Leadership Intelligence
By Mary Shippy, Angela Tallman, Mike Kraft, Pieter Oosthuizen and Charlotte Rotterdam

Few would debate the need for better leadership in today’s public and private arenas. A recent Harvard Kennedy School poll tells us that 80% of the respondents believe we are currently in a leadership crisis. We have a plethora of good books on the topic of leadership, written by smart savvy business and educational leaders and researchers. The research shows that as leaders and organizations we get stuck in some common but subtle traps that keep us anchored to the past and short term solutions rather than looking ahead to the execution of long term smart strategies. The first of those traps drives leaders to believe that yesterday’s solutions will solve tomorrow’s problems. The assumption that present trends will continue is the second trap and the third is turning a blind eye to what is happening in the global market today by neglecting, denying or ignoring the possibilities and opportunities the future is creating.

For organizations to survive in the 21st century, they need to embody a learning modality within the heart of their culture. To be successful at this, leaders must become learners – willing to admit what they don’t know all the answers, but maintain a curiosity about information and learning, not just knowledge experts – believing they already have all the answers and that they possess the information and experience needed.

Leadership Intelligence is about the practice of blending high performance experience and knowledge with personal and collective integrity within the context and culture of collaboration. To do this effectively leaders need to move followers from the present paradigm across a bridge of complexity and uncertainty that is basically being built while it is being walked across.

The paradigm of leadership that is emerging or reemerging has an altogether different quality than that of old paradigms. This demands what we are calling Leadership intelligences – this is made up of a variety of non-academic intelligences, several of which we want to highlight in this whitepaper

It is these intelligences that allow us to move with fluidity and flexibility in the constant changing environment, contextualizing our leadership style with appropriate action and communications that is grounded by values forged in life and with an optimism based in reality of the business community.

Within the larger framework of Leadership Intelligence, Angela Tallman, will be addressing Business Intelligence. Mary Shippy, will concentrate on Moral Intelligence and Cultural Intelligence. Mike Kraft, on Emotional/Social Intelligence, and Pieter Oosthuizen and Charlotte Rotterdam, will focus on Spiritual Intelligence in leaders.
BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

As a society, we are drawn to compelling and creative leadership. Especially in difficult economic times, we look for leadership that is steady and sure-footed. We want our leaders to be confident, and have the knowledge and demonstrated experience to “fix” the problems. We have studied models of leadership for centuries – there have been many documented methods and models of leadership but the truth is that no centralized concept of leadership has surfaced which definitively established the standards by which we can effectively measure, recruit or even reject leaders. Part of the sustainable model of leadership is dedicated to the traditional models of leadership, characterized by the competencies and skills which come from a sense of KNOWLEDGE, and EXPERIENCE, the application of KNOWLEDGE in practical and logical business situations.

The model of sustainable leadership defines leadership along the axes of a grid, with the horizontal axis representing what we consider to be the traditional models of leadership and the vertical axis defining the leadership wisdom as a way of being. It is characterized by the competencies and skills which come from a sense of KNOWLEDGE – ones that are learned through a formal education and provide the backbone of all decision-making and analytics. The model is also characterized by a higher degree of EXPERIENCE - or the application of Knowledge in real situations, allowing a leader the ability to analyze situations quickly and apply knowledge to solve problems. Assumptions built into the model require that the leader have a vision and the ability to not only act on that vision, but to also lead others to fulfill that same vision.

The model in itself represents a paradox – specifically during times of situational crisis. Leaders will have varying levels of response to certain situations depending on the level of competence of the leader. They may migrate back and forth along this axis, believing that problem solving comes from one end of the spectrum or the other, and this slide will often depend on where the leader finds the most comfort; relying on learned knowledge or their experiences. Often times fear is the driver and the actions leaders take are intended to “FIX” short term problems or satisfy short term needs. Many times these actions are in the best interest of making short term profits, and satisfying shareholders – rather than making longer term, strategic decisions and staying the course.

While the definitive model of leadership or the most desirable or required traits are still in debate, the most important characteristic a leader MUST have is competence. Competence happens when KNOWLEDGE and EXPERIENCE converge – so when leaders know what they are doing, know what needs to be done, have a
deep sense of purpose or vision, have the capacity to take the necessary risks and make wise
decisions, they can lead people through taking intentional action and creating intended results.
Strategies are questioned, and actions are taken deliberately in consideration of the vision a leader
establishes. When a leader can communicate the vision and instill purpose for the organization, the
limits of accomplishment are endless.

Leaders can reach a high level of sustainable leadership, and cultivate a sustainable organizational
culture on the Business Intelligence axis. It must be done through a convergence of knowledge
and experience leadership—meeting in the center. Leaders must also adopt a learning modality
and begin to shift their thinking regarding shared or collaborative leadership. It can no longer be
either KNOWLEDGE or EXPERIENCE, but it must be KNOWLEDGE and EXPERIENCE.
Assessment and Executive Coaching are great ways to engage in leadership development.

