



## **Provocative Proposition**

### **Leading the Clevers**

Clever people are famous fast.

Their impact is more profound and spreads more quickly than ever before.

The global economy amplifies their influence.

Being clever isn't just about being smart. While in many cases your organization's most clever people may also be on the smarter end of the IQ scale, there are many other components to be on the look out for.

The bottom line is that not only do clever people add value, they seek it out. Clever people are always on the lookout for new and exciting things. They are self motivated, and this is one of their key differentiators.

### **What Clevers Want**

Clever people need to work in clever environments and, if possible, for a clever boss.

The major difference managers and leaders within organizations have to understand is that clevers respond to expertise, not hierarchy. Therefore, your position alone isn't going to get you anywhere with Clever people. In the end, this leads to a two-fold benefit to having a Clever-friendly culture - you get innovative and creative thinkers, and your managers must constantly develop themselves in order to keep one step ahead of the Clevers.

Another cultural expectation Clevers have is freedom.

At Google, a Clever-haven, their corporate culture has been developed in a way that enables Clevers to spend a percentage of their time working on anything that is of personal interest to them. This freedom fulfills a fundamental need in the Clever and, therefore, results in a greater ability to focus on other corporate driven initiatives.

## **Leading Clever People**

Herding cats may seem like a perfect analogy for Clevers. The immediate picture is a room full of self-absorbed, creative thinkers with high ambition.

As a manager, it may seem virtually impossible to approach them, let alone lead them. However, they, as with all other people, are just that - people, and they need you.

In terms of specifics, the first thing they need is context setting.

Clever people may have a great ability to solve a problem, however leaders must spend a great amount of time ensuring that the Clevers understand the context in which to solve the problem. In other words, tell them the What and the Why of the problem, let them come up with the How.

Secondly, and probably more importantly than the first, is the fact that Clevers need rewards and recognition for their accomplishments.

While they may be self-motivated in terms of picking up the next project, they need the satisfaction of knowing that they impressed you, and that you value their contribution.