
The Business Case for Spiritual Intelligence (SQ)

by
Sebastian Salicru
Business and Performance Psychologist
Director, PTS Consultants
Melbourne, Australia
ss@pts.net.au
www.pts.net.au

Abstract

Intellectual Intelligence (IQ) refers to thinking, Emotional Intelligence (EQ) to feeling and Spiritual Intelligence (SQ) is about being. SQ is not religion, theology, cult, philosophy, ideology or speculation; further, it is not belief-based, paranormal or esoteric. SQ, also referred to as 'the third Q', is the new secular scientific paradigm of spirituality, which addresses fundamental challenges currently faced by businesses. SQ is the science of human energy management that clarifies and guides the structure of awareness. The application of this awareness allows access to a full range of human capabilities required to succeed in life and prosper in the current economic environment and social climate. In order to be successful, organisations require effective management in four critical domains: data, money, materials and human energy. SQ relates to the awareness, management and regulation of human energy, and is the key to personal fulfillment and peak performance. SQ practice leads to a more satisfying, effective and productive workplace. Hence, SQ impacts all areas of life and provides individuals with the capability of sustainable performance at extraordinary levels.

Introduction

This paper presents the business case for the application of Spiritual Intelligence (SQ) at work. To this end, the science of spirituality is introduced, SQ defined, a brief background on the evolution of the concept of intelligence and capital provided, and spiritual capital (SC) defined. Next is a consideration of the relevance and contribution of SQ and SC in contemporary businesses operating in a context of unprecedented social, ecological and economic global challenges, where the need to act promptly and effectively is required. Further, the link between SQ and leadership is explained, and the key attributes of spiritually intelligent leaders highlighted and exemplified. The SQ capabilities and corresponding benefits for individual employees and their organisations are also outlined. Finally, the main providers of SQ training are presented.

Background – From IQ to Emotional Intelligence

Intelligence is an umbrella term used to describe a property of the mind that encompasses many related abilities, such as the capacities to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend ideas, use language and learn. Everyone is familiar with IQ - the abbreviation for intellectual quotient - which is the measurement of intellectual intelligence. IQ was popularized by psychologists at the beginning of the twentieth century, and was equated with human intelligence. IQ refers to a range of human abilities such as the capacities mentioned above. This verbal, sorting, detail-oriented and rational activity is driven by the left side of the brain and uses serial processing. In contrast, the right side of brain is responsible for more spatial, intuitive and nonverbal activity.

During the 1960s IQ became a controversial concept, its validity being questioned with claims that it only measures left brain activity and was culturally biased. By the early 1990s the notion of intelligence was being challenged by the concept of EQ (emotional quotient) or EI (emotional intelligence). EI is the capability to perceive, understand, evaluate, control and regulate emotions. It is also related to so-called 'social intelligence' or ability to get along with other people. EQ, then, is equated with emotions and the right brain, and uses associative processing, as opposed to serial processing. EQ was popularized by Daniel Goleman in his book 'Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ.' More recently, the concept of Spiritual Intelligence, SQ, has emerged.

The Third 'Q'

A combination of IQ and EQ is important for success, but do not by themselves enable sustained performance and enduring fulfillment. A next level or third kind of intelligence - Spiritual Intelligence - is also necessary.

Danah Zohar is a thought leader, management educator, and founder of the Oxford Academy of Total Intelligence. She was the AHRI Corporate Social Responsibility Award winner at the AHRI National Convention 2009 in Sydney. Zohar defines SQ as

the intelligence with which we access our deepest meaning, fundamental values, and a sense of abiding purpose in our lives. SQ, according to Zohar, is the route to achieving lifelong peak performance.

Richard Griffiths, psychologist and founder of the SQ Institute, asserts that SQ is the paradigm for the new millennium. SQ has no connection with religion or any other organised belief system. SQ is a secular and scientific operating system for human awareness and energy, a set of capabilities based on transcendent aspects of reality that improve performance and increase fulfillment. From this perspective, spirituality is a science that addresses issues of fundamental importance for contemporary organisations.

