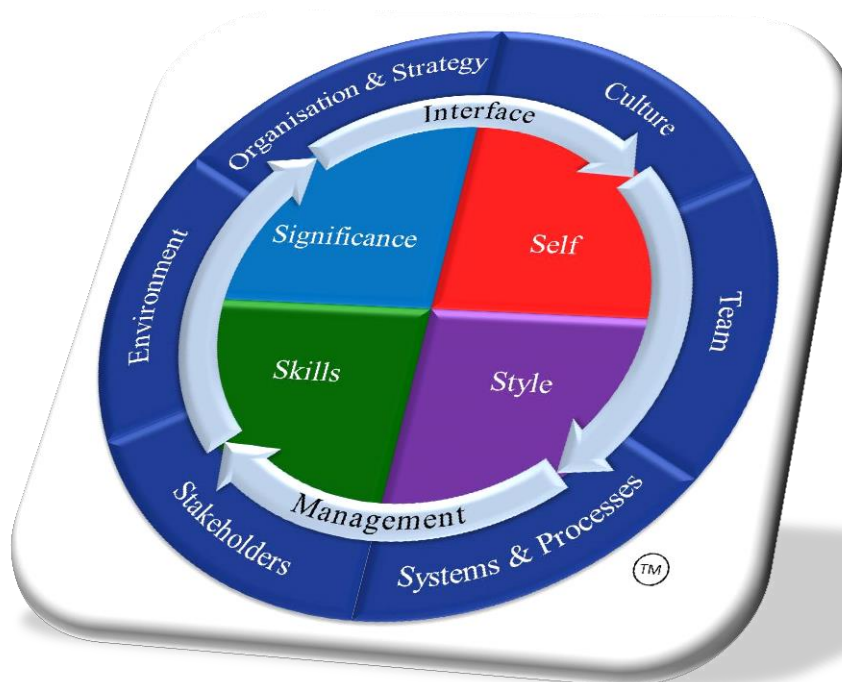


# How Technical Experts Can Make A Painless And Stress Free Transition To Leadership And Management

Plus

10 Mistakes To Avoid  
Along The Way



**Mark Johnson, MBA, FIML**  
Performance Strategist &  
Founder of Intelligent Performance

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

Intelligent Performance Resources And Support .....	3
Setting The Scene.....	4
Does This Sound Familiar?.....	5
Mistakes Even Experts Make .....	6
Mistake #1: Not Letting Go Of Technical Work .....	6
Mistake #2: Thinking A Move Into Management Was The Only Logical Step .....	7
Mistake #3: Believing Their Previous Manager Typified What Management And Leadership Is About.....	7
Mistake #4: Unaware Of Their Skill Gaps And Deficiencies .....	7
Mistake #5: Closed Minded .....	7
Mistake #6: Misunderstanding Their New Role.....	8
Mistake #7: Not Having A Useful Plan.....	8
Mistake #8: Ignorant Of What Makes Teams Effective .....	8
Mistake #9: Addressing Performance – Good And Bad.....	9
Mistake #10: Thinking You Can Do It On Your Own .....	9
A Better Way .....	10
The Intelligent Leader Success Framework™ (ILS) Explained .....	10
4S – The Inside World .....	10
Externalities – The Outside World .....	11
Interface Management – Bridging The Worlds.....	11
How We Use the ILS Framework.....	11
Coaching.....	12
In-house Programs.....	12
Consulting Projects.....	12
Public Workshops .....	12
Speaking.....	12
Our Supporters.....	13
Your Next Steps .....	15
Work with me One-on-One .....	15
Attend one of our workshops .....	15
Feed Your Mind.....	15
About The Author.....	16
Where To Contact Us.....	16

## INTELLIGENT PERFORMANCE RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

At Intelligent Performance we offer you multiple ways to engage with us and our community. We are all about sharing content and learning opportunities so people can be engaged, satisfied and productive in their worklife.

Here's six ways you can continue to grow, develop and contribute:

1. **Join our mailing list for regular free content.** This includes regular team tip videos, whitepapers, reports and other content we think you will enjoy. You can also receive invitations to relevant workshops and possible discounts.

Our mailing list: [Intelligent Performance Mailing List](#)

2. **Follow us on social media.** By following Intelligent Performance or myself, Mark Johnson on LinkedIn or Facebook, you will gain further access to valuable content as well as communicate with other followers to share opinions and ideas.

