

No cushy office for this mentor

When Barry Tarasoff was research director of Schroder Wertheim, a Wall Street investment firm, he sought to hire engaging, reasonable analysts who were friendly and easygoing. His goal was to create a team that actually enjoyed working together.

This may sound basic. But in many Wall Street firms in the 1990s, cutthroat competition and ruthlessness reigned. Analysts sometimes viewed one another with disdain and often schemed for ways to make themselves look good at the expense of others.

Tarasoff, now head of equity research at Cowen and Co., doubled as a well-regarded coach at Schroder Wertheim.

“He made it very collegial,” recalls one of the analysts. “He encouraged discussion, reminded us what we were in business for, which was to find money-making ideas for our clients, and was a zealot in defending the independence of the analyst.”

A fan of celebrations, Tarasoff regularly praised superior effort or performance. He also gave constructive feedback that boosted morale.

His choice of office space reinforced his effectiveness as a coach. While most research directors took a corner office on a high floor, Tarasoff insisted on a less prestigious but more practical space among his analysts.

His physical closeness to his team endeared him to them. They knew by his proximity that he wanted to play a hands-on role in developing their expertise and supporting their success.

Tarasoff’s commitment to coaching helped shape the organizational culture. He set an example of treating people respectfully, demonstrating intellectual rigor and bringing out the best in those around him.

— Adapted from *Chasing Stars*, Boris Groysberg, Princeton University Press.