

Case Study: The Route to Managing Director



Gregor Dobbie was Sales Director and considered a top performer in the UK operation of a Global Business. Members of the board could see his potential and his ability to lead the UK organisation, however Gregor wasn't so sure.

THE CHALLENGE – PART 1

Gregor was not convinced about stepping up to the role of UK Managing Director. It meant leaving his comfort zone and a very successful track record as a Sales Director who delivered. The board wanted him to be convinced of his own potential and his readiness to step up to the senior level.

The key stakeholders were asked to outline their views on Gregor's potential and why they felt he had more to offer. In addition Gregor was asked to consider his career options and the different routes he felt were open to him. It was important that all concerned were communicating clearly about their objectives for the coaching programme and that those objectives were aligned.

THE SOLUTION

Gregor would define a future role in the company that would meet the organisation's growth targets and meet his career objectives.

Gregor was to explore and define his own leadership style. What did he feel were the leadership qualities of a Managing Director and the potential gap in skills and experience that he faced? How would he adapt to the demands of the MD role and different claims on him? The coaching programme would support this exploration and learning process through access to contemporary research and thinking, and through reflection on Gregor's own skills and experience.

There was a need to explore the potential of a future role on the board and how the MD role would help him on this journey. How would the Sales role versus the MD role better serve him for this potential position in the future? What are the risks and how could they be mitigated?

Rialto used selected profile tools to help Gregor understand his broader leadership capability and his perspective on the world. His Coach explored different leadership models and assessed how Gregor operated as a leader in his organisation.

He then worked with Gregor to enable him to understand the wider demands of the MD role in his business with the benefits and potential risks that this brought. This exploration allowed Gregor to understand his leadership style, the value he brought to the organisation and the areas where he needed to improve his skills. It also enabled him to look at the additional responsibility he would carry as MD.

The work allowed Gregor to see that the challenge of the wider remit and the potential to lead his own team was a great motivator for him and that he did have the potential to grow in this MD role.

THE RESULT

Gregor stepped up as MD at a time when his skills and energy were just what the organisation needed. The move was a great success and Gregor was able to create an excellent team in the UK who showed real potential of working together with a shared vision and driving to succeed in very difficult economic circumstances. Gregor was seen to quickly embrace the change and enjoy the new challenges.

THE CHALLENGE – PART 2

Having been promoted to the role of Managing Director for one of the UK Operations of this multi-national business services organisation in the financial services sector – a second phase of coaching was requested. This phase was focussed on supporting Gregor to cement his MD role, help him develop the broader commercial and organisational skills required and assist him in continuing to build his personal brand inside his organisation.

THE SOLUTION

Given the fast moving pace of the UK business, and other changes in the Group driven by the prevailing economic conditions, Gregor and his Coach had to work on achieving three new set of outcomes concurrently over a 12 month period.

For Gregor to create a positive, energised and supportive culture in the UK organisation, and with this base improve the performance and results of the UK. This would require Gregor to set and communicate his vision for the UK business, set expectations of changed performance, and provide the resources and capability for his team to deliver.

Support Gregor in building a more holistic understanding of the UK and Group especially in terms of financial management, performance management, and the creation of business cases to develop the growth path for the UK.

Continuing to build Gregor's standing inside the Group through building his network, influencing skills and his visibility with Executive Management.

The major focus at the start was for Gregor to understand and evaluate his UK Executive team, build relationships with them quickly and start to act as a role model for them for the level of energy, commitment and ways of working he wanted to introduce. His Rialto Coach acted as the sounding board and the mirror in helping Gregor to establish his team around him. This included helping him gain insight to his own impact on others and evaluating the behaviour of those around him.

Gregor also worked with his consultant on creating and communicating his vision for the UK business. To support this we used models such as Kotter's change framework and the McKinsey 7S performance model to help Gregor structure this work and to challenge his thinking.

His Rialto coach was able to help him understand the Group financial reporting and KPIs, and the language of finance in the Group. As a PE backed company there were specific performance measures in place and a unique way to present business cases to gain valuable capital allocation and management support. As part of this, Gregor was able to build his relationship with the Group CFO, a key stakeholder in this process.

THE RESULTS

Gregor was able to build a strong team around him in the UK including strengthening both the sales and finance functions.

The UK started to show significantly improved performance even in very tough market conditions. His ability to trust his UK team was important as he extended his responsibility to become GM of the European production site after delivering the project to evaluate their performance issues. Gregor was asked to support the strategic development of the Group by working with external consultants to assess the direction of the Group and especially the UK business within it. This also raised his visibility with key stakeholders at the Executive Group level.

In the time after the coaching programme Gregor has continued to develop as a leader with the business and now holds a senior European role within the Group.

“My promotion to the position of UK MD came probably around a year earlier than I would have expected due to a set of unforeseen circumstances. As such I was on a very steep learning curve, having only ever previously been focused on the commercial side of the business. I realised the key was to ensure that my management team were working with me rather than against me and the coaching I received was invaluable in achieving this. I believe that without the coaching my transition would have been significantly more painful. I was able to lean on my coach to test out different approaches to potential problems and it was fantastic to have such a sounding board. The coaching has set me up well for my future career.”



Richard Chiumento

Director

T +44 (0) 20 3043 8640

E info@rialtoconsultancy.com

www.rialtoconsultancy.com

The Rialto Consultancy

Central Court

25 Southampton Buildings

Chancery Lane

London

WC2A 1AL



For further details visit: www.rialtoconsultancy.com


ACCELERATED IMPACT