LinkedIn: [Intelligent Performance on LinkedIn](#)  
[Mark's LinkedIn Profile](#)

Facebook: [facebook.com/IntelligentPerformance/](https://facebook.com/IntelligentPerformance/)

3. **Check out our news and blog posts.** With regular postings you can keep up with the latest tips and information to watch, read and share.

News & Blog: [intelligentperformance.com.au/news\\_events](http://intelligentperformance.com.au/news_events)

4. **Register for one of our upcoming programs.** Attending workshops face to face offers participants extended learning opportunities. Our workshops have a practical focus and we guarantee you will return to work with strategies to implement immediately and reap the benefits. If you are on our mailing list, you won't miss out.

Our mailing list: [Intelligent Performance Mailing List](#)

5. **Participate in webinars.** Often these are free to attend or a small fee may be involved. Either way, you will benefit from short and focused interactive presentations. Make sure we have your details on our mailing list so you don't miss out.

Our mailing list: [Intelligent Performance Mailing List](#)

6. **Try free coaching.** Book a free 30 minute coaching call with me to discuss challenges you face and possible actions to take. No hype and no sell involved.

Book via email: [mark@intelligentperformance.com.au](mailto:mark@intelligentperformance.com.au)

## SETTING THE SCENE

---

For as long as I can remember (and that's quite a while), organisations have been promoting high performing, technically brilliant people into leadership and management roles and wondering why they underperform, lose motivation, get stressed, resign or all of the above.

I've seen too many good people get thrown into management and leadership roles unprepared, causing personal and organisational pain. They cease to enjoy their work and end up trying to be something they're not.

Along the way their team loses respect for them as a leader, though may still acknowledge their technical expertise and they experience negative impacts on their family and personal lives.

Some might say the simple answer is to give people leadership training and everything will be fine.

Well, over the years I've searched for programs that resolved this issue but I found they were mostly a dump of leadership theory and provided little to no ongoing support and frankly knowledge does not guarantee success.

Alternatively there were other programs that provided a motivational pump up which was quickly forgotten when people returned to work.

Having a long career in human resource management, organisational development and education, I was determined to develop a program which not only educated but importantly supported people in realising the changes they wanted and needed to make the successful transition to leadership roles and career satisfaction.

## DOES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR?

---

Having worked with a large number of technical experts and various industries, I've come to see a few trends appear when people are given the responsibility of leading and managing others.

By way of example, consider the following:

### **Eddie the Expert**

Eddie has been with his employer for a little over 5 years now and lives and breathes his specialty. He knows his stuff and will readily engage in conversation about the technicalities and interpretation of information and data. Clients love Eddie and he is well respected for his level of knowledge.

An opportunity came up for Eddie to take on a management role in a new team. Having been in his current role for a few years Eddie was happy but wanted more. A promotion would give him more responsibility, challenge and money as well as a better lifestyle – at least that was the plan.

In his first week Eddie was met with a barrage of issues. His manager wanted him to:

- Address a poor performance issue with one of the team members which was supposed to have been started three months ago by his predecessor
- Work on a new operational plan to meet increasing productivity objectives
- Address general team performance as they were behind in meeting their current performance targets
- Commence a new project for a client without any additional resources.

Now Eddie is not one to step back from a challenge and he was keen to make a good impression, so he took on the challenges as best he could.

Being technically brilliant Eddie thought he would address performance by showing people the best way to do things. After all, that's what his boss had done to him. Unfortunately Eddie did so to the point of micro managing them and being a "control freak".

With a great attention to detail, Eddie researched how to prepare an operational plan and produced a well structured 50 page document. Unfortunately his manager wanted a "plan on a page".

When he wasn't doing re-work or planning, Eddie took on the bulk of the new client project himself. It meant he was spending more time at work

and even taking work home with him. But at least it would get done properly.

The poor performance issue had not been addressed yet, but will be as soon as Eddie can find some breathing space. At present he needs all the resources he can get (even if they are not performing too well).

At this point, Eddie has spent little quality time with his team and they are starting to feel frustrated that he is not addressing team issues or providing guidance. He is also becoming moody and abrupt both at work and home.

As for the lifestyle improvements, well that will all happen sometime soon he hopes.

## **MISTAKES EVEN EXPERTS MAKE**

---

Eddie reminds me of so many of the technical experts I see in the workplace. Whether they be lawyers, financial advisors, accountants, IT consultants, engineers, project specialists or medical and allied health specialists and more, each person has a passion for their discipline and that's what drives them to become the respected expert they are.

