



## **This is Your Secret Weapon in the Battle to Get the Right People in the Right Jobs**

Steve Sanduski:

We have another great show lined up for you today on the CEO Coaching International Podcast, and I'm your host, Steve Sanduski. Joining me today is Sheldon Harris. Sheldon is a coach here at CEO Coaching and prior to joining the firm he held a number of leadership positions including President of Cold Stone Creamery and he led the company as it great system wide revenue to 500 million dollars with 1400 stores and 15,000 employees around the world. He's also been involved in several other entrepreneurial ventures and Sheldon, it's great to have you back on the podcast.

Sheldon Harris:

Thanks, Steve. Good to be here.

Steve Sanduski:

Sheldon, we are going to talk today about a very, very important issue. I know here at CEO Coaching, one of the things that you do as a coach is you help your clients and you help leaders around the world really identify and select other leaders for the organization and really going through that process of helping them figure out how do I determine if the people that I'm talking to here, the candidates that I have in front of me, how to identify which is the right one that's going to be the best fit at the company.

I know you've got a tool here through CEO Coaching that you're using to help these leaders identify these people. We want to talk about that today. Why don't you get us started here. Tell us, you know, kind of set the stage for us here.

Sheldon Harris:

Sure. I look at this, I remember the Cold Stone days well and one of the things we always said is, "We're not in the ice cream business serving people, we're in the people business serving ice cream." One of the things I've come to realize in all the CEO's that I coach around the world is that no matter what industry we're in or what geography or what business, we're really in essence in one business and it is the people business. Sometimes that can be the hardest part of what we do and I often find that one of the greatest challenges that can

either be a big detriment to our success or a big accelerator for it, depending on how we do it, is hiring those right people.

As you pointed out, at CEO Coach International we use a particular tool called the talent insights tool that we use as an assessment for this. There's a lot of other tools out there in the market that aim to do similar things. The important thing is to leverage these tools to help us make better people decisions. I'd love to just kind of take you through our methodology that we use at CEO Coaching to achieve this.

Steve Sanduski: Sheldon, before you really jump into that, let me just ask you a broad question. That is, and this is something that I hear people talk about all the time and that is, as you look at your team do you talk to your clients and say hey, we need to have only A players on the team, or we need to have X percent of A players and then we can handle, you know, X percent of B players and if you have any C players on your team you either need to move them up to a B or you need to move them out within the next 30 to 60 days. Do you have a philosophy on that in terms of what is a good expectation for a high performing company in terms of the overall quality of all the people that they have? Let's say on the leadership team and then just throughout the organization in general. Do you have any thoughts on that?

Sheldon Harris: Sure, absolutely. From my perspective, I believe if we're going to have a world class organization we need to create a culture of excellence. When I say that, I think intuitively people understand well, we've got to get great results and that certainly is important. I also believe in the human side it carries over to behavior. In fact, I often say, we should expect excellence in both performance and in behavior. You'll often find organizations struggle because of perhaps you've got a great performer but I would say the performance is about how well an individual contributes. The behavior is about how what they do impacts everybody else's contribution. Everybody else's performance. That's the part that often goes hidden in an organization.

To answer your question directly, I believe we should be surrounding ourselves with excellent players in every role. That, of course, means we want to develop talent, nurture it and encourage it and create an environment where it can flourish. We should absolutely be, hands down, shooting to have A players in role strata organization.

Steve Sanduski: Okay, and so that's something that you're helping your clients really figure out and making sure that, and I know I've heard you guys say before that often times you'll be swapping out senior management when you're working with a new client. Often times one of the first things that you'll focus on is making sure you've got the right people in the right roles.

