

Emotional Intelligence for Managerial Excellence

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Gone are the days when mere academic brilliance or technical expertise were considered to account for professional excellence. People with high intelligence quotient failed to achieve what those with lesser intelligence quotient succeeded to do. In addition to intelligence, certain other competencies like self-awareness, empathy, and understanding emotions and managing them, which is popularly known as emotional intelligence help managers in drawing out extraordinary performance from ordinary employees. The article explores various quotients of emotional intelligence and enumerates how managers can formulate strategy, sustain motivation, achieve team effectiveness and create great work atmosphere leading to outstanding success at work.

“People who rise to the top of their field, whether it’s psychology, law, medicine, engineering or banking aren’t just good at their jobs. They’re affable, resilient and optimistic.”

– Dale Carnegie, 1936.

Indra Nooyi, apparently termed as an average student of IIM-C raced her way to success to covet the enviable CEO position of PepsiCo.

Dhirubhai Ambani, without any formal exposure to management education went on to be the architect of Reliance Empire by the sheer dint of hardwork and excellent people management skills.

As per the research at Turknett Leadership Group, there is almost no difference in technical skill between the best leaders they have coached and those who are rated the lowest. The difference lies in their ability to facilitate teamwork, motivate others, and be an inspirational role model.

This emphatically contradicts the widely held belief that intelligence or Intelligent Quotient (IQ) wholly determines professional success in life. History is replete with many examples of those who have made an indelible mark despite not having impressive intellectual credentials. It is surprising to note that people with high IQ fail to achieve what those with lesser IQ coupled with qualities like initiative, adaptability, drive for achievement, understanding people, empathy, etc., succeed. What sets apart Dhirubhai Ambani or Indra Nooyi from the brand of other managers with far more academic excellence lies in their ability to balance the qualities of head and heart. Others obsessed with brilliance in academics and poor at emotional competencies have soon faded into oblivion. Those emotional competencies that set apart the average performers from the stars are popularly known as emotional intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Emotional Intelligence according to Daniel Goleman is “the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships.”¹ In modern organizations degree of effectiveness and productivity of an employee is determined by their degree of EI.

Emotional intelligence primarily consists of the following:²

¹ Goleman D (1995), *Emotional Intelligence*, Bantam Books, New York.

² www.iiiasisa.com

Self-Awareness

- Emotional self-awareness. Reading one's own emotions and recognizing their impact, using them in decision-making.
- Self-analysis to know one's strengths and limits.
- Possess self-confidence and appreciate self-worth.

Self-Management

- **Emotional self-control:** Keeping raging impulses and disruptive emotions under control.
- **Transparency:** To exhibit honesty and integrity.
- **Adaptability:** Openness to adapt to changing conditions.
- **Achievement:** The drive to persist and achieve to meet inner standards of excellence.
- **Initiative:** Readiness to act and seize opportunities.
- **Optimism:** Seeing the brighter side of all happenings.

Social Awareness

- **Empathy:** Sensing other's feelings, to be open to their perspectives and taking active interest in their concerns.
- **Organizational awareness:** Scanning the current happenings at the organizational level.

Relationship Management

- **Inspirational leadership:** Guiding and motivating with a compelling vision.
- **Influence:** Adept in persuasion and building networks.
- **Developing others:** Building and developing others' abilities through feedback and guidance.
- **Change catalyst:** Initiating, managing, and leading in a new direction.
- **Conflict management:** Resolving disagreements.

- **Building bonds:** Cultivating and maintaining a web of relationships.
- **Teamwork and collaboration:** Cooperation and team building.

What EI does

Emotional Intelligence influences the overall ability to cope with environmental demands. When one understands the circuit of feelings, thoughts and reactions, they can blossom into mature individuals. This helps in handling irrational fears, understand strengths, and overcome weaknesses to cope with the challenges. Then the employees can transcend self-imposed limitations and actualize their potentials. They become adaptable, constructive, creative, productive and effective in the tasks they undertake.

The ability to become aware of oneself enables one to understand and relate to others better. They become more empathetic and sensitive to other's feelings. Such people bring out the best in others and make them highly productive. They become adept in interpersonal relationships that are unswervingly important to build harmonious relationships in the functional groups.

Intelligence Quotient and Emotional Quotient

People with mere IQ not only become ambitious and productive, but also inhibitory and anxious. People with Emotional Quotient (EQ) become cheerful, outgoing, risk-taking and possess tremendous capacity for commitment. They do not succumb to overwhelming anxiety, diffidence, or depression amid stiff challenges and setbacks. They strive hard to achieve their goals and convert adversity into an opportunity. They nurture great attitudes. Emotionally intelligent people thus stand in sharp contrast with their degree of skills and perform creditably well.

However, it requires two wings to fly high in the sky. Emotions uninfluenced by the light of reason can play havoc with life. We have heard that many people when tossed against the waves of emotions could not hold the handle steady and ended up doing something irrational and unacceptable. They can get enraged and embittered when things go against their expectations and thus resort to destructive behavior. If not controlled by reason, such actions can result in violence, reprisal and disaster. Good blend of IQ and EQ can guide people to unambiguous success.

EI at Workplace

Modern organizations are highly volatile, dynamic and demand higher productivity. Tasks cannot simply be accomplished individually or by working with others in fixed or routine ways. Only those who can respond to the mounting challenges and be open to innovate can only survive. These jobs involve understanding, communicating, empathizing with and learning from team members. The skills required to succeed at these jobs with a future require a high degree of intellectual ability as well as EI. Knowledge and skill may help someone get in to the position, but it takes an emotional understanding of oneself and those around to emerge triumphant. Hence, employees too are called on to balance their skills with the qualities of the head and heart.

