

LEADERSHIP IN A CHANGING WORLD or How to Succeed Where Others Have Failed By Derek Dann

This article is presented with the compliments of Consultation Limited for the personal use of its clients and visitors to its web site. For this piece, Derek Dann draws on a UK Chartered Management Institute (CMI) study to explore the required shift in emphasis for leaders over the next 10 years and the place of Emotional Intelligence in achieving that shift.

'It's not as if we haven't been changing our approaches to leadership; of course we have. After all, we'd never survive in today's global marketplace if we didn't update our thinking and our behaviours in terms of all sorts of business skills, including leadership.

We're much more focused on giving our people the freedom to participate fully and to create and innovate'.

These are probably sentiments you've heard a thousand times before. And whilst they acknowledge the need for different approaches, there's often still a lingering, nagging doubt whether we've moved sufficiently in the right direction. No matter what publication we read on the subject of leadership, it probably says we're still lagging behind our international competitors. If that's true, what can we do about it?

In their March 2008 study, *Managing Futures; The World in 2018* (ISBN 0- 85946-436-9), the UK Chartered Management Institute (CMI) examined two fundamental issues:

- ◀ What will the world of work and management look like in 2018?
- ◀ What do we need to start doing to enable business leaders to deal with tomorrow?

The study highlighted the challenges managers and leaders may face in three different futures:

- ◀ The probable;
- ◀ The unexpected;
- ◀ The desired.

The study's findings imply that holograms, robots and 'intelligent' computers all have a role to play in the UK's future business landscape.

However, the report went on to suggest that CEOs will be more concerned about changes to current business models, trade blocs and the UK's ability to compete on a global scale. And we're also told that skills in coaching, motivating and connecting with dispersed staff were identified as being crucial to success in 2018; so too was a high degree of Emotional Intelligence (EI).

However much we might think we have changed our approaches to leadership, the fact is that we need to continue that process of change if we are to meet the challenges of doing business in 2018. For the best performance from our leaders and our people now and in the future, we should ensure three things:

- ◀ That on a personal level we fully understand what makes us tick, our preferred ways of being and doing. We can't begin to understand what makes others tick until we really understand our own drivers.
- ◀ That we are genuinely people-centred, truly understanding what makes others tick and their preferred ways of being and doing.
- ◀ That through our leadership, rather than projecting what we think they need, we should build for our people a working environment in which they are free to create and innovate for joined-up business success.

The first two of these are centred on EI. Extensive research has shown that, whilst IQ is of course important in determining intellectual capacity, the EI equivalent, EQ, is a differentiator of success. In other words, given a comparable level of IQ, those with higher EQ significantly outperform their lower EQ counterparts.

The last of the above three factors is addressed first by climate and then by culture. There is no better way for a leader to pave the way for a culture of staff engagement, creativity and innovation than through McClelland's model of organisational climate:

- ◀ **flexibility**: how free employees feel to innovate;
- ◀ **unencumbered** by red tape;
- ◀ their sense of **responsibility** to the organisation;
- ◀ the level of **standards** that people set;
- ◀ the sense of accuracy about performance feedback and aptness of **rewards**;
- ◀ the **clarity** people have about mission and values;
- ◀ and finally, the level of **commitment** to a common purpose.

The benefits to be gained are that we will bring about a strong desire at grass roots level for our organisations to grow and develop,

relying on our staff to grow with us, to be stakeholders in our success; our people will be recognised as being at the core of our success; they will be proud of their achievements and recognise that they have not finished yet.

For everyone, at all levels, change may be challenging, yet with proper support to facilitate action, it need not be frightening.

So here's the challenge for leaders: lift your eyes and look forward to the future with excitement, passion and vision, to an organisation that is people-centred with skills in coaching, motivating and connecting with dispersed staff and where high levels of EI are commonplace.

Now, that's not too much to ask, is it?

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