Sheldon Harris: Absolutely. Right people in the right roles is one of the first things. One of the things I, we've all heard the adage hire slowly and fire quickly. It's ironic, if I'm

working with a group of CEO's and I'll ask the CEO's, "How many of you have ever fired anybody and wished you waited longer?" Not a single hand goes up. Yet, when I say, "How many of you have had that painful awareness that you should have done it much sooner?" Every hand goes up. I'm certainly not advocating a turnover culture where at the first hint of trouble people are out the door, but we do need to expect excellence and we need to take action if we're getting anything less than that.

Steve Sanduski: Yeah, and I've heard Mark Moses, the founding partner here of CEO Coaching International say that the longest time in an entrepreneur's life is the time between when they decide to let someone go and when they actually let them go.

Sheldon Harris: Yeah, there's so much truth in that. If you look in the rear view mirror at issues that have occurred in an organization whether they're dysfunctional, failed performance, failed product launches, legal issues, workers compensation claims, in almost all those circumstances, if you look back at the root of it there was an employee or a group of employees that would have failed on one of these two questions had you asked it proactively. Question number one, knowing what I know today would I rehire that person? Almost always, had you asked that question of yourself proactively the answer would have been no. Question number two is, knowing what I know today would I enthusiastically convince this person to stay if they were trying to leave my company? Again, if the answer is no, often times that's what we find. Let them check those become the root of a lot of the issues we end up dealing with downstream.

Steve Sanduski: All right, well those are two great questions for people that are already on the team. Now, let's jump in to all this assessment that you're using and let's dig into that a little bit.

Sheldon Harris: Sounds great, Steve. You know ,the way I look at it when you're assessing talent there's several pieces, puzzle pieces you can assemble to get the picture. One, of course, is a very thorough and dedicated interview process which we won't go into on this session, but clearly there's a best way to go at interviewing talent. The second is reference checking and perhaps background checking. Again, a topic worthy of discussion but not for this call. The third is using an assessment tool like this talent insight tool that we use at CEO Coaching to gain that insight. I would say none of these should be used in a vacuum as a binary go or no go, but together they paint a picture.

As I circle in on this talent insights tool that we use one of the things, the reason I love this particular tool and I've used most of them over the course of my life, I've been exposed to so many tools. This particular one is hands down, in my experience, the most effective for a couple of important reasons. This particular assessment we're talking about here today takes about 15 minutes to get the input from the candidate, so it's very easy for them to do. Secondly, the results come out in a manner that's very easy to interpret and utilize. The third is, as I'll

share, it provides insights that not only help us recruit and attract the right talent, it helps us retain the right talent by helping understand what makes them tick and helping get them into the right roles. Does that make sense?

Steve Sanduski: It does. I don't want to jump the gun here, but at what stage of the interview process would you have someone complete this assessment?

Sheldon Harris: Right, so I usually do this once I know that somebody is at least passed the first initial interview and I'm liking what I'm seeing. This type of a tool then gives me insight into questions I should be asking. I'm not going to take the tool as iron clad as though it defines the person. I'm going to take it as an indicator of things that I should be mindful of that I need to validate about the person. Prior to, somewhere between the first interview and I like them and when I'm getting to the point of making them an offer I want to get this on the table.

Steve Sanduski: Okay, now I know there's a tremendous amount of information in the output of this report. What's the first place that you start when you're looking at this report?

Sheldon Harris: The tool we use aims to get at a behavior and a motivator. Really, how does a person show up? What's their style? The common assessment out there that people see is the disc profile. This leverages a lot of that same methodology. For those that may not be familiar with disc, the four letters of the word disc form the acronym and each of those letters stands for a facet of a person's style. You think of D for dominant, I for influence, S for steadiness and C for compliance as kind of being the four facets of a person's style.

What I love about this particular assessment is that it measures that style in their natural state. What that means is in the absence of external pressure, what is this candidate or this person's natural style as related to those four facets? What I love about this particular tool, also, is then it also takes a stab at identifying what, how does this person adapt under pressure? We call that the adapted style.

