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# COACHING FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: AN INTELLIGENT CAREER APPROACH

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Change, ambiguity and shifting relationships are recurrent themes in contemporary career development. In turn, personal success in the unfolding knowledge economy calls for self-awareness, adaptability and the ability to work with others. A challenge in career coaching is to help people better develop these kinds of skills, and in turn to help people to contribute better to the contemporary knowledge-driven organisation (Drucker, 1999). A similar coaching challenge applies when working with current or aspirant leaders, namely those charged with helping or seeking to help the knowledge-driven organisation succeed. These leaders need to be successful in their own careers, and to simultaneously encourage and support other people's contributions to the organisation. In the knowledge economy, a different, more relational, style of leadership is required (Shamir, 1999).

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As leaders develop their own careers, and as organisations seek to benefit from leadership behaviour, the twin challenges of career development and leadership development come together. More-

over, contemporary firms must 'increasingly rely on the knowledge, skills, experience, and judgement of all their people' (Dess & Picken, 2000, p. 18). In other words, the challenges of career development and

leadership development often reside in the same individual, and are broadly distributed among an organisation's workforce.

This paper suggests an approach to facilitate both career development and leadership development in a dynamic, knowledge-driven world. The point of departure is the 'intelligent career'—a theoretically based model that has proven effective in eliciting and working with subjective career data.

### THE INTELLIGENT CAREER MODEL

Organisations in the knowledge economy need to broadly practice 'intelligent enterprise' (Quinn, 1992) through the application of distinct knowledge-based competencies. Quinn and other writers concur that these organisational competencies fall into three broad areas: culture—reflecting the organisation's overall sense of mission and purpose; know-how—reflecting what the organisation has the ability to do; and networks—reflecting the organisation's overall links with suppliers, customers and other business connections.

The three areas of organisational competencies are interdependent. Organisational culture may drive or inhibit the application of effective know-how, for example through the collective efforts of a project team. The development of new know-how may contribute to the development of new customers, and thereby the organisation's networks. Those networks may also influence the overall culture of the organisation through the kind of work they expect it to perform.

The concept of the intelligent career responds to the three broad areas of organisational competency outlined above. Accordingly, intelligent career theory posits three 'ways of knowing', called knowing-why, knowing-how and knowing-whom (Arthur, Claman & DeFillippi, 1995). Specifically, knowing-why connects with company culture, knowing-how connects with company level know-how and knowing-whom corresponds to the company's networks, as described below.

Knowing-why involves themes of individual motivation, the construction of personal meaning and identification. As such, it incorporates traditional career development concerns about individual uniqueness, reflected in constructs such as personality, aptitudes, values and interests. Knowing-why further

incorporates attitudes to family, lifestyle, and other non-work factors that affect career choice, adaptability and commitment.

*Knowing-how* reflects an individual's repertoire of job-related skills and expertise. These may include formal qualifications and training, as well as informal and tacit knowledge that emerges from work experience. People may have, or may wish to develop, a broader set of knowing-how skills than their present job demands, and, therefore, may seek to expand or change their work arrangements to enhance career opportunities and employability.

Knowing-whom involves a person's work relationships and includes supplier, customer, industry, occupational and internal company connections that can support his or her unfolding career. Knowing-whom also incorporates broader contacts with family, friends, fellow-alumni, and professional and social acquaintances. Any of these contacts can enhance a career by providing support, transmitting reputation or affording access to information.

The three ways of knowing are illustrated in Figure 1. They not only correspond to unfolding organisational competencies, but also are interdependent with one another, as the following section illustrates.

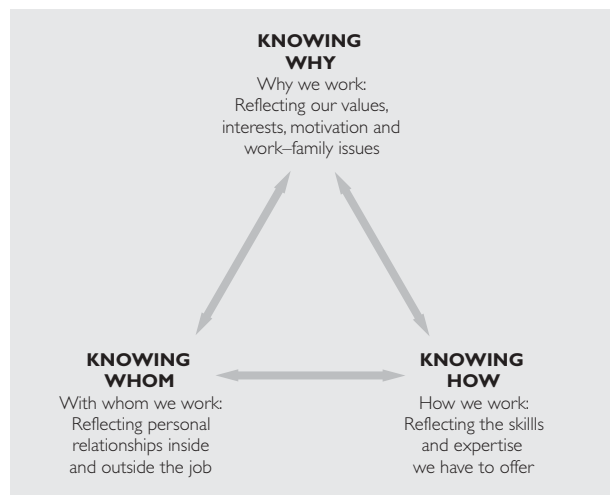


FIGURE 1. THE INTELLIGENT CAREER: THREE WAYS OF KNOWING

### INTELLIGENT CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Although intelligent career theory is grounded in the three ways of knowing, most career development

occurs through the interaction among them. Specifically, there are six uni-directional combinations that may be considered.

