

## **The Peter Dupont Group**

### **Representative Composite Case Studies**

#### **Case Study One**

The Board was concerned the founder and first-time CEO was unprepared to take the company to the next level through product rollout and potential Series B financing. The CEO, an Engineering PhD, had strengths in software development, engineering and product management but needed coaching in building his leadership and team-building capabilities as the company rapidly ramped forward.

The CEO and I worked together to clarify his business vision and strategies. We then established an executive team and an effective team process. This led to creating and monitoring a set of critical priorities and metrics dashboard followed by an analysis of and recommendations for a capital strategy, which included a detailed annual plan. We worked together to develop a refreshed Board package and practiced “dry-runs” of critical presentations.

My work with the CEO uncovered a potentially dangerous situation around processes and controls evidenced in a rapid rise in accounts receivable balances. Although not yet showing up as a cash problem, the forward indicators signaled rapidly growing sales combined with growing receivable aging, which would quickly and negatively impact cash. I worked with the CEO by helping him to see the urgency of this situation and used my network to engage an interim CFO to execute a 90-day project establishing an effective and scalable accounting function.

Regarding personal development, the CEO had an unclear understanding of the expectations and nuances of his multiple roles as leader, owner, manager, employee and board member. He also needed guidance in clarifying his relationship with the Board, including an understanding of his span of control in various areas. We addressed these issues by clearly defining roles and expectations, identifying and working through potential misunderstandings based on different cultural backgrounds and developing a clear decision-making process.

The CEO and I continue to work weekly on establishing and progressing priorities, thus improving his focus on the most important elements of the business. My operating experience has proven helpful in ferreting out potential issues and I occasionally act in a tactical, consulting role on specific issues.

Acting as a trusted, confidential advisor and sounding board to the CEO, we work together as he processes issues critical to this rapidly growing enterprise and provide counsel on longer-term professional and personal development issues.

#### **Case Study Two**

Introduced by the board of directors and engaged by the CEO, coaching the former surgeon-turned-entrepreneur and business executive focused on helping him favorably adjust his leadership style.

Various interactions with business partners and senior management indicated this inappropriate behavior could potentially jeopardize important relationships. There was additional worry that the CEO was giving insufficient credence to Board member input. Serious concern arose about whether the CEO could effectively raise a Series B round of financing.

Through an assessment interview process conducted with the Board and senior management, I was able to identify examples of how this behavior was potentially risking team morale and business results. Through a series of direct discussions around specific examples of the impact of certain behaviors, we started to see the beginnings of the necessary changes in behavior. The CEO subsequently and successfully completed an ‘up’ round of Series B financing.

The CEO and I worked together to firm up a compelling vision for the company, followed by a redesigned strategic plan including a set of critical priorities, which we reviewed, revised and progressed each week. By engaging the leadership team in clear, focused priorities, the CEO was able show the board significant business process improvement that, in turn, resulted in significantly improved business results.

### **Case Study Three**

Through my business strategy work with a CEO client, he identified sales of a new product as critical to enterprise success and requested me to coach the VP of Sales in his stretch assignment (the VP was in his first national level leadership role). The objective was to build the VP’s skills quickly as complexity increased.

The VP and I established a three-part development plan supported through a system of accountability and direct feedback:

- 1 Establish a game plan including a detailed Sales Business Plan, integrating a tactical plan, critical priorities, and team building and structure.
- 2 Team leadership including rules of engagement (behaviors), priority management, a communications plan, decision process, clear roles and deliverables, a sales department performance culture and a key metrics dashboard.
- 3 Personal development centered on identifying “blocking issues” and promoting strengths. Areas covered included poise and presence under pressure, personal organizational systems, communications skills (one-on-one and group presentations), and focusing on the important over the urgent.

We also quickly and effectively addressed the lingering tactical issues of refining sales coverage strategy, sales representative agreements, incentive plans, performance metrics, communications plans, sales meeting strategies, job descriptions and recruiting.

### **Case Study Four**

The Board determined that the founder and CEO, an MBA with a Product Management background, needed to grow his strategic, operational and external relationship skills to successfully transition the company from a development mode to product launch, which would require extensive discussions with the Board and CEO, it was clear there was both a skill deficit and misalignment around role expectations. Having grown up in India, the CEO brought a different cultural background to the Board and required guidance and tools to grow his assertiveness and confidence in a challenging Board situation. We began by reworking the language around the company vision and strategy, followed by creating a set of business priorities to provide more clarity of direction for the Board. We developed an action plan around growing an ever-widening external network, attended a three-day presentation skills workshop together (which included hostile questioning tools, small and large group presentation strategies and practice), worked through a personality assessment tool (using the Enneagram system), reformulated the Board package and practiced prior to key meetings and presentations.

I was able to leverage my personal network enabling the CEO to meet two potential new Board members with domain expertise.

This nine-month engagement wrapped up with the CEO gaining sufficient Board confidence to launch the Series B round financing search.

The CEO and I stayed in touch monthly for brief luncheon updates. Subsequently the CEO engaged me to:

- 1) Continue professional development work with the CEO.
- 2) Work with the VP of Product Marketing to assess and enhance his skill base.
- 3) Work with the management team to put in place a process to build a highly performing team as the company scales.

Additional case studies and references are available on request.

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