

KEARY HARPER

Insight Nine

How do I stay focused?

Sometimes it can be dispiriting to try changes without getting positive responses



Christine was the only woman on the board of her FTSE-100 company, her first directorship. All the male board members had operational roles, apart from finance, and Christine was in charge of strategy. She found that in the cut and thrust of board debates her voice was being drowned out or disregarded. Feeling that she simply would not be taken seriously, she was on the point of giving up and finding another company. Coaching gave her the encouragement to keep going and keep making her argument in different ways. Eventually, the company followed her recommendations and changed strategy, profitably. She moved on to become MD of another business in the same sector.

David was an experienced MD but colleagues complained that he was too aggressive and threw his weight around. They didn't enjoy working for him and there was a real risk of defections. He admitted to his coach that he frequently lost his temper – sometimes deliberately but more often through lack of control. Together they worked out mechanisms to change his behaviour and manage his emotions. But it took several months before his team noticed the difference and he was beginning to revert to his old ways. Challenged by his coach, he persevered and ended up with a robust but effective executive team who felt comfortable enough to give him positive – and negative - feedback!