Then one day all that changes and they are faced with managing and leading people which was never really high on their list of most enjoyable things to do. Along with this, their manager expects them to deal with the many people and performance issues.

And so, with the best intentions, they try their utmost at something which is unfamiliar and uncomfortable.

Sometimes things go well and often mistakes are made. Here are the most common mistakes I see occurring (in no particular order):

### **Mistake #1: Not Letting Go Of Technical Work**

With the exception of some roles (e.g. legal partners), managers and leaders need to focus more on strategic thinking and people management. The day-to-day technical work needs to remain at the team level. Frustratingly for technical experts, they have a preference for the technical challenges and problems. After all, that's what they have done for much of their career to date and that's what they prefer doing. And when things get stressful, we all tend to do those things we feel comfortable and confident in doing.

*How much time are you spending on technical work?*

## **Mistake #2: Thinking A Move Into Management Was The Only Logical Step**

Like Eddie in the previous section, a move into management and leadership is for many, the next logical step. Traditionally, for a technical expert to progress in their career, they had to move into management. For some who have a natural bent toward management and receive development and support, the move is successful and they forge a new career path. For others who are only really passionate about technical work, the move to management will be a disaster, with or without development and support. It is becoming more common now for organisations to provide an alternate career path for technical experts where they can be acknowledged and rewarded appropriately.

*Where does your true passion lie and what work do you find engaging?*

## **Mistake #3: Believing Their Previous Manager Typified What Management And Leadership Is About**

I've lost count of the number of times managers and leaders have explained their poor behaviour and / or leadership style by saying "well that's how I was treated when . . ."

I often encourage people to look for role models to guide how they should behave. Unfortunately some people look to the wrong role models and instead of doing the opposite of a poor role model they do the same. They make the mistake of thinking that's what you need to do when you're a manager.

*Who are your role models and what are they teaching you?*

## **Mistake #4: Unaware Of Their Skill Gaps And Deficiencies**

There is a saying that "ignorance is bliss" and whilst that may be true in some instances, it does not apply to someone wanting to make a good impact in a new role.

Successful transition into a management and leadership role requires technical experts to raise their awareness when comes to areas for development. Putting ego aside, a thorough assessment of strengths and areas for development will provide solid useful input to development planning. This should also be coupled with feedback for other credible sources.

*Take a look in the mirror. What are your strengths and areas for development?  
How would others perceive you?*

## **Mistake #5: Closed Minded**

In some ways this mistake can relate to the previous. When people intentionally ignore or dismiss feedback about their behaviour or areas for development, the result can only mean disaster – for them and their team.

When fear, ego or arrogance prevent us from opening up to our deficiencies, we are shutting ourselves off from realising our potential and purpose.

*What's stopping you from opening your mind? What would be the benefit of taking on feedback from others?*

### **Mistake #6: Misunderstanding Their New Role**

Sometimes people underestimate or misunderstand their role as a manager and leader. Through no fault of their own, they may have not been fully informed about the role and responsibilities or they may not have been previously exposed to the reality of management roles.

Either way, this can be solved with asking the right questions and clarifying the written and unwritten expectations of key stakeholders.

*Are you clear on your role (or the role you desire)? Have you asked stakeholders what they expect from you?*

### **Mistake #7: Not Having A Useful Plan**

Have you ever tried to drive somewhere you have never been before without a map, street directory or GPS navigator? It can be frustrating, time consuming and you probably get lost more than once.

The same goes for starting a new role as a manager and leader. The team will expect you to provide direction, a reason to do certain work, to fix the past problems and make their work-life more satisfying and engaging. Without a plan, how will you make this happen? No doubt you will flounder for a while, probably get side-tracked on non-important issues and fail to communicate a future which is inspiring and motivating.

As the saying goes, when you fail to plan, you plan to fail.

*Do you know how to develop an operational and business plan for your team? Can you think strategically and long-term?*

### **Mistake #8: Ignorant Of What Makes Teams Effective**

Many of us have participated in a variety of teams either as children or adults. Some of those have been successful and others not so. Many technical experts tend to be self-reliant, which can be a strength. When looking at a team from a management and leadership role however, the dynamic changes. There are personalities, relationships, role clarification, development and many more elements to be considered.

