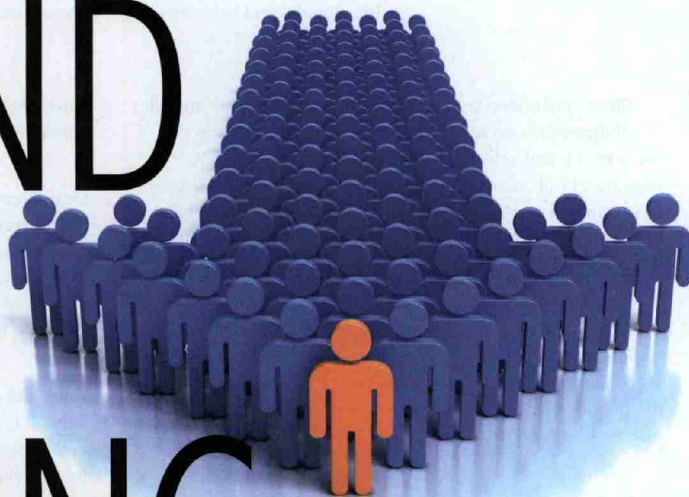


Quick Study

Great Financial Leadership

STAND OUT AMONG PEERS

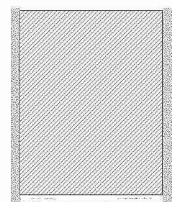


By Roxana Bahar Hewertson

Financial leaders need to know if they are an “at risk” or “effective leader” as much of their peers in other disciplines. Success depends entirely on the integrity of their work and their word, and by extension, the work and word of the people they lead.

A chief financial officer who fails to effectively lead his or her people puts the entire organization at risk.

Attitudes and behaviors are the biggest differentiators between great financial leaders and failing ones. They demonstrate four factors that are directly correlated with leadership attitudes and behaviors that greatly impact a leader's success or failure. The four well-researched core emotional intelligence metrics are self awareness, self management, social



Page 1 of 2

awareness and relationship management.

The following focuses on attitudes and behaviors that most training of financial leaders omits. Too often leaders are taught how to be star individual contributors, instead of leaders of other individual contributors. These skillsets are as opposite as credits and debits. Being proficient in numbers, logic and objectivity ignores the fact that a leader's success is completely dependent on the contributions of others.

The most effective leaders learn, develop and increase their own emotional intelligence. It takes assessment, self motivation, learning, awareness, practice and feedback. Improving one's emotional intelligence is a life-long journey — and one that great leaders choose to take.

The attitudes and behaviors of great financial leadership include the ability to:

- 1 'Read' and understand emotions and recognize the impact of themselves on self and others.** By developing an accurate view of, and aptly managing, one's own emotional responses to situations, the rest of the leader's skills and talents are magnified and leveraged. These leaders pay close attention to their impact, regularly seeking feedback and acknowledging when their impact and intent are out of synch.
- 2 Pick up on other people's signals and thus demonstrate empathy.** This emotional intelligence skill relates directly to social awareness. One cannot be a good leader without empathy, period. A leader with blinders on will miss important information, ideas and perspective.
- 3 Know one's own strengths and limits. The best leaders understand they can never know and do everything ... and don't pretend to.** Instead, they recognize what they are good at and leverage those skills. They surround themselves with people who are smarter and more experienced in areas of their own personal gaps, and then they listen.
- 4 Know and have a good sense of one's own self-worth and capability.** There is a big divide between confidence and arrogance. Confidence comes from a strong sense of self worth and self awareness. Arrogance comes from fear in many cases, and a sense of entitlement in others. The best leaders are confident about themselves based on an objective, not assumed point of view.
- 5 Have awareness of organizational clues, norms, decision networks and politics and develop a wide network.**
- 6 Deal directly with and resolve conflicts by understanding the difference between accountability and blame and the way an issue is approached.** Ask questions to understand how or where things went wrong and thus "own" the problem. Then have a candid discussion with appropriate people about the situation and the solutions.
- 7 Think and act with optimism — see the 'upside' of situations.** There are two kinds of world-view attitudes people project: those who think and act through the lens of abundance and those who think and act through a lens of scarcity.
- 8 Go for solutions, new ideas and silver linings, even in the worst of times.** They may change course, but they never give up. The great leaders thoughtfully navigate their staffers to a better place — often to places their direct reports didn't even know or believe possible.
- 9 See and seize opportunities for contributing to the greater good.** Despite conventional thinking, great leaders have low ego needs precisely because of their solid confidence and self worth. By not wasting time and energy shining up their image, they free up energy and time.

The CFO whose integrity is without question, who is willing to partner with others on her/his team, who listens with an objective ear, and contributes to the greater good of the organization, is the leader who stands out among peers. 🐾

Leadership authority Roxana Bahar Hewertson, CEO of Highland Consulting Group Inc. (www.highlandconsultinggroupinc.com), has spent her entire career helping both emerging and expert leaders boost quantifiable job performance to achieve or exceed organizational and career goals.