

## Good Relationships and Cool Projects:

How coaching could directly improve the bottom line



Pictured left to right:  
Jennifer Lynn, Dorothy Greenaway, Rochelle Zorzi,  
Melissa McGuire, Mia Eng, Marilyn Osborne

Cathexis Consulting is a small consulting firm that specializes in evaluating the impact of programs in organizations and helping them identify ways to improve.

Concluding 2013 with a net loss was a harsh reminder that even evaluation companies may need to revisit their own effectiveness from time to time. Luckily, Cathexis management team acted fast and spearheaded a business

development makeover that leveraged coaching to conclude 2014 with a stunning 29% increase in profits.

Historically, Cathexis Consulting had done most of its work with government, which meant participating in competitive bids, which also meant having to write 3 proposals for each winning project. This took an inordinate amount of time and led to extreme cycles of feast and famine. Despite their passion, the Cathexis team was becoming exhausted.

By November of 2012, it was time to make a change. CEO Rochelle Zorzi knew she wanted to focus on client service and improve Cathexis' business development approach, but the team was so immersed in day-to-day survival that it was difficult to make substantial change on their own.

### The Strategy

Determined to create a substantial change, CEO Rochelle Zorzi reached out to her coach Dorothy Greenaway, of People Dynamics Learning Group Inc. In summer

2013, Dorothy began meeting with the entire Cathexis team for half a day each quarter. They decided to make a shift in focus from selling (which was uncomfortable for some staff) to strengthening personal relationships with current and past clients, with a focus on those who do not require a competitive procurement process. And because personal warmth cannot be faked, the team decided to strengthen relationships that they genuinely enjoyed.

The coaching focused on enhancing communication skills inside the team and with clients in addition to building high quality relationships that were more likely to lead to engaging projects, giving birth to the unofficial strategy title: “good relationships, cool projects.” That communication metamorphosis meant being mindful of the importance of connecting with people – as people – first, before jumping into the business at hand. CEO Rochelle recalls one of those moments: “In a session that focused on asking questions, Dorothy stopped me partway through and said, “Rochelle, you just asked the same thing in two ways. Your questions will be more powerful if you ask them one at a time. Try just asking the first question, and see how impactful it is.” So I tried it, and I got to feel how much of a difference it made, and so did everyone else.” Reflecting on that moment, CEO Rochelle observes that

“Dorothy helped us create a learning environment that was both so safe and so powerful that nobody minded being openly critiqued in the least.”

## **The Results**

The team’s hard work soon started to pay off. By the end of 2014, their measures showed improvements in client experience. That translated, as intended, into repeat business: in 2014, Cathexis’ proposal success rates almost doubled, and all of the new projects were with previous clients. CEO Rochelle is convinced they couldn’t have accomplished this without the guidance and in-the-moment feedback of Coach Dorothy.

The success of their new business development strategy had a huge impact on the bottom line. Cathexis’ team managed to increase profit margins from -16% in the previous year to 13%.

Cathexis celebrated the beginning of 2015 with increased profits, better customer relationships and sharing the spotlight with three other organizations that won the ICF Toronto’s PRISM Award.

Well done, Cathexis!

ICF-Toronto Coaches was founded in 1999 to promote awareness and public recognition of the value and positive impact of coaching, and cultivates a collaborative, inclusive community for Greater Toronto Area coaches from all schools and traditions. It is one of the five leading international chapters and the home of the PRISM Award, launched in 2001 and then adopted by the ICF Global in 2005.



[info@icftoronto.com](mailto:info@icftoronto.com)

T: 416.960.4791 x3 | F: 416.929.5256