Chapter VI

The Emotionally Intelligent IT Organization

INTRODUCTION

At this point it may be useful to hypothesize how a typical North American IT organization might evolve in psychological awareness/emotional intelligence. Such a vision may be useful in showing IT managers, in encapsulated form, what may indeed be possible.

In 1974, Richard Nolan identified six stages of data processing growth within an organization: initiation, contagion, control, integration, data administration, and maturity. Here, a similar attempt is made to identify and describe growth stages in enhanced emotional intelligence within an IT organization.

A GROWTH STAGE MODEL

Initially, before the first stage, no formal attempt has been made to introduce psychological factors to the IT organization. A few individuals may have read some books on personality or motivation and may have discussed some of this material privately with receptive co-workers.

Stage 1: Orientation

Members of the IT department are given a Myers-Briggs personality type seminar. Each person has his/her type assessed. The presenter speaks generally of organizational applications but does not address IT specifically.
In the following weeks, some IT staff discuss their types with co-workers, a few “pioneers” attempt to address basic issues (e.g., extraversion, intuition) regarding teamwork. Many discussions are, however, light-hearted.

Articles on MBTI relevance begin appearing (perhaps twice a year) in professional IT journals and newspapers. Such articles may be posted on the coffee room bulletin boards by astute IT managers.

After a while, the occasional project manager (likely an NF temperament) will, mostly informally, consider personality preferences when assigning people to tasks. Some IT managers, on their own initiative, may purchase a book such as this one and consider at least half-seriously the possibilities presented.

This is the stage of orientation. People begin to become aware of their preferences on the four MBTI dimensions. The Myers-Briggs system, because of its structure and adaptability in wide circles, is likely the best starting point for psychological awareness in IT.

To move an organization beyond this stage, more relevant articles appearing frequently in professional literature will definitely help. Applied research and development (from “Psycho-informatics” researchers collaborating with senior MBTI trainers) may yield literature applying MBTI directly to IT. For example, a booklet parallel to the existing one on type in organizations can be produced on type in IT organizations, outlining main work characteristics, strengths, weaknesses, and areas for development for each of the 16 types. Such an effort would indeed be very valuable to get organizations to progress beyond the first stage.

Stage 2: Consideration

After reading recurring articles on the value of MBTI in IT, after attending MBTI workshops at professional conferences and reading newly developed IT-specific Myers-Briggs material, IT management decides to “get serious.”

An IT-specific Myers-Briggs workshop is given. Management circulars encourage personality type consideration in IT work. Persons on a team begin to discuss openly personality issues as related to cooperative efforts.

In some organizations, specific applications are described in an internal newsletter. Particularly, applications that imply increase in effectiveness begin to be noticed by management.

By this time, research and development efforts (perhaps initiated by the formation of an “Institute of Psycho-Informatics,” composed of MIS academics and Myers-Briggs trainers/psychologists) will have produced a
Semantic Models for Competence-Based Assessment
www.igi-global.com/article/semantic-models-for-competence-based-assessment/117572?camid=4v1a