There's another name for this adaption and I would contend that the name for that is stress and what it means is most of us are adapting our natural styles to suit the needs of our current environment. It's important to understand how does a person react under pressure or under stress because I don't know if anybody else has experienced this, but that offers occurs in the world of business. Stress and pressure. We want to know how this person's going to react and that's one of the things I see in this particular assessment tool.

Steve Sanduski: Okay, now the person who is taking this assessment, they take it online and then do they just simply answer a number of questions that I think you said takes about 15 minutes?

Sheldon Harris: That's correct. It's really easy lifting for the candidate taking the assessment because that's what it is. 15 minutes online, very simple questions, not a lot of thought needed but the report that comes from this is amazingly insightful and it almost seems completely out of context for how easy the questions were and how quick it was. What I'd like to point out is, with regard to the style, which is one of the key facets that we look at. The DISC, the disc profile. If you think about those four areas that I just described, what you're looking for in each particular role is going to be slightly different than in other roles. There is never, I would never say there's a good style or a bad style, but there is a better fit for a particular style with a particular role.

For example, suppose that you had somebody in finance an accounting and they were very low on the S and very low on the C. That would probably set you up for challenges because that would tell me this person is moving very rapidly, they're all about going quickly rather than methodically and it would also tell me that systems, process, and structure are not that important to them. If there is one area I would like to see those it's going to be in our finance and accounting team. That's an example of how I can get an insight into does this persons natural style match well with the attributes of the role that I'm considering hiring them for.

Steve Sanduski: Okay, now as I look at the disc output, or the output of this insights report, it's going to take each of these four attributes, the D-I-S-C, and it's going to give you a number from 0 to 100. When you say in this example you just gave, if they scored low on the S, so let's say maybe it's a 20 or a 30, correct me if I'm wrong but isn't that saying that if you score low on the steadiness that means boom, you're moving like lightening. You want to move quickly. If you score low on the C, that means rules are for other people. Would that be accurate?

Sheldon Harris: That's correct.

Steve Sanduski: Okay.

Sheldon Harris: You're absolutely right.

Steve Sanduski: Okay, yeah, so I think that's one of the key things about this assessment tool that makes it so cool is that just at a glance, you can see what the number is for each of those four attributes and you can immediately understand what that means about that person in a general sense.

Sheldon Harris: Yeah, so here's a great real use example. Most organizations have rain makers, business development people that are driving the sales for the organization. If you think about the dominance, influence, steadiness and compliance facets, when I ask audiences or CEO clients that's new to working with me which of those do you think would be most important in somebody that's out creating business development, often the I comes to mind, because those people are enthusiastic, persuasive, passionate, they love people and people love them and

they're engaging. I would contend that in my experience the most important facet is the D, the dominance, and let me tell you why. If you have a person that has an I that's high and a D that's lower, what will often happen is they will want to be around people that like them and that they like. They want to be in a friendlier environment that has less conflict associated with it. If you think about rain making, what is the number one word you hear typically in an outbound sales role?

Steve Sanduski: No.

Sheldon Harris: That's right. No is the number one thing you hear. Every business is different, but typically let's say you have to get 20 no's before we get to one yes. A person with a high I, particularly if they also have a high S, by the way, but I'm just picking on the I right now. That's not going to create a lot of warmth and friendliness when they're getting told no 20 times in a row and it can lead to a call reluctance or whatever that might manifest itself in a particular business. Reluctance to go, push into a new unfamiliar territory where a no might be likely and I'm going to tend to gravitate towards relationships that are warmer and friendly. If I'm looking at what I really want is that high D, who's also got enough I to be friendly and engaging but the high D looks at a no as hey, that's great. That's just one step closer to a yes and they just carry on and move on to the next one. It's really insightful.

