



What Makes an Organization Truly Great: The Links Between Personality Type, Emotional Intelligence, and Corporate Culture

By Harry Redinger, MBA

What makes an organization truly great? If you ask ten different people, you would probably get ten different answers. However, research has shown that the most successful organizations have a strong corporate culture that supports the strategic objectives of the organization.¹

How are corporate cultures created?

This varies widely from organization to organization, but smart organizations are intentional about creating a positive culture that engages and empowers employees to help meet corporate goals. In addition, they are aware of how personality type and emotional intelligence influence corporate culture.

Corporate culture is often referred to as the shared values and beliefs of an organization, which dictate the behavior of its members. The senior leadership of an organization has the biggest influence on corporate culture; however, corporate culture is rarely documented and can take two to three years for new employees to ascertain. Organizations that support the process of developing and documenting their corporate culture empower management and staff to trust and believe in the shared values of the organization without fears of guessing what is acceptable. Furthermore, management and staff can freely engage and participate in the organization because they understand the parameters by which they must manage their behavior. This is where emotional intelligence (EQ) plays a critical role. Simply put, emotional intelligence is the ability to understand and manage emotions, which can be measured with instruments in relation to national standards. The higher one's EQ score, the more likely the individual will achieve success in life. The higher the collective EQ scores of an organization, the more successful

the organization will be in executing their mission and achieving corporate goals. For that reason, a documented corporate culture should include emotional intelligence norms.

How does personality type fit into all of this? Personality type influences both emotional intelligence and corporate culture. It is like our fingerprint; it is inborn and does not change. Understanding personality type makes us aware of our differences and preferences in our daily interactions with others. However, these differences can cause problems and lead to conflict. The good news is that we can master how to engage and work with the opposite aspects of our personality type and adjust our behavior to help overcome our differences and achieve personal and corporate goals. This is where emotional intelligence comes in to play once again. This article introduces and validates a five-step process on how to develop, establish, and maintain an emotional intelligence based corporate culture that exponentially empowers both management and staff to function at the highest competitive level.

The Strategic Path: All organizations follow a strategic path whether they know it or not and whether it is documented or not. The strategic path is the organization's external and internal strategy for doing business (see diagram below). The external strategy is often referred to as the organization's market strategy, and the internal strategy is often referred to as the management strategy. Corporate culture is one of the three internal management strategies of the organization and is often overlooked or underdeveloped.

¹ Organizational Culture and Leadership, Edgar H. Schein, John Wiley and Sons, July 2010

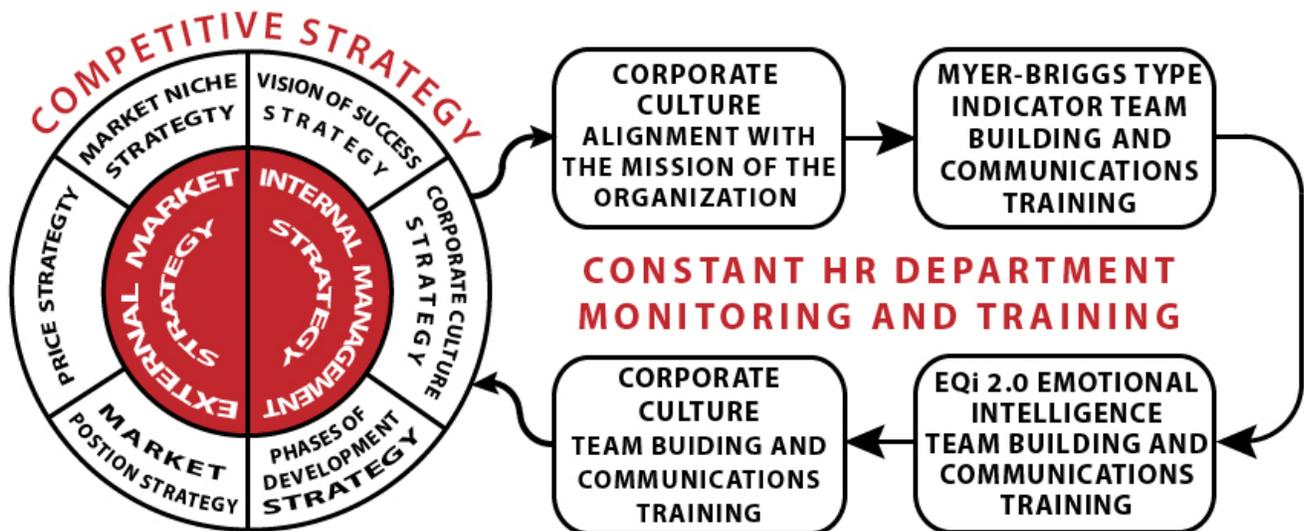
External Strategy (The Market):

