

## The Case

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### Executive Coaching: Siguler Guff

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#### Case Overview

- Executive coaching
- Managing Director as key client
- Private equity
- Financial Service sector

#### The Context

Siguler Guff is a global, diversified private equity investment firm which currently has over \$10.4 billion of assets under management. Head quartered in New York, Siguler Guff currently employs over 135 employees around the globe. Siguler Guff manages and co-manages several direct investment private equity funds and multi-manager funds, each targeted at carefully defined areas of market inefficiency. It also provides discretionary private equity advisory services.

#### The Challenge

Siguler Guff hired a deputy GM to head its China business, responsible for direct investing, managing and facilitating top-tier GP and government relationships and fundraising in China. The deputy GM is sharp and intelligent, has good insights to identify value drivers, understands industry dynamics and brings strong insights at the individual company and deal level. Not coming from the private equity industry, the deputy GM was expected to adjust her communication style with appropriate nuances within the private equity world in order to quickly establish credibility and trust with the investors. The Managing Director of Siguler Guff needed an efficient and focused solution to help the deputy GM of China quickly make this important adjustment within two months.

#### The Solution

Russell Reynolds Associates (RRA) worked closely with the Managing Director of Siguler Guff to understand the behavioral change expectations for the deputy GM of China in areas of executive presence, structured and persuasive communication and fielding questions. A team of RRA consultants was formed for designing and delivering the two month intensive coaching program. One was a search consultant who is very familiar with Siguler Guff, the deputy GM of China, and the demands and requirements placed on private equity firms and their representatives by potential investors and various stakeholder groups; one was a local Chinese organizational psychologist and coach who understands the cultural and behavioral nuances; and the third was an organizational psychologist and experienced designer of adult learning interventions, and interactive coaching and training programs.

The deputy GM of China first completed a set of online leadership questionnaires to get a sense of her style. The results were fed back to her in detail from the organizational psychologists to understand deeper awareness of her natural tendency, as well as attributes that are likely to facilitate or inhibit her ability to display the desired behaviors.

After the insight building session, five coaching sessions were designed and delivered, each around a specific area (Executive Presence, Logical Structure and Response, Persuasive Communication etc.) across the two

month period. Each session lasted 2-3 hours and typically involved sharing practical behavioral tips and best practices that could be leveraged to improve performance in a specific area, role play and dry runs of presentations, as well as immediate feedback discussions to reinforce the positive changes as well as pointing out additional areas of focus. A summary of observations from the coaching session was sent to the deputy GM of China after each one, in which specific action steps were suggested to keep her momentum and development going in between each session.

#### The Outcome

The deputy GM of China was highly motivated and engaged throughout the process. She was very receptive to the feedback and made positive improvement each time. Her self assessment of performance in formal presentations dramatically improved post the coaching program. She was very successful in her first big investor presentation immediately after the coaching program and the success also greatly boosted her confidence on the stage. The Managing Director also observed her improved performance in other formal settings. He commented that the approach and methodology RRA used in the coaching program was effective and professional and the coaching program provided extremely good value to their business and the firm.

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