



Case Study

Sharpening Technical Graduates' Commercial & Collaboration Skills

Client Drivers

Our client within the Technology division of a global financial services organisation, needed to enhance their existing graduates development programme to ensure that graduates within their EMEA market were able to operate in a more commercial and collaborative manner and within a quicker timescale than earlier cohorts of graduates.

The division had decided to recruit more highly technical orientated graduates to fill some of the skills gaps they were experiencing within EMEA. The graduates had different levels of work experience; some with no work experience and others with some experience of working within a corporate environment.

It was recognised that the technical capabilities of these graduates needed to be backed with strong stakeholder management skills in order to succeed and flourish in the fast paced division where collaboration is key. The format of their development programme meant that graduates would rotate throughout the division to cover different functional and/or technical roles. Hence there was a need to become effective quickly with new key stakeholders as well as be able to communicate and influence more senior managers without needing to take up a significant amount of the senior people's time.

Future roles for the graduates were likely to take the form of technical architect roles and therefore it was important for the graduates to understand the 'big picture' and be able to differentiate between strategic and tactical activities and understand 'why' as well as 'what' they were being asked to do.

Strategis' Solution

We designed a highly interactive workshop which was routed specifically within the challenges of a fast paced technology organisation. Case studies based on real challenges, group and individual exercises, facilitated discussions and key activities working with actors all made the workshop relevant and memorable for the graduates and made it easy for them to translate it to their own experience

Key learning and group activities were focussed around:

- ▶ Understanding business partnering in the context of an IT environment
- ▶ Getting to grips with a professional questioning tool-kit
- ▶ Challenging their listening skills to really listen and assimilate the relevant business information
- ▶ Reviewing Business school level case studies to develop business acumen and judgement
- ▶ Creating a project brief
- ▶ Creative and innovative thinking in order to inform new think about a real technical challenge for the business
- ▶ Communication styles and how to gain credibility and influence others, including senior stakeholders
- ▶ Practising skills and receiving in the moment and personalised feedback the moment feedback from actors and facilitators

Value To Our Clients

- ▶ Graduates who were better able to conduct themselves in a professional manner when trying to understand new project requirements, utilising a professional questioning technique
- ▶ Graduates displaying more listening skills
- ▶ Increased awareness of the importance of first impressions
- ▶ Increased awareness of their preferred communication style and the impact that may have on others
- ▶ Graduate who have more curiosity about the 'bigger picture'
- ▶ An opportunity for the graduate management team to observe the graduates in action with actors in pseudo-real situations in order to help confirm their first assignments and to direct graduates' on-going development

Delegate Quotes & Content

"Enjoyed the entire programme – both the theoretical and practical aspects. Will definitely think about my preferred communication style and the 6 areas of ambiguity."

"I found the entire programme of great use. Particularly the 6 areas of ambiguity and the role playing with the actors."

"Good instant and personalised feedback so can use right away"

"The most useful part of the programme has been the various ways of being influential. "

"Relevant case study was really good"

STAKEHOLDERS
 PERSONALISED FEEDBACK
 STRATEGIC MUSCLE
 SOURCES OF POWER
 FIRST IMPRESSIONS ACTORS
 FACILITATED DISCUSSIONS
 SELF-AWARENESS EMPATHY
 CREATIVITY TECHNIQUES
 COMMERCIAL ACUMEN
 LISTENING PROJECT SUCCESS
 CREATING VALUE
 COMMUNICATION STYLES
 INFLUENCING