



GARD EXECUTIVE CONSULTING, LLC

applying
behavioral science
to enhance
executive and organizational
performance

Case Examples of Coaching

Please note that certain details have been changed in these case histories in order to protect the confidentiality of the parties involved.

Family Business Dilemma

Richard was the 67 year old founder and CEO of a family-owned manufacturing firm with three plants across the Midwest, each run by one of his children. Last year his youngest child Amy announced that she would soon leave the family business. The other two children determined that they could not step in to manage operations at the third plant and they implored Richard to begin a search for Amy's replacement. Usually a decisive figure, it took Richard several months before he even telephoned a recruiter. Puzzled by their father's inaction the children speculated that Richard was struggling with Amy's "defection" from the family business. Amy suggested that an executive coach might help her father cope with her departure and reassert his leadership abilities. Meeting with Richard it became clear that Amy's leaving was an important but secondary issue. Richard knew that selecting a replacement for Amy was a prelude to selecting a successor for him. He had been avoiding thinking about this topic, hoping that one of his children might proactively express an interest in becoming CEO. He was also anxious that he might find himself having to select one child over another. Executive coaching helped Richard begin a dialogue with his children about who would succeed him, and what his role at the firm might be once he retired. His search for Amy's replacement began in earnest.

An Angry Vice President

Jan was a 42 year old vice president at a local bank. She was easily frustrated by her new assistant Paula's minor mistakes. Rather than speaking calmly with Paula about her errors, Jan instead become quite angry. She would later apologize, leaving Paula upset and perplexed because Jan was otherwise pleasant and kind toward her. This pattern continued for six months until Jan launched into another tirade, at which point Paula broke into tears and went straight to the bank's HR department. One of Jan's previous assistants had complained of similar conduct so a decision was made to link Jan with an executive coach to help her modify her behavior. Jan was initially reluctant to participate, fearing that she would be "under the microscope" and that other problems might be uncovered. She became more intrigued and invested in the process as we examined her fear that people would view her negatively, and she theorized that her hostility towards Paula stemmed from her concern that Paula's mistakes might reflect badly upon her. As we talked further, Jan admitted that her parents had been highly critical of her faults growing up and she recognized that she was treating Paula in much the same way that she had been treated. Jan was readily able to use this insight to contain her irritation and she developed a more measured reaction to Paula's occasional mistakes.

If you have questions about how executive coaching might work for you or your firm, please contact us. Your inquiry is confidential and most welcome.

One South Dearborn
Suite 2100
Chicago, IL 60603
Phone: 312-541-8833

E-mail: drlgard@gardexec.com
Web: www.gardexec.com