



BURNHAM ROSEN GROUP

The Science of Superior Performance

CASE STUDY



Global Consultancies invest a great deal in client relationships. Understanding how these relationships are created and why some leaders are more effective than others is critical to helping develop future leaders and to building the deep and lasting partnerships that are valued by clients.

GLOBAL CONSULTING – THE SCIENCE OF EXCEPTIONAL CLIENT LEADERSHIP

This global consultancy provides a broad range of services to clients across the globe. Following a restructure to bring more clarity to business development and client management roles, the organisation sought to understand the alchemy behind their most successful performers.

The ambition

The questions we were asked by this consulting firm were, “Are there traits that differentiate our best performers in client leadership roles? Can we develop this ability across all our client-facing leaders?”

Burnham Rosen Group conducted two large, empirical studies drawing on a careful analysis of performance of all post-holders in the target roles over the last 3 years.

Conventional psychometric measures of personality reveal no correlations with performance. However, BRG’s unique assessment of implicit motivation (see next page for an explanation of implicit motivation) identified compelling links between how client-facing leaders think and their performance.

In these studies it was found that 93% of the superior leaders in client service roles shared the same implicit motive profile. This profile was almost entirely absent in average performing leaders in the same roles.

Counter-intuitively, the studies also showed these findings are consistent across different cultures: the attributes of highly successful client service leaders are the same in China as they are in North America or Europe.

How we helped

The discovery of thought patterns that predict superior performance provide part of the answer. In-depth interviews were carried out using a specialist interview technique.

This data was used to capture the precise way that these thought patterns were shaping behaviour and so creating outcomes. This enabled a unique Thought-Action-Outcome™ model to be developed.

This model was then used to design development programmes and to support organisational level initiatives to drive performance by working on people’s underlying thoughts.

Results

The impact of these programmes was immediately evident in how senior leaders improved their ability to really connect with their clients, uncover their real issues and align their capabilities to the needs of the client.

Entire client teams used the insights from this research to rethink their client engagements. The Burnham Rosen Client Impact Workshop™ enabled teams to develop a deeper emotional connection to their work at a client and to move out of a transactional sales mode to a more enduring relationship style.

Most powerfully, the insights from this research helped this consultancy recognise where client centricity is present and where it is absent, to appreciate the impact of this on performance and to do something about it.



IMPLICIT MOTIVATION AND LEADERSHIP

Implicit Motives are stable patterns of thought about specific goal-states. People have low knowledge of these implicit thoughts but it is possible to accurately measure them. **Approximately 70% of our behavioral choices have their origin in implicit motivation.**

Power Motivation is a non-conscious, or implicit, concern with impact and influence-based relationships. Dominance in this motive is associated with interest in roles such as teaching, acting, management and leadership.

Most leaders in large organizations are dominant in this motive. But the expression of this motive in thought and action is subtly influenced by the particular way a leader thinks about Power. There are four distinct patterns. These are known as the Stages of Power.

Dependent Power – This orientation to Power seeks to attract the positive interest and support of powerful others. No leaders are dominant in this orientation, superior or average.

Independent Power – This orientation to Power concerned with self-sufficiency and self-determination.

Imperial Power – This orientation to Power is concerned with acquisition of power and, in its most constructive form, the use of the leader's own authority to accomplish organizational goals.

InterActive Power – This orientation to Power is concerned with purpose and meaning. Research consistently demonstrates this orientation drives superior outcomes for leaders in large, complex organizations.



Illustration

Senior leaders in consulting organisations are trained on how to conduct themselves with clients. But for some individuals there often remains a pattern of behaviour that persists and undermines their effectiveness.

The implicit motive research helped these leaders understand how they are thinking about their work and how it differs from the thinking patterns of the most effective leaders. Often this brings answers as to why repeated problematic traits emerge despite the leader's self-awareness of the unhelpful nature of these behaviours.

“Understanding why I behave the way I do in client meetings has been incredibly insightful.”

The most significant correlation between success in role and implicit motivation for these senior leaders relates to how they think about the purpose of their work.

Challenged to define their role and goals most leaders talk about client impact, sales and revenue and building capability. These explicit goals are so reinforced that they are assumed to be driving outcomes.

However, measures of implicit motivation illustrate the very considerable differences in what these leaders are thinking about outside of conscious awareness.

These non-conscious patterns are known to be highly predictive of behaviour and performance and this is certainly true in these senior consultancy leadership roles.

For these leaders it was fascinating to learn how to uncover for themselves their non-conscious thought patterns and to see how these were driving unhelpful behaviours – and to then learn how to change these patterns and create the impact they were really striving for.

The evidence-based nature of the training and coaching undertaken by these leaders was a critical factor in the acceptance of feedback and commitment to change.

For more information on this case study or about Burnham Rosen Group please contact the following:

Rob Jackson (UK)
Rob.Jackson@burnrose.com
+44 (0) 7881 828567

Amery Burnham(USA)
amery.burnham@burnrose.com
0+1 617 350 6100

