

Let me tell you about Henry. A senior leader of a Fortune 500 organization, Henry has had a high level of success in leadership positions that span a diverse cross-section of departments and companies.

Henry is extremely intelligent, highly creative, and is an incredibly fast thinker. Always a step ahead and frustrated when others couldn't keep up, his communication style was gruff at best, impatient and explosive at worst.

Lost in Translation

"Henry is a great guy with a lot to offer the company but he doesn't know how to get that across to his staff." – Henry's CEO

Henry was frustrated by his inability to develop productive relationships with his staff and peers. He was a workaholic and brought a lot of this work stress home with him, affecting his relationship with his family.

The affect on his subordinates was dramatic. Individually he could bring someone to tears with his communication style. As a team, his department didn't have a unified vision of what they were working towards.

This led to dysfunction and low productivity, including his own. He was not able to delegate and was trying to do everything himself, no matter what "road kill" he left along the way.

Classroom Training Falls Flat

To help Henry and others, the organization had implemented classroom training in management strategies, as well as self-directed assessments and 360° assessments. This one-size-fits-all approach had little impact. In fact, Henry had received similar training in the past, and it never helped.

The Coaching Calvary

Bill Burtch of Harmony Coaching and Consulting was already well known in the organization. He had worked previously with a VP of Human Resources, and had done other consulting work within the organization. It was a natural fit, and Bill was brought in to implement an executive coaching program with three people on the executive team, including Henry.

It was a highly customized coaching program. In Henry's case, the focus was on his leadership and communication style, and building a more collaborative culture in his department. Those goals were determined in the 1st of a 4-step process, the preparation stage, when Henry and his CEO discussed their desired outcomes for the coaching.

2nd, a series of assessments and 360° interviews were conducted with Henry, his bosses, his peers and his subordinates.

3rd was the actual coaching, implementing an action plan and specific behavioral changes. A sample exercise was asking Henry to walk around the office periodically and have informal conversations with team members.

And 4th, an evaluation of the process, including the important steps of transitioning to long term continuous improvement and developing a method for self-monitoring his ongoing progress.

The Results

"Before it felt a little 'scrambled' as far as where we were going. Now it's very clear." – Team member.

Henry was very introverted, so finding ways for him to open up and share with people personally and professionally was probably the biggest challenge. Once that breakthrough happened, the change was outstanding.

As a result of this coaching process, Henry has improved his self-awareness and developed a coaching style of communication and leadership. He asks more questions, listens more, clearly establishes accountability and has regular coaching conversations with his team members. Based on his own feedback and feedback from his staff, these changes resulted in:

- An increase in his and his team's productivity,
- Shorter cycle times,
- Improved peer/staff/family relationships,
- A more relaxed and positive working environment,
- More leading and less managing, and
- A more cohesive team.

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