

## Coaching Smart Workers- It's EQ Not IQ that Matters!

By Cynthia Kivland, Principle, CareerPerformanceStrategies

**Combining head and heart** is the key to career fulfillment, states Cynthia Kivland, Principle, CareerPerformanceStrategies and author of the EQ Matters© coaching and training programs. Daniel Goleman, author of "Emotional Intelligence" (Bantam, 1995), "Working with Emotional Intelligence" (Bantam, 1998), and most recently, "Developing Leaders That Get Results" (HBP, 2001) is the leading authority in EQ. His premise is "sensitivity to emotional states (one's own and others') and effective relationship skills are the critical competencies in today's global, self reliant work environment. Simply put, IQ and expertise are no longer considered the best predictors of performance or leadership effectiveness.

Consider the traditional formula for leadership success as possessing cognitive intelligence, an analytical, detached decision style and getting results, often through people. Most important, you did not show emotional sensitivity, you were not transparent so people knew what you really meant and you did not focus on understanding others first to build rapport. However, the skills employers really want are the ability to build people up, bring them together and inspire them to do their best.

### Personality Trait or Skill?

Is EQ a personality trait, either something you have or do not have? The good news is that EQ is a skill that can be learned with practice and reinforcement! However, as individuals of habit, we often lock into a workstyle that is most comfortable and transmitted as "This is the way I do things." Personality inventories, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator© or FIRO-B have shown that each of us develops a stable and comfortable " default work style. " This "default workstyle" influences how we approach our work and how we interact with others with whom we work. This default style does not change much after the mid 20s, however we can learn to manage and adapt our "style" to fit varying work situations and the personal needs and styles of others.

### Working Smarter to Get Results

Emotional intelligence or "EQ" is the ability to *intentionally* understand, manage our social interactions and ourselves skillfully. The key word in the above sentence is "intentionality". Working smarter is intentionally being aware of the impact you are having on others and adjusting your style to get the best results with people and not through people. It is a heightened awareness to intentionally manage our "default settings" to reduce interpersonal disconnects by understanding and accepting others' needs and styles. The Working Smarter EQ program, *Sharpen Your Focus, Heighten Your Impact*© builds skills in the two pillars of EQ competencies:

**Personal Competence:** How well we know and manage our strengths and limitations

**Social Competence:** How well we manage our relationships to achieve results with people.

EQ can be learned, however such self-development is hard work. It is not simply deciding to read some books on emotional intelligence and taking a personality assessment. Developing and sustaining emotional intelligence requires a constant -- and often uncomfortable -- commitment to personal and social skill development. It requires a developmental sequence of awareness and skill development from a Focus on You (Personal Competence) to a Focus on Us (Social Competence). EI requires skill practice and the ability to solicit and accept feedback on skill development. EI is best developed using multiple learning mediums- from classroom, self-reflection, assessment, individual and group coaching and development assignments. Remember, EI skills and habits will not emerge until the rewards for the competencies are directly related to one's performance outcomes and employability within or outside the company. This often requires organizations to take a "hard look" at the behaviors they are tolerating and determine how long and at what cost they want to tolerate the "default style". Remember, there are limits to how much individual's can change behaviors. However, it is possible to increase awareness of how our "default settings" may affect others and self manage to optimize our EI assets and minimize our EI liabilities.

## Developing Smart Workers- It's EQ Not IQ that Matters

### A Scientist Learns Being Right All the Time is Not Very Smart

A brilliant research scientist, promoted to manage a team of very smart people, was not achieving the results she wanted in a performance based outcome environment. As part of an emotional intelligence training and coaching program, she received candid feedback that her team believed they could never do anything right. Her thoroughness and critical analysis of work product was creating a "risk-averse work climate " and the leader was perceived as "arrogant." Team members stopped trying to offer information or ask for feedback as they felt her opinionated mind was closed to new information.

The leader's strengths were readily acknowledged as a brilliant researcher, writer and mentor to others. The leader agreed to work on managing her defensive and perceived arrogant behaviors. First, she set a development goal of to acknowledge disruptive behaviors, habits and emotions that interfere with hearing other's perspective. Second, she set team and individual meetings to give feedback that bolstered or re-directed others natural abilities and accomplishments. Third, she shared team leadership by delegating tasks and outcomes to team members.

*I have become aware that when my default workstyle is emotionally hijacked or exaggerated, I exhibit a directive, intellectual and rational style, debating my "truth" instead of gathering perspective from others. I learned that my tendency is to over intellectualize, analyze and debate everything, focusing initially on the flaws of a decision or outcome than supporting the implementation. I guess this makes me seem less excited or interested in others ideas or feedback than I really am. I can understand how individuals feel that I think I am smarter than or superior to you. That is not my intention, but I realize your perception is the reality. Your performance success is influenced by how you perceive my style. I want you to know that when I fall into those habits of behaviors, it is OK for you to let me know the effect it is having on you. Give me feedback about my behavior is what I want and need to be a more effective leader for you and our team.*

As the above example illustrates, the first aspect of emotional intelligence is identifying and building around your strengths, knowing and managing your limitations and staying open to adapt your style to the situation, the work climate and social interactions.

#### **Working Smarter EQ Skills**

**S**elf –understanding one's default style of emotions, strengths, limitations, values and motives

**M**anagement- ability to manage one's default style to sustain optimal performance FLOW

**A**uthenticity- intentionally displaying honesty, integrity and transparency to build and sustain trust

**R**esilience-flexibility in adapting to changing situations, skills to manage setbacks and resources to overcome obstacles.

**T**rust: consistently meeting other's needs, hearing other's perspectives and following through on commitments

**E**motional Self Control-intentionally managing disruptive emotions, actions and impulses that may interfere with individual or team performance

**R**elationship Results - ability to manage other's emotions from a foundation of authenticity, empathy, influence and collaboration to move others towards results.

*For more information about with EQ matters assessments, coaching, retreats, training or train-the-trainer programs contact Cynthia -ckivland@careerperformancestrategies.com or 1-877-60-COACH*

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