The three main disciplines that have contributed to research on the existence and nature of SQ are neurology, cognitive psychology and transpersonal psychology. The relevance of SQ in the current changing world is related to the need for a new kind of awareness. This is the awareness required to act effectively in the face of unprecedented social, ecological and economic global challenges. In turn, this awareness, which is intrinsically related to SQ, gives rise to a new kind of capital – Spiritual Capital.

Spiritual Capital (SC) – The Rise of a New Business Consciousness

The concept of capital evolved in parallel with that of human intelligences. Just as IQ was once the only recognised form of human intelligence, economic or financial capital (money and other tangible assets) was the only recognised form of capital. In the current knowledge society, however, intangible assets have become more important than tangible resources as sources of organisational competitive advantage. With the increased awareness of the importance and measurement of these intangible assets, the concept of Intellectual Capital (IC) emerged. IC comprises three forms of capital: Human Capital, Social Capital and Structural Capital.

Human Capital (HC) refers to the human dimension of organisations, and more specifically to the intangibles that reside within the minds of individuals, such as knowledge, competencies, experience, know-how, and creativity. Social or Relational Capital (SOC) refers to the relationships the organisation establishes with resource providers, customers, key stakeholders, and other social networks and relationships, both internal and external to the organisation. Structural Capital (STC) is what remains in the organisation after employees go home at the end of the working day, such as the organisation's processes, information systems, databases and other tangible assets and resources (eg. hardware and equipment). It is interesting to note that of these three types of capital only STC intrinsically belongs to the organisation; HC and SOC go home after work.

The emergence of SQ has given rise to yet another new form of capital – Spiritual Capital (SC). In her book 'Spiritual Capital: Wealth We Can Live By', Zohar defines SC as the "vision and model for organizational and cultural sustainability within a wider framework of community and global concern." This makes a compelling business case for SQ in the

current corporate world, which faces unprecedented challenges related to ethics and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Examples of these challenges include the fact that current organisations are consistently asked to clarify their actions, both remedial and contributory, in relation to global warming, climate change and pollution.

According to the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, sustainable water management is fast becoming the item of top priority in the global business agenda. In order to use SC effectively in dealing with such challenges and effecting the required corporate cultural change, the right kind of leadership is required. As noted by Westpac's Dr Noel Purcell, former Group General Manager, Stakeholder Communications, there is a need to create a new generation of leaders who are conscious of corporate responsibility. In fact, Danah Zohar asserts that spiritual intelligence is the ultimate intelligence of a leader.

SQ and Leadership

SQ and SC are directly related to the key issues facing leaders in today's organisations, which are operating in this context of serious global and social problems, and looming environmental crises. The future of any business depends on the sustainability of water resources, for example, which is increasingly under pressure. At the same time, consumer awareness and increased investor scrutiny of corporate water risks is resulting in stronger expectations that corporations should reveal their 'water performance.' To respond effectively, business will need guidance, tools, standards and schemes to enable change to more sustainable practices. Above all, in order to attain this level of CSR, SQ leadership is required. This is the kind of leadership that acts fearlessly and faces challenges head on.

An example of this leadership is reflected in an interview conducted by McKinsey with Rio Tinto's CEO, Tom Albanese. The interview reveals how water management has become a strategic issue for Rio Tinto, one of the world's largest mining groups, whose operations tend to be located in areas that are either arid or plagued by torrential rains. More specifically, Albanese explains the economics of water, the role of climate change, and how Rio Tinto is adapting its operations in order to make water management a source of competitive advantage.

A further example of the corporate world taking on SQ leadership is the initiative implemented by PricewaterhouseCoopers who, in partnership with The Findhorn Foundation (a spiritual and educational community located in northern Scotland), developed a 'Developing Emotional & Spiritual Intelligence in the Workplace' program. The program was undertaken under the assumption that more emotionally and spiritually intelligent people will be:

- Able to create more meaningful work, and working environments, for themselves and others;
- More able to respond to the needs of the moment and, therefore, be more effective;

- More aware of their responsibility to themselves, their colleagues and the planet; and
- Able to live more meaningful and fulfilling lives.

The initiative examples mentioned thus far are aimed at meeting a new corporate performance criteria known as the Quadruple Bottom Line (QBL). Applying this criteria, businesses need to be: (1) Economically viable; (2) Environmentally sound; (3) Socially responsible; and (4) Spiritually intelligent.

