

EQ Coaching – The Ultimate Development Tool

by: Peggy Grall

I smiled to myself when Michael walked in and put his feet up on the desk. I smiled because, in another boardroom, in an earlier era, that would have been unthinkable. Today, it seemed almost normal, even to me. I've come to regard the Michaels' of Generation X, with respect, curiosity and sometimes amusement. How different they are than the Boomers. They are so creative, technologically savvy, change friendly and unimpressed with authority; so unwilling to sacrifice everything for the company. Good for them!

Like so many of his cohort, Michael's computer skills are stellar and his ability to learn quickly is impressive. The dilemma with Michael is that he's 26, and the company wants to promote him to Manager of the Marketing department. He's never managed anyone; heck, he's only been working 4 years! This is a scenario I see duplicated repeatedly within the companies I coach.

The need to promote inexperienced, but technologically superior employees is quickly becoming a key element in the succession planning of most organizations. Harvard Business School recently published a study in which they found that most employees in the professional and technical fields have an IQ of 110 – 120: several points above the average. However, their finding also indicated that IQ accounted for only 10 – 25% of job success, and that the same employees who were high in IQ were often challenged in EI - Emotional Intelligence. In another study conducted by Hay/McBer, it was found that emotional competencies (EI) were “twice as important in contributing to excellence as pure intellect and expertise.” In a similar study done by Michigan State in collaboration with the University of Ohio, it was found that strong EI skills increased the likelihood of success as the complexity of the job increased. For simpler jobs, like clerks and machine operators; those with strong EI skills outperformed their colleagues by a ratio of three to one. For jobs of medium complexity, like data entry, sales clerks and mechanics; the top performers outdid their counterparts by a ratio of 12 to one. For the most complex jobs like lawyer, account managers and physicians; the EI superstars were outperforming their colleagues by 127 %. Research consistently tells us that it is an individual's EI (the real stuff of leadership) and not IQ, that determines who makes good employees, managers and leaders - and who doesn't.

Emotional Intelligence skills are what we often think of as maturity; fully knowing one's self, regulating one's emotions and intuitively interacting with others in a way that is respectful and productive. The Emotional Competence Framework, as articulated by Daniel Goleman, author of *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, includes:

- **Self Awareness:** Knowing ones internal states, preferences, resources and intuitions
- **Self-Regulation:** Managing one's internal states, impulses and resources
- **Motivation:** Emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals
- **Empathy:** Awareness of other's feelings, needs and concerns
- **Social skills:** Adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others

Human Resource professionals are only too aware that over the next 5 – 10 years, as the Boomers leave the workforce in droves, companies will be faced with the need to promote these young, inexperienced Gen Xer's – ready or not! Enter coaching!

Historically, coaching has been used primarily as a leadership development tool for a select few in an organization. Today it's being widely used for young men and women like Michael, to groom them for assuming positions that will require maturity beyond their years of experience. For example, I'm currently coaching a young computer analyst in a large pharmaceutical company. Her division needs her to assume the responsibilities of West Coast manager when the position becomes vacant later this year. She's bright and eager; she's also intimidated by complex decision-making, senior employees and doesn't yet have the personal presence to provide strong leadership to a team. She can develop these qualities, but not through conventional training methods. In coaching sessions she's working on her ability to: be decisive under pressure, conduct productive meetings, think strategically and communicate confidently with her team. By discussing hypothetical trial & error scenarios in a confidential, non-threatening relationship with a seasoned coach, she is quickly learning to emotionally manage herself and others. The individualized interaction with a coach will get her where the company needs her to be - faster.

Many employees currently in Information Technology, Accounting and Marketing are Gen X's or Next'rs, and some like Michael, are managing employees old enough to be their parents. Although it's not new for an older generation to be managing a younger one, it is a new phenomenon for a considerably younger person to be in a position of authority over someone older. The vast differences between the current working generations; the disparity of technology skills, work ethic, work/life focus and opportunity, all present specific challenges for both groups when one is in authority over the other. As a result, coaching is often used as an approach to work with both sides to create bridges of increased understanding, insight and cooperation. By linking a Gen X'er with a coach, they are able to gain access to a wealth of experience and knowledge that otherwise would take them years to develop on their own. Beyond what simple mentoring can accomplish, coaching can elicit the creativity of the young leader in a way that allows them to grow synergistically. For management professionals responsible for succession planning, it makes sense to consider coaching as a tool to accelerate the development of those savvy young Gen X'rs in your office.

(920 Words)

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Peggy Grall is a Certified Executive Coach, key-note speaker and former Psychotherapist with 19 years experience in the areas of Change Management and Conflict Resolution. Organizations experiencing mergers & acquisitions, culture transformations, and other intense change initiatives have utilized Peggy's skills to help them navigate the high-risk, high-reward atmosphere of significant change. Her unique background equips her to work effectively with individuals and teams to assess and address the complex *people issues* affecting *change outcomes*. She is President of the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers Toronto Chapter and in 2004 was nominated for **Business Person of the Year** and nominated again in 2005 for the coveted **Athena Award** recognizing Women in Business.

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