

Got a good boss? He's no Einstein

By Leon Gettler
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You don't have to be smart to be a boss - in fact, it's better if you're not. According to global corporate psychologists YSC, the successful executive is no Einstein.

YSC principal Angela David said: "Bright people can often get it wrong and those that are the most successful are rarely the most intelligent. Social, emotional and practical intelligence is not assessed in IQ tests but can often lie behind the achievements of successful people."

YSC, which consults to the FTSE's top 100 in Britain and has now set up operations in Australia, said the best leaders were not necessarily good team players who could cope with a wide range of demands, the types held up as models in management literature.

According to Ms David, the best are typically unusual characters.

They are not well rounded but have distinctive and crucial strengths. They are bright, but not necessarily the most intelligent. If they have an IQ above 160, they should apply for another job.

Nor are they driven by money, status or job security. For them, according to Ms David, it's about making a difference.

They have lots of self-assurance without being cocky, they are not scared of standing out from the pack and feel no need to fit in, and they are able to simplify complex problems.

She said YSC looked for "spike" factors in a CEO's profile. A "spike" was a brilliant ability or signature strength that identified ideal corporate professionals. "It could be as a deal maker, a motivator, or they may possess tremendous strategic capabilities," she said.

But then, the "spike" has its problems too. Jeff Skilling, former CEO of Enron, the high-flying Texas energy company that declared bankruptcy in 2001, hired people he called "guys with spikes".

History shows that wasn't a smart way to run a business.