**Knowing-why to knowing-how:** A link in this direction occurs when a person comes to understand how his or her values and interests (knowing-why) can lead to the application of specific skills and job-related expertise (knowing-how). Much like traditional vocational guidance theory, intelligent career theory suggests a range of exploratory knowing-why topics, including values, interests, identity and the balance of work and family, that may influence a person's choice of education, occupation or work experience.

**Knowing-how to knowing-whom:** A link in this direction reflects how the application of individual skills (knowing-how) may result in new contacts and relationships (knowing-whom). In the work environment, successfully drawing on specific job-related knowledge and expertise may also promote reputation among colleagues or customers. In situations involving teamwork, an individual contribution may add to the effectiveness of the team, as well as to individual or shared reputations.

**Knowing-whom to knowing-why:** The relationships that comprise an individual's network (knowing-whom) may be influential in affirming or challenging a person's identity and self-image (knowing-why). Links in this direction may reflect the impact of specific connections such as mentors and friends. Other links in the same direction can involve colleagues either reinforcing or dampening a person's motivation to engage in shared activities.

**Knowing-why to knowing-whom:** The directions between the three ways of knowing may also move in an anti-clockwise direction in Figure 1. Someone motivated to interact with certain colleagues (knowing-why) would be likely to seek new career opportunities to work with them (knowing-whom). This can include seeking out new opportunities to learn from other people, for example by volunteering to work in a particular team, or under a particular mentor.

**Knowing-whom to knowing-how:** An example of a link in this direction is when collaborations with colleagues (knowing-whom) lead to opportunities to apply job related skills and expertise (knowing-how). Reputation within a social group may bring referrals



for work in other areas in which the individual is unknown. Another way to benefit from a group is to seek feedback that may contribute to enhanced competence, as is reflected in models of '360° feedback'.

**Knowing-how to knowing-why:** A link in this direction occurs when the results of formal or informal performance feedback (knowing-how) have an impact on an individual's motivation to work (knowing-why). Simply, the perception of one's performance (perhaps stemming from a lack of feedback), or the direct experience of a work assignment, can have an impact on self-esteem and in turn impact on subsequent attitudes towards further work assignments.

In sum, the complexity of career development can be organised into a series of six links between any two ways of knowing. The links provide a structure for considering the separate effects of each way of knowing on other ways of knowing, that is of the six arrows included in Figure 1. The structure also provides a way to integrate separate elements in career development into an holistic view of the person. In the following section, we suggest that this same process may be effective in considering the practice of leadership development.

## INTELLIGENT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

At the same time as ideas underpinning career development have changed, so too have ideas about leadership development. Older, relatively rigid, prescriptions of leadership seem incongruent with 'intelligent enterprise' and related new organisational forms. Moreover, evidence of the broad applicability of intelligent career theory (Eby, Butts & Lockwood, 2003) in determining career success suggests the theory may also be applicable to the careers of leaders. The paragraphs below propose some of the ways in which the same links described above may apply in leadership development.

**Knowing-why to knowing-how:** A link in this direction is evident when a leader is motivated (knowing-why) to act as a role model (Kouzes & Posner, 2003) and consequently demonstrates particular job-related skills and expertise (knowing-how). The motivation may be stronger when coupled with a positive self-image that engenders confidence in applying the relevant skills. Effective 'situational leadership' can occur when the required skills are already part of the leader's repertoire.

**Knowing-how to knowing-whom:** This link is demonstrated when the application of leadership capability (knowing-how) is recognised by others (knowing-whom). In formal situations, such as in project management, the leader is directly accountable for the work of the followers. In informal situations, knowing how to persuade or convince others to support an agenda illustrates how a leadership competency (influencing others) links to the leader's intended audience.

**Knowing-whom to knowing-why:** This link reflects the role expectations of the leader's intended followers (knowing-whom), the accompanying attitudes with which their expectations are expressed, and their effect on the leader's motivation (knowing-why). As organisations make the transition from traditional to more team-based structures, the acceptance of leader behaviour by team members becomes a more critical issue, as does the leadership capacity of the team as a whole (Horner, 1997).

