



**Macdonald
Associates
Consultancy**

Our People: Capability

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Once you have a structure you need to populate it with people who are capable of doing the work that needs to be done. Capability is about how well a person is suited to the range of work in a role.

Giving a person work that is too complex for them, or not complex enough, can cause significant problems for that person and for anyone working for them. On the other hand, where you have a good match between the individual and the role he or she is in the individual can be said to be 'In-Flow'. This state adds to a person's well-being and motivation.

It is desirable in an organisation that everyone is working to the same model of capability – not doing so may lead to a number of unwelcome consequences including people dipping down, perceptions of unfairness around promotions, etc.

The Systems Leadership model of capability has six components to be considered.

One of these is mental processing ability. Some people equate this to IQ though it is not the same. It is the ability to solve problems of a particular complexity. It refers to the intellectual or cognitive qualities of an individual in terms of the way that a person mentally processes information about a variable, or the relationships between two or more variables. This enables people to construct views of the world, analyse problems, and decide what to do.

We all know people who can solve problems more quickly and better than we can. In determining whether someone has the basic mental grunt to do the work in any level, it is important to remember that a role is made up mainly of tasks of the complexity of that level, but also has some problems which are more or less complex and which fit into the levels above and/or below. This means that to operate successfully at any level you need to be able to solve at least some problems of the stratum above.

Second is Application - a person's ability to act to get results in an efficient, effective, and timely manner. This is affected by a number of things, including how interested a person is in the role. Third is Social Process Skills - a person's ability to interact effectively and productively with other people. It's not just about being nice. Fourth is Technical Skills - the ability to carry out particular activities using tools or processes i.e. about people interacting with things. Fifth is Knowledge - the learned information required to be successful in a particular role.

