

Best Gems_Leading performance requires perfect adaptation

Those who aren't ready simply disappear

Beyond complicated and lengthy hypothetical discussions about the exact way dinosaurs became extinct, the simple fact is that they were not ready.

Under the law of the jungle only the fittest survive and thrive, while those who fail to adapt fast enough to environmental change simply disappear. Nature doesn't admit excuses or stop to listen to whining and protesting or unrealistic dreaming. If you don't adapt you die.

The dramatic economic downturn most western economies are suffering has left many high executives trembling. The tough question you need to answer NOW is whether you have what it takes to adapt fast enough and rebuild new performance heights, or you don't. If you're not ready ASAP, you WILL be left behind in the pantheon of executive dinosaurs.

Corporate dinosaurs running amok among our corporate elite

Take a good look around your top executives. I really hope you don't find too many corporate examples of the following reactions to the economic downturn:

- **Dreamers:** Haven't assumed the situation yet. Are still hoping to find a ridiculously extravagant amount of money somewhere to implement a similarly unreal, slow moving and futuristic business opportunity.
- **Blamers:** Pointing fingers at anyone and everyone who was ever mildly involved in their previous lives. Blaming their bosses, their bankers, their partners and even their own subordinates for doing everything wrong and missing out on how the economy was going to go bust.
- **Wait-and-seers:** Silently studying everybody else's comments before issuing an opinion, and stubbornly hiding behind the overwhelming silence, hoping nobody will notice they're not really doing anything to solve the situation.
- **Hiders.** Secretly hidden behind their office doors and long, unclear emails about where they are. Making excuses, never providing a straight answer to any question, and phoning in sick as often as they can.
- **Blind rebuilders.** Like stubborn ants who insist on remaking their whole in the ground between one wave of water and the next, these guys are desperately working to bring the company back to its past

splendor. Ignoring the future, they work without pause to achieve the impossible.

If these guys were fish in the sea or animals out in the cold of raw nature, they would all be dead by now. So if these are the guys who are managing your business, you have a big problem. And it's URGENT.

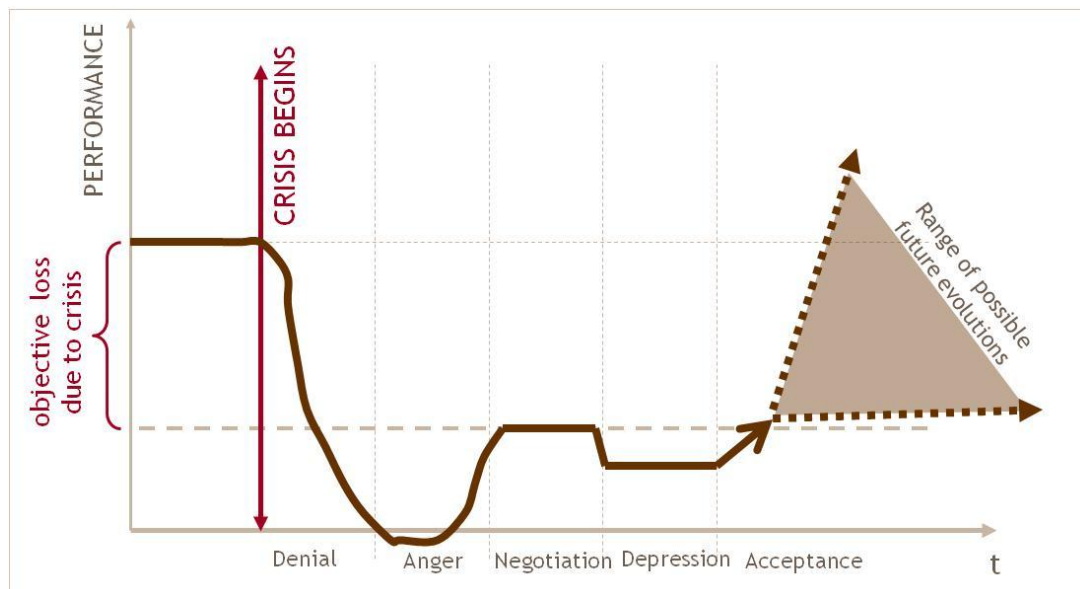
Surprisingly, they probably all have outstanding degrees, MBA titles and a long list of achievements behind their backs. *How can they be so not ready if they're so smart?*

