

MENTORING: BALANCING EQ WITH IQ

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Why Managers Fail

When asked what it is they manage on an ongoing basis, many executives and senior managers mention such things as determining strategic direction, developing human capital, exploiting core competencies and sustaining an effective corporate culture to be at the core of their job.

But while most executives seem to have a fairly clear understanding about *what* it is that they should be managing, few managers have clarity around *why* their efforts sometimes fail.

In May 1988, the Wall Street Journal published an article examining the "5 Top Reasons Why Managers Fail". For more than twenty years, those reasons have stood the test of time. They are:

- Inability to "get along"
- Failure to adapt to a changing marketplace
- The "me only" syndrome (failure to build a team)
- Fear of taking action
- Unable to rebound from setbacks

Isn't it interesting that none of the above reasons have anything to do with education, skills or experience? Instead, they are centered around the issues of *adapting to change, self-image and relationship management*. This Wall Street Journal article and many other research projects since, have found that 'management failure' has more to do with emotional awareness and managing change, than it has to do with a manager's inability to "make the numbers". In fact, a quick look through some recent Harvard Business Review articles will show the abundance of evidence now available indicating the importance of an executive's need to use their EQ (Emotional Quotient) – when navigating through

change, as often as they use their IQ – when making decisions that affect the bottom line.

While there is no question that 'making the numbers' is a critical priority in any organization, relying solely on numbers to evaluate a manager's success could be a short sighted. Measuring success simply on financial results ignores the manager's understanding of corporate values and the importance of team building, mentoring, coaching, visioning and leading change – all of which are at the core of a well-developed EQ. While a 'numbers-only' evaluation may be **easy** to communicate and manage, it can also be viewed as executive management's 'cop-out' to addressing the tougher issue of how corporate values impact results.

Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric, perhaps one of the most numbers-driven CEOs of our times, is quoted in his book, Built to Last, as recognizing the need for a balance between numbers and values. He said, *"People who make the numbers and share our values go onward and upward. People who miss the numbers and share our values get a second chance. People with no values and no numbers – easy call. The problem is with those who make the numbers but don't share the values . . . we agonize over these people."*

Executive Mentoring

The fact is an organization's values can't be found in the numbers. Its values, like its strategies, are given breath every time one of its employees comes in contact with either another employee, or one of the organization's customers. It is at that very moment of contact – *'the moment of truth'* – that all of senior management's creative thinking and strategic planning comes to life.

However, for many executives with underdeveloped EQ's, working and managing within stated corporate values is often much more difficult for them than just "making the numbers". It is for that reason many of today's successful organizations have turned to Executive Mentors for help. Executive Mentors can help business owners and senior managers in their quest to find that **balance** between the "soft side" of business performance – *values, change management and related EQ issues*, and the "hard side" of fiscal performance – *getting the numbers*.

Leadership Paradox

Daniel Goleman in his Harvard Business Review article "What Makes a Leader", indicated that effective managers have a high degree of understanding of their

moods and emotions and have the ability to suspend judgment so that they can think before they react. In addition, high performing executives tend to be passionate about their work for reasons that transcend money or status and are adept at managing relationships and being appropriately empathetic. These high EQ characteristics contribute to their success and also allow them to achieve rapid gains from executive mentoring.

Such people experience the value of mentoring in a variety of ways. Many cite the Leadership Paradox -- 'the higher you rise in the organization, the less likely you are to receive candid feedback'. Unfortunately, valued information often recedes at a time when an executive's greater visibility invites higher levels of scrutiny, decisions become increasingly pivotal and mistakes prove more costly. A seasoned mentor can fill the gap by providing candid, objective counsel.

Others appreciate the opportunity to sound out new ideas and many say mentoring provides insights about their leadership and better understanding of their impact on the team. Those who have experience working with a mentor generally share the belief that trusted counsel adds leverage to their strengths, while helping them avoid some of the potential roadblocks to effective leadership and reaching their goals.

A Mentor is More Than a Coach

While many mentors can perform the fundamental role of coaching -- to help someone reach a specific goal, few coaches have enough business experience to perform the fundamental role of mentoring -- to help someone successfully navigate through their personal and business lives by offering advice, solutions, new tools and the power of personal experience.

Coaching

Typically, Executive Coaches are specialists in a certain topic, competency or industry and are usually engaged to help someone reach a pre-determined goal. Using their definitive knowledge and tools, they work with executives to identify the behavior change required to attain a specific outcome. In short, Coaches tend to be goal and performance oriented.

Mentoring

Mentors tend to be successful and seasoned business executives who offer broad career experience and deep accumulated wisdom. They typically 'walk alongside' a business owner or executive and freely engage in discussions on a wide range of personal and business topics. They are at ease offering advice and solutions,

and tend to act more like partners than coaches. And because mentors are usually executives who have 'been there - done that', they are both a source of knowledge as well as Socratic questioner when an executive needs help or advice on a new idea or personal challenge. In short, a mentor is a trusted advisor with broad business knowledge and a highly developed EQ.

Some personal benefits of working with an Executive Mentor

- A better understanding of where you are in relation to where you want to be
- The clarity that comes with having a focused conversation with an experienced advisor
- The sense of well-being you'll receive when talking to someone who listens with your best interests in mind
- The excitement and motivation you'll feel when challenged to go beyond where you could go by yourself
- The feeling of security that comes with a discreet mentoring relationship
- The comfort of exploring options with someone you respect and trust
- The confidence you will feel when creating goal-oriented, strategically sound action plans with someone who believes in your abilities
- The feeling of relief that comes when you make a decision to do what you 'want' to do instead of doing what you think you 'should' do
- The sense of personal pride you will experience when you reach your stated goals
- The feeling of control when you finally take charge of your career and life