



Coaching Challenge

Navigating Change and Managing Up

Vincent* was a tenured, highly competent mid-level operations manager. His new boss had recently joined the company and Vincent was responsible for ensuring current projects continued in accordance with existing commitments, timelines, and budgets. Vincent's new boss had the best intentions. He was eager to do a great job and to please his new client and his own boss, he proposed fast new initiatives, but he hadn't yet learned "the way things actually get done around here." He spent little time exploring the capacity and workload of his team and routinely neglected to discuss proposed new commitments or required resources with Vincent for his input.

Vincent's more deliberative, exacting approach to work clashed with his new boss's improvisational, big-picture thinking. Despite differences in their approach to work, their strengths complemented each other nicely. However, each unplanned client commitment and each forwarded "fyi" email delivered to Vincent without context, left Vincent increasingly frustrated. He felt disrespected and angry at his new boss. He felt overloaded by

**Name changed to protect client privacy.*

ambiguous information and unclear direction, left to him to interpret and prioritize himself. His team was falling behind on key projects due to several pressing new commitments. Vincent was close to requesting a move off this client and was prepared to begin looking for another job if that was not an option.

In our coaching sessions, we explored the roots of Vincent's stress, including his beliefs about how teams should work, his expectations of his boss, and his discomfort with perceived conflict. We explored his personal beliefs, values, and vision of leadership, and the opportunity to step up in his role as an operations manager, to strategically manage the expectations and style of his new boss. We practiced strategies for initiating much needed relationship and rapport building with his boss, communicating workload and capacity proactively, seeking out the missing information needed to do his job, and ways to offer his input and recommendations to better influence outcomes. Within six months, Vincent and his boss developed a strong and effective partnership that now leaves Vincent feeling supported, valued, and confident that he can capably manage thru any future challenges and transitions that arise. 🌀



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