A final example that highlights the emerging relevance of the link between SQ and leadership is the *The 7th Spirituality, Leadership and Management (SLaM) Conference*, 11-14 February 2010 in Sydney. Themes addressed included the creation of prosperous and innovative organisations that act with integrity, creativity and care, and the combination of social responsibility with an organisation's economic mission. The conference brought together keynote speakers who shared new ideas and thinking on how to approach the complexities of leadership in organisations in the 21st century. An interesting case study was presented by Stuart Elliott, Head of People Strategy & Development, Westpac Group, who shared Westpac's Journey of Transformation to becoming a more socially and environmentally conscious organisation in recent years. In the late 1990s, Westpac's poor reputation led to commuting staff being unwilling to wear their uniforms on the train. This prompted an explicit commitment to a program of corporate social responsibility. Stuart also shared how the current global financial crisis, and the need to address public perceptions about banks, has provided an unparalleled opportunity for Westpac to back their words of good intention with demonstrable supportive action.

Attributes of SQ Leaders

Organisations wishing to meet this quadruple bottom line criteria need leaders with high levels of SQ. Such leaders need to display the following SQ attributes: a commitment to personal transformation and self-actualisation; presence and spontaneity; a voice that articulates an inspiring vision promoting holism, integration and collaboration; compassion and humility; and fearlessness and courage.

Incidentally, these SQ leadership attributes not only apply to business leaders, but also to political and community leaders. Consider, for example, great world leaders such as Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, JF Kennedy and Winston Churchill. The impact they made as leaders was not due solely to their IQ, but to a combination of IQ and EQ, and predominantly SQ. Their acceptance and recognition as leaders was due to the fact that they were: committed to transformation on a massive scale; able to articulate their vision in a way that resonated with people; compassionate; able to connect with others and inspire them to action; and committed to causes that they pursued with fearlessness and courage until the end – in some cases, even to the point of sacrificing their lives.

Interestingly, the same applies to great minds like Albert Einstein's. While he obviously had an extraordinary IQ, his appreciation for qualities beyond the IQ is evidenced in some of his quotes:

The only really valuable thing is intuition.

Imagination is more important than knowledge.

SQ Capabilities and Benefits for Individuals in Everyday Work

For an organisation to change, individuals within that organisation must change first. Therefore, a personal perspective on the capabilities and benefits provided by SQ is necessary. SQ has seven key capabilities and each affords corresponding benefits.

These seven key capabilities of SQ are: (1) Free will; (2) Creativity; (3) Intuition; (4) Responsibility; (5) Self-esteem; (6) Transforming negative emotional reactions; and (7) Integration of intelligences. When applied, these SQ capabilities provide individuals with the following benefits:

- Ability to truly exercise free will and responsibility
- Reduced stress and anxiety
- Increased self-esteem, clarity of purpose and confidence
- Higher levels of creativity and intuition
- Ability to sustainably perform at extraordinary levels

Examples of the application of SQ in everyday work are in providing customer service (dealing with customers on a regular basis can be an emotionally demanding task), when using negotiation skills, conducting performance appraisal interviews or in everyday interactions with other team members. It is hard to imagine that any individual or organisation would not want to acquire and exercise these capabilities.

Individual employees who know how to access their SQ are stress-free, responsible, and have a clear sense of purpose, and are able to make the differences that impact positively on the business' bottom line. Such employees have a healthy self-esteem, are able to transform negative emotions into positive energy, consistently come up with new and creative ideas and innovative solutions to problems, and act confidently, ethically and with integrity. From this perspective, SQ training is a smart strategy for any organisation, as it is bound to provide high returns on investment.

SQ Training and Development

The Oxford Academy of Total Intelligence, founded by Danah Zohar, is a global organisation also providing SQ-related training. The Oxford Academy is an educational and research centre and consultancy, aiming to create deep sustainability for individuals, organisations, society and the planet itself. It employs a holistic and scientific approach to questions of leadership and wealth creation. In Australia, the SQ Institute supports SQ-related research and provides SQ training using the twin-pole fast-track method.

An expanded version of this article, and details about SQ training, are available by contacting the author at: ss@pts.net.au

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