



BUILDING A HIGH-PERFORMANCE CULTURE

A Q4 Culture



A Q4 Culture

For almost 60 years, Psychological Associates has helped hundreds of client companies build a culture of high performance while also increasing the leadership capabilities of managers at all levels. Although our leadership and management development initiatives build skills, they also powerfully frame the attitudes and behaviors necessary for true high performance. This framework differentiates what we do from those who simply teach skills or offer training programs.

Through our efforts, we not only teach skills, we also embed those skills in a qualitative, behavioral, and attitudinal framework that strongly distinguishes between highly effective and less effective leadership and management behaviors in the workplace. The foundation of this framework is the DIMENSIONAL® MODEL OF BEHAVIOR™, which has guided our work for five decades.

There are many 2 X 2 models of leadership pointing out that “You can be either A, B, C or D ... they are all good and useful at different times.” This is not one of those models. Fifty years of research repeatedly validates that Q4 is the most effective leadership behavior for gaining commitment to superior business results. Q1, Q2, or Q3 behaviors can produce results, but not at the level of Q4 — and not without some collateral damage.

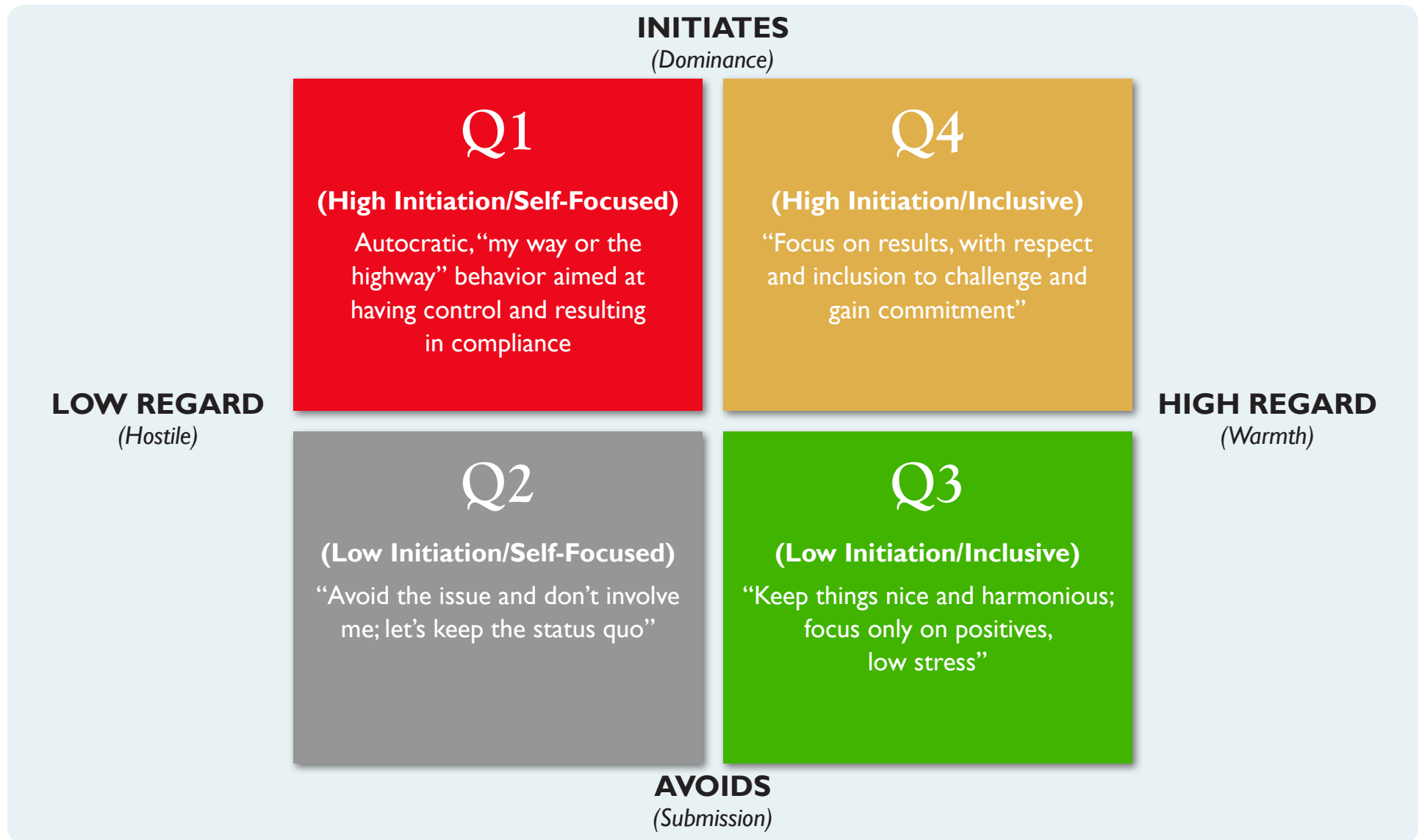
Although everyone’s behavior is a mixture of all four behaviors (Q1, Q2, Q3, and Q4), we give leaders the skills to increase their Q4 behavior while recognizing and reducing the other behaviors.



