



Growing a Leader from a Functional Role

A consumer products company appointed a senior research fellow to head its entire research and development division. Could the company's top scientist and academic researcher, who had never managed a staff of more than 20, make the transition to effectively manage hundreds of people in his division?

The Challenge

The executive soon realized that the new job's difficulty exceeded his expectations. New administrative tasks and issues among staff members consumed huge amounts of time. Little time or energy remained for the pure research he had enjoyed for so much of his career. He began to question the organization's decision to place so much of the company's future in his hands. At that point, the company asked Career Partners International to help the executive become acclimated to his new role.

CPI's Response

CPI consultants asked the executive to articulate his career goals and division objectives. Then, using a combination of a 360-degree feedback survey and structured interviews with his colleagues, CPI identified the executive's key strengths and suggested areas for improvement. While none of the findings surprised the executive, they did provide focus for the development strategy he defined with CPI's help. That strategy called for him to:

- Delegate several major tasks to senior managers both to advance the projects and to provide developmental opportunities
- Network with managers from other divisions to better understand how his own division fit into the larger corporate strategy
- Use a town meeting format, including question and answer sessions, to regularly communicate within the division

The Results

The executive's discomfort with the new position dissipated once he aligned his activities to suit his new responsibilities. The executive found the job less stressful and more rewarding, while the company reaped the benefits of having a more effective organizational leader.