

Leadership and Intelligence

Lessons for Oil and Gas Project Leaders in Nigeria

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Strengthening one's Leadership ability does not imply following a set of instructions or methodology. The reasons for this are not farfetched. The instructions or methodology may not be in consonant with the individual's personality or style; the individual may not be genuine at applying the instructions and may be at a loss when exceptional situations arise (Clawson, 2001:1).

According to Professor James G. Clawson (2001:1):

Most observers believe that intelligence is an important precursor to effective leadership. Smart people are generally considered to have the best potential for being the leaders of industry, nations, and institutions. Interestingly, a study of valedictorians, however, indicates that after twenty years, most of them are working for their classmates (Goleman, cited in Clawson, 2001:1). This counter-intuitive result causes us to rethink our beliefs about intelligence and its relationship to effective leadership.

Clawson (2001:1) believes that the philosophy of the Age of Enlightenment in western civilization has contributed to 'many of the leadership models taught in business schools [that] have focused on rational decision making in which emotions are viewed as detriments or obstacles to making good decisions'.

Furthermore, it has been argued that although the concept of intelligence quotient (or IQ) has been the most prominent measure of intelligence, its validity as well as those of general intelligence or aptitude substitutes have come into question in recent years. These tests 'still wield a great deal of influence over our academic opportunities and those of our children' (Clawson, 2001:2).

However, 'startling conclusions about the nature of intelligence – many of them at odds with old assumptions- have begun to emerge' in recent times (Clawson, 2001:2).

Three important inferences can be drawn from Daniel Goleman research on recent studies, according to Clawson. They are:

- Existing standardized intelligence tests fail to predict success in life or in business because they do not tell the whole story;
- Emotion, while it can sometimes sabotage clear-headed thought, has been scientifically shown to be an indispensable contributor to rational thinking and decision-making, and
- Despite traditional views that IQ is inherited and that one cannot do much to change it, the newly recognized various intelligences seem to be, to a large extent, learned (Clawson, 2001:2)

It could be argued that there exist multiple intelligences (Goleman cited in Clawson, 2001:2) and that believing in 'longstanding notion of a single kind of intelligence [is] both wrongheaded and injurious' (Gardner cited in Clawson, 2001:2).

According to Clawson (2001:3) 'Gardner's perspective explained why traditional tests had been ineffective in predicting success: they measured only one or two of many necessary and important kinds of intelligence'.

Clawson posited that 'Goleman took Gardner's "personal" kinds of intelligences – the inter-personal and intra-personal- and---- to create a story that described something he called "emotional intelligence,' and that 'in the day-to-day world no intelligence is more important than the interpersonal [EQ]' (Clawson, 2001:3).

Intellectual Intelligence (IQ) is characterized by genetic 'inheritance, revealed in curiosity, honed by discipline in study and supported by range of experiences' while Emotional intelligence (EQ), on the other hand, as introduced by Goleman, is composed of 'recognizing your emotions, managing your emotions appropriately and productive self-talk out of emotional hijackings' (Clawson, 2001:4).

Clawson (2001:7) separated the two aspects of EQ as against Goleman's perspective for clarity's sake into Social Intelligence or Social Quotient (SQ) and Change Intelligence or Change Quotient (CQ).

According to Clawson, Social Quotient has to do with 'recognizing and managing the emotions in interpersonal relationships' [and are] 'directed toward others in relationships' (Clawson, 2001:7).

Components of SQ include 'Recognizing emotions in others, listening, caring about the emotional state of others [and] helping others manage their emotions' (Clawson, 2001:8).

Clawson introduced another kind of intelligence which he called Change Intelligence, CQ for short. He stated that 'change intelligence [is the] ability to recognize the need for change, [the] comfort in managing change, and [the] understanding of and mastery of the change process'(Clawson,2001:10).

The components of CQ which include 'Recognizing the need for change, Understanding the Change Process, Mastering implementing the Change Process [and]Comfort in managing the Change Process' stand out in limelight (Clawson. 2001:10).

In the end, according to Clawson (2001:12) 'the challenge and invitation presented -- -- to each of us is to assess our emotional preparedness for leadership and to invest in our abilities to improve that kind of intelligence. This means viewing intelligence in a broader context, one that includes not only IQ, but also EQ, SQ and CQ'.

Lessons for Project Leaders

To be an effective leader it is mandatory to develop EQ, SQ and CQ abilities. The good thing about it is that the skills can be learned unlike IQ that is predominantly inherited. The benefit of improving on these skills cannot be overemphasized considering the impact they will have on the day-to-day interaction at home, at work and elsewhere.

You may not be good at discerning the emotional states of the people you work with on a daily basis, sometimes due to the pressure to get the work done. You may have been having challenges managing your emotions dealing with both your superiors and subordinates at work. You would raise your tone of voice when stressed to make a point especially when you are not getting the point he is trying to make.

Given the present understanding of EQ, SQ and CQ it is good to realize that that is not the way to go to effectively lead. This challenge, which could be a personal one for that matter, should be dealt with without delay. Everyone would like to be able to manage his or her emotions, test his or her abilities to do so, and feel better about life and better able to manage relationships.

To this end, as the project leader, you should resolve to

1. Ascertain your level of emotional intelligence (EQ)
2. Regularly check with those you work with to confirm or disconfirm your views of their emotional states
3. Help one person each week to manage his or her emotions beginning next week, and increase the number as you make improvement following lessons learned weekly
4. Be prepared to embrace change with an open mind and to respond appropriately.

Bibliography

Clawson, J. (2001) *Leadership and Intelligence*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Darden School Foundation.

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