

# Case Study

## Executive Coaching and Adaptive Leadership

### Purpose

**This case study highlights the depth, clarity, and measurable impact of a Design You Coaching® engagement.** Coaching and consulting engagements often involve multiple interconnected leadership, team, and organizational goals that evolve throughout the process. While the case study reflects a real client experience, names and identifying details have been changed to protect client confidentiality.

### Client Snapshot

**Mary, a Senior Executive at a law firm, was preparing to expand her leadership responsibilities while improving operational efficiency across her team.** A respected leader with more than 15 years at the firm, she believed her team would welcome increased autonomy and new performance expectations designed to reduce case resolution times and improve client outcomes.

Within the first three months of leading the transition, Mary noticed signs of strain across the team. Performance declined for several team members, communication became tense, and trust within the group began to erode. Although highly capable and deeply committed to her team, Mary found herself balancing growing execution demands with the relational intelligence and cultural challenges that often accompany organizational challenge.

**Mary partnered with Tanea Ellis and Design You Coaching® for an executive coaching and adaptive leadership development support.**

### Engagement Focus

Over a six-month executive coaching engagement, we used the **DREAM. DISCOVER. DESIGN™ framework** to strengthen leadership clarity, communication, decision-making, and adaptive leadership capacity.

#### **DREAM**

We began clarifying Mary's vision for both her leadership and the future of the team. Together, we identified short-and long-term priorities, explore what success would look like beyond operational performance alone, and aligned her leadership approach with the kind of culture she wanted to create.

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## **DISCOVER**

As we transitioned into the DISCOVER phase, we used the LIFO® assessment to explore Mary's leadership orientation, behavioral patterns under pressure, communication tendencies, and relational dynamics with the team.

This phase revealed that both Mary's and her team had become stuck in familiar interaction patterns and assumptions about one another. Team members were responding not only to current circumstances, but also to long-standing perceptions and habits developed over the years of working together. While Mary's intentions were grounded in empowerment and accountability, her team often experienced the changes as pressure and uncertainty.

Mary began to see how her decision fatigue, unclear communication rhythms, and tension between execution and people leadership was affecting her confidence as a leader.

## **DESIGN**

Mary redesigned how she communicated, delegated, and led through change. We partnered with her team to establish a clear team vision, mission, and values framework while strengthening alignment around expectations, accountability, and decision-making. We also facilitated further team alignment using the LIFO® assessment to identify individual and overall team behaviors in favorable and unfavorable conditions.

Throughout the engagement, we focused on:

- Leadership identity and executive presence
- Relational intelligence and communication
- Team alignment and trust-building
- Adaptive leadership behaviors during change
- Sustainable performance and succession planning

## **Engagement Results**

By the end of the Design You Coaching® engagement, Mary successfully led a team reorganization that improved alignment, clarified responsibilities, and strengthened overall team engagement. She evolved her leadership approach to communicate more clearly based on the team's LIFO assessment styles.

## **Design You Coaching®**

Leadership transformation begins within. The most meaningful change happens when clarity, awareness, and aligned action come together in practice. Real change requires real work. Connect with Design You Coaching® to facilitate the change you seek from within.