

Career Coaching

As part of a major consolidation and restructuring programme of three business centres, a large, well-known organisation proposed new posts for retained staff.

John, who had been an IT manager for one of the former business centres, was recommended by his manager for the equivalent position in the new organisation. Since part of the programme of restructuring had involved John as a member of our project team, observations had been made of his skills. It was apparent that John enjoyed being a technical specialist but had limited experience and interest in people management.

To give John the space and opportunity to consider this proposed new role, I met with him to discuss its implications on his career and any issues around the relocation of his family. We explored the scope of his current position and the skills sets he used which we compared to the job specification and skills sets of the new role.

It was evident that the new position was going to be much more demanding; he would have to manage a team and the expectations of his customers would be much higher. Since this would be a more strategic role, he would also have less hands-on involvement in the technical work of the department.

The first meeting of the two sessions was arranged outside of the workplace. This was important because it meant John could feel confident about speaking freely and we could be away from the pressures of the office. Through examination it became apparent that the responsibilities of the new role were not aligned with what John wanted to do. He was looking to increase his technical knowledge and become a specialist. He had some concerns about his abilities to manage staff and deal with senior management on a regular basis. We discussed the career implications of him taking a sideways move and the subsequent impact on his future earning potential. He decided that he gave higher value to being in a position that he would enjoy and felt that his family would support him in this decision.

The sessions with John were structured to enable him to clarify his thoughts and uncover where he can bring value in specific situations. Using probing questions and techniques such as active listening and Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)* I built a positive rapport with John which gave him the reassurance and confidence to be honest and objective about his situation.

As a result of his sessions, John decided that the best option was not to take the offered IT manager role, but to go for a specialist technical position that matched his interests, strengths and skills and in which he would be much happier. Having the opportunity to discuss his issues and concerns in a non-judgemental environment helped him to decide the best course of action.

* Definition - Neuro-Linguistic Programming: "NLP is the Art and Science of personal excellence. Art because everyone brings their unique personality and style to what they do and this can never be captured in words or techniques. Science because there us a method and process for discovering the patterns used by outstanding individuals – this process is called modelling." *Introduction to NLP*, Joseph O'Connor & John Seymour 1990.