

## **Developmental Coaching – Building Gravitas**

**By Douglas Gerber**

### **CHALLENGE**

This is an executive working in the financial services industry in Asia. He was seen as highly competent executive, very intelligent with upward mobility. His challenges consisted of being perceived as being very tactical, lacking the strategic focus and communication at the strategic level. Moreover, the way he presents himself does not lead to a sense of executive presence required for the position. He needed to build “gravitas”, in order to progress in his career as well as to gain the respect of peers, and clients.

### **SOLUTION**

The first step was to clearly understand how the coachee was perceived. This was done through comprehensive face-to-face 360 interviews in which we interviewed peers, direct reports and his manager. A clear picture was obtained and these results were confidentially and verbally communicated back to the coachee. The executive, after hearing the patterns reiterated consistently and clearly, became convinced that changes were required, and that in fact he needed to get more strategic and step up the challenge. Clear coaching objectives were articulated to work on strategic thinking and communication, expanding executive presence and gravitas and achieving respect from key stakeholders. He worked on having clear positions on issues before engaging in discussions. He also committed to preparing better prior to presenting on important issues. As a part of his image management, he realized the necessity to dress and look the part, commensurate to his position

### **OUTCOME**

The executive made significant changes in his executive presence. He realized that the consequences of his behavior were counterproductive, and worked seriously on his objectives. Based on feedback from peers and his manager, his gravitas significantly increased, and his opinions started gaining respect and traction. He worked on his appearance and looking the part. He created the discipline of thinking through issues prior to talking about them. At the end of the process he was promoted into a position with greater responsibilities. The organization was satisfied with his development and progress.

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