



**THE ROI OF  
COACHING:  
IMPROVING  
CLIENT  
RETENTION**

**CASE STUDY**



## ABOUT OUR CLIENT

Our client is a global research and advisory company, helping business leaders make informed decisions. The firm's customers sign yearly subscription contracts to access its consulting services, research, reports, briefings and updates.

## THE CHALLENGE

Client retention is the lifeblood of any organization. As *Harvard Business Review* notes, an **increase in customer retention** of just 5% can result in an increase in profits by 25% to 95%.

The firm's regional VP of HR noted, "We spent a lot of time trying to understand from a business perspective what it was that drove retention. Because a **point of retention was worth approximately millions of dollars** to the company when it was smaller."

He reached out to the advisors who had the highest record for retaining clients, to ask these "bright spots" what they did differently from the others. The answer that consistently came back was "We coach our clients."

Further discussions with other advisors in the firm revealed that there was no company-wide methodology or vocabulary, and that few of them felt comfortable coaching. These advisors were lacking the skills to be more coach-like with their customers.

To ensure a sustainable coaching culture, the firm's people needed to change their behaviour so that coaching became a habit — and a regular and useful part of their customer-consulting repertoire. However, after years of "yet another training initiative," the advisors were skeptical at first.

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The value far outweighs the cost. We probably got an easy 10 to 20 times return on our investment, maybe more.

Beyond that value, it shaped what the business became.

The firm has had double-digit growth every year. And that's organic double-digit growth. If you talk to people who've been there a long time and people who are part of the business that implemented these programs, they would acknowledge what Box of Crayons did."

— Regional VP of HR

## THE SOLUTION

Box of Crayons was brought in to help embed a systematic coaching culture throughout the organization, to replace the existing ad hoc approach.

Box of Crayons has delivered a series of programs to our client over a 10-year period, starting with Coaching for Great Work. This comprehensive coaching program gave advisors and leaders the skills and capacity to provide results-based coaching in 10 minutes or less. Specifically designed to build focus, expand possibilities and create accountability, the program provides a framework for our client's people that enables them to coach their clients consistently and effectively. The questioning and listening skills learned in the initial and subsequent coaching programs support a coach-like consulting approach with the firm's customers.

"When we put on this training program, there was cynicism. People thought, 'Oh, you've got to be kidding me,'" the regional VP of HR relayed. "We picked the people who were most skeptical. We picked the hardest audience we could.

"And I'll never forget it. One of the participants came to me the next morning after training and said, 'I have to confess, I did not want to go to this training program. I really thought that, at this point in my career, I had nothing left to learn. Yet some of the things that were taught to us yesterday, and one thing in particular, I tried out last night with someone I've been working with for several years. It changed our relationship completely and moved it to another level — and it was so simple. It kind of blew my mind.'"

As the regional VP of HR noted, "For the first time in my professional career, I saw people asking for more training, as opposed to rolling their eyes and trying to come up with excuses to get out of it."

Business leaders and HR executives understand that coaching works best when it's used for a specific purpose within the business. Otherwise it seems nebulous, theoretical and divorced from the reality of the busy workplace.

"We had a corporate goal of raising retention overall, because it's one of the things that drives our stock valuation. The higher the average retention, the greater the positive impact on the value of the stock," said our client.

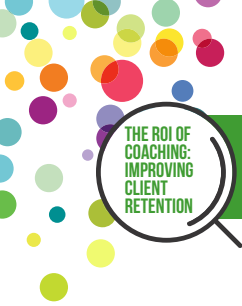
"Over the course of the first year in which we ran the programs, people really felt good about them, thought they were making a difference. **And then the business retention rates began to rise.** And every quarter and every year, the retention rates continued to go up."

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We got consistently good feedback from people that the coaching program was valuable; it changed how they related to others and gave them a whole new way of working and a new set of tools.

When I say the feedback was positive, it was exceptionally positive."

— HR executive



When the organization polled its people on the factors contributing to client engagement and retention, the Box of Crayons program was consistently credited.

During the rollout of the Box of Crayons programs, our client hired a research firm to identify the needs and wants of their ideal customers, those who renewed at a higher rate. These customers were looking for advisors who would be objective and supportive, and help them make smarter decisions.

“The thing the ideal customer valued the most was not the research ... What they wanted was a ‘thinking partner.’ And the way they described that partner exactly fit the skills taught in the programs. It really validated Box of Crayons’ work. So what we uncovered was that these qualities that drove retention were actually the valuable heart of our business.”

## THE RESULTS

The impact of the Box of Crayons programs has been significant. As a direct result of the experience:

- Client retention rates rose from the mid 70% level to the mid 80% level.
- The firm saw an additional \$7 to \$10 million per year in profits, thanks to less client attrition.
- Revenue quadrupled in the 10 years that Box of Crayons has worked with the client.
- Consultants who adopted a more coach-like approach with clients were more highly valued as “thinking partners.”

As the client notes, “We went from a firm that had revenue of half a billion dollars to a firm that’s got revenues in excess of three billion now. And what Box of Crayons accomplished runs through the company.

Pieces of vocabulary, ways of working and ways of thinking were introduced that not only were ahead of their time but also really influenced the company culture. **They’re now a meaningful part of an organization that experienced some really incredible growth.”**

## NEXT STEPS

If you would like to learn more about Box of Crayons’ programs, please visit:

[BoxofCrayons.com](http://BoxofCrayons.com)  
or email our team at [inquiry@BoxofCrayons.com](mailto:inquiry@BoxofCrayons.com)

