

mt MASTERCLASS

EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT STRATEGY

What is it? You know all those thrilling off-site strategy get-togethers you've had to sit through over the years? The ones with flip charts, SWOT analysis, and earnest, lengthy and circular discussions? They are just so 20th-century. Today, we are into the 'experience economy'. We need to explore the 'deep metaphors' that inspire our customers' spending decisions. This means tuning in better to what might speak to our customers in the marketplace, and devising a strategy that inspires our workforce in the first place. Bingo! – the emotionally intelligent strategy has been born.

Where did it come from? Much of the credit for this concept goes to the London-based consultancy firm Cognosis. Drawing on its experience of marketing in the drinks and FMCG sectors, Cognosis commissioned research into what managers actually felt about their firm's own strategy-generation. They found that arid, dull strategies were being developed by elite management teams. Middle and junior managers were rarely consulted. There were few reality checks from the shopfloor. The result? Abstract strategies that may have looked sound on paper but won no buy-in from the rest of the organisation.

Where is it going? Leadership teams will have to work a lot harder at developing the emotional appeal of their strategic positioning. They must involve staff at all levels in strategy generation and allow more creative and less hidebound conversations on strategy to develop internally. If it's going to speak to your customers, it will have to speak to your staff first. As Henry Mintzberg has written: 'Strategy doesn't only have to position, it also has to inspire. So an uninspiring strategy is really no strategy at all.'

Fad quotient (out of 10):
Coming up fast at 7.