

# Citibank Malaysia

## Impact study

### 300% increase in leaders bringing others to new solutions

#### The project

In June 2010, 78 high-potential leaders from Citibank Malaysia completed a short coaching skills training program, “The Art of Coaching: building commitment and engagement in teams”, run by the NeuroLeadership Group. The Art of Coaching is part of a wider leadership development initiative called LEAD, in which top leaders engage in a series of training, mentoring and other learning initiatives over a 12-month period.

Neuroscience has shown that helping people find their own solutions to problems is a highly effective way of increasing their commitment and engagement. This happens when a leader helps a direct report or colleague have an insight through using a specific type of questioning which has proven to be not only more effective, but faster than other techniques like advice giving.

Our goal in this program was to increase each leader’s capacity to bring others to insight. This report is a summary of our findings.



#### Key findings

Summary: Average number of solutions found in 6-minute interactions

Pre-training

18%

Post-training

67%

#### About the training

The 78 participants were split into three training groups. Each group experienced one full day of live in-person training at Citibank’s learning center, followed by two teleclass training sessions held over one month.

Participants first learned about how the brain works in relation to helping people solve problems. This module included a basic understanding of the threat and reward response, the SCARF model and the neuroscience of insight.

Giving leaders a basic understanding of the social brain helps them understand how and why a coaching approach is so effective.

Participants then practiced using a coaching conversation model called *The Dance of Insight* in which they followed a series of steps in order to activate the optimum mental conditions for insight to occur.

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### How the data was gathered

At the start of the training, participants were asked to write down a business challenge they had been faced with for some time, for which they had failed to find an effective solution.

Participants were then paired up. The coach in each pair was randomly chosen and instructed to have a conversation with their colleague to help them solve their problem, using whatever technique they thought would be effective.

In a debrief, we discovered that the majority of the techniques the coaches used involved either giving direct advice or asking questions as a prelude to giving direct advice. This is commonly observed in every program we've run around the world.

After interacting for six minutes, the colleagues were asked: 'Have you seen a change in your problem, some kind of insight, such that you are now very likely to take an action that you would not have taken before this conversation?'

Toward the end of the one-day training, the exercise was repeated, using different pairings and different workplace challenges. The number of people who had insights each time was collected and turned into a percentage of the number of interactions.

In summary, across all 78 participants, the average number of solutions that were found in six-minute interactions before the training was 18%, and after the training was 67%.

This is a significant improvement of more than 300% in the effectiveness of peoples' problem-solving techniques. The shift involved the coach inhibiting their desire to solve a problem for the other person, and instead asking questions to help them reflect on their own thought processes.

### Overall results

	Pre-training	Post-training
Day 1	27%	67%
Day 2	0%	63%
Day 3	27%	70%
Total Average	18%	67%

### Participant feedback

*"I have realized that what I need to do to create a more effective team is to improve peoples' thinking, not just tell them what to do."*

*"Until you get to insight, there is no engagement or commitment. These insights actually have to come from the coachees themselves."*

*"Today created self-awareness in me. I usually just talk or instruct rather than trying to discover. Now I realize that understanding, communicating and making sure I am open is important to be a relevant manager."*

*"It (the program) is simple, clear and engaging."*

*"One thing that I learned that was different from other coach training – there is questioning until the coachee comes to insight. This has to come from the coachee. I've realized it's about them finding another way to change."*

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