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## The Search for Intelligent Organizations on Earth

When I was young, there was a lot of talk about Intelligence Quotient or "I.Q." We marveled at the fact that intelligence could actually be measured. As I grew older and became a manager, I noticed that there wasn't always a correlation between a person's I.Q. and their maturity level. In fact, some of my most intelligent team members seemed incapable of making "smart" decisions. I came to understand that a membership in Mensa might not be such a positive credential on the resumes I reviewed.

Thankfully, the concept of I.Q. was soon followed by the notion of Emotional Intelligence, or "E.I.Q.": the ability to identify, assess, and manage one's emotions. This gave me great hope for the future of organizational success! The development of E.I.Q. recognized, as I had, that even brilliant people could be emotionally immature. Once this is brought to light, it can be addressed through education and conscious management. This was progress in my mind, as many of the negative issues I encountered in organizations stem from the

actions of intelligent, but less than mature minds.

A couple more decades passed, and surprisingly I wasn't seeing the real leaps in behavioral improvement I had hoped for. Again and again, working with organizations, I would scratch my head and think, "How can a roomful of such intelligent and well-balanced individuals make such sub-optimum recommendations?"

Until recently, I.Q. and E.I.Q. referred mostly to individuals. At last I see signs of interest about the intelligence of groups, or organizations. For example, an organizational I.Q., or O.I.Q., would measure the collection of knowledge and reasoning ability of the total organization. Such a measurement would include the organization's collective ability to put their knowledge together to create synergistic results and produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects. This gives me great hope as an organizational consultant.

So, if there's an O.I.Q., that leads me to think there is also an Organizational E.I.Q.

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OWNER/CONSULTANT  
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CELL: 360.789.3626  
VASARKOVY@AOL.COM  
WWW.WOLF-MARK.COM

or O.E.I.Q. In other words, it is also possible to assess the emotional intelligence of any group or organization. This could be very useful. It would explain why many organizations, although made up of intelligent people, as decision-making groups, routinely make decisions that leave me scratching my head. It could answer the question, "If this group is so smart, why do they make such ineffective decisions?"

In times like these, exceptional thinking, creativity, and innovation, and of course, commitment, are necessary for organizations to survive and thrive. Now more than ever, organizations must learn to work wisely together to make careful decisions about how to spend their time, money, and energy most effectively. That calls for an Intelligent Organization.

If your collection of intelligent, emotionally mature individuals isn't adding up to an Intelligent Organization, then it's time to take action to work more effectively as a group. There are no rules of course, but here are a few ideas to prime your thinking process.

- Create and foster a safe environment in which

group emotional intelligence can be discussed.

- Discuss it often, at all levels, to help generate curiosity and willingness to be frank.
- At moments of major decision-making, create a pause in the action to double-check with how people feel in their guts.
- Before it's time to make a major decision, get input from as many stakeholders as possible. Don't be afraid to get too much, and never edit that input.
- Honor your local nay-sayers and devil's-advocates, and listen to them with attention.
- Identify and examine the best criteria for making a decision before it needs to be made.
- Model awareness of group dynamics.

Keep in mind that organizations are as unique as individuals when it comes to emotional intelligence, so don't look for a one-size-fits-all magic bullet. Like other maturities, organizational intelligence is a product of experience, introspection and awareness. Tread gently and get support. ▲

## WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT ORGANIZATIONAL INTELLIGENCE?

### HERE ARE A FEW LINKS TO CHECK OUT:

<http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~rxv/kmoi/orgint.htm>

<http://www.strategy-business.com/press/16635507/12644>

<http://ideas.repec.org/a/nwe/confer/y2005p189-196.html>

[http://www.cio.com/article/31521/The\\_Power\\_of\\_Minds\\_at\\_Work\\_Organizational\\_Intelligence\\_in\\_Action](http://www.cio.com/article/31521/The_Power_of_Minds_at_Work_Organizational_Intelligence_in_Action)

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