

## Business Acumen and Value Creation Process

Although there is a lack of consensus on an exact definition, Wikipedia defines business acumen as “a concept pertaining to a person’s knowledge and ability to make profitable business decisions.” Employees with high levels of business acumen are highly prized by corporate leaders since such employees’ judgments and contributions add bottom line value.

### Value Creation Process

True value creators bring together their IQ (industry knowledge, expertise and intellectual horsepower) and their EQ (ability to create and sustain relationships in which people share what they think and feel to be true). This combination can be a powerful differentiator in the evaluation of one’s business acumen. Value creators passionately and effectively focus their intent on helping the company/other succeed. They create value objectively and subjectively - objectively in things that can be measured, and subjectively in terms of increasing feelings of good will.

IQ and EQ can, and often do, run in opposite directions – the smarter our IQ the lower our EQ. If we get fixed on how smart we are or how good our ideas are, we tend not to listen, not to hear, and not to make space for our views to be challenged. To turn intelligence into business acumen requires the ingredient of emotional intelligence (EQ).

When our intent is to help the company/other succeed, it frees us to be objective rather than pushing our ideas and solutions. Whether responding to a request or initiating a conversation, value creators conduct a thorough value creation diagnosis before offering solutions. The questions they ask of others, and of themselves, facilitate high quality interactions, precise evaluations, and creative, effective solutions.

### DO YOU HAVE A VALUE-CREATION MINDSET?

Taking our individual value creation to a higher level requires us to elevate the quality and effectiveness of our conversations. Follow these tips to increase your emotional intelligence and business acumen:

1. Fight the urge to jump to solution-talk before understanding true business needs and desired outcomes.
2. Use inquiry and listening to uncover issues, evidence that the issues exist, the impact they are having on the organization/company, and the desired results.
3. Explore and uncover constraints – time, people, and money. The number one reason decision-makers do not act on suggestions boils down to resource constraints. Know the constraints that he/she is facing and add value through relieving them.
4. Present your solutions to the right people. Be prepared to address what the decision-maker will need to see, hear and believe to be true in order to give a definitive answer.