

## **Lloyds TSB**

Lloyds TSB Group is currently the fifth largest banking group in the UK, with a distribution network that includes around 2,000 branches as well as internet and telephone banking. They have over 76,000 staff and 16 million customers.

In 2007, Lloyds TSB had a net income of £6,092 million. Both their profit and their earnings increased by 17% on the previous year, despite the backdrop of turbulent global financial markets.

## **The Challenge**

For four years, John Bradford worked for Lloyds TSB in a role that required him to manage 20 branches and 200 staff. Despite the fact that his results had consistently placed his division within the top 5 percent in the UK, John began to feel that he needed a new challenge.

In England, Lloyds TSB's branches are grouped into eighteen regional areas. Roughly every few years a vacancy opens up for a new Area Director to control one of these eighteen areas. The Area Director role carries responsibility for overseeing 90 bank branches and 1,500 staff.

In early 2008 a new Area Director vacancy opened up, and John decided to apply. Soon after he completed a series of interviews but unfortunately did not gain the promotion. John knew that he had not been passed over because of his performance results. In order to help him identify what had prevented him from gaining promotion, John decided to engage with a performance coach.

John met with three different coaches and chose Trayton Vance, a Leadership Coach at Enabling Visions, a performance development company that works with leaders and their teams to maximise success.

## **The Interview**

Within three days of contracting the coaching, John got a surprise. An unexpected phone call let him know that another Area Director vacancy was open. He was invited to attend the first of five interviews in one week's time. John called Trayton and arranged to receive a coaching session immediately.

Together with Trayton, John realised that he had previously assumed the combination of exceptional banking results and confidence would carry him through to promotion. Trayton helped him revisit his psychological state so that he could go into the interview fully prepared and able to act at his highest level. He asked John to give his presentation in a crowded hotel lobby, thereby proving that John could give a successful talk no matter what the circumstances.

On the day of the all-important interview, things could not have gone worse. John's train was delayed, and his packed midsummer tube got stuck in a tunnel. When he arrived at the interview he was sweating and flustered. However, rather than rush into the meeting, he thought back to his coaching and slowed down. When John walked into the interview room he felt calm and able to focus on what the interviewers were saying. Unlike his previous interview, he led the conversation. When John walked out of the interview room, he knew he had secured the job.

## **The Challenge Redefined**

John's coaching journey did not end with his successful promotion. Once he gained his promotion he realised that a new challenge lay ahead of him.

The role that John accepted was a particularly difficult post. Lloyds TSB scores its banking areas across a range of measures that include sales, service levels, and risk assessment. The banking area that John was to manage did not have a history of delivering against its budgets and targets. This was perhaps unsurprising; in the past four years the region had been managed by four different Area Directors. John realised that he would have to quickly improve the performance of the area so that it delivered in future.

### **Coaching to Success**

Before John started, he had a coaching session with Trayton to discuss his first week in role. As he talked through the first hour he would spend with the whole team, he began to make adjustments to his plans. Instead of imposing his existing ideas on the team, he decided he would ask his team for their suggestions. He would also slow down, taking the necessary time to build a solid base. He even changed his proposed schedule so that rather than cramming his week full of meetings he would focus on his direct reports only.

John's first week in role went well; he laid the foundations for his immediate team to become the engine room of his plans to improve the banking area's performance. John says of the changes he made following his conversation with Trayton *"though I left 80% of my plans as they were, the 20% that I changed made a huge difference"*.

Trayton continued to coach John over the next few months, both in arranged face-to-face sessions and with adhoc telephone support. John would play out his plans and Trayton would reflect back with simple and effective challenges, prompting him to create his own solutions. Of particular use was the Discovery tool used by Trayton which gave John a detailed profile of his conscious and subconscious

personality. This allowed him to examine his interaction with other people, and find where his blind spots could be. As a result, he felt more able to deal with and engage with different members of his team on an individual basis.

Indeed, John credits coaching with changing his leadership style overall. Before receiving coaching he was very hands-on, often falling into the trap of intensive management at the first sign of difficulty. Nowadays, he is more trusting of his staff. He agrees a set of working principles up front, and if he intervenes it is usually to offer support rather than criticism.

### **Results**

John's efforts have seen results. The area that he manages now delivers against budget and targets, and has leapfrogged up the league-table of banking performance within a few short months.

John is clear that his journey has not finished yet. At one point, he was expecting a downturn; progress had been so quick it seemed natural that there would be a swing backwards. However, after speaking to Trayton, John realised that to talk of failure was to encourage failure. Now he has a new language; that of sustaining and building on his area's exceptional growth.



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