

## Engineers Need to Start Mining Soft Skills

**Pretoria, March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2018:** *In order to remain competitive and to achieve growth, engineers at firms in South Africa's engineering, mining and manufacturing sectors need to recognise the role that emotional intelligence plays in business growth and career development. This says leading management systems and assessment tool provider, Thomas International.*

An engineer's management style can be ineffective if it has an 'all head and no heart' approach. This style is unfortunately more common in the engineering industry than one might think because many engineers, while having a high IQ, lack emotional intelligence (EQ). This can manifest in a number of aspects that can hamper productivity, for example, trust issues, an inability to convey ideas and difficulty working in a team.

Although IQ is an important factor for success, EQ is the key to relating well to others and achieving your goals. EQ is an awareness of your actions and feelings – and how they affect those around you. It also means you value others, listen to their wants and needs and are able to empathise and identify with them on many different levels.

For some engineers the anxiety caused by their inability to understand others' emotions has jeopardised their careers and impeded the growth of those working for and with them. For the organisations they work for, this can stunt business growth due to a lack of productivity caused by teams that are mismanaged.

According to Fiona Millar, New Business Development Manager at Thomas International, the solution to this challenge begins with assessing individual EQ. This is because EQ is the foundation for critical traits and competencies vital to productivity and individual performance. A lack of EQ can affect decision making, empathy, team work, presentation skills, communication, accountability, and trust. "This is where Thomas International's solutions will make a difference," says Millar. "Many people don't realise that that while you are unlikely to change the personality traits associated with EQ, you can most definitely develop and modify the observable behaviours displayed by these individuals."

Thomas International's solution allows engineers to gain much needed insight through a Trait Emotional Intelligence assessment which assists them in understanding their emotional triggers and discover what drives and motivates them. This is the first step to understanding the effect that their emotions and behaviour have on the people that they work with.

According to Millar, this gives an indication of an individual's inherent characteristics and behavioural patterns, allowing for coaching and developmental discussions around areas for growth in terms of their role both in a team and as leaders. "Behavioural competencies that typically require the most development among engineers include self-awareness, conflict management, influencing skills and inspirational leadership. Self-awareness lies at the heart of emotional intelligence. Without it, an individual's chance of demonstrating strength in other areas is low. With it, he or she is likely to shine," she explains.

“There are numerous benefits to investing time and effort into understanding EQ. These include highly improved communication, workplace engagement, team effectiveness and conflict resolution. Thomas International has, over the years, been involved in numerous initiatives where EQ in middle and senior leaders has been measured. This research has made it increasingly clear that individuals with strong levels of EQ are far better positioned to be exceptional leaders,” says Millar.

Millar stresses that changes in EQ and behaviour do not happen overnight and takes practice and continual guidance. “We have found that engaging with clients in this industry on an on-going basis is fundamental to a successful outcome. Regular engagement keeps them committed to self-improvement and provides them with an opportunity to consult with us on areas that might still be negatively affecting their performance.”

For more information, contact Fiona Millar at [fionam@thomas.co.za](mailto:fionam@thomas.co.za) or by calling +27 (0) 12 111 0821.

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**About Thomas International:**

Thomas International offers a broad portfolio of assessment tools that aim to provide insight into people’s potential, what motivates them, and their core strengths and limitations – thereby adding a high level of certainty to all people-related decisions across each stage of the employee life-cycle. Thomas International SA has a team of administrators, psychologists and psychometrists based in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town to support businesses on a national level, complemented by a large support network in the UK. Thomas International is the largest privately owned global provider of people assessment tools and the only provider with bespoke Education and Sport Divisions.

For more information, visit <https://www.thomasinternational.net/en-za/> or follow them on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.