

Tekst 6

Work

Forget IQ – it's brains that matter

'Emotional intelligence' is now rated above mere intellect, say Michael Syrett and Jean Lammiman

- 1 TOO CLEVER BY HALF is not a phrase used much in current management thinking, but it lurks beneath the surface of all modern organisations. One of the more interesting conclusions reached by the Japanese investigators of the recent nuclear accident at Tokaimura is that the technicians responsible for the processes at the plant let their high IQs get in the way of common sense. In their single-mindedness about cutting through inefficiencies that were blocking the plant's productivity, they lost touch with the overriding need to put safety first.
- 2 After more than 100 years dominated by the Aristotelian principle that intellect always triumphs over instinct, management recruiters are abandoning their worship of the high IQ and placing a new premium on emotional maturity. US psychologist Daniel Goleman recently looked at the profiles of top performers in 500 companies worldwide and found that a high IQ got the best managers only on the first rung of their chosen careers. After that, personal qualities such as an ability to empathise with others and a grasp of the big picture counted for much more than analytical skills.
- 3 Accompanying this discovery is an outpouring of new academic research on the workings of the brain and how this influences day-to-day management decisions. A long-term research project at Harvard University has been examining the neuro-biological basis for defensive and non-rational behaviour. The two professors representing the business school, Michael Jensen and Chris Argyris, are using the results to determine why chief

executives persist in making decisions that are bound to damage their companies. They have already concluded that the unconscious mechanisms that generate a fight or flight response in animals generate emotionally defensive behaviour in humans.

- 4 The all-important process to grasp is this: the signal generating fear in humans reaches the amygdala (the part of the brain at the back of the head which is responsible for our emotions) before it reaches the cortex (the front of the brain, responsible for rational thought). As a result, humans are driven into defensive and non-rational behaviour by their instincts without being aware of it.
- 5 If we smell danger, we throw rationality to the winds and shoot from the hip. If we can learn to temper this instinct – using methods that are often no more than sophisticated forms of counting to 10 – our capacity to make effective decisions is transformed.
- 6 Critically, this has little to do with our IQ. The most conventionally intelligent people are often the worst offenders when it comes to emotional immaturity.
- 7 The relationship between the cortex and the amygdala has become *the* subject of the moment for academics and the human resources profession. It formed the basis for three of the five most popular sessions at this year's Institute of Personnel and Development national conference, attended by more than 2,500 recruiters, trainers and senior managers.
- 8 Goleman, one of the keynote speakers, stressed that this newly sought 'emotional intelligence' is founded on two clusters of

personal attributes. The first consist of those qualities that help us become more self-aware: emotional self-control and adaptability; the second are those qualities that help us relate better to other people, including the ability to influence, provide effective service and work well in teams.

- 9 'Better self-awareness helps people recognise when they are about to be hijacked by their amygdala, and so become better able to short-circuit the hijack before they find themselves out of control,' he says. 'Empathy allows them to do the same for someone else – picking up the early warning signs of irritation, frustration or anxiety that mark a person as being at risk from a hijack.'
- 10 Danah Zohar, a physicist and philosopher turned management guru, went further. Over and above the personal attributes Goleman identifies as the hallmark of the effective modern manager, she argues that the neurons which determine our behaviour are capable of oscillating in unison, which accounts for our ability to be insightful, creative and ready to challenge existing ideas and orthodoxies. 'People with a highly developed spiritual intelligence are', she says, 'more open to diversity; have a greater tendency to ask "why" and seek fundamental answers; and have the capacity to face and use adversity.'
- 11 The new emphasis on examining how the dynamics of the brain shape our intellect and emotions means that good employers will in the future spend more time helping their less well adjusted professional staff break away from the acquired habits that shape their performance at work.
- 12 Traditional selection techniques concentrate on identifying these habits and weeding out candidates with traits the company deemed undesirable. The new approach focuses on getting people to think more clearly about the habits they have had 'forever' and the way we are all rule-bound about our lifestyles and work processes.

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- 1p **14** Wat willen de auteurs door middel van het voorbeeld van het ongeluk in de kerncentrale aantonen?
- 1p **15** Citeer uit alinea 2 de eerste en de laatste twee woorden van het zinsgedeelte waarin voorbeelden van kenmerken van 'emotional maturity' gegeven worden.
- 1p **16** ■ Which outcome of 'academic research' is discussed in paragraphs 3–4?
A Defensive behaviour is the only effective response in threatening situations.
B Instinct is man's most important asset in the struggle for survival.
C Rational behaviour is the most productive strategy in any given situation.
D When man feels threatened instinct takes precedence over reason.
- 1p **17** ■ With which of the following could paragraph 5 also begin?
A Besides, if ...
B Finally, if ...
C Incidentally, if ...
D In other words, if ...
E On the contrary, if ...
- 2p **18** Welke twee zelfstandige naamwoorden benoemen de essentiële kenmerken van Goleman's visie zoals weergegeven in alinea 8 en 9?
Citeer deze.
- 1p **19** ■ Which of the following is the key phrase in Danah Zohar's analysis (paragraph 10)?
A 'the hallmark of the effective modern manager'
B 'neurons which determine our behaviour'
C 'a highly developed spiritual intelligence'
- 1p **20** ■ Which of the following statements is in accordance with paragraphs 11–12?
A Good employers will be personally involved in hiring new staff.
B Good employers will invest in encouraging their employees' personal growth.
C Good employers will make their employees' emotional health a priority.
D Good employers will maximise a spirit of cooperation in the workplace.