It's a little like baking a cake. To get a consistent result you need to not only follow a recipe, but also the correct process for assembling the cake. Do things in a different order and you get a different result.



So in building an effective team you need to understand the team elements and processes and how and when to use them.

*What team development processes or models are you familiar with?*

### **Mistake #9: Addressing Performance – Good And Bad**

Everyone likes to receive feedback on how they are performing. The context can range from public praise to a private thank you. Some need continual acknowledgement and others want to be appreciated for going above and beyond. The challenge is doing it in a way that matches the individual's personality and motivation. Unfortunately some managers and leaders who don't require a high level of acknowledgement apply the same rule to their team members and thinking that "if something is wrong I'll let them know. Otherwise they are just doing their job"

Just as good performance must be acknowledged, poor performance must be addressed. Many managers and leaders fear confrontation and mistakenly avoid the tough performance discussions. This often comes back to bite them later when the issues get out of hand and result in warnings and possibly termination

*Do you find it easy to praise people for a good job? How would you approach a poor performance discussion?*

### **Mistake #10: Thinking You Can Do It On Your Own**

Finally, a mistake that many people in general make is thinking they need to do everything themselves. When we are promoted into a new role, particularly as a manager or leader, we don't want to disappoint those who appointed us. We feel that we should know everything and be able to do everything. Consequently, partly driven by ego, pride and possibly over-confidence, we don't ask for help when needed and don't delegate as we should.

The majority of people (peers, team members and managers) want you to succeed in your new role. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness or that the wrong recruitment decision was made – assuming you are growing and learning rather than wanting to avoid responsibility.

Help comes in many forms. It may be extra resources, extension of time, advice from a mentor or even development aligned to your new role such as coaching or training.

If you think an external coach is a waste of time or inappropriate, consider every elite sportsperson, entertainer, and high profile business person. They all have coaches in one form or another and never stop learning.

*What do you need help with? Who could help you?*

## A BETTER WAY

---

Now, just being aware of these potential mistakes is an awakening in itself, but what can be done to avoid and prevent these occurring?

In my work experience and search for answers to address these mistakes and many more, I came across a variety of approaches, models and theories. As mentioned previously these provided information but not support. Through my years of coaching and facilitation I also looked at methods for people to transfer learning back to the workplace and deliver sustained results and improvement.

With this combined research and experience I created the Intelligent Leader Success Framework™, which ensures the success of technical experts as they transition to leadership roles.

It is based on research and practical application through my coaching, facilitation and consulting work. The key elements address the recurring themes which arise for technical experts and the challenges they have in dealing with them as they move into leadership and management. The strategies and actions associated with each element have been developed and tested in the workplace.

### The Intelligent Leader Success Framework™ (ILS) Explained

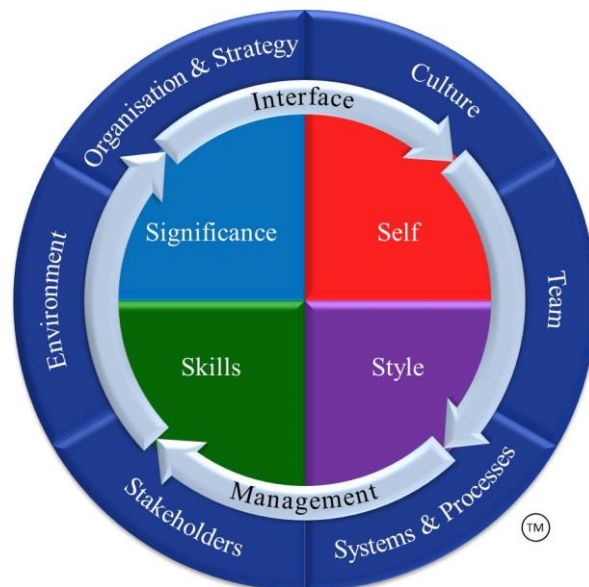
There are three key parts to the model which are equally significant when it comes to leader success.

In essence, these deal with the leader's inside world, their outside world and how the leader relates one to the other. Let me explain.

#### 4S – The Inside World

At the core of the model is the leader themselves. Leaders can only understand and lead others when they first understand themselves. This is achieved by considering four aspects:

- **Self** – appreciating and connecting with one's personal values, vision, purpose and passion.
- **Style** – personality and behaviour impacts the individual's leadership style. Awareness of strengths and areas for development allow a leader to adapt their style and approach for more effective results.
- **Skills** – The knowledge, skills and competencies required by leaders will vary depending on their role and position within the organisation.



