden moment of realisation - that she was focused upon the 'day to day', was missing the bigger picture, that she was operating at a level below her new leadership team grade and that her management style had not led to her teams' leaders taking responsibility.

#### **The Outcome**

With her new insight and resolved to make a difference, we practiced techniques for raising commitment, ownership and performance within M's team leaders and improving interpersonal skills for M herself. M's division went on to achieve increased performance against targets, corporate-wide breakthrough levels of performance and achieved prizes at a company awards ceremony.

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