VAYOMAR

The power of being heard

CASE STUDY

How Do I Establish My Position in an Organization Via Presentation and Communication Skills?

The Client

10 Chinese managers from an American multinational information technology corporation. It provides hardware, software and services to consumers, small- and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) and large enterprises, including customers in the government, health and education sectors.

The Challenge

This project started from a "pain point" that is common to all global organization managers – the need to prepare effective presentations, that will be clear, concise and will motivate people into action.

In this case, there is a double challenge involved with presentation skills:

First, these are people with a technical background and their communication skills are not their strongest feature. Technologically oriented managers are accustomed to concentrating on technical details and bottlenecks (like failures, defects, etc.) and not on strategic points of view and the "bigger picture".

"This Program Started From a "Pain-Point" that is Common to All Global Managers- the Need to Prepare Effective Presentations, that Will Be Clear, Concise and Will Motivate People into Action"

The second challenge is the Chinese Culture. As managers in a global organization,

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they are required to present according to

Western standards including the use of body language and strong, "bottom-line" messages (positive or negative), though the Chinese culture is more modest and minimalistic.

When these managers present to their Western colleagues, they must use Western standards and not the local and traditional standards with which they are more comfortable. The managers coped with the difficulties of presentation skills across all interfaces: with their team, their managers and their clients. The need to speak clearly, effectively using interesting and well-presented content was a bottleneck across their various interfaces.

"The Consultation Sessions were Built Gradually and each Session Added another Tool and Component to the Level of Complexity. At the End the Puzzle was Complete and All the Methods and Tools for Presentations and Interpersonal Communication were Available".

The Solution

A series of 10 individual weekly sessions with a senior consultant, all concerning presentation and communication skills. The consultations were conducted through a one hour 1X1 virtual session with each participant.

Each session focused on a different presentation challenge. The consultation sessions were built gradually and each session added another tool and component to the level of complexity. At the end the puzzle was complete and all the methods and tools for presentations and interpersonal communications were available.

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Various alternatives were considered including a coordinated workshop for all the participants, sending videos made by senior lecturers for passive viewing, followed by the managers having to photograph themselves and sending their videos for presentation and more.

The ten individual sessions with each manager proved to be the best alternative, as they provided individual focus on the challenges and on the strengths of each manager within the given time period. The managers acquired tools for delivering messages, for presenting presentations before decision-makers and for preparing executive summaries. There were also essential discussions on how to effectively answer difficult questions, how to establish yourself as an influential manager, how to use tone of voice to create impact, and more.

In addition, the managers filmed themselves between the consulting sessions (according to tasks assigned to them) and sent the videos to the consultant for feedback. We were thus able to provide them more comprehensive, relevant answers.

This solution, which was "tailor made" for them, produced great value for them since it was dynamic, and personally adjusted to the challenges faced by each one. Although there was a common base to the interpersonal communications challenges and to the presentations, the pace was set on an individual basis and the order in which the tools were acquired changed according to need.

Each manager knew that if he faced a complex situation during the week, like an important presentation before his division manager, or if he faced a challenging question during a discussion, he could receive

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answers in the form of tools and practice for each situation. During the sessions the managers prepared for future situations, examined past scenarios that needed to be improved and drew conclusions.

Results

As mentioned above, implementing the solution was spread over several months during which we saw the progress of each manager as rated by the success measurements, KPI's (key process indicator) defined in advance.

Each participant was rated by the senior consultant according to four main criteria which measured success during the process. Each KPI was on a scale of 0-10 and the managers were rated at each session by exact quantification that perceived the effectiveness of the presentation, its level of content, its delivery style and how well the presenter established his status during his presentation.

The improvement curve was sharp and fast in certain instances and slow and moderate in other cases. The trend was encouraging, however, because every manager advanced in each parameter.

The importance and emphasis were on improvement and not on perfect execution (although this was a bonus given to some of the presentations).

The benefits to the managers themselves were high and helped them to more effectively present to their target audiences and in varied situations.

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They established their positions with their managers (in Chinese culture great importance is attached to a high level of management hierarchy). They learned to strengthen self-confidence and deal with stage fright before an audience.

In the organization (on the local level) the benefit was demonstrated through the ability of the presentation to clarify messages, in a way that motivates team, management and customers toward the recommended course of action. In certain instances, presenting in real-time and preparation time for the presentation were cut to half compared to the original timing.

This process, though fitted to its participants according to defined needs, audiences and objectives, is quite representative of many global companies.

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