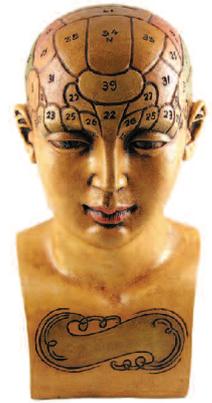


“Modern education systems predominately produce left-brain thinking...”



The accepted wisdom on two-sided brain thinking is that people inclined to left-brain thinking have strengths in logical, sequential thought, analysis, objective and rational decision making and are able to look at the world in discrete parts. These are excellent skills for junior and middle managers, as they are required to manage a team performing a subsection of an overall task, and are required to marshal resources to get the job done.

Those with a more dominant 'right-brain' will tend to be more intuitive and holistic, bringing together a number of parts and placing that into the overall context. They may be more creative and subjective – demonstrating a more engaging passion and being able to find innovative solutions to challenges that arise. Exactly the sorts of skills required to lead successfully in many organisations, especially at senior levels.

So how does an organisation approach developing its managers and leaders if they require them to be left-brained part of the way up the ladder, and then suddenly right-brained nearer the top? Would left-brainers face a glass ceiling? How would right-brainers get the ground-floor experience so vital to understanding the heartbeat of a business?

Perhaps the solution is in a 'middle way'. Developing managers and leaders who are able to access both sides of the brain, and therefore both sets of skills, will produce a more rounded team of leaders, who are better able to flex to the demands of their role. With modern education systems predominantly producing left-brain thinking (consider how many 'maverick' entrepreneurs, who show right-brain thinking, did not graduate from university or even complete high school education), the training need for managers is often to develop the right-brain skills – in balance with those of the left.

A good leadership development programme, therefore, should move beyond the division between left and right, between managing and leading.

Such a programme should develop the ability to see how the whole brain is the best tool in modern management. A first step is to develop awareness amongst leaders of their own dominance, and provide tools and techniques to control and influence what skills their brain uses in various situations.

The outcome is a more responsive, diligent and creative leader, able to manage responsibilities but also seek and secure innovative solutions. For the business, this will translate into increased competitiveness, better abilities to adapt to market change, and therefore improved and continued success.



"I know I'm overqualified - what if I promise to use only half my brain?"

FURTHER INFORMATION

Gerry Talbot and Zena Knight are Directors of the leading behavioural change training company, Advanced Behavioural Capabilities Ltd.

They provide bespoke management development programmes to organisations which induce behavioural change and increased capabilities in current and future leaders.

To learn more, visit www.abc-training.com or call 01638 664345.