

### **Case Study: Executive Coaching with *DiSC Classic* and *Team Dimensions Profile***

*DiSC Classic and the Team Dimensions Profile provided non-critical insights into motivators and preferences in the workplace. It showed that we can be different and yet not flawed.*

It is difficult to imagine a person more primed for success than the young executive who saw himself as the future CEO of a Fortune 100 company. He was smart, competent, confident, and determined. His organization was thrilled with his performance, and his future seemed boundless.

"But he didn't like his job at all," says the consultant. "He felt stuck."

Despite all appearances, the executive was unhappy with his career trajectory. So he hired the consultant to coach him on how to get his working life back on track. The consultant admits that it is rare for an individual to pay out of pocket for coaching services, but he says that this illustrates just how serious the young man was about his potential.

"He saw it as an investment in his career," the consultant says. "He knew that open-ended coaching could help him achieve his goals."

The first thing the consultant had to do was pinpoint what problems his client faced at work. The consultant discovered that the executive had frequent arguments with his superiors and expressed clear discomfort in team settings. In addition, the executive felt swamped because he believed that he had to do everything himself. Finally, he often tuned people out or ignored them, leading to a reputation among peers that he was condescending or arrogant.

"He was a very sharp person," the consultant says. "But he came across as a know-it-all."

Obviously, the executive had taken no effort to get to know his colleagues, nor did he understand their preferences. But there were other underlying causes for his problems. For starters, he didn't know his own behavioral style or role. He also had great difficulty delegating tasks, and the team process was a total mystery to him. Perhaps most important, however, was that he was floundering in an incompatible work environment.

"His department did not nurture creativity and was hostile to change," the consultant says. "He was a dynamic person who wanted to try new things. At every step he faced a lot of resistance."

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The consultant talked with his client about career stagnation and its possible solutions. Placing the executive's needs at the forefront meant that the consultant avoided using a preset system or random set of instruments.

"I always talk to the person first and then come up with a solution," the consultant says. "Depending on the situation, I make a judgment call about the best approach."

The approach that the consultant devised was to develop the executive's communication skills and teach him about his behavioral style. He also wanted his client to learn about his colleagues' behavioral patterns. Of course, another objective was to find a conducive environment for the executive's talents and drive.

"The company had pockets of greatness," the consultant says. "We just had to find the right fit for him."

To help achieve this goal, the consultant administered DiSC client then discussed the profile's results, paying special attention to its insights about motivation and preferences. The executive quickly comprehended the DiSC model and its usefulness to his work situation.

"He understood why a high C acted a certain way and how come he was not like that," the consultant says. "And it helped him accept that this was not a flaw."

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*DiSC Classic* also proved helpful when the consultant had some of the executive's colleagues respond to the profile. Comparing his behavioral style with those of his co-workers was a breakthrough for the executive, who saw for the first time how to communicate better with his peers.

"If it's possible, it's good to look at the team members' information to help the client learn how to be more effective with those particular styles," the consultant says.

With this insight fresh in his client's mind, the consultant shifted the discussion into an analysis of productive teamwork. For this portion of the coaching, the consultant administered the *Team Dimensions Profile* to the executive, who again quickly picked up on the profile's applications.

The client learned about his strengths and weaknesses in a team setting, and he saw how he fit in with his colleagues. Because the executive had been particularly uncomfortable working with others, the profile's results were enlightening to him.

"He became aware of the different approaches that people have in teams," the consultant says. "It helped him not only understand himself, but the culture of his team."

Throughout the coaching, the executive learned more about his own behavior. He also saw how others perceived him, which helped him understand the reasons for miscommunication in the past. These insights, along with his new ability to identify his colleagues' styles and roles, helped the client become more effective when dealing with others. As a result, the executive is now less self-centered, which the consultant says can only improve communication.

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"Now he pays attention to others' needs rather than just his own," the consultant says. "He used to be really focused internally, but now I see him focused externally. He's also a much better listener."

The new insights also helped the executive come to a powerful conclusion: His environment was a complete mismatch and he had to move on. He realized that he

required a creative setting, and his department would never be that. In addition, even if such a radical organizational change were possible, the executive was not the person to create it.

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