



Case Study 3

Unlocking High-Potential Managers for the Global Stage

The Scene:

A \$8.5 billion Japanese chemical and semiconductor materials manufacturer with 34,000 employees across 24 countries was expanding rapidly into global markets. Despite commanding top market share in semiconductor materials, their high-potential managers—the future leaders of international operations—struggled to effectively run and facilitate critical global meetings where their leadership was essential.

The Challenge:

The company identified a troubling pattern: their most promising Japanese managers, many destined for international roles, were remaining quiet in English meetings where their expertise was most needed. As one high-potential manager explained:

"It's difficult to speak up. When it comes to English, I need to understand what's appropriate to say and what isn't—I don't want to create misunderstandings."

This hesitation was limiting both individual career advancement and the company's ability to leverage Japanese market insights in global strategy discussions.

What Our Analysis Uncovered

Through our comprehensive Friction Point Analysis™ across multiple groups of high-potential managers and their international colleagues, we revealed specific communication barriers affecting strategic contribution:

Japanese managers identified their primary challenges as:

- Leading global teams or projects
- Negotiating effectively in English
- Answering questions quickly and succinctly
- Disagreeing diplomatically with colleagues' plans
- Influencing people and outcomes using English

International colleagues felt their Japanese counterparts struggled most with:

- Providing feedback and comments without being asked
- Answering questions quickly and succinctly
- Influencing people and outcomes

The confidence gap was significant:

- 76.9% of Japanese managers felt "nervous" when running English meetings
- 84.6% felt "not confident" when working globally
- 38.5% believed they were "participating assertively," while only 7.7% of international colleagues agreed

The Transformation

The company implemented our confidence-first communication program across multiple cohorts of high-potential managers. Following our motto “Building skills builds confidence,” participants developed the “No Hesitation” mindset essential for strategic leadership. Using structured frameworks for organizing thoughts instantly, managers learned specific techniques to enter conversations smoothly, disagree diplomatically while maintaining relationships, and control conversation pace through strategic questioning—all focusing on communication confidence rather than English proficiency.

High-potential managers built skills to:

- Enter strategic discussions without hesitation using structured techniques
- Challenge global assumptions diplomatically: “I appreciate that perspective, however from our market experience...”
- Lead cross-cultural teams through clear communication frameworks

The Results

Immediate Impact Across Multiple Groups:



Business Impact:

- High-potential managers now actively contribute strategic insights instead of remaining quiet
- International teams benefit from Japanese market expertise previously unheard
- Global strategy discussions now include critical regional perspectives that were missing

What Made This Work

Three Critical Success Factors:

1. **Confidence-First Foundation:** Applying our “Building skills builds confidence” approach, participants developed the “No Hesitation” mindset before tackling complex business communication. By emphasizing communication effectiveness over language perfection, this created lasting behavioral change.

2. Communication Intelligence Development:

Managers mastered techniques based on human nature that work effectively when facilitating meetings with multiple cultures simultaneously—essential skills for leading diverse international teams.

3. Leadership-Aligned Development:

The program addressed real challenges facing high-potential managers, making communication skills immediately relevant to their career advancement and business contribution.

Participant Voices

“Understanding that language and communication are different concepts is encouraging for those of us who lack confidence in English—it means we can communicate effectively even without perfect language skills.”

— Senior Manager

“Working in English is about business results, not perfect grammar. I completely changed my approach.”

— Department Manager

The Bottom Line

This manufacturer transformed their high-potential managers from silent observers to strategic contributors by building communication confidence first. When future leaders can articulate insights without hesitation, companies unlock both individual potential and collective strategic advantage in global markets.

Our Guarantee:

If participants are not more confident after the workshop, it's free.