

Eureka!



Employers are looking for people whose critical thinking will solve problems

The critical thinker - emotional intelligence continued

John Lawson, Lawson Williams Consulting Group

The careers experts at Lawson Williams continue to offer tips, tricks and advice on building your chosen career.

Over the past month I have had the opportunity to interview a number of Food industry professionals who are looking for work. They have ranged in work experience from new graduates to over 20 years in the industry. What continues to mystify me is the lack of awareness that people have of their work style and the factors that have impacted on their success to date and their potential in the future.

In the last article we discussed the importance of developing a high level of Emotional Intelligence (EI) for career success. This is absolutely critical in the current work environment and the rapidly changing food industry in New Zealand.

As an example, we talked about Motivation as a core factor in EI and within this the importance of Optimism. On the surface, optimism is a simple thing: you either have it or you don't and most of us, if asked the

question would say we have suitable levels of it, but have we?

I have been interviewing technical people for the past 20 years. In my interviews I have always paid attention to people's levels of optimism because I know from my own experience that our training as technical people and our subsequent technical jobs require us to be critical thinkers. But as critical thinkers we can often be perceived as pessimists rather than optimists.

Critical thinking is an important skill for a technical person. It is a set of tools used to consider ideas, issues or problems, and to present our own ideas in a clear and considered way.

Central to critical thinking is to understand why something can't work, whether the evidence supports a theory and to come up with an alternative or a solution.

Unique Selling Point

I'm really excited to begin this year. Why? I'm feeling loved. Thanks to my 3 new connections on LinkedIn and especially @rsehji for the tweet regarding my article in the last Food New Zealand journal.

As daunting as it is to put yourself out there it's somewhat empowering to actually receive feedback so thanks to those who have let themselves be known.

However, my logical brain then takes me down the thought process of either:

- a) I only have 3 readers?
- b) You are struggling with where to start.
- c) The rest of you can't be bothered or do not see the value of Personal Branding!

For those of you who selected C let me throw a recruitment statistic at you. Nine out of Lawson Williams Consulting Groups last 20 placements into companies were sourced from Social Media or referrals, not Seek or TradeMe. Do I have you thinking now?

I hope, though, that most of you chose B, as I can actually help and therefore in a roundabout way feel I'm helping to change the world with my bi-monthly ramblings.

- Your starting point. Ask yourself, "What does your brand say about you now?" Are you happy with the message? What are your skills, your passions and what is your Unique Selling Point (USP)?
- Take this a step further. How are you perceived? Your personal relationships, professional relations and your online reputation? (Googled yourself lately?)

- One step further now. What do you want to achieve in your sector, your market and your style?

As I mentioned last time, Lawson Williams has a great road map to help in creating your Personal Brand, simply contact me Raewyn@lawsonwilliams.co.nz, connect with me via LinkedIn or Twitter @raewynbrownnz or if you are not ready to go public just yet, google "Personal Branding" 21,000,000 results and counting.

I'll leave you with this thought. Are you wondering why you were not considered for a promotion, a job opening or other opportunities? Whether your ideas are respected or viewed as credible and whether others are willing to help or hinder you look no further than your Personal Brand.

P.S. Yay I have 3 readers! (She says doing a little dance in her head...)

I am Raewyn Brown: You'll find me on LinkedIn and Twitter @raewynbrownNZ. I have over 15 years experience in all aspects of the Recruitment Industry. I am comfortable in my own world, called quirky in others'.



As such we are required often to approach our work from the point of view of what is wrong with something and why it can't work. Unfortunately for some of the technologists I meet this has become their habitual work style or preference.

I see it even in my own staff, some will always tell me why my idea won't work or see the negative before they see the positive, or worse, never get to the positive.

Critical thinkers (who can be perceived as pessimists) can be tiring to work with. They can drain a team of energy. Managers can find them hard to manage or will see them as only suitable for certain positions and overlook them for progression. Often managers say to me, "Find me someone who will come to me with the solution, not the problem."

So a word of warning to technical people in the food industry, we are

good at our jobs because we are critical thinkers but when working with others we need to remember to not let our critical thinking ability appear as pessimism.

Talk about positives and solutions, because we all like to work with optimists and optimism is an important factor in your Emotional Intelligence status and employers are placing increasing importance on it.



John Lawson is founder of Lawson Williams Consulting Group. He initially studied Biotechnology at Massey and is a professional member of NZIFST. He now enjoys leading a team of recruitment consultants, helping people like you develop satisfying careers.