

Client Case Study

Nº 48



Paul Towner - Talent Development Programme

"I'm far more confident as a leader now as I've learned to understand my weaknesses and also accept that often these aren't weaknesses, but actually assets."

This has led to really positive feedback from my manager, career development officer, and most importantly, my customers. For the first time in my 12 year Allianz career I've just received the top band bonus. The proof really is in the pudding."

**Paul Towner, IT Project Manager
Allianz**

Synopsis

After initially being sceptical about how he could relate a Farscape Talent Development Programme back to the workplace, Paul Towner has developed significantly, in terms of both his behaviours and skills. Following the programme he is much more confident as a leader and has received top band bonus for the first time in his 12 year career at Allianz.

Challenges and Requirements

- After participating in a number of ineffective team development programmes in the past, Paul was sceptical about participating in more training.
- He found it difficult to relate abstract concepts – such as participating in experiential tasks – back to his role.
- As a project manager he didn't exhibit the drive and energy that was required for the role and this was limiting his career progression as well as not delivering results for the business.
- Paul lacked confidence when it came to speaking his mind and challenging others – he had a tendency to want to please others, which meant that he wasn't always honest about how he felt.

The Farscape Learning Experience

Paul was selected to take part in an experiential Talent Development Programme with Farscape Development, along with 11 other delegates from Allianz. The Programme included:

- Meeting with his line managers to set specific objectives against the Allianz behavioural framework, in order to identify areas for his development.
- Carrying out a leadership behaviours self-assessment against the Kouzes Posner Leadership Practices Inventory.
- Exploring behaviours in leadership, which highlighted the importance of self-awareness, relationships with others and flexibility in leadership styles.
- Undertaking individual profiling using the Strength Deployment Inventory (SDI) in order to enhance his understanding of his own Motivational Value Systems and how they relate to others.
- Challenging himself with emotionally engaging outdoor activities, which were designed to push him outside his comfort zone and give him an opportunity to experiment with different leadership techniques in unfamiliar situations. These were then related back to the context of the workplace at Allianz.
- Giving feedback and enhancing his self-awareness in order to drive forward his performance.
- Receiving feedback about his performance, including his key strengths and areas for development. This was fed into his personal development plan and is being built upon by managers at Allianz.

"Farscape showed me what they were all about – the honesty and openness of everyone really helped me see what I was getting from the programme – I'd just expected too much, too soon. I learned that it doesn't matter if you don't have the answers immediately and that leadership is not all about being the person who shouts the loudest during tasks.

I'm now seeking new ways to challenge myself further and push myself even more – and totally remove myself from my comfort zone."

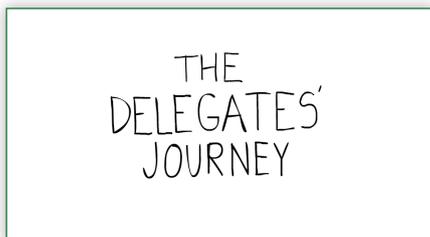
**Paul Towner, IT Project Manager
Allianz**

- Receiving regular email contact from Farscape to support him and ensure that his learning was embedded in the workplace.
- Following up the learning with a group action-learning workshop designed to focus on the transfer of learning in the workplace and to focus on specific leadership challenges.

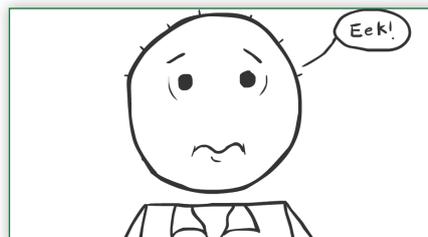
Outcomes and Results

Initially Paul struggled with the programme, finding it difficult to relate the more abstract, experiential elements to the workplace. He also had high expectations of himself and found it difficult to be positive when he didn't perform as well as he thought he could. During the Outdoor Experience he said that he had hit 'rock bottom'. However, after some space and time to reflect on what he had learned and to implement his action plan, Paul realised the following outcomes:

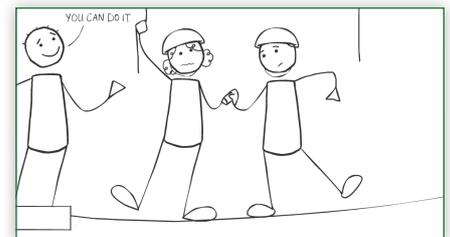
- He had learned how to assess himself, making him much more self-aware.
- His confidence as a leader greatly improved once he understood what his strengths and weaknesses were. He also realised that many of his perceived weaknesses were in fact assets.
- After implementing 100% of his personal development plan, he scored extremely highly in his annual review, received positive feedback from his manager, career development officer and his customers.
- For the first time in his 12 year Allianz career he received the top band bonus.
- The Farscape Experience has now made him seriously consider his future and what he wants to do. As a result of the course he is seeking new ways to challenge himself and push himself further



Paul took part in a carefully designed learning journey



The programme pushed him outside of his comfort zone in order to enhance self-awareness



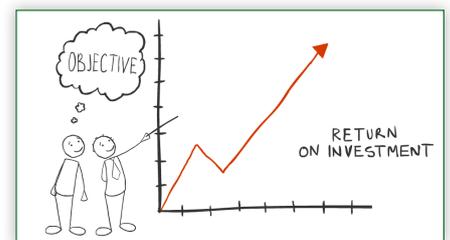
An outdoor learning experience enabled him to try out new skills



Individual feedback about performance allowed him to understand areas for improvement



Group action learning follow up focused on the transfer of learning in the workplace



Positive impact can already be seen with improved confidence, self-awareness and receiving the top bonus