DIMENSIONAL MODEL OF BEHAVIOR

Our MODEL has two dimensions. The vertical dimension is initiation — the extent to which behavior is either focused on making things happen and producing results (behavior above the line), or avoiding or trivializing issues (behavior below the line). The horizontal dimension reflects whether the behavior is self-focused (left side), or inclusive and respectful of others (right side).

This results in four quadrants, or “Qs.”



In addition, leaders learn how to understand and work with the problematic behaviors of others to ensure optimal commitment and engagement. Leaders learn that the secret to gaining commitment is to focus on **WIIFT** (What's In It For Them), instead of only focusing on leaders' own needs. This promotes a true shift in perspective, behavior, and workplace culture.

Researchers studying high-performance culture usually identify some combination of these five factors as central to establishing and sustaining superior performance:

1. Building high trust and high, constructive candor — focusing on confronting reality.
2. Maintaining a laser-like focus on results, taking the initiative, and moving events forward.
3. Developing inclusiveness, mutuality, and engagement — a sense of shared accountability.
4. Igniting motivation and real commitment, rather than simply getting compliance.
5. Respecting and managing diverse individuals — individually.

The attitudes and skills of Q4 leadership support each of these factors. As your leaders and managers learn to operate in the Q4 quadrant, the culture starts to shift toward these five defining elements. Adoption of Q4 attitudes and skills changes how your managers think about and view the workplace, not just how they act. There is a palpable difference in the feel and tone of a workplace managed in a Q4 fashion. Research indicates that it is much easier to change behavior than attitude. Our focus is to change both behavior and attitude, and to ensure that changes stick by reinforcing them with targeted skill acquisition.



1. Building high trust and high, constructive candor — focusing on confronting reality.

When you look at the behaviors that build trust across an organization (see Stephen Covey's work on "The Speed of Trust" or Gordon Shea's thoughts on workplace trust), it's obvious that we are talking about Q4 behavior. In addition, Q4 candor leads to constructive confrontation with reality, rather than simply hoping that problems solve themselves or that issues evaporate.

2. Maintaining a laser-like focus on results, taking the initiative, and moving events forward.

Q4 leadership is continuously focused on optimizing results. Q4 is high in initiation, seeking to challenge and confront (but always with respect and inclusion) to move events forward. Problems are solved, decisions are made, and issues are addressed sooner rather than later, with a strong sense of urgency to optimize outcomes.

3. Developing inclusiveness, mutuality, and engagement — a sense of shared accountability.

As mentioned earlier, behavior on the right side of the MODEL is inclusive, stressing involvement and respect of others. Some might think that Q4 leadership is about being "nice", but Q4 behavior is not about being nice — it's about being effective. Q4 can be just as tough and even more challenging than Q1. Q4 leadership challenges others to be their best. The difference is always mutuality and respect — hallmarks of a high-performance workplace.

4. Igniting motivation and real commitment, rather than simply getting compliance.

High-performance leaders aim for engagement and commitment, not just compliance. Any leader can get compliance. Q4 leaders learn how to use the Model to understand their people's personal needs, those powerful, intangible needs that focus and drive performance. Then, they link fulfillment of those needs with task performance for results.

5. Respecting and managing diverse individuals — individually.

Q4 leaders understand that they don't manage "typical" employees. They motivate and manage individuals — individually. Our approach provides proven skills to successfully lead individuals no matter where they fall on the MODEL. Whether it's the Q1 colleague who consistently wants to argue and control, the Q2 direct report who resists a new process, or the Q3 peer who readily agrees but doesn't follow through, leaders learn how to optimize their interactions in all directions. They understand that people are different, with different agendas and different personal needs. They understand that effectively working with others requires Q4 interpersonal skills and flexibility. By focusing skill acquisition on real-life, current situations that these leaders bring to the table, we ensure high relevance, applicability, and immediate success in using new skills.

In Summary

The attitudes and skills built through our development experiences change not just behavior, but also attitudes and culture. A focus on Q4 is a change in thinking. Consider, for a moment, the power of a culture built on the five principles. All of our development programs, whether for individual contributors, first-line managers, or for the executive suite, fit together to build a workplace characterized by excellence in performance and civility in tone. This is much more than just training; this is the development of a sustainable high-performance culture based on values, attitudes, and behaviors.

Don't take our word for it. We would be pleased to provide you with senior-level references in companies, both large and small, who can discuss the impact of Q4 skills and culture on their organizations. Leading diverse individuals is not always easy, but it's always exciting. It's the synergy of individual uniqueness that gives any organization the breadth and power of different perspectives.



The Challenge

Today's leadership challenges — managing a diverse, multigenerational workforce, focusing on results and costs, ensuring commitment and engagement, and supporting others through change and uncertainty — require leaders who have powerful interpersonal skills. Those skills form the foundation of a Q4, high-performance culture.



“Think how hard physics would be if particles could think!”

**Murray Gell-Mann,
Nobel Laureate, Physics**