The other thing I can see in this type of an assessment, Steve, is sometimes people in their natural state have a relatively high D but under pressure, when they're under pressure it falls dramatically. Same outcome. I might have somebody who comes across in peaceful times or everything's good as a high D, but under pressure that falls which could have a detrimental affect. That's an example. Now, that doesn't mean you don't hire that person, it means you want to validate through the interviewing process are they going to be able to handle the conflict that's inherent in an outbound sales role or are they perhaps better suited to a client relations type of a role where quite frankly, somebody who would be great at the outbound sales, who's impatient and driven, charging forward and wants constant change. You don't want those exact attributes in a client relations role you want somebody who's more nurturing and connective and supportive and steady. Does that make sense?

Steve Sanduski: It does. I think you can look at this assessment and you can identify like within your existing organization who's really successful in a certain role and you can have them take this assessment or maybe have a number of people in your organization that are successful in roles take the assessment and get a baseline. Say in our organization, this is the kind of profile that typically is successful and then you can compare that profile to the people, the candidates that you're looking at and see if their profiles are similar. I think at a glance, you can get a pretty good idea of if their profile here on the assessment is similar to other people who have been successful in that position.

Sheldon Harris: Well, and I would suggest ... In my circumstance, currently, I'm working with about 35 CEO's in nine countries around the world. I would tell you that I see direct consistency in the way people perform in these roles regardless of culture or size of firm and what not. A lot of this is just experience in knowing what attributes are going to be most relevant to each role. There's a lot of ways to cut through to that and really be, leverage that in the interview process to know am I setting somebody up for success by hiring them to the role that I'm considering?

Steve Sanduski: Mm-hmm (affirmative), and I know you talked about this natural style and then that adaptive style when they're under stress and so that's another key thing to look for is is there a big difference between how they score here on the natural style versus what happens to their score under stress. That is, I think you mentioned, if there is a big gap then that is something that you need to discuss in the interview process. Anything else on this piece? I know there's a few more components to this assessment that you want to talk about, too.

Sheldon Harris: Yeah, there's a lot more nuances here, but what I'd like to really do is move along to the next key part of this which is one of the things I really like about this particular tool is not only does it measure their style, like we just described, it also seeks to get to their motivator. What are the motivators that drive them? This is really why they do what they do? Not the how they show up, which is a style, but the why. This particular assessment tool, the insights, breaks this down into six categories, if you will, of motivators. Again, there's no wrong or right motivators. We all have some of each of the six categories within us but it's really, again, aligning those motivators for the role they're going to go in.

By the way, not only is that important but when you're talking about human relationships, team members getting along with each other and speaking a common language, it's a really great way to help teams function cohesively and bring the best out in each other because there's a very different way that different motivators like to make their decisions, or consider their decisions. By understanding each other's decision making styles they can be much more effective in the way we interrelate as team members. Really powerful on the motivators piece.

Steve Sanduski: Now, can you just briefly describe what the six motivators are?

Sheldon Harris: Yeah, so two of the ones, I'll start with the ones I most commonly see in executive leadership. One is individualistic, which is really about power and control. Of course, you're going to hope that that's used in a very nice manner as a leader, but it's typically that high need for power and control that causes a leader to take on a leadership role or an entrepreneur to launch a business. It's that need for independence. A second one that I often see highly ranked with leaders is utilitarian which is really, I'm going to say, ROI utilitarian. What do I get? For what do I give what do I get? The application of resources is obviously a

critical consideration in creating a successful enterprise so that would be a reason that that's common amongst CEO's and executive leaders.

If I look at some of the, so those are two of the top ones I see quite commonly. A few of the other ones that are there, one is theoretical, which is really about the thirst for knowledge and continual learning. That can be, depending on the industry and the role, that can be a very important consideration. That piece. The remaining three, one is aesthetic, which if you think about that that's kind of the appreciation of form over function. It shows up in many different ways. People think aesthetic. Well, do you have a neat desk and a clean car and are you wearing a nice suit? Really, aesthetic can show a lot of different ways including an appreciation of nature, appreciation of music, of beauty, I mean, there are so many ways that that can show up.