1. **Market Niche Strategy:** Defines and explains the mission statement.
2. **Price Strategy:** Establishes the organization's price point.
3. **Market Position Strategy:** Defines and explains how the organization will deal with market competition.

Internal Strategy (Management):

1. **Corporate Culture Strategy:** Establishes the accepted and condoned values, beliefs, and behaviors of the organization.
2. **Vision of Success Strategy:** Establishes the ultimate objective of the organization.
3. **Phases of Competitive Development Strategy:** The steps by which the organization will execute the mission statement to achieve the vision of success.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE BASED CORPORATE CULTURE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



The *corporate culture strategy* is vital to the overall success of an organization because it is the glue that holds the organization together, it determines who the organization will hire, and most of all, it establishes the behavioral norms of the organization.

Emotional Intelligence Based Corporate Cultures

A healthy corporate culture will include three components: (1) the historical roots of the organization including the values and passions of the founders; (2) the personality of the organization which may include its role in the community, the common characteristics or interests of the employees, and the things that unite them; and (3) a set of emotional intelligence values that are embraced by the entire organization. Ultimately, this will include the five

realms and fifteen scales of the EQi 2.0 Emotional Intelligence instrument, which are shown on the next page.

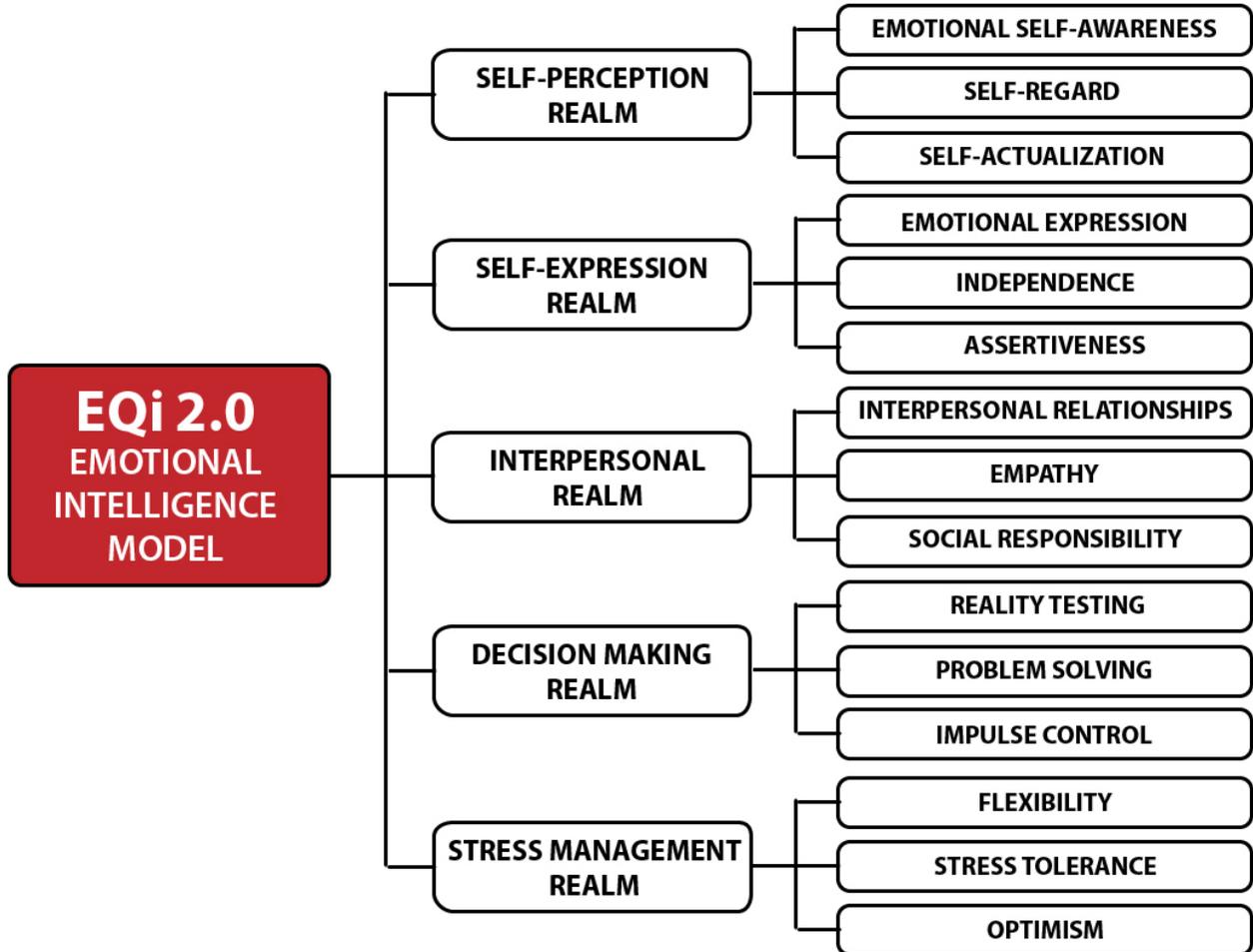
There are several EQ instruments available and this article is using the EQi 2.0 instrument developed by *Steven Stein, Ph.D. of Multi-Health Systems.*

