



# Transition Coaching to Senior Leadership

## Financial Services, Asset Management Client Story

The transition of a regional director into a role leading people who had been his peers, coupled with increased responsibility for developing business growth strategy.

### **The organisation – Context**

A leading asset management business in the financial services, sector with a strategic focus to grow assets under management through outstanding performance and positive relationships with key distributors.

The distribution & sales function traditionally favours the promotion of people from within its ranks, where possible, rewarding those who have proved themselves to be consistent performers in delivering their own results.

### **The leader – Context**

Following eleven years of success growing sales & distribution in his role as a regional relationship director, he was encouraged to apply for the national role of Managing Director of UK Distribution when the position became vacant.

He was previously unaware that he had been identified as the natural successor to the role of MD.

Whilst well respected within the business, and never afraid to share his insight with the senior leadership team, he had no formal experience of leading others.

Encouraged by the acknowledgment of his performance & talents, he applied and was

successful in the appointment of Managing Director of UK Distribution.

### **The challenges – for the organisation and the leader**

As a sales function, this business had confidence that the newly appointed MD of distribution had the qualities and capability to succeed in the role.

The business required a sales leader that could lead a team of senior, highly technical regional directors, managing key external relationships, drive cohesion across other internal functions and form strategy for the changing demands of asset management.

He felt that he had a number of key strengths to bring to the role including;

- Excellent external relationships.
- Respect of his peers.
- Respect across other internal business functions.

In contrast, his vulnerabilities included;

- Leading a team that had previously been his peers.
- An over reliance on 'gut feeling'.
- A feeling that some in the business found his directness when communicating intimidating.

*Continue overleaf*

### **The tailored coaching process.**

The soon to be appointed leader contacted The Secret Coach immediately before commencing the new role, initially to enquire as to the potential benefits of executive coaching and what the process would entail.

It was decided that a programme of transition to leadership coaching would be beneficial & should commence as soon as possible.

The Secret Coach suggested that he involved his Executive Director and/or HR business partner to sponsor the development plan and fund the programme.

Following a three-way conference call (coachee, Exec director & The Secret Coach) it was agreed that a programme of coaching for transition would commence during the first week in the new role.

The programme was designed to meet the needs of the coachee and his Exec Director to be delivered over a six-month period, with particular concentration during the first month involving face to face sessions, telephone and email support.

### **The coaching focus – Defining development priorities**

The coaching sessions and ongoing support uncovered the following priorities.

- i) Developing his own authentic style:**  
Maximising his natural leadership and interpersonal skills, whilst understanding that he could not be everyone's friend. He would need to make some tough decisions.
- ii) Gathering insight to form future strategy combined with robust information before making decisions:**  
Maintaining his excellent instincts, whilst developing the skills & mind-set

to explore and form well considered strategy proposals.

### **iii) Managing his 'under stress' communication style:**

To take ownership for the impact of his communication style on others, and develop ways of using his passion to influence rather than intimidate.

As these priorities were identified early in the coaching programme, subsequent coaching sessions and telephone support were focused on achieving targeted development.

### **The impact - for the leader and the organisation**

Following the transition coaching programme, tailored to the leader's needs and priorities of his business, he successfully achieved;

- The commitment and support of a cohesive team of relationship directors who now shared his vision with passion.
- Strategy that could be collectively agreed with the executive team, related business functions and executed by his direct reports.
- Increased credibility with other leaders across the wider business, which resulted in greater effectiveness and influence.

The leader and business achieved ambitious growth targets, and increased market penetration with existing supporters. The new MD was able to remain close to key distributors. He also went on to engage development coaching for some of his direct reports.

*In the words of the client –*

*"I'm pleased that I didn't let my ego get in the way and I used coaching to support my promotion to a very different role. I've always been passionate about working for this business and love being part of the team. Now I can be really confident in my ability to lead from the front"*



*with good supporting relationships that deliver results"*

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E: [Rosanna@the-secret-coach.co.uk](mailto:Rosanna@the-secret-coach.co.uk)

T: +44 (0) 7771 792639

W: [www.the-secret-coach.co.uk](http://www.the-secret-coach.co.uk)