

Case Study

Instinctual Product Prodigy Turned Inspiring Leader

Client Profile

- Newly promoted Head of Product Engineering at fast growing tech company
- 1-1 Leadership Coaching for six months, in person, bi-weekly, with initial *Interview-based Feedback Assessment*
- Goal setting and progress reporting with co-founder

Background

Client was an initial engineer of a start-up which was experiencing market success and had grown quickly over a couple of years. When Mariposa began working with client, he had just been promoted to lead a large part of the engineering organization, which consisted of two dozen people and needed to continue to scale rapidly. He was no longer managing engineers and tinkering with pet projects as he'd done in the past. His new role required aligning and motivating managers and making strategic product decisions. Re-orgs had been common and created thrash and loss of productivity and morale. He could no longer have fly-by or after-hour conversations to influence the founder. His communication needed to be more crisp, thoughtful and timed, and his work more strategic.

Client's Testimonial

"My coach was a strategic thought partner who helped me expand and grow my leadership in new ways that were still consistent with my strengths and intuition as a product leader. Our bi-weekly meetings were brainstorming sessions that helped me gain clarity, perspective, and a game plan that really elevated my leadership and spurred unprecedented growth for our team. Who says re-orgs need to be disruptive? I discovered ways to apply innovation and creativity to leadership and I became more thoughtful, proactive, and inspiring as a result."

Coaching Focus Areas and Results

(Excerpts from Coaching Progress Report)

Leadership Development – To cultivate leadership style and be strategic and proactive with crucial conversations.

Accomplishments

- Became more strategic and deliberate with communication. Tailored messaging to the specific audience and provided information appropriate to role and level (i.e. managers vs. engineers). Client sent fewer emails that were more concise. *Results:* Less angst for his team during restructuring. Less speculation and less misinformation via the game-of-telephone effect.
- Prepared in advance for all hands meetings and other critical meetings. *Results:* Meetings flowed better. No dumb questions.
- Created a video to get team fired up for reorg – it worked.
- Shifted from leading by example to leading from vision and mission. Defined and communicated roadmap clearly to both team and senior leadership. Gained swift alignment at a pivotal time. *Results:* Last re-org took 3 months; client did it in a week and a half. Each team is like it's own startup: mobilized, empowered, aligned and engaged.
- Cultivated a learning attitude towards leadership and sought out mentors for guidance as well as gleaned insight from observing peers and other more seasoned leaders. *Results:* Found new appreciation for colleagues and their strengths. Strengthened relationships with colleagues by asking for help and recognizing what they had to offer.
- Client asked more specific yet open-ended questions of his team. Rather than asking generic questions: "How'd that go? Or what did you think?" he'd ask, "What part of this message could be more clear?" *Result:* Client coached team to dig deeper and provide more insightful and actionable feedback.
- Applied design principles to creating and designing an organization. *Results:* Built teams based on a combination of strengths, abilities and experience. Inspired other leaders to do the same.