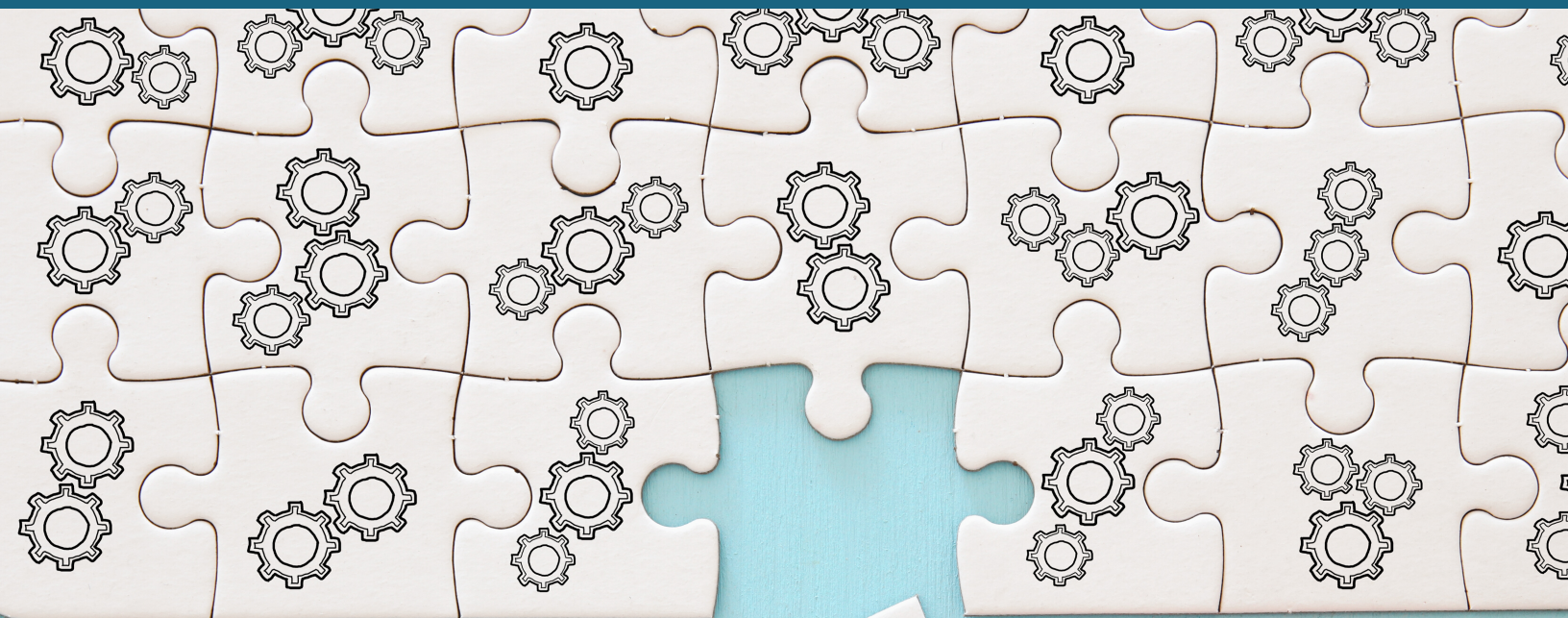


CREATING TRANSFORMATIONAL

*leaders*

AND HIGH-PERFORMANCE

*organizations*



**40pillars**  
Leadership, Strategy & Growth

JOE COHEN JD, ACC

WWW.40PILLARS.COM



“

*Everybody*

NEEDS A COACH”

– *Eric Schmidt*  
*former CEO of Google.*

– *Ted Talk by Bill Gates*

*If everyone needs a  
coach, how about you?  
What makes you the  
exception?*

How can coaching help you  
and your business?

## CASE STUDY 2

# How Joe Cohen helped an Am Law 100 firm retain a talented senior associate and increase her work output and leadership skills

---

Sarah Jone is a talented lawyer who aims high. When Joe met her, she was a rising senior associate in her firm's corporate department. The department was short staffed at the senior level and the group was counting on Sarah to manage several high-profile projects. At the same time, Sarah's performance and ability to lead her team dipped while she was experiencing some challenges in her personal life. While her colleagues and the partners in her department noticed the change in her work, they were unaware of her personal issues and too busy themselves to inquire as to what might be affecting the quality of her work. Sarah felt undervalued and overworked. Her workload continued to increase, she had a hard time delegating work to more junior lawyers and setting boundaries on her own time, she struggled with asking for feedback or assistance, and felt overwhelmed.