Fundamentally, when the five realms and fifteen scales of the EQi 2.0 are adopted as part of a corporate culture, management and staff are much more likely to perceive and project themselves in a way that is positive and productive. In addition, they will manage relationships with authenticity and humility, openly solve problems as a team, and manage stress with tolerance, flexibility, and optimism.

There is no one style of management or leadership

that is proven to be superior over another (A Test of the Vroom-Yetton Normative Model of Leadership. Field, R. George, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 67(5), Oct. 1982, pages 523-532) However, what is universal in all forms of successful human communi-

cation and leadership is emotional intelligence. In reality, emotional intelligence is more of an individual or group awareness than it is a management style.



The power of emotional intelligence lies in its ability to bring about higher levels of awareness, understanding, flexibility, and innovation, which are critical to organizational success. Markets change, products have a life cycle, and employees come and go. Corporate culture is the glue that helps hold everything together and keeps the organization on track, but corporate culture is only as strong as the emotional intelligence norms that are part of its foundation.

Five Step Process for Developing and Adopting an Emotional Intelligence Based Corporate Culture

The primary objective of an emotional intelligence

based corporate culture is to establish a common set of behavioral norms that are embraced and enforced by members of the organization to help achieve corporate goals. However, one of the hardest things to change in an individual is behavior. To achieve this, one must first understand the difference between innate personality type, which we cannot change, and behavior, which we can change.

Herein lies the difference and thus the use of a personality type instrument like the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI) and the EQi 2.0 Emotional Intelligence instruments. The MBTI helps you understand your innate personality type, which cannot be changed, and the EQi 2.0 helps you understand as-

pects of your behavior, which you can change. An emotional intelligence-based corporate culture can establish an EQ baseline that the entire organization will strive to maintain and improve upon. By identifying the three lowest EQ scale scores and working both individually and collectively to improve on them, a domino effect occurs where a multitude of other areas are positively affected.

The following five steps are a logical sequence of events to develop and activate an emotional intelligence-based corporate culture for an entire organization:

Step One: Senior Management Strategy Planning Session. Objective: To identify problem areas, set goals for improvement, and create an action plan.

Step Two: Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Team Building and Communications Training. Objective: To build trust and respect in the organization by introducing individuals to their innate personality type, the types of others, and the normative type of the entire group.

Step Three: Emotional Intelligence Team Building and Communications Training. Objective: To become more effective communicators and highly productive employees. This starts by having individuals learn their EQ scores and the normative score of the entire group and continues with improvisation training techniques to master EQ skills.

Step Four: Corporate Culture Team Building and Communications Training. Objective: To facilitate a group collaborative process to develop a written corporate culture statement that embraces emotional intelligence and creates a common bond among employees that empowers them to self-govern their corporate culture.

Step Five: Senior Management Debriefing and Strategy Review Session. Objective: To review progress, provide feedback, and set long-term goals for maintaining an emotional intelligence-based corporate culture long into the future.

