



EXECUTIVE 02

OLIVIA

New managerial skills

SITUATION: Olivia was a newly promoted manager at a mid-sized manufacturing company we will call The Ascend Company. After four years, she had rotated successfully through several departments. She began as a cost accountant, spent some time observing the sales and marketing function, and was now working in the warehouse as an interim manager of shipping and receiving while the incumbent manager was on maternity leave. This temporary assignment offered Olivia her first experience leading a team in the business world—and provided The Ascend Company a benign test of Olivia’s management skills.

In the first month of the new assignment, Ascend realized that Olivia had difficulty developing positive relationships with her team. Even though the department was small, and the situation of her promotion unique, Ascend was concerned to learn of Olivia’s communication deficiencies in a leadership setting. She had been an outstanding employee, but she would be limited to non-management roles unless something was done. At a meeting where performance of the shipping function, was being discussed, one of the regional sales managers suggested the company call Jody Michael Associates.

RESOLUTION: In their first meeting, JMA assured Olivia that though The Ascend Company was paying the bill; anything that they discussed would remain confidential. Furthermore, referring to the work as ‘management development,’ Olivia felt better about the process and its goal. It was not a critique or judgment of her performance, but rather an investment in her future at the company.

She committed to work with JMA, for a six-month period of one session per week.

JMA conducted several phone 360 evaluations with Olivia's boss, her peers and her direct reports. JMA's assessment of Olivia was she needed development in several key areas of emotional intelligence. In session, coach and client completed interactive exercises that built Olivia's ability to receive negative feedback, to constructively approach co-workers with whom she was disappointed or angry, and to plan and lead meetings. She was given experiential exercises for homework, reading material and insight oriented homework.

OUTCOME: Through a combination of diligent introspection and emotional intelligence work, immersion training in communication and leadership skills, and her ability to immediately practice her new tools on the job, Olivia progressed quickly. JMA's Life RoadMap curriculum was also brought in to demonstrate the successful interaction and balance of life and work. It showed her how to set goals and achieve them while maintaining the recovery time she needed for herself.

Almost as an after-affect, but a requirement that brought this whole process about, Olivia altered her internal dialogue to enhance her self-esteem. As a result, over time she began to exhibit the confidence team members expect of a leader, and removed the closed, protective shroud that had made collaboration and approaching her difficult.

Olivia's improvement through the final weeks of her interim assignment encouraged Ascend's management to give her another position of responsibility: Manufacturing Manager. As a result of her experience with JMA, her hard work, and her willingness to work through her weaknesses, Olivia's career in management has continued.