

Mentoring a Junior Team Member at Shell International



The Problem

The Shell International account was a highly complex operation, with numerous moving parts requiring meticulous coordination. It was being managed by a young and enthusiastic account manager (AM), eager to excel but lacking the experience to delegate effectively. Her desire to be involved in every meeting and oversee all activities, though well-intentioned, led to inefficiencies and mounting stress, both for her and the team. This approach risked creating bottlenecks and fragmented team efforts.

The Solution

To address these challenges, a strategic mentorship approach was adopted:

- 1. Establishing a Framework:** Instead of focusing on micromanagement, a clear strategic and operational framework was created for the team. This structure provided clarity on roles, responsibilities, and project goals.
- 2. Empowering the Team:** The account manager was encouraged to take a step back, allowing team members to independently manage their projects and programs with light-touch oversight. This delegation fostered trust and accountability within the team.
- 3. Reinventing Meetings:** Regular meetings were restructured as alignment sessions rather than prescriptive or detailed implementation reviews. This shifted the focus to collaboration and support, ensuring the account manager maintained an overview without being overwhelmed.

The Results

This mentorship approach delivered noticeable improvements across several dimensions:

- **Reduced Stress:** The account manager became noticeably less stressed and was able to focus on her passion for strategy development, enabling her to contribute at a higher level.
- **Empowered Team:** Team members thrived under their new responsibilities, relishing the opportunity to manage client-facing projects and showcase their capabilities.
- **Enhanced Collaboration:** The new meeting format fostered alignment and unity among the team, reducing tensions and internal politics.
- **Client Satisfaction:** The Global Marketing Director observed a significant improvement in the team's unified output, recognizing the positive impact of this collaborative and empowering approach.

This case demonstrates the importance of thoughtful mentorship, structured delegation, and fostering a culture of empowerment. By guiding the account manager to lead more strategically, the entire team, as well as the client, benefitted from improved performance and outcomes.