**Intelligent Leader Success Framework**

Identifying and developing these requires an understanding of the leaders “significance” and the outside world elements.

- **Significance** – understanding the leader’s role and desired impact provides clarity for management and planning responsibilities and expectations.

## Externalities – The Outside World

Beyond the individual leader exists all the other elements they are responsible for and must work with.

- They must deliver in accordance with the **organisation’s strategy** and navigate its structure.
- They must work with as well as influence the organisation and team’s **culture**.
- Leading their **team** is obvious but requires an appreciation of individuals and team processes.
- From a management perspective, **systems and procedures** must be complied with, followed and improved.
- **Stakeholders** have a significant influence and may include clients, suppliers, internal management and a range of other bodies.
- Understanding the **environment** allows the leader to avoid threats and take advantage of opportunities.

Each of these elements impacts the other and complexities must be understood

## Interface Management – Bridging The Worlds

A leader’s effectiveness is only measurable by how well they bridge the gap between their inner world and outer world – i.e. their own leadership competence and the people they lead and interact with and the responsibilities they must deliver on.

This element of interface management is in some ways “where the rubber hits the road”. Knowing the theory and issues relevant to the inner and outer worlds is one thing, but can the leader work effectively with both?

Successful Interface Management is achieved through effective processes, collaboration, engagement, analysis and communication etc.

## How We Use the ILS Framework

No doubt I am biased but I think this is a fine model for capturing the challenges leaders have in matching their own capabilities and style with the various elements they must work with on a day to day basis.

The ILS Framework serves as a basis for the programs we run with individuals, teams and organisations. Such programs start with the 4S elements using a variety of assessment tools to raise awareness of personal behaviours, capabilities and impacts. Once this awareness has been provided, the outer world is explored using proven methodologies and tools to assess the current and future status. The critical aspect of Interface Management are addressed with targeted skills development

How this is achieved may include:

## Coaching

One-on-one or small group coaching is conducted and starts with exploring challenges and issues leaders face. The ILS Framework can be used as a diagnostic tool and map of where action and development may be required.

Coaching may be delivered in three, six or twelve month programs

## In-house Programs

Leadership development programs can be shaped and customised to suit client needs. These may involve a series of short workshops or longer intensive programs. Often some form of coaching or workplace support will take place between workshops.

## Consulting Projects

Where organisations are reviewing leadership across business lines, consulting projects may be delivered. The ILS Framework will provide a “map of the territory” to be scoped and improved. The nature of these projects depends on the challenges faced by the organisation (e.g. change, growth, mergers, retention etc) and the desired objectives (increased engagement, performance improvement, cultural change etc).

## Public Workshops

From time to time public workshops are conducted by Intelligent Performance. The focus of these may be the entire ILS Framework or specific elements.

## Speaking

I speak on a range of topics including leadership, teams and professional and personal performance. Whether you need a speaker for a conference or workshop sessions, the topics and content will be highly relevant, practical and entertaining.

## OUR SUPPORTERS

---

The following are comments from clients with whom I have worked over the past few years providing coaching, facilitation and consulting services. You will see the common themes of which I am proud, including integrity, excellence, professionalism, practicality and results.

Mark worked with Suncorp's leaders over approximately 2 years coaching them on advanced leadership communication skills to drive ownership and performance in their teams. Mark's skills, integrity and approach enabled him to connect quickly with Suncorp leaders across multiple levels and support and challenge those leaders to bridge the gap between actual and desired/required performance. I recommend considering Mark to help you grow your own capability or the capability of the people in your business.

**Craig MacDonald, Suncorp**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for taking the time to present on the topic of Employee Engagement to Partners and Senior Associates of the firm on Tuesday 13 October.

The attendees at the presentation found it to be right on point especially at present given the changing economic times and the increased confidence around. The tips were particularly of interest and many commented on the practical suggestions that were provided. Many thanks for the participation and insight.

**Peter Ellender, CEO, Carter Newell Lawyers**

Mark is an excellent facilitator and business coach. I have used him on many occasions for business building and team building days and I am very happy with the results.

**Gerard Reiter, Powerlink**

Mark is the consummate professional. He is able to bring to bear his significant change experience and interact effectively with all levels of an organisation to achieve positive change outcomes. His composure, even in times of stress, means that he is pleasure to have as a part of any team.

