

### Powerful people – Outstanding results



### Introducing Promina

Promina Group Limited (Promina) has recently merged with Suncorp Metway Limited. Prior to this merger Promina was a leading group of specialist insurance and financial services companies listed on the Australian and New Zealand stock exchanges.

Ranked among the top 50 companies in Australia and top 20 in New Zealand by market capitalisation at the time of its merger, the company's operations trace back to 1833 in Australia and 1878 in New Zealand. Promina Group's brands included general insurance household names in Australia and New Zealand like AAMI, Australian Pensioners Insurance Agency, Just Car Insurance, Vero, Secure Sentinel and AA Insurance. In financial services Promina's brands included Asteron, Guardian Financial Planning, Tyndall and AA Life.

Michael Wilkins, former CEO and Managing Director of Promina, was appointed to that role in 1999. He is a past President of the Insurance Council of Australia and has more than 25 years experience in the insurance and financial services sector.

### Improved performance and renewed motivation

Michael reflects on his experience of executive coaching, "It was a tailored process with Hewsons, and the end result is I am now more aware of the drivers behind the issues I was dealing with and have gained the tools to recognise and deal with them effectively."

He explains, "Certainly it made me feel more confident about my performance and the contribution I was making. It also changed attitudes from others that I interacted with in the business, especially in terms of how they perceived the way in which I approached issues."

*"My commitment to the job and motivation was renewed. My personal performance certainly improved as a result of using Hewsons."*

Michael Wilkins, former CEO and Managing Director, Promina Group Limited

### How to stay motivated?

Michael explains his reasons for looking into executive coaching, saying, "I wanted to explore some issues that were concerning me, particularly around my personal style, which I felt was contributing to dissatisfaction with my own performance. I was hoping to get a third party dispassionate opinion and subsequently gain some tips on how to manage and deal with my own characteristics."

*"One of the overriding questions I was asking myself was 'do I still have a strong commitment to this job and to continue to do it?' Using Hewsons, I wanted to address certain issues I thought were impeding my performance and affecting my motivation."*

Michael Wilkins, former CEO and Managing Director, Promina Group Limited

Michael considered other options including soldiering on but realised he could benefit from Hewsons' experienced and highly qualified executive coaching. He says, "I thought that independent advice from a qualified professional would achieve maximum benefit."

## A tailored and honest approach

Hewsons tailored a program specific to Michael's needs, as he explains, "My program was customised and we would reach an agreement at the start of each session around what we were going to explore and what needed to be achieved."

*"What was also important was the knowledge that Hewsons were being brutally honest with me. They were not afraid to tell me things that I didn't necessarily want to hear."*

Michael Wilkins, former CEO and Managing Director, Promina Group Limited

## Focusing on specifics to achieve results

In order to achieve his key objectives Michael and Hewsons focused on the key areas of time effectiveness, empowering others, managing difficult people and engagement. Michael comments, "In terms of time effectiveness, Hewsons helped me to recognise when others were delegating upwards to me or abdicating their own responsibilities. This goes towards empowering others as well."

*"I have a tendency towards perfectionism. Since working with Hewsons I've learnt to let go and found that this made the people around me feel more empowered and supported."*

Michael Wilkins, CEO and Managing Director, Promina Group Limited

## Benefiting from the law of mutual exchange

He adds, "One of the key things I carried with me – literally – from Hewsons was a diagram of the law of mutual exchange. It helped me lift engagement by reminding me to understand the perspective of others and put myself in their shoes. It certainly helped me deal with issues that arose on a daily basis."

Michael offers the following advice to other executives considering coaching, "Approach it with an open mind and understand what you want to get from it. Be prepared to work hard because change does not happen overnight and, at the end of the day, the only person that can make the changes is you."

## The outcome

"With Hewsons the results for me centre on engagement and empowerment of others, personal motivation, a general self-awareness that came from the executive coaching process and a more appropriate work/life balance," says Michael.

## Results achieved

- More empowered people
- Stronger engagement
- Higher personal motivation
- Enhanced ability to handle difficult people
- Improved time effectiveness
- More appropriate work/life balance