

# Rob parson at morgan stanley



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Striking the Balance of High-performance and High-value Rob Parson, a young banker with strong relationships with the important players and a proven track record in the financial services, made significant gains in building Morgan Stanley's reputation and revenues in the financial services sector (" Rob Parson," pp. 90, 93). He has thorough marketing and product knowledge, approaches and works with clients brilliantly, and pursues the business aggressively and successfully (" Rob Parson," pp. 95, 96, 97).

However, from the 360-degree evaluation, his " soft skills" do not appear to be as strong as his technical ones. He needs to improve his interpersonal skills, respect and trust his colleagues, and adapt to Morgan Stanley's organizational culture (" Rob Parson", pp. 87, 93). Being a high performer, should Parson be promoted to Managing Director? I think not. First of all, Managing Director needs to command respect for knowledge and insight among people both inside and outside the firm (" Rob Parson", p 102).

From the evaluation, instead of being open to others' ideas, Parson always thinks that he has the right answer (" Rob Parson", p 91). Second, Managing Director needs to acquire highly developed organization skills (" Rob Parson", p 102). Contrary to the average score of 3.80 for professional skills, Parson was scored at only 3.13 for his management skills (" Rob Parson", p 100). Without competent management skills, Parson will have difficulty communicating with, motivating and empowering employees.

Thirdly, the ability to articulate departmental visions and strategies is an important responsibility of managing director (" Rob Parson", p 102). Coming from smaller investment banks, Parson kept the same work style, which

conflicted with Morgan Stanley's culture and norms(' Rob Parson", p 91). He will not lead a good example to employees in demonstrating Morgan Stanley's vision and strategy. In many organizations, there are high performers like Parson who works great as an individual, but does not fit well in the organization's value system.

Both performance and value are critical factors for the health of an organization. What are some of the ways to strike the balance between the two? First of all, enhance performance by aligning organizational value with employee's goals. When Rob Parson was invited by Paul Nasr to join Morgan Stanley, he accepted the offer primarily because he wanted to work with Nasr, not because that he would be a good fit with Morgan Stanley's culture (" Rob Parson", p 90). Before long, conflicts will surface and a series of problems will occur.

How to minimize the misalignment? The organization needs to clearly communicate its mission and vision statement to its employees. Then employees should be encouraged to find similarities of their goals and the statement. If a gap exists, managers can work with employees to identify key characteristics of the two and find a common ground. In Parson's case, because his personal vision is not aligned with Morgan Stanley's, he faced problems when working with other colleagues and got frustrated by not understanding what he did wrong (" Rob Parson", p 92).

If his goals had been aligned with Morgan Stanley's, he would have had a more effective working relationship and without doubt, his performance would have been greatly enhanced. Second way to achieve the balance is to

drive organizational value through sustained performance. Assessing employees' skills, investing on training programs and fostering an environment for continuous improvement are strategies for a sustained performance. Rob Parson may not be ready to be promoted to Managing Director, but inevitably, he has great potentials.

What steps should be taken to make Parson a more effective leader? do something to utilize RP's energetic, entrepreneurial nature that organ Stanley needed to penetrate the sector? \_ First, I recommend that Nasr provide Parson constructive feedback and coaching. Nasr was worried about the potential risk of losing him (" Rob Parson", p92), but if conducted in an effective way, feedback can help Parson understand more about himself and others, while coaching can help him reflect on discoveries from the feedback and make action plans for improvement.

The existing 360-degree evaluation has provided factual basis, and Nasr can work together with Parson to explore unconscious mind behind certain behaviors and discuss what impact these behaviors had on others. Second, align Parson's goals with Morgan Stanley's vision. Before he went to work at Morgan Stanley, Parson knew that he was not the typical Morgan Stanley type (" Rob Parson", p 90), however, one does not have to be one particular type to share the same vision with the organization.

I recommend that Nasr sit down with Parson, go over Parson's personal goals, and help him identify common theme with Morgan Stanley's vision. The more aligned Parson's goal is with Morgan Stanley's, the more Parsons will feel being part of the team. Parson brings Morgan Stanley experience

and talent in an area it needs improvement, and Morgan Stanley provides Parson the platform to utilize his skills and expand career horizon. The link between Parson's goals and Morgan Stanley's vision will help Parson take ownership of Morgan Stanley's vision greatly. Thirdly, I recommend forming a knowledge sharing community in Capital Market Services. Parson was consistently commended for his strong marketing knowledge and relationship management skills (" Rob Parson", pp 95, 96, 97), both of which many employees lack. Other employees also have valuable experiences from different functions, which Larson was not open to listen before. " Lessons learned" and " Lunch and Learn" can both be examples of implementing the knowledge sharing.

Gathering collective expertise and wisdom from employees will bring team closer, and add value to achieve Morgan Stanley's goal of becoming the world's best investment bank (" Rob Parson", p87). The process knowledge exchange will provide Parson more opportunities to interact with colleagues in a different environment, where everyone's goals are aligned to enrich their knowledge base. First of all, get his buy-in of Morgan Stanley's culture. Before he went to work at Morgan Stanley, Parson knew that he was not the typical Morgan Stanley type (" Rob Parson", p 90).

I recommend that Nasr sit down with Parson, go over Parson's personal goals, and help him identify common theme with Morgan Stanley's vision. The more aligned Parson's goal is with Morgan Stanley's, the more Parson will feel be in the team. Second, I recommend that Nasr conduct feedback session between him and his peers, encourage conversation to discuss conflicts and observations. Use this as an opportunity to increase the

openness and appreciation of new style and idea among the team as well. To learn and understand more about each other, May be used as an opportunity to create synergy.