**Amanda Fajak, Regional Director Europe at Walking The Talk,  
Organisation Culture, Culture Transformation Specialist**

I have actively engaged Mark on numerous occasions to provide consultation services within the areas of Strategic Planning, Team Building and Organisational Change Management and DiSC Profiling. During these engagements, Mark had to actively work not only with my core execution program/project teams, but also with the greater enterprise/business.

I have had Mark conduct strategic planning workshops and team building for me while at Boeing and the more recent engagement was with QLD Main Roads. Our results were outstanding and had a direct relationship to the On-line Services Strategic Roadmap that was delivered.

In closing, Mark is an extremely honest individual whom prides himself on delivering the highest results to the end client. I would HIGHLY recommend Mark to any of my colleagues and other organisations.

**Todd Hunt, Director P2E (Previously Main Roads)**

. . . Mark provided direct HR support to line managers on a range of HR issues including leadership development and coaching, performance management, recruitment and process improvement projects. Mark is an extremely experienced and knowledgeable HR professional who is able to build strong relationships and deliver exceptional results for the business.

**Jo Mugglestone, GM, Human Resources, APAC, Ausco Modular**

## YOUR NEXT STEPS

---

This paper has attempted to highlight the challenges technical experts face when transitioning to a leadership and management role and a framework to make the transition successful.

What happens next is up to you, the reader. I would however reiterate my earlier comments that successful people don't try to do things on their own. Life is too short to spend time sweating over challenges and trying to work things out on your own.

Think of a sportsperson, musician, actor or business person you admire. Now if they wrote a book on their craft, describing all the theory and technicalities and you read that book, do you think you could achieve what they have achieved? How would you go playing tennis against Roger Federer, singing on stage with Adele, acting opposite Nicole Kidman or sitting in a board meeting with Richard Branson? Do you think their book would equip you to play at their level?

If you are ambitious and committed to making an impact on your team, the organisation and your profession; if you want to experience success without the pain and stress; and if you want to have a life which is not all consumed by work problems, then I would encourage you to pursue one or more of the following:

### Work with me One-on-One

- [Contact me](#) for a free 30 minute no obligation coaching session
- [Contact me](#) to discuss a three, six or twelve month coaching program

### Attend one of our workshops

- [Contact me](#) to run an in-house workshop with your team or colleagues
- Attend one of our public workshops – sign up to our mailing list to be updated
- Talk to your organisation's HR or L&D team for development guidance. I would welcome them contacting me to discuss program options.

### Feed Your Mind

- [Sign up to our mailing list](#) for regular free content
- Follow me on social media
- Start reading broadly on leadership and management
- Follow influential business leaders and thought leaders to expand your knowledge

Too many people take on new information which may benefit them, but fail to act. Now you are in a position to take the next step.

*Have a bias toward action - let's see something happen now. You can break that big plan into small steps and take the first step right away.*

*Indira Gandhi*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

---



**Mark Johnson, MBA, B. Bus. Mgmt, FIML**  
Performance Strategist & Founder of Intelligent Performance  
Coach, Facilitator, Consultant & Speaker

*“I make the transition to leadership for technical experts painless and less stressful with practical and proven strategies that increase team performance and engagement to achieve guaranteed increased productivity.”*

Throughout a business career spanning over 30 years in human resource management and organisational development, Mark has led and managed teams to achieve significant improvements in productivity and satisfaction. He has also played key roles as part of successful senior leadership teams.

Passionate about enabling individuals, teams and organisations to achieve outstanding levels of performance, Mark has worked with and facilitated development across a range of organisational levels from frontline teams and new supervisors to middle management and executive leaders improving performance in highly competitive and demanding environments.

His personal style and skills have allowed him to achieve success in a broad cross section of industries including Federal, State and Local Government, Finance & Insurance, Aerospace, Energy, Mining, Agribusiness, Professional Services and Construction.

Mark also works as a tertiary educator with both Torrens University and Griffith University facilitating Post-Graduate Masters level programs in leadership, management and change.

Read more about Mark’s professional experience at  
<http://intelligentperformance.com.au/about--meet-mark.php>

### Where To Contact Us

Phone: 07 3272 4922  
Mobile: 0418 123 033  
Internet: [www.intelligentperformance.com.au](http://www.intelligentperformance.com.au)  
Email: [info@intelligentperformance.com.au](mailto:info@intelligentperformance.com.au)