

Cultural Intelligence

Cultural Intelligence (CQ) has become increasingly important in today's global business world. People with low CQ may not be able to connect with colleagues from or in other cultures, and their business will suffer as a result. CQ goes beyond emotional intelligence in that people with high CQ have the ability to interpret the behavior of others' and accordingly adjust their own behavior as needed. The three sources of CQ are the head, the body, and the heart: each communicates various cultural differences. Using these sources, people with high CQ can adapt their behavior to become more sensitive or to mimic the gestures, ways of talking, and other habits of those from other cultures. Managers may have various levels of CQ, with chameleon types being able to interpret and adapt to a variety of cultural situations, and the less-talented provision-types being better suited to work with people similar to themselves. Managers and executives who fail to realize the influences of global and company cultures on decision-making and deal-making will be at a disadvantage.

Quality improvement efforts are bound to fail unless improvements to organizational culture are made. A "culture of quality" focuses on improving organizations' strategic focus by changing old management systems, investing resources to improve quality concerns, and working together with staff to improve performance. Leadership is key to improving quality and strengthening organizations' weaknesses, and quality improvement efforts must be tied into broader organization-wide culture changes. To improve quality, organizations must collect quality data, turn that data into information that they can study to determine what improvements should be made, and then devise a plan. Risk management is an integral part of quality improvement process, as organizations have the chance to not only improve their quality and customer satisfaction, but to mitigate their potential risks. Comprehensive risk management programs help organizations monitor their potential risk exposures and take advantage of quality improvement techniques to mitigate risk. Measuring data about quality improvement and culture changes help organizations create benchmarks with which they can grade themselves against others in their industry. Even after successfully embarking on plans to change their cultures, organizations should continue to monitor, evaluate, and benchmark their quality improvement efforts.

Governmental organizations face an incredibly challenging task in creating a competitive business environment, and should partner with private-sector groups to develop in-demand workforce skills. Businesses are in the best position to help determine the trends and skills needed for a rapidly changing market, and can also provide private-sector links to cost-effective solutions. These programs are helping produce the skilled professionals local governments need to bolster their economies, increase return-on-investment, and reduce unemployment. Public-private partnerships should not be limited to IT skills training, however, but should provide governments with an in-depth understanding of the local competitive landscape. Businesses help governments assess priorities in regard to the economy and industrial environment, define goals, and develop and implement workplace training programs.

The rapid pace of technology change has enabled women to reach top positions in the industry. Over the past 20 years, many women have benefited from what they know, rather than who they know. The high-tech industry still has more work to do. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, men filled 69 percent of computer and information-systems manager jobs recently. Women continue to struggle because companies do not objectively identify and develop their talent, adding that they also lack role models and access to informal networks. Lang says large companies tend to provide better support for women.