



# CASE STUDY

## Executive Leadership Team Uncovers Newfound Power in Vulnerability

Employee turnover rate decreases by 63 percent

### **SUMMARY**

A specialty insurer writing complex commercial business was challenged to keep up their rate of growth due to limited management bench strength and a high turnover rate for their skilled professionals. The company's executive team, which was comprised of mostly technical and financial experts, was struggling with the people development side of their business. The team needed to quickly broaden their leadership skills quickly. CIM's executive on-the-job learning and coaching program offered a proven, practical and cost-effective solution.

### **ABOUT THE CLIENT:**

A national property & casualty specialty insurer, writing complex commercial business. Since its founding 12 years ago, the company has grown an average of 14 percent per year. Today they have 750 employees and operations in 21 states.

### **CHALLENGES:**

The company had a stable, experienced leadership team. While the team was highly skilled at managing the technical and financial aspects of the company, the CEO was frustrated by their silo mentality and lack of focus on the people side of the business.

To support the company's aggressive growth, employees were being promoted into management with little to no formal leadership training to prepare them for those critical roles. Many lacked the skills to drive performance within their teams. As a result, employee morale and engagement were suffering. The organization was starting to lose its better people. Given the company's specialty focus, finding replacements with the requisite skills was difficult, expensive and time-consuming. Leadership's inability to develop managers was becoming a major barrier to growth.

## QUOTES

*"I knew this program was really working when one of my new employees came to me and asked when she would be able to participate. She did not want to be someone who might hold the organization back."*

CEO

*"This program changed my life at work and home. As someone who's always been a control freak, I've learned to let go, delegate, and better utilize and work with the people around me."*

Manager

*"I was skeptical when I started this program. I didn't think I wanted to change. In truth, I didn't think I could change. Now when I look at myself and see aspects of my behavior that I'd like to improve, I have and use the tools to make it happen."*

CFO

*"For me it was always all about the work. If I made my numbers, nothing else mattered. Working on my improvement goal helped me see a bigger picture. As a result, I'm a better colleague and manager. I'm enjoying my job a lot more."*

Region Head

*"This program gave me a level of confidence I've never had. I know now that I deserve my recent promotion and that I have what it takes to be a strong leader for my department."*

Supervisor

## HOW WE HELPED:

Working in tandem with CIM coaches, executive team members were assessed against the organization's core values and leadership competencies. Using feedback from these 360 assessments, each executive chose a behavior-based improvement goal viewed as critical due to how it was limiting their individual performance and impacting the team and organization as a whole.

Supported by their CIM coach, each leader developed a goal-specific action plan based on a proven, six-step, adaptive learning process for behavioral change. Ongoing coaching enabled leaders to consistently work on their improvement goals, stay accountable and build needed skills during the course of their day-to-day responsibilities.

The heart and soul of the program was the peer-to-peer support. Rather than trying to cover their weaknesses, look their best and manage other people's impressions of them, executive team members talked candidly about what they each needed to work on. They shared their individual improvement goals. Throughout the process, they talked openly about their successes and setbacks. They were relentless about holding their peers accountable. This shared vulnerability and genuine connection totally changed the team dynamic and relationships between members.

## WHY THE CLIENT CHOSE CIM

CIM offered a proven methodology for helping individuals and teams understand and overcome the fundamental, yet often invisible, barriers that hinder progress on individual and collective goals. The client found the approach both valuable and empowering because once learned, it creates a shared language for the organization and can be applied to virtually any change effort.

The company was disappointed in the leadership development programs they'd tried in the past. The events seemed effective at the time but had no real staying power in impacting desired attitude and behavior changes. They were drawn to CIM's "learning that sticks" approach, which is:

- Goal oriented
- Fully customized for the individual
- Incorporated into the leader's day-to-day job responsibilities
- Kept top-of-mind until the new ways of thinking and behaving become automatic

## RESULTS

- Follow-up 360 assessments indicated that all team members showed measurable improvement on the leadership skills related to their individual improvement goals.
- In the year following the program's introduction, employee turnover decreased by 63%.
- Based on the success of the executive team initiative, the program was run at the manager level and is currently being run on an ongoing basis for an "up & coming" leaders group.
- The company now has made huge strides in building its bench strength and is on track to meet its 2020 growth goal of being a billion dollar company.

FOR MORE  
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