



Leadership Coaching Case: The Cost of a Star

Navigating the Tension Between Culture and Performance

Scenario

One of the bank's top Managing Directors consistently delivers record revenue, but HR investigations reveal a pattern of toxic leadership—public humiliation of team members, high turnover, and multiple exit interviews naming this MD as the reason for leaving. Removing them could mean losing millions in short-term revenue. Keeping them risks long-term culture erosion, reputational damage, and possible legal exposure.

Your task: Weigh in on the path forward and define what "great leadership" looks like in this situation.

Key Stakeholders

- **Executive Leadership** – Torn between protecting revenue and safeguarding culture.
- **Employees** – Disengaged, citing burnout and fear under this MD.
- **HR & Legal** – Concerned about liability, compliance, and retention.
- **Clients** – Satisfied today, but may be impacted by team instability and turnover.

Decision Point:

- Do you recommend removing, coaching, or retaining this Managing Director?
- How do you balance results, risk, and reputation?

Leadership Objectives

1. **Think like an enterprise leader** — integrate financial, cultural, and reputational impacts.
2. **Recognize your leadership instincts** — what drives your decision-making under pressure?
3. **See the system** — connect short-term results to long-term organizational health.
4. **Lead with courage and values** — align your recommendation with what the bank stands for.
5. **Influence through dialogue** — engage peers respectfully when perspectives differ.
6. **Communicate with clarity** — craft a one-paragraph message to the Board, team, or media explaining your decision.

Reflection Prompts

1. What would you do — and why?
2. What message does your decision send to employees, clients, and the market?
3. Is this a management decision or a leadership moment?

Bring your voice. Challenge assumptions. Think beyond today's balance sheet.