Again, I'm probably going to find high aesthetic scores in architectural firms or graphic design groups, but maybe not so much in some other types of businesses. Social, is another category. Social is really about being how mindful are we about the impact that our decisions and actions have on the lives of others. Just because a person might have a lower social score doesn't mean they don't care about others, it means that they care about others in subservience to some of the other higher drivers that they might have. For example, if I had a high utilitarian driver and making a return on our efforts is very important to me I would want to make sure I was holding people firmly accountable to deliver those results. If they weren't, I would prioritize the success of the organization over that one individual and say I've got to look out for the greater good and make some tough decisions.

Folks with a really high social driver might not be part of a for profit business. It could be, but often times they're going to be so drawn into altruistic endeavors or charitable works that they might be doing things that are more in volunteer organizations, if that makes sense. Then the sixth and final driver in random order, is a traditional driver which if really the one of these that's hardest to see because it's really an internal way of seeing the world that is often driven by perhaps a commitment to a particular religion or to a way a person was brought up with family belief structure that was instilled in their youth.

Those are the six drivers that we all have to one degree or another inside of us but the ways those are ranked through the assessment tool really helped us to make sure we're aligning that person with the role that they're going to be most successful at.

Steve Sanduski: Then do you also see frequent combinations between the motivators and then the scores that they have on the D-I-S-C? For example, if someone is a high D, do you often see that the motivator is utilitarian or the ROI that you mentioned?

Sheldon Harris: That's a great question, Steve, and the answer is no. There's virtually no correlation between those two but it's a common misperception that they will

correlate. You could have somebody on the disc that had a very high D, which is that, you know, dominant, direct and bold and that type of a thing and have a low individualistic driver which is the need for power and control, or visa versa. They might have a very high individualistic driver and need power and control but they come across as a high I in style, so they're more using influencing to exert their power and control.

Steve Sanduski: Okay, yeah, that is very interesting. This is just giving that other facet. I think you mentioned that the motivators piece is telling them why they do things, so what motivates there.

Sheldon Harris: Correct.

Steve Sanduski: Okay, so good, so two good components here so far. Anything else on this one or do you want to move to another component?

Sheldon Harris: Yeah, I'll go to, there's two more that I want to cover so let me move along. One of the things I look at is every profile no matter how it's structured or how strong it may be, it has what I'm going to call blind spots by definition. We all have them. This particular assessment aims to point out what some of those blind spots may be. Now, when I say they may be, this doesn't mean, this assessment tool doesn't say you have these blind spots just because you took the assessment. What it means is people with your profile often do. What I really look to engage the people I work with on this is do these potential blind spots resonate with you? How might they resonate with you? Are they a blind spot you're not seeing about yourself or are they just erroneous in this case. I keep a real open mind about this, but this particular tool will literally help you identify five or six areas that are likely to be blind spots for you.

For example, if you had somebody that was a very high S on that steadiness scale, so they're prone to be very consistent in the way they show up. Very steady in their pace. They don't like a lot of change. Some of the blind spots they might have could be perhaps they're not, they appear to resist change because that's the way they're wired. Their wired for more consistency. Or they might have habits that end up getting in their way and could be a blind spot because they're so committed to their habits. Those are examples of how the blind spots cascade directly out of our styles and our motivators.

Steve Sanduski: Now, depending on the role, though, you might want to find someone who is a high S or the high steadiness.

Sheldon Harris: Absolutely.

Steve Sanduski: Yeah, so when you're looking at these as potential blind spots, in some cases they may actually be good for the role that you're looking for. Correct or no?

Sheldon Harris: That's absolutely right. Every profile is going to have blind spots. What we want to do is make sure those blind spots are going to be a benefit to the role a person is in and not a detriment. The other facet of this, Steve, that I find fascinating is often times team members, one team member might view another and say, "Well that person is just always being a stick in the mud. They're always resisting any new idea or any new direction ..." and almost become offended by that. When you start to realize that they're not doing that just because they want to be a pain, they're actually wired this way. This is the way they're wired and we can view that as a strength. They're literally going to help prevent us from running off a cliff because they're the ones saying hey wait a minute, should we really change that? You start to realize that we need a symphony of all these different styles in order to make the most affective outcomes together.