The steps outlined above provide a logical sequence for creating an emotional intelligence-based corporate culture. It begins with a planning session to strategize and organize, then progresses with training on personality type, emotional intelligence, and corporate culture development, and ends with a debriefing session with senior management to review what was learned and provide suggestions for the ongoing implementation of the new corporate culture.

Why This Process Works

This process works because it's built on the following foundation of proven concepts and theories:

1. **Represents All Three of the MBTI® Steps:** The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator instrument can be used for three different purposes: (1) understanding one's four letter type, (2) learning about the five facet dichotomies associated with each of the four letter types, and (3) examining the opposite side of one's type, which is the essence of emotional intelligence. Unfortunately, most of those who complete the instrument and are debriefed on their MBTI type, never go any further than MBTI Step One. The process outlined above engages management and staff to understand MBTI Step One, as well as Step Two and Step Three.
2. **Defines the Difference Between Psychological Type and Behavior:** Confusion between psychological type and behavior can lead to a myriad of problems and misunderstandings. The process above explains clearly how psychological type is innate and can't be changed, while emotional intelligence is behavioral, and can be changed to adapt to different situations. A key moment in developing an emotional intelligence-based corporate culture is when the team understands this difference and works together to help each other improve their emotional intelligence, while respecting the innate aspects of personality type.
3. **Improvisation Training:** Improvisation is a communication technique that allows one to keep the dialogue going until a positive outcome is achieved. Many of the top MBA programs in the United States are now including courses on improvisation in their curriculum because it trains emerging managers, executives, and entrepreneurs how to think on their feet and use emotional intelligence to disarm others and work in potentially volatile situations. Improvisation can be used to train management and staff on how to engage others on each of the fifteen scales of the EQi 2.0 instrument. As a result, individuals become empowered to monitor each other as a team to maintain the highest possible level of EQ performance, resulting in a positive corporate culture that has a powerful advantage over competitors in the marketplace.

4. **Establishing a Substantive and Tangible Corporate Culture:** The above process guides the organization through a logical sequence of exercises to arrive at a company-generated emotional intelligence-based corporate culture that is self-perpetuating. The idea is to have everyone in the organization engaging in and projecting their culture as a part of daily operating procedures. Most organizations do not document their corporate culture, let alone engage the organization to help develop their values, beliefs, and behavioral norms. Once a corporate culture is put in writing and promoted by senior management, the rest of the organization tends to substantively and tangibly believe in the organization and connect the destiny of their life with the destiny of the organization.
5. **Panacea Solution to a Wide Range of Human Resource Issues:** Establishing an emotional intelligence based corporate culture helps organizations address a wide variety of problems inherent in the workplace. Learning to master the opposite side of one's personality type enables an individual to be more flexible in a wider range of situations. In addition, mastery of psychological type also provides an understanding of which of the fifteen EQ scales are natural strengths and which are potential threats for both the individual and the organization. Understanding and embracing the five realms and fifteen scales of emotional intelligence makes the achievement of normative EQ values in one's daily interactions a

reality. Furthermore, this eliminates a wide range of HR issues, such as a lack of employee engagement, a lack of teamwork, conflicts, low performance, high turnover rates, sexual harassment, workplace violence, and other concerns.

Conclusion

The importance of an organization's corporate culture cannot be ignored as a fundamental part of the overall strategy of the organization. Developing a corporate culture on the foundation of emotional intelligence is no doubt the most untapped opportunity for most organizations, large and small -- public and private. The MBTI personality type and the EQi 2.0 emotional intelligence instruments have both been proven in the marketplace. Improvisation training is considered an advanced way to train management and staff to think on their feet and work as a team in the moment. Many organizations embrace the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator team building process but few follow the process all the way through to emotional intelligence mastery. The development and implementation of an emotional intelligence-based corporate culture, as described in the five-step process above, can take your organization to levels previously unimagined, making it a truly great organization. ■



Harry Redinger: Managing Partner at Strategic Path Group; Master Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Practitioner; Qualified EQi 2.0 Emotional Intelligence Practitioner; Certified California Psychological Inventory Practitioner (CPI 260); Author of *The Strategic Path, Business Plan Development for Emerging Entrepreneurs*; Business Plan Development Instructor at *UCLA Extension* since 1993; MBA *Pepperdine University, Los Angeles*; BS Industrial Technology, *California State University, Long Beach*.