



## The Big Blue Box Ltd

### Meetings, Emotional Intelligence and The Art of War

Drawing inspiration from both Emotional Intelligence and The Art of War, a military icon may not seem an obvious coaching combination, but the impact for a senior leader was significant, challenging him to practice a thoughtful, patient and strategic approach.

#### Background

For many leaders part of their success comes from effectively managing relationships with others within their organisation. But many operational managers struggle with the subtle and intangible political and strategic approach that can be essential. N has been identified as a potential senior leader but he has recently been passed over for a promotion.

#### The Process

He was failing to engage his colleagues, who clearly saw N's behaviour, and any allegiance to him, as risky. Very quickly it was clear that N's feelings about his new boss were affected by anger, which affected his judgement.

N would take any opportunity to challenge his boss. He described a recent board meeting that had been a set-back to him.

We also needed a framework that N could build upon for his strategic thinking. We used a military metaphor to examine his behaviour in that recent, difficult board meeting.

Some tough questions followed:

- What was the likely outcome from an 'attack'?
- Was this the right moment to 'attack' - or was it just an opportunity?
- Was a board meeting the right place to challenge his boss openly?
- Had he marshalled his resources,
- What was he hoping to achieve, what was his plan?
- What did he gain? Was it worth the expense,
- Had N assessed his 'allies', were they aligned with him?
- Why did he need to 'attack'?
- Could he have achieved his objective another way?'
- Was this the hill N wanted to die on?'

It was clear to N that he had made a tactical, and strategic blunder!

*'You always find these simple phrases that make the point so clear....  
The thing I'm getting from this is to learn to really challenge myself.'*

We introduced the concept of Emotional Intelligence and focused upon raising N's Self Awareness, and then his Awareness of Others. This would help him to avoid over –reacting - being emotionally 'hijacked', and also help him to engage influentially with colleagues.

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## **Meetings, Emotional Intelligence and The Art of War**

### **The Outcomes**

Using emotional intelligence we worked to raise N's self awareness and self management capability, and his awareness and influence of others.

To raise his strategic awareness N's was to read and reflect upon The Art of War, by Sun Tzu, written in China over 2000 years ago. This explores the guidance, thinking and behaviour for the commander of an army, where the principles include 'Know yourself and know your enemy', and 'Outwit the enemy, don't outfight him' - Win without fighting!

There is a powerful, significant cross over between the two apparently different approaches.