Steve Sanduski: Yeah, because if you had an organization that was just filled with high D, high dominance people, there'd probably be a lot of conflict in that company.

Sheldon Harris: There would be an I often find that leaders that aren't mindful of this can just surround themselves with people who are wired very much like they are and you can imagine the difficulty that makes. You know, for example, the person with a high D might have very low patience for that person with a high S and a high C and so they just hire a bunch more high D's. Next thing you know who's taking track of making sure that things are methodical and process oriented and scalable from a structural point of view. It's a common pitfall that leaders can fall into.

Steve Sanduski: Good, well I know we've got a couple of blog posts out on the CEO Coaching International.com website where we do talk about blind spots, some common blind spots that we see with CEO, so we'll make sure that we link to that in the show notes page of this podcast. Anything else here on the blind spots?

Sheldon Harris: No, so I'll move onto the fourth and final view point that I believe this tool is so powerful. It's really about value to the organization. The way I look at this is every profile has very special gifts, very special gifts associated with it. Our job as leaders is to align those special gifts with the role that needs those same special talents. To your point a moment ago about wouldn't something that would be a detriment in one role actually be an attribute in another role it's spot on. That's one of the things that I see evidence in this assessment we use is we're able to ... If we were to envision what are the attributes of a particular role that would allow somebody to succeed in it and kind of make a list of those, then run our candidates, our internal and external candidates through this assessment, we would be able to see right away whether there was alignment or misalignment between the persons attributes and what they were going to need to be successful in this role.

I call this thing the decoder ring because it really helps us understand things that otherwise we're going to stumble blindly into. One of the things that we say,

Steve, is, you know, in the people side of our business it's never going to be 100%. We're going to make mistakes as leaders. We're going to make mistakes in the way we hire, in the way we promote, in the way we lead. But a tool like this, talent insights tool, really helps us increased the odds that we're going to do a better job of that and there's amazing ROI that comes as a result of that.

Steve Sanduski: Yeah, well I think it's a phenomenal tool and you've done a great job. You're really walking through some of the key components of it, and as we think about the hiring process I would say, you know, there's science to it and maybe to some extent there's a bit of an art to it. This tool here really helps with the science parts. Well validated and it's really easy to use generate some tremendous insights. Then when you couple that with a really top notch interview process and selection process and looking at the results of this assessment and using that to inform the questions that you're going to be asking of the candidate, I think it really turns, even some of that stuff that's an art, turning that more into a science. You've got good data and good assessment at your hands that you can use.

Sheldon Harris: Yeah, I agree with you, Steve. There's proven best practices that work hands down, time and again for doing this thing that every firm needs to do, which is getting the right people and getting them in the right roles. I would contend that if you win at this part of the business, getting the right people in the right roles, you win. If you lose at this, you're never going to have a successful business.

Steve Sanduski: Yeah, because ultimately a business is nothing more than just the people that staff it. This assessment that you just walked us through here that is available and used by the coaches here at CEO Coaching International really helps increase those odds of getting the right person in the right role. I really appreciate you taking some time here to walk through it with us.

Sheldon Harris: Yeah, it's my pleasure because I've just seen the impact this has made with all the clients I work with and then them with their teams. It's really something. If folks aren't using an assessment like this in their business I highly encourage it because utilized correctly it will help you to be more successful and grow your business to a greater scale.

Steve Sanduski: Excellent, well, we'll get all this in the show notes here at CEO Coaching International.com and Sheldon, again, thanks. Appreciate it. Look forward to having you on the podcast again down the road.

Sheldon Harris: Thanks, Steve. Have a great day.

To inquire about our coaching services and programs, please call **1-866-622-9583**.

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