



Counselling

The Project

Pro EnviRo were called in to provide support to a senior Technical Manager who had recently lost his job as a result of stress-induced absence. We were asked to provide guidance to the manager in his future career choices and to recommend to the company any actions that may be required to avoid a repetition of the problem with other staff.

Two half-day in-depth sessions were undertaken on a one-to-one basis. These are designed to help the individual understand the relationship between their natural behavioural styles, their adaptive role and how this can lead to high levels of stress.

The sessions are designed to help the individual understand their own natural style, and therefore their approach to people and situations, and how team members with different perceptions and styles would react to that natural gap in alignment.



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The first session is used to evaluate the present situation from the individual's perception, and carries out a situational profile specially designed to look at both adaptive and natural styles. The results are then discussed in general terms to give the subject an overall view of:

- The swing between their natural and adaptive style, and the stress consequences of this.
- The strengths and weaknesses of their style.
- How others perceive their style.

In the second session we examined how the subject's approach to people and situations can be improved to relieve pressure in the future.



Stress in the Workplace

Stress in the workplace is so often linked to a mismatch of expectations between the employer and the employee and the lack of competence within the employee to achieve the requirements of the role. Lack of competence is not simply a problem of the employee; it tends more to be an issue that the employer has failed to recognise. Many capable individuals are not given the competencies they need to perform a role.

The continued "failure" to meet expectations, both internal and imposed, and the lack of any control of the resources that are needed to meet expectations will eventually lead to a stress-inducing situation.

An individual who has a tendency to be over analytical will find it difficult to break out of this cycle and can find themselves with "their backs against the wall and nowhere to go".

In this situation the Technical Manager was clearly most comfortable with technical problems that could be analysed and an answer calculated, and least comfortable with multi-faceted issues that require interfacing with many different people. He had been recruited as a "technician" and was promoted to a "managerial" position without being provided with adequate training or development.

Stress is the result of many mismatches and a feeling of helplessness due to a lack of control. Many of these issues are a result of the overall situation he found himself in and the personal problems were created by an individual being in a situation where he was not provided with the tools to effectively manage a role he should not have been recruited to.

The Benefits

Both the manager and the company were able to learn some important lessons from the process.

The manager was able to understand his own strengths and will be better equipped to match them against future career opportunities to try and ensure that he does not find himself in such a difficult situation again. He is now able to consider some of the issues that may have been within his subconscious thoughts and he can now tackle them in an orderly manner.

The company learnt that if it did not do things differently in the future they would have similar problems. Changes include the following:

- All appointments, including internal, will involve a thorough assessment of the needs of the role and the perceived capability of the individual.
- A gap analysis will be completed that will identify training and development needs.
- Expectations will be realistic and agreed between the company and the individual.
- The company will consider the provision of a confidential support service for employees to discuss and manage their personal issues.

