



# Chapter 1

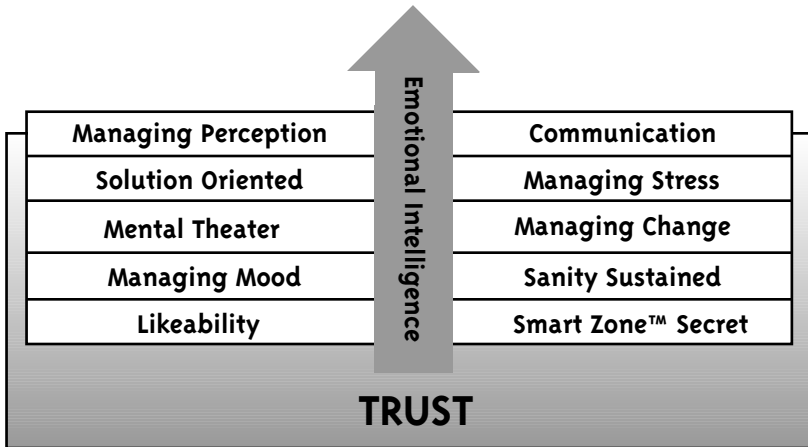
*The Smart Zone Model  
and How It Can Work for You*



## The Smart Zone Model

# In The Smart!Zone™

More Productive  
More Efficient





The Smart Zone Model begins with two foundational key concepts—**Emotional Intelligence (EQ)** and **Trust**. There is a lot of evidence to prove that high-performing organizations are more Emotionally Intelligent and have High Trust cultures. In the chapters that follow, we will show you this evidence.

The model builds on these two concepts with 10 strategies that will help your organization grow and sustain its gains from *Working in the Smart Zone*. These 10 strategies are based on performance-enhancing business practices that will tune and calibrate your performance.

Every organization must have a results-driven culture. An organization that embraces the concept of *Working in the Smart Zone* wants to be highly effective and produce results. Many organizations have discovered the value of raising an organization's EQ and creating a High Trust environment, and are incorporating those concepts into their leadership training. But only the Smart Zone Model provides 10 strategies that will help you create a climate of Smart Zone thinking.

### **The Value of Self-Management Skills**

Most people will say that they earned the best grades in college when they took a full load of classes and also held down a job. It doesn't really make sense that more work (having a job *and* going to college) created better outcomes (higher grades). Wouldn't you just burn out from so much responsibility so young? Actually, no. When people know they have limited time to complete a task, they rise to the occasion and manage themselves. Okay, not everyone will. But those in the Smart Zone will!

Workers with high work pressures and poor self-management skills miss work twice as often as workers with strong self-management skills. Self-management skills help you cope better with work pressures because they help you:

- organize yourself
- anticipate conflicts
- manage your impulses
- minimize distractions
- keep yourself alert



If you read this list again you'll probably think of people who count on *others* to do all those things *for* them. Those people have poor self-management skills. Organizations value people with good self-management skills because they're the most productive, need less supervision, and are self starters.

### **Time Management is for Rookies**

While you're learning to Work in the Smart Zone, let's get one thing straight from the beginning. Time management is for rookies. Working in the Smart Zone is about managing your *attention* and your *energy*—not just managing the hours in the day. People in the Smart Zone take inventory of those things in life that drain them, and they try to minimize or even eliminate them. Stack the deck in your favor by including things in your life that give you energy. You'll be glad you did.

Every company I consult with tells me that they are being asked to do more with less. Maybe you've considered buying a BlackBerry or other device to help keep yourself organized and manage your work and personal life. You may not realize that there is no magic tool you can buy that can keep you on task throughout the day. But you *can* stay in your Smart Zone and increase your productivity by managing your behavior, your emotions, and the way you think.

Self-management is about more than managing time. By following these Smart Ideas you can have a productive day *and* have time for yourself, and you'll avoid the mistake of thinking time management alone will increase your productivity.

- **Be selfish with your yes's.** Learn to prioritize, and manage your ability to use your yes's wisely. There are many tasks to complete but some are more negotiable. Be intentional about what you commit to. Does the commitment fit into your overall strategy and focus? Are you committed to this task or are you saying yes because someone else expects it? Choose two things you have a choice about and just say no.
- **Look at but don't answer email first thing in the morning.** Many people waste a lot of time and energy early in the morning getting lost in their email. But they don't realize that they're set-



ting a negative pace for the day. Unless you're very disciplined and have mastered one- or two-sentence responses, you use a lot of time and energy gathering your thoughts for emails that can range from managing the budget for a project at work to who will drive for the next Boy Scout campout. Review emails in the morning but get in the habit of setting aside a dedicated block of time to respond. Stick to the schedule and you'll avoid getting lost in email adventures that misuse your energy and attention.

- **Master the ability to end conversations that are not productive.** If at the end of the day you wonder where the time went, learn to monitor your downtime at work. How many people dropped by to shoot the bull? When you have to call someone who could keep you on the phone too long, say up front, "I only have a minute but I wanted to get back to you before this afternoon." That sets the expectation that the call will be short.
- **Let the phone ring.** Growing up, I remember my parents taking the phone off the hook while we ate dinner. I didn't like it as a teenager, but now as a parent I see the value in uninterrupted family time. When you're in the middle of a task at work, whenever possible don't let the phone interrupt you. Finish your thought, finish the task, and then respond to the voicemail. Shifting constantly between tasks can interfere with your attention and drain your energy. Don't let someone else determine the pace of your day.
- **Make lists and notes in a central place you can always have with you.** When you write something down, you're more likely to do it. But make your list on something that you're likely to keep with you. Sticky notes and napkins get lost because they seem unimportant. Carry a small journal with blank pages—preferably the kind that also holds a pen—so you can easily write down things that you value, and then make sure you keep the journal with you. This way you are less likely to lose a good idea or the information you need to follow up with someone.

The Smart Zone Model outlines the ways you can be *Working in the Smart Zone*. The following chapters describe the two major concepts, Emotional Intelligence and Trust, and each of the 10 strategies in the



model, and provide specific techniques to get you there. The Smart Moves section at the end of every chapter in Part One will help you by summarizing key concepts outlined in the chapter.

Now that you know the Smart Zone Model, get ready to start *Working in the Smart Zone*.

## Chapter One

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# SMART Moves

- The Smart Zone Model is based on Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and Trust. High performing organizations are more Emotionally Intelligent and have High Trust cultures.
- Self-management is about more than managing the hours in the day. Instead, managing your attention and your energy will help you stay in the Smart Zone.
- Increase your productivity by managing your behavior, your emotions, and the way you think. Prioritize your commitments, and be intentional about those you choose to take on. Make sure they fit with your overall strategy. Email can consume valuable hours. Schedule time to answer email so that you keep control of your day.

