



From a
demotivated
mid-level manager
to his **double**
promotion
in eight months

CASE STUDY

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THE SITUATION

Vikram was frustrated doing the same job for the last three and half years and no hope for any new learning or growth in the current company. He was aggressively looking for an opportunity to switch from the current job at a leading IT company, but had only got disappointments in the last six months. He would never come out and greet his colleagues or bosses or chit chat with anybody beyond transactional conversation. He felt his job was to get the assigned work done well and on time so that nobody questions him. Because of his mediocre communication skills and below average confidence, he was taken for granted in the management meetings, where more verbose colleagues would attract attention and call shots while he would be present as a statue. Very frequently many of his team members would also dominate him and put unreasonable requests which he acquiesced in.

THE PROBLEM

In the first conversation, we figured out self worth, communication and confidence were the major roadblocks to his growth. He also needed to display authority at work and demonstrate highest integrity while dealing with colleagues.

INTERVENTION & BREAKTHROUGH

Although, the structure for delegation existed but it was rarely followed in his team. When the concerned team member missed to complete the assignment, Vikram would do that to meet the timeline and it added extra-weight to his already tight work schedule. So, first Vikram worked on his integrity and the change was sensed in the team. The next week, he called a meeting and reminded the roles to each member and also asked them to add a consequence if they failed to deliver. Now, his job was only to follow up with them and hold them to account. Gradually, his authority was visible and the team felt empowered and accountable while he created time for doing more important tasks. The experience also added to his self worth. He deployed various tools like context setting, questioning, listening, empathy etc. while working with his team members.

The next goal was to acquire super-confidence. Everyday, Vikram was given a task to go out of his comfort zone and do the things that he feared. Some of the tasks included: be the first to greet a colleague, starting casual conversation with workplace bullies, insisting for an action even when the other person disagreed etc. Gradually, he found all his fears were creation of his own mind. By end of the second month, he was one of the most sociable managers on the floor, frequently seen chatting with top executives who he feared even greeting a month back.

His frequent interactions with senior leaders gave him insights about company's challenges beyond his department. Quality was one of the major concerns for that business unit. He volunteered to take that up a project which was giving nightmares to the unit head. He ran a pilot that raised quality scores from 88 per cent to 97 per cent. The company decided to set up a separate quality department and Vikram was given the responsibility to lead. Now, 27 managers were reporting to him regarding quality matters.

In the next few months, he created structures and processes. He hired people and trained them till the department was run on auto-pilot. Later, a quality specialist was hired to lead that team and Vikram was asked to go back to operations with a promotion. In between, he received many acknowledgments and recognition both from his onshore clients and superiors. Now, a forgettable employee had turned into an indispensable leader.

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