



Distinguished Leadership

by Matt Williams, ACC

What distinguishes great leaders, those whose teams consistently exceed expectations, from merely good leaders? According to a body of work introduced into the business community by Daniel Goleman (1), rather than IQ or technical skills, which are important in their own right, it is the skills that contribute to EI (Emotional Intelligence) that separate the great from the good. These skills

- Self Awareness – knowing ones strengths, weaknesses, drives, values and impact on others
- Self-regulation – controlling or redirecting disruptive impulses and moods
- Motivation – relishing achievement for its own sake
- Empathy – understanding other peoples emotional makeup
- Social skill – building rapport with others to move them in desired directions

are present in each of us at certain levels; however, it is those who cultivate these skills that will, especially at the highest levels of a company, distinguish themselves as exceptional leaders.

Can emotional intelligence be learned? While there is undoubtedly a genetic component to emotional intelligence, research and practice demonstrate that it can be learned if properly approached. Emotional intelligence is a function of the part of the brain that governs feelings, impulses and drive, the method of learning must be considered. This system, research indicates, learns best through an approach that incorporates motivation, practice, and feedback. Traditional training methods utilized to enhance primarily analytical and technical abilities (i.e. sales processes, strategy, etc) fall short of delivering lasting change related to the skills around emotional intelligence and can even have a negative impact on job performance. To enhance, or learn, the skills associated with emotional intelligence, training must help people break old behavioral habits and establish new ones, a process that may include traditional training, but whose effectiveness requires the inclusion of practice and feedback.

For additional information on Emotional Intelligence, download our whitepaper at www.developinsights.com/white-papers or contact us at 877-689-8256 to discuss the leadership development and executive coaching programs available.

(1) Goleman, D. (1998) Working with emotional intelligence. New York: Bantam