



1 out of 5 Suns

Executive Intelligence

The Third in the Second series of: ***An Executive Summary for Busy Managers.***

Executive Intelligence... some people would define this as an oxymoron. Not much different than Jumbo Shrimp or Calculated Risk.

Howdy! Rumor has it that McDonald's is performing a little due diligence by adding a high-quality coffee offering, and that 7-11 gas station coffee has been ranked independently to taste better than you know who. Could the end be in sight for the formidable Starbucks or should we not believe the hype? Either way, it looks like the little green mermaid has her work cut out for her!

Can you learn to be as effective as Jack Welch? Can someone predict the future capability of a new executive during the interview process?

Justin Menkes has authored a book titled Executive Intelligence, What All Great Leaders Have.

I was really excited about this book when I first picked it up. I thought to myself, "Self, where has this treasure been hiding? Now I will have an opportunity to learn the real secrets of success." However, a couple of pages in I felt like I was in the middle of a high pressure networking event with names being dropped like it was the London Blitz. I think it is safe to say that Menkes original thought accounts for no more than 10 pages of this 300 page book.

This book will not reveal any management or leadership secrets. As a matter of fact, 96.7% of the book consists of quotations from other people

who have either written books that you may have already read or they have spoken on primetime television where you probably heard it firsthand anyway.

This book is basically a psychology dissertation gone bad. There is a lot of discussion about the virtue of the good old IQ test. As a matter of fact, there is a lot of history discussed, primarily how the original inventor's (Alfred Binet) idea for the IQ test was modified and developed into something for the Army to evaluate new recruits during World War I. Menkes is suggesting a similar test for new hires. Certainly, this is fascinating stuff, but is it really going to help a senior leader become more effective? The quote on the cover of the book states, "*Executive Intelligence is a breakthrough. Packed with useful concepts and case illustrations, this book shows what it takes to be a successful leader in any organization.*" In truth the book is packed with quotes from leaders of all types of different companies. The reader gets tips from the leaders as varied as the CEO of GE and Avon, to the President of the United States of America and the CEO of Dell. Hmm...

Here are the secrets contained within the book with regards to considering a new hire (although the author never really spells this out for the reader):

1. Ability to Communicate
2. Effective Bullshit Detector
3. Detail Oriented
4. Ability to Follow-Up

Typically I love to read anecdotes from the greatest business leaders that the World has to offer. However, the author



continuously tells us that we are going to be told the secret of recognizing the factors that make great leaders great. I kept reading with the hope that some mystery was going to be solved right before my eyes. Low and behold, no mystery was solved and no great insight was offered.

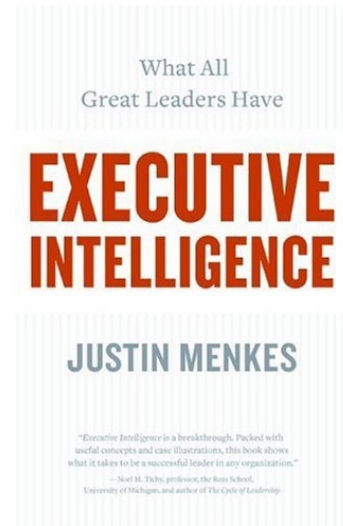
Have you ever considered having your leadership team take an IQ test?

This would probably cause many people to revolt. There is however, an interesting idea that a classical IQ test might be valuable when selecting future leaders. IQ testing is supposed to evaluate an individual's ability to logically think through a situation. Management and leadership require a healthy dose of this skill.

Succession planning is becoming a very hot topic. The Baby Boomers are getting ready to enjoy their hard earned retirement nest eggs. Generation X never really fully engaged and Generation Y is more interested in anything that does not have to do with their employer. Of course these are gross generalizations, but at the same time, there is no doubt that a brain drain is going to occur within the next 5-10 years. Perhaps it is time for HR to focus on developing procedures for succession planning? 5-10 years might be enough time to season people that already have the cognitive skills and develop them into full-blown leaders.

Regardless of where you and your company stand on developing your next generation of management, don't expect Executive Intelligence to offer any useful insight. It is certainly not worth the

investment of your "free-time" and probably not even the \$28 it will cost to display on your bookshelf for all of your colleagues to see.



Just my opinion and we all know what "they" say about opinions...

Thanks
JB

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