Shortly before Sarah began working with Joe, she had an annual review with one of the partners in her department. The partner had time for a brief 5-10 minute review and gave her some high-level constructive criticism on projects she'd worked on months ago. He shared that she needed to improve in the following areas: delegating work, time management, and confidence.

As a highly-driven person, Sarah was frustrated that there was no time for any more individualized feedback than that and felt like she didn't have the mentors to help her implement the advice he'd just given. In light of how hard she had been working for so long,

---

\*Not her real name



## *The Challenge*

Sarah took it as a thankless review and was resentful. She was feeling overburdened by the demands on her professional and personal life, and seriously considered leaving the firm, which would have been a loss for her team.

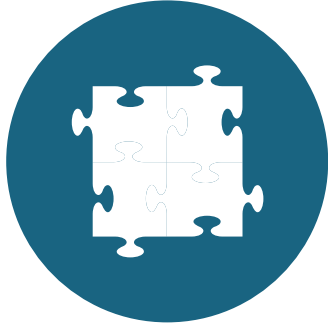
Worth noting: Months later, in the middle of the coaching process with Joe, Sarah sought further feedback from the partner who had given her annual review and she learned that he had no intention of deflating her. But at the time, feeling overwhelmed and stuck, the cursory feedback seemed all negative. These kinds of miscommunications can be costly.

If a promising attorney does not feel fulfilled, they will bring a negative energy with them to the office. They may also feel a pull to leave, to find fulfillment and appreciation somewhere else.

Sarah needed a third party to help her evaluate her situation with some objectivity, assess her strengths and weaknesses, become a more effective leader and consider the next steps in her career. The partners at her firm did not have the capacity to provide the kind of regular, individualized feedback that Sarah was looking for, and even if they did, Sarah wasn't so sure she'd want to share her concerns with a supervising partner—this is where a coach can be effective.

Law firm partners often give feedback months after a project is complete, and they don't have time to work with each associate to implement the advice. A coach can take that feedback and create one-on-one strategies for success.





## *The Solution*

Joe met with Sarah to assess her experiences and challenges. He also spoke with some of Sarah's friends and colleagues who were willing to provide input as to how they perceived Sarah. From this initial fact-gathering, he learned a few key things about Sarah's tendencies that would inform a tailored strategy for Sarah's growth—for instance, he learned that she loathed giving people instructions, which led her to do most things herself. This was inefficient, stressful, and a large key to improving Sarah's standing. Joe utilized the EQ 2.0 test as well as various coaching techniques and models to help Sarah create a strategic plan for improving her delegation and time management skills, as well as improving her confidence.

Joe and Sarah met regularly by phone, in person, and over video-conferencing for about 7 months. Initially, they focused on damage control, developing a short-term strategy; then, over the next several months, Sarah learned skills to optimize her performance and to enhance her leadership during a difficult period in her personal life.

The work included building greater resilience and confidence by developing tools to manage critical inner voices and self-sabotaging behaviors. Sarah also worked on communicating directly with her direct reports about providing better work product.

As she implemented the plan, Sarah's stress levels decreased and she became more engaged. Partners and team members quickly noticed a positive change.



## *Results*

---

After working with Joe, Sarah recovered from her performance dip and got her career back on track. She decided to remain at her firm indefinitely and would weigh potential exit options thoughtfully. She was appreciated for her demeanor and clear directives.

### **BETTER OFFICE ENVIRONMENT**

Sarah led her team with more confidence and she became a calm leadership presence. Sarah learned how to delegate projects so that each team member was utilized well.

### **BETTER WORK OUTPUT**

Sarah produced more work at a quicker pace and at a higher quality. Her efficiency led to more billable hours in less time spent at the office and the ability to more confidently manage and develop direct reports.

### **PRESERVE CLIENT RELATIONS**

The firm was able to retain Sarah longer, maintaining continuity with clients on Sarah's key projects until they were completed.

## EPILOGUE

One year later, Sarah left the firm on good terms to work as in-house counsel for an organization that was a prospect of her firm. An opportunity arose that met Sarah's long-term goals, and she was able to approach her decision to leave the firm from a place of calm and confidence.

Sarah is now a client of her prior law firm. She, the firm and her current boss are happy to have preserved the relationship.

---

# Capitalize on the talent inside your firm.

**BOOK A CALL WITH JOE TO  
SEE HOW HE CAN SUPPORT YOU  
AND YOUR ORGANIZATION.**

Joe Cohen | 347- 576- 4612 | [Joe@40Pillars.com](mailto:Joe@40Pillars.com) | [www.40pillars.com](http://www.40pillars.com)

[WWW.40PILLARS.COM](http://WWW.40PILLARS.COM)