EMOTIONAL/SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is a term that has become increasingly popular in the workplace since
Daniel Goleman wrote Emotional Intelligence in the early 1990s and Working With Emotional
Intelligence a few years later. EQ describes and is a measurement of a person’s ability to do such
things as; Develop meaningful relationships with other people, manage conflict effectively, balance
the skills of advocacy and inquiry, express empathy for other people, and manage oneself and
one’s emotions, particularly in stressful situations.

Also referred to as Social Intelligence, EQ pre-dates Goleman’s work. For example, Dale Carnegie
deserves credit for early work in the development of social intelligence. His 1936 publication of
How to Win Friends and Influence People— even if it was non-scientific— clearly articulated the
importance of demonstrating a genuine interest in other people as a way to cultivate influence with
them. In 1958, Will Schutz developed FIRO (Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation)
Theory and a behavioral preferences assessment to explain how people might build trust in
relationships by practicing more self-accountability and flexibility in their interactions with
others. While it’s significantly revised and expanded today, FIRO Theory tends to garner less
attention than the work of Goleman and others who have built their identity and expertise around
Emotional Intelligence.

In leadership development circles, EQ receives significant attention as organizations have sought to
identify and develop leaders who inspire and engage the workforce. The good news about EQ is
that it’s not believed to be an inherent trait like IQ. Instead, people can learn the skills of emotional
intelligence and become more effective leaders. Paraphrasing from Goleman, roughly 4% of a
person’s success is attributable to IQ. Another 4% is attributable to specific job skills and
expertise. The remaining 92% comes from a person’s ability to form and maintain effective
working relationships.

In particular organizations are concerned with the connection between success and failure that can
be directly tied to emotional intelligence in leadership. The old adage that people don’t leave
organizations they leave managers ties to the leaching of creativity and innovation from organizations.

The driving emotions of a leader are infectious. Dissonance or incongruence in leadership leads to low morale, low trust, and low credibility. These have been demonstrated to directly impact productivity and financial success in studies of organizational effectiveness. Another pithy way of describing the critical role that emotional intelligence plays is, “No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care.” So by developing competencies across five broad domains (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills), leaders gain access to wisdom and flexibility. With higher levels of EQ, leaders have the freedom to interact and move with fluidity from one situation to another, practicing different leadership styles as they are appropriate to their current context. In essence, they learn to be stronger contextual leaders, who are able to move decisively or slow down and gather more information, to advocate or inquire, to work independently or team with others – all in the normal course of a business day.

Participating in rigorous assessments such as the ECI 360 and in Executive Coaching are great ways to increase your leadership effectiveness by consciously learning more about and cultivating your Emotional and Social Intelligence.

MORAL INTELLIGENCE

Central to this discussion, Moral Intelligence is how we think about, talk about and apply values of our work in public and private institutions without getting caught up in the politics of virtue or the parochialism of doctrine. As such, moral intelligence comprises at least two areas of focus for our discussion of leadership intelligence. One is personal ethics – consisting of an individual behavior and private virtues that build character. The second is social ethics – a combination of public values that build community and promote social cohesion. As we read the newspapers and experience the lack of moral compasses in the business community, we can begin to comprehend how important this discussion is to leadership intelligence.

The central process involved in the development of one’s personal moral development is one of conflict and choice. As children we move through stages of moral development when we are caught between our ‘natural’ wants and needs and the necessity of obeying rules in order to avoid punishment, or to gain incentives such as a return of favors, a tangible award or approval of others. These choices are worked out not simply by reasoning but by day-to-day exposure to concrete choices that reflect moral conflicts. Dominating and personifying these alternatives are
leaders such as parents, teachers, peers, priests, preachers, village elders. The sharper the conflict, the larger the role of leaders and culture will tend to be in moral development.

As we progress into adulthood our perspectives of ourselves increasingly take the view of role models – those individuals with stronger and clearer motivation and purpose have greater influence. This process of moral development is not simple, it is fraught with ups and downs, and it is also not predetermined. Leaders and followers constantly come up against intense, high pressured situational ethics of particular groups and distinct circumstances. Typical personal values, such as honesty, responsibility, courage and simple fairness, take on increasingly the qualities of more broadly and social morality or ethic.

Moral Intelligence as social ethics suggests that there are core ethical values, social responsibilities, economic and ecological stewardship that are congruent practices and responsibilities of leadership in any community/organizational environment. This is in direct conflict with the values and behaviors that have been condoned through our personal development – manifesting in action for achievement, action for success, failure is not an option, etc. As a society, we are now condemning these behaviors in favor of socially defined ethics, accountability and responsibility.

The assumption that morality is merely a private, personal or religious matter and that moral choices are merely subjective and relative is one of the most common roadblocks to the discussion as it applies to Leadership Intelligence in general. Yes it demands extensive, sophisticated social and practical intelligence. Core Ethical Values are in fact fundamental, shared values. They make social life possible and indeed enjoyable. Intelligent ethical and social problem solving is becoming a key to leadership intelligence in the 21st century.

CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

Business in the 21st century has expanded to global proportions. The need to move effectively from culture to culture, fluidly navigating through many differences has become a business necessity and as such an important element in leadership intelligence. Yet despite the rapid globalization of business in the world, culture is generally slow to change. For this reason, cultural intelligence becomes an important aptitude and skill for leaders. In the broadest sense, CQ is the capability to interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds. Like other forms of intelligence, such as social and emotional, cultural intelligence composes many facets.

A person with high cultural intelligence grasps what makes us human and at the same time what makes each of us different from one another. Cultural intelligence is the capability to interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds. A person with high cultural intelligence is able to figure out the behaviors and features of individual and groups that are true of all people and all groups and at the same time, observe and appropriately react to individual situations.

One of the ways we fail to cross the cultural barrier presented in global business is by not being aware of the key features and biases in our own cultures. For example, Americans do not realize that their outgoing manners can be perceived by other cultures as overly aggressive, noisy and
disrespectful. Another way we fail is by being defensive or ill-mannered when interacting with people who are culturally or physically different. Yet another failure, preventing us from crossing the cultural barrier, is tending to see the behaviors of others through our own cultural lens, leading to misunderstanding and confusion. Finally we often are unwilling as individuals or organizations to adapt to doing things differently. All these areas produce stress and anxiety and ultimately result in impaired performance and lost business opportunities.

To develop cultural intelligence, start with an understanding of yourself and your cultural habits. Just like every family has certain traditions and rituals that they practice daily, your culture is rich with those types of customs. Cultural intelligence depends on having keen observations skills. Using these skills to pay attention to the subtleties of human interaction is an important part of becoming culturally intelligent. Even within our own culture leaders can miss subtle clues of business clients, employees and other stakeholders. Try observing not just what people are saying with their words but what they are saying with their body language and tone.

**SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE**

Spiritual intelligence, in essence, challenges the leader to re-examine and re-evaluate the very notion of self and the worldview that necessarily follows from our conceptions of self. If our image of self is very narrowly defined, we tend toward more fear-based views of the world around us; when we invest in the idea of a self with more permeable boundaries functioning within an interdependent world, our worldview becomes more fluid and contextual. Instead of arising from fear and self-preservation, our business decisions are inspired by collaboration and possibility. In an interdependent world, the driving force is creative collaboration rather than straight-up competition, and sustained authenticity is the ultimate achievement.

The spiritually intelligent leader cultivates the largest possible contextual view, one that is able to hold dichotomies and paradoxes, and is willing to embrace seemingly irreconcilable views. Fundamentally it holds the conviction that right action does not lie in the black and white of rights and wrongs, but rather emerges where the larger context and the uniqueness of the specific circumstances intersect. Thus, spiritual intelligence has to do with an ability to live and lead without recipes. We might call this larger view ‘transpersonal’ because it arises in the ability to honor, yet be able to see beyond one’s own habitual frame of reference. The transpersonal view is further based on the realization and experience of an interdependence of all things; thus different viewpoints are not ‘wrong’ but simply views from another angle of the network.

From the transpersonal perspective the leader understands that every decision must be viewed as having an impact beyond the scope of its original situation. The business is viewed as an organism within a larger ecosystem of which it is an integral part. By the same token, our individual ideas and actions are constantly informed by the surrounding environment and the field of consciousness we participate in, consciously or unconsciously. The leader finds benefit in becoming conscious of this interplay, welcoming it, and utilizing the richness of it to further organizational goals.

From the view of interdependence a sense of responsibility naturally arises, because we see that our challenges and triumphs are intimately connected to those of others. Spiritually intelligent
leadership is a willingness to take on this responsibility and to find the most effective ways of acting in the world for the benefit of all. This then points us to the leader’s commitment to develop and foster personal integrity and authenticity.

How do we cultivate this spiritual intelligence? We begin with the willingness to examine ourselves, our values and long-held beliefs. Usually our areas of discomfort or fear are markers for where our view is narrow or rigid. Part of the cultivation of spiritual intelligence necessitates a willingness to sit in this discomfort, to truly experience our emotions and thoughts as they arise without instantly trying to label, fix or change the situation. We take on our obstacles, not in order to obliterate them, but in order to breathe greater acceptance and compassion into them. Spiritual intelligence is not a one-time endeavor; rather it challenges us to take on every situation of our lives, professional or personal, as an opportunity to expand our view, deepen our experience, and practice compassion. Executive Coaching are great ways to engage in Spiritual Intelligence. Contact me for more information on this leadership development process at Mary@AlignLeadership.com.

PULLING IT TOGETHER

It is these leadership intelligences that allow us to move with fluidity in the constantly changing environment with flexibility and substance. It is critical for leaders to develop a relationship with their own learning edge that allows them to enter into conversations, collaboratively creating the possibility for creativity and innovation as they address the future with smart business plans that lead to profitable and create meaningful visionary action in the world.

We at Align Leadership work with individuals and organizations to build capacity for intelligent leadership development and to retool organizational cultures to reflect sustainable practices. If you are interested in further information regarding developing leadership intelligence please contact me. We can work with you in assessing your current leadership, hiring leadership intelligence, and planning for your future succession.

For further information contact Mary@AlignLeadership.com