

HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS

Coaching for Powerful Communication and Extraordinary Results

The Business

Herbert Smith Freehills (HSF) is one of the world's leading law firms.

With offices spanning Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, the Middle East and the United States. The firm offers local insight and cross border services in all major regions.

The Coachee

Peter Dunne joined Freehill Hollingdale & Page (as the firm in Australia was then known) in 1994 - straight out of University. Peter had completed Bachelors of Economics & Laws (Honours) and a Graduate Diploma of Applied Finance and Investment.

Peter worked at HSF Melbourne's office for three years and then joined Ashurst Morris Crisp in London working in their Private Equity Group. After two years in London he relocated back to Australia, and in 2002 moved to HSF's Sydney office. After three years in Sydney (and eight years at HSF) Peter was made a Partner in the Corporate Group at the firm. After two years in the role as a Partner, with a strong practice in the Private Equity industry, the Global Financial Crisis hit and a number of firms for whom Peter acted ceased or significantly reduced their activity levels.

The Challenge

As a Junior Partner in a difficult market environment, Peter sought out specific coaching to target his communication and business development skills. At this point, Peter approached Carolyn Dean of Hewsons to discuss an executive coaching relationship.

The Solution

The **Hewsons Executive Coaching** program, in consultation with Peter, focused on achieving results in:

- Confidence and communication skills;
- Time management with a focus on core strategic activities; and
- Business development skills to grow and expand the pipeline of clients and relationships.

Communication Skills and Clarity of Message

Peter has a gregarious and engaging nature but at times his communication style belied a lack of confidence, particularly when dealing with some of his senior colleagues. The **Hewsons Executive Coaching** program enabled Peter to identify what he considered important in terms of communicating with senior people, and ways of ensuring that these elements were able to be expressed in a concise and clear manner - without losing or needing to discard Peter's natural enthusiasm.

Creating a Disciple Around Business Development

Internally Peter was recognised as having strong interpersonal and business development skills. However, Peter was the first one to admit that there was a lack of discipline and clarity around business development approaches, and more of a shot gun type approach to marketing activities. **Hewsons Executive Coaching** program helped Peter put in place a structure to identify those areas and activities that would have the greatest possibility of translating into increased work for HSF, and to target specific ways to use those opportunities.

By introducing a degree of discipline and rigor to business development activities, Peter's practice grew rapidly in the two to three-year period following his involvement with the **Hewsons Executive Coaching** program. Peter notes:

Traditionally I had resisted any degree of system or discipline around business developing activities in a mistaken view that this would quash or limit spontaneity and energy.



The Benefits

With the work that I did with Carolyn I was able to alter my communication style to focus on clarity and succinctness of message. This has given me greater confidence and increased my ability to express my views concisely and effectively.

With regard to business development, I was able to introduce a disciplined approach to my activities in a manner that produced significant tangible results. All this was done in the context which facilitated an increased level of enthusiasm and energy.

In 2015 Peter was appointed Head of Herbert Smith Freehills Asia Pacific Private Equity Group. He is currently working with Hewsons to look at how he takes the next step in his career to grow out a team in a different market.

