

CLIENT STORY

Coaching to Improve Manager and Employee Relations



SITUATION

After seven years at his law firm Ralph was frustrated with his new manager, Susan. Intent on making partner track he was shocked and disappointed to have received the first negative performance review of his career. It cited poor communication skills. He couldn't understand it because he had consistently received positive feedback from past managers. He was so distraught that he considered leaving the firm. Instead, he turned to a career coach.

ASSESSMENT

Strengths—Ralph was a smart, accomplished attorney known for his quick mind and excellent problem solving skills. He was proud to have built a sizeable network of supporters at the firm. Ralph had been lead counsel on several big cases under Susan's management and, although she credited his strengths, she insisted that his communication skills were poor.

Weaknesses—Ralph was fiercely independent. He preferred to take action now and apologize later. He was a risk taker who enjoyed moving fast and trying new approaches. He felt he had earned the right to use his own judgment to decide how and when to proceed.

COACHING HIGHLIGHTS

Step 1—Joan prepared an assessment tool for Ralph to reflect on his style and that of his past and current

managers. He needed to learn what his natural style was and what management style best played to his strengths.

Step 2—Ralph discovered that his style was very high on independence and so too was the style of the managers he worked well with. But Susan was very high on control. A manager high on control with an employee high on independence is a crash course waiting to happen!

Step 3—Joan coached Ralph to see that Susan was in the position of power and it was in his best interest to learn to accommodate her need for high control. That meant he needed to slow down and share proposed actions with her before doing them.

RESULTS

Ralph ratcheted down his pace showing Susan his work before moving forward. She loved the change. Three months after the coaching, Ralph received a very positive review citing "much improved communications." He is well on the partner track now. It's win-win-win, for Ralph, Susan and for the law firm.

IN HIS OWN WORDS

"It's amazing that I didn't see what was going on. I played the blame game and didn't even consider the notion of management styles. I learned a lot about myself in the process. And to think that I almost gave up on a seven year track record of hard work! Joan gave me powerful insights and skills that I will use throughout my career."

ABOUT JOAN



Joan Tabb, M.A. is a career coach, public speaker and author of Great in 8: Job Seeking Skills. Based in Silicon Valley, she quickly rose through the management ranks of Fortune 500 companies; Memorex, Apple Computer and 3Com, leading training and global marketing initiatives. Then, as a marketing consultant, she spearheaded communications for high tech start-ups, getting them on the map. Joan's focus then turned to developing employment networks and the fascinating area of individual career development. All of her experiences and skills come together in her passion for career coaching. Joan is driven by a desire to help people grow, change and achieve more in their careers.