Adaptability is a lot less related to IQ than you think

Managers' reactions to economic loss are remarkably similar, no matter what their intellectual capacity. The famous Elisabeth Kubler-Ross model is ironically illustrated in a short animation you can find on youtube under the name "giraffe in quicksand". It's the basic for all other reaction to change models.

Both smart and dumb people go through five phases of emotional response to important losses. A small few speed past the process towards new progress and growth, while most tend to get stuck somewhere along the way.

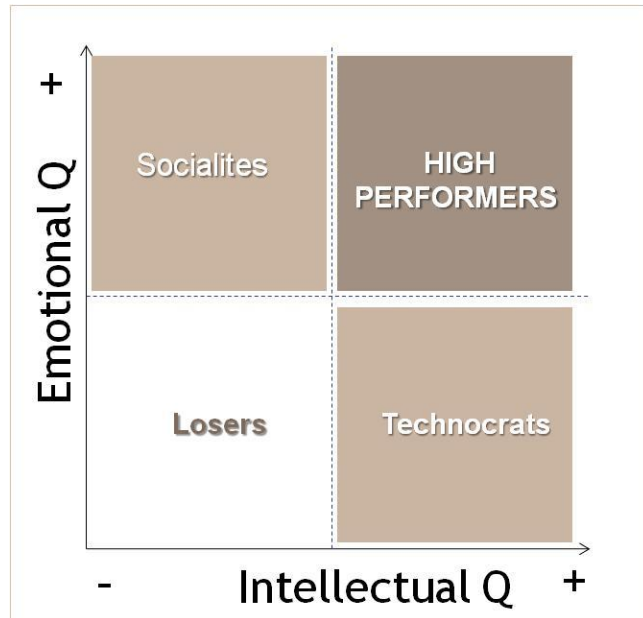
Dreamers, hidens and blind rebuilders are probably stuck in the denial phase, while blamers are in the anger phase and wait-and-seers are waiting to see what phase they should be in. Only those who have moved past negotiation and depression can start to rebuild their performance levels from the acceptance phase. The following graph depicts average evolution of executive performance through the five phases.



High performing executives are not those with the highest intellectual quotient, but those who also bring strong emotional wisdom to the table. They become aware of their feelings quicker, process them effectively and recuperate the motivation to move forward, leading their colleagues with optimism.

Just as successful species in evolution are those who best adapted to the environment they lived in, high performance executives are faster to adapt to changes.

When we started talking about emotional intelligence in the work place we began to admit that being empathetic, having good communication skills and being persuasive could be important to manage people successfully.



But as neuroscience research advances, it becomes increasingly clear that having a high emotional quotient goes way beyond this initial definition, and is key to lead organizations into high performance ways of doing business.

Executive adaptability is dictated by emotional response

The reason why a few high performers react rapidly to change and loss is that their emotional response to the situation is exact, while the emotional response of non adaptable executives is inadequate: too much anxiety, too much fear, not enough alert, etc.

Because emotional response dictates the filtering process of incoming information and consequent learning, a wrong emotional response means an executive will underestimate competitor’s presence or become hysterically obsessed about insignificant details in the profit and loss report, for example.

If your executive team is not adapting fast enough, you should start looking at their emotional quotients, both individually and as a team. The way they behave in meetings and how they interact with each other will provide a lot of information about how to push them through the phases into acceptance to boost their performance.

High performance can’t happen without perfect executive adaptability. There really is no time to lose. Get moving now.