**Knowing-why to knowing-whom:** This process is illustrated in classic trait-factor theories that suggest how particular traits or characteristics possessed by a leader (knowing-why) may be used to influence others (knowing-whom). One application of these

theories is to simply place people who exhibit necessary traits into leadership positions (Horner, 1997). However, a more adaptive application can address a person's motivation to develop the emotional intelligence needed to become a better leader.

**Knowing-whom to knowing-how:** This link reflects what has been called 'followership', involving the way people (knowing-whom) respond to a leader's behaviour (knowing-how). Followers may either reinforce or challenge the skills that a leader brings to a situation. One outcome can be for the leader to simply become more aware of the situations in which he or she is effective (Fiedler, 1967). However, another outcome can be for a coach to help the leader perform more effectively in a problematic situation.

**Knowing-how to knowing-why:** Direct feedback from leadership experiences (knowing-how) may provide new data that contributes to the development of the leader's self-concept (knowing-why). This may be driven by self-reflection, or it may emerge as the direct result of work or project experience that affects the motivation to repeat the experience. In particular, success in the application of existing leadership skills may lead to higher motivation to learn additional skills (Bennis, 1989).

## TWO COACHING EXAMPLES

One way that career development and leadership development can be simultaneously facilitated involves application of the intelligent career card sort (ICCS®) career exploration system (Amundson, Parker & Arthur, 2002). The ICCS® was developed to reflect the three ways of knowing previously described. Working with the ICCS® involves having a client select and rank seven items from around 40 cards three times, once each for knowing-why, knowing-how and knowing-whom card subsets respectively. The cards reflect a range of alternative career behaviours related to the underlying intelligent career model. However, the selected cards are used only as stimuli to elicit subjective data from the client, and in turn to draw on these data in further consultation or coaching.

The particular application of the ICCS® that concerns us here involves linking between themes of career development and leadership development as the conversation unfolds. The following excerpts from two client conversations illustrate how the process can work.

Bill selected the knowing-why card 'I like to gain a sense of achievement from my work' and began to talk about the stretch targets he had as a result of his recent promotion. As a young engineer he had always experienced and enjoyed success, and he felt highly motivated and confident in his ability to perform (knowing-why to knowing-how). His confidence was reinforced through previous bonus awards, which were well publicised within the company and, Bill felt, resented by some of his colleagues. Bill further volunteered that he was now in a new leadership position where he had to consider ways to apply his knowledge and skills without upsetting team members (knowing-how to knowing-whom).

Later in the coaching session, Bill moved on to consider his knowing-whom card selection 'I work with people who can learn from me'. Bill began to acknowledge that what others perceived as an arrogant attitude could bring about a negative reaction from those reporting to him (knowing-whom to knowing-why). He became aware that a focus for his leadership development was to work on his ability to bring people along with him, rather than come across as the 'lone achiever' ahead of everyone else.

Jane, a civil servant in a leadership position, selected the knowing-why card 'I like to influence others through my work' and explained that she was much more comfortable with an influencing, cajoling approach than with a control and command style (knowing-why to knowing-whom). She proudly described how many of the people she had positively influenced had moved on to better things. However, during her coaching session she realised that although she felt good about her influence on other people's careers, she also felt she was being left behind.

When Jane moved on to considering her knowing-how selection 'I seek to become a better leader', she became aware that her present behaviour was inadequate to maintain her leadership profile. She needed to seek out opportunities to demonstrate skills herself (knowing-how to knowing-whom), as well as facilitating the career progress of others. Over time, Jane became better at representing her own contribution. One outcome was an increased confidence in her ability to take greater initiative without fearing this would be interpreted by others as controlling behaviour (knowing-how to knowing-why).

These brief examples highlight the potential that exists for overlapping and mutually-beneficial coaching for career development and leadership development. Through the application of the ICCS®, the coach can work with the particular meaning that a client attributes to selected cards. The client can then be invited to integrate his or her own subjective data, and consider its relevance and implications under different contexts. The three ways of knowing inherent in intelligent career theory provide an organising framework through which both career development and leadership development may be facilitated.

In some cases, one form of development may take precedence for a client over the other form. In other cases, a client's priorities may shift over time, or in response to the coaching conversation. In all cases, the approach allows the coach to address issues of both career development and leadership development in an holistic and integrative way.

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