

## Insight Ten

### Looking for leverage in symbolic actions

*Or, sometimes, actions speak louder than words!*



Philip was a regional MD in a large international business based in Europe. He was worried about his executive team: they all seemed to be pulling in different directions and his influence over them seemed minimal. When he joined the company he was given a sumptuous office in the same headquarters building as his fellow group directors. His coach challenged him to think the unthinkable: which was to move his office so that he sat with his regional team.

Within days, the whole atmosphere had changed and the team starting working together and supporting each other. Nothing formal was ever said about the move!

Margaret had a well-established operations manager who got results but had high staff turnover. He was old-school hierarchical and practised 'divide and rule'. Margaret wanted to change the culture but couldn't get him to accept the need for change. Feeling thwarted and knowing that she needed a new operations manager, Margaret worked through a range of options with her coach. She decided to recommend him to the parent company which had just acquired a new business that needed knocking into shape. He moved over and succeeded with this project before retiring. Margaret promoted her new manager from within and changed the culture in months.