Managers and Role of EQ

As the ability to get things done through people is the vital task of the manager, EQ is an important factor. If managers do not balance their IQ skills with EI like understanding and empathy, employees might feel insecure and unappreciated. At times they can even feel underestimated, criticized, and disrespected. These negative feelings can result in seething dissatisfaction leading to absenteeism, passivity, lack of productivity and attrition. As an employee with desired potential is scarce these days, only those who are adept in retaining employees can excel in their jobs.

Hence, companies are laying heavy emphasis on the need to integrate both the skills of the head and heart to manage employees better. The managers and professionals are designing programs to educate people about the relevance of EI in effective management of people. This helps in creating environment where employees feel trusted, valued, stay motivated, respected and rewarded leading to minimizing stress and reduce turnover. Even, recruitment and selection processes are geared towards selecting those who can balance the skills of the head and heart. EI can also assist in the following ways to achieve managerial excellence.

Strategic Planning

Management is much spoken about as planning and executing those plans. Emotionally intelligent behavior helps managers plan better in many ways. It helps to:

- Change plans as per the changing situations.
- Be open to variety of possible actions.

- Dare to brave the status quo.
- Overcome resistance with persuasion and persistence.
- Be ready to keep the plan under the shelves if they are not going to work.

Motivation

Emotionally intelligent managers are self-motivated. They understand others and make them feel valued and supported to get them motivated. To be successful, managers must be emotionally balanced in order to boost team's motivation and productivity. They get people going, even amidst impending difficulties. They can:

- Secure cooperation.
- Reduce fear and insecurity.
- Allow employee participation and give autonomy.

Decision-Making

Acid test to managerial success is to make decisions based upon strong emotions. When the emotions are not properly dealt with in a constructive way it can lead to disastrous decisions. EI managers make better decisions by:

- Using emotions to improve thinking.
- Avoiding compromises.
- Staying calm to see things clearly even when others press panic button.
- Balance their thoughts and eliminate reactionary feelings.
- Make decisions with head and heart.
- Do not let strong emotions blind their wisdom.

Team Effectiveness

Self-awareness helps managers become aware of their strengths and weaknesses, which help in their interaction with other employees in the team. The glue which holds the teams together can be supplied by EI. This enhances the emotional climate of the group, which increases the effectiveness of the group and ultimately

the profitability of the company. It is said 1% improvement in emotional climate creates a 2% increase in revenues. This is the reason why some of the leaders are most popular, loved by team members and get extraordinary results from ordinary people. EI also helps to:

- Increase managers to understand their own emotional reactions as well as of others in various circumstances.
- Strike a personal emotional balance to manage anger and frustration.
- Ensure emotionally intelligent business acumen for the success of the team.
- Making team life an enjoyable experience.
- Influence people and create synergy.
- Create sense of belongingness.
- Build trust in team members.
- Be a role model and lead by example—walk the talk.
- View problems from multiple perspectives.

Stress Management

In addition to mounting tasks, manager's inability to manage relationships with others contributes to the stress at the workplace. Interpersonal problems in workplaces are considered to be one of the most significant causes of burnout. It also costs organizations dearly in terms of lost customers and lost productivity. Organizations also lose invaluable human capital due to stress related issues. Emotionally intelligent managers can enable employees manage their stress and sustain their enthusiasm to handle challenging task at ease. They:

- Raise employee confidence to overcome debilitating problems of stress.
- Help in meeting the challenges.
- Seize new opportunities with enthusiasm.
- Build the health of the organization.

Conflict Handling

When people are working together, differences of opinion and approach are inevitable. Conflict can create problems in work productivity and composition. EI can be used to take advantage of diverse perspectives and resolve conflicts in an amicable fashion. To better prevent, manage, or resolve conflict, it is important to understand the emotions of all concerned in any situation.

Reduce Attrition and Increase Retention

It is often said employees do not leave companies, but their bosses. This presupposes lack of understanding between the employee and their manager leading to hostility and discontent. An emotionally intelligent manager can reduce such animosities and prevent incidents that cause ill feeling by effective people management and social skills. Thus the risk of losing a good employee is reduced leading to higher retention levels.

Relationship with the Customers

Emotionally intelligent managers are adept at maintaining relationships with the customers and influence them to get repeat business. They have the skill to satisfy the customers with their disposition and demeanor.

EI is a dynamic force which acts as a guide to professional success.³ It is far more powerful than IQ. Without exaggerating the role of reason or IQ, we should learn to recognize our emotions, understand them, and handle them effectively. It can be distinguished from IQ by its emphasis on personal and social competencies like self-awareness, persistence, etc. But it cannot be a replacement for ability, knowledge, or job skills. IQ is still important in workplace success. To enhance one's competitiveness and performance integration of both EI and IQ become extremely critical.

"A good head and a good heart are a formidable combination."

– Nelson Mandela.

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³ Daniel Goleman (1998), *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, Bantam Books, New York.

Training Emotional Intelligence for Conflict Resolution

Emotional Intelligence is neither a passing fad nor the latest pop-psychology or self-help program. It is a well-researched theory that helps to explain many missing components of mainstream conflict resolution education. From experience, training and education focused on the development of EI, competencies can increase a trainer's ability to work with individuals and groups; a mediator's ability to listen and respond; any person's ability to understand and manage daily conflict in a better way; and also adds a component to conflict management training that transforms and sustains itself in the workplace.

The primary components of EI begin with the self. We use the acronym ARM for it and the components are:

1. Developing self-awareness;
2. An ability to regulate one's behavior and thoughts; and
3. To motivate oneself following setbacks.

Conflict resolution is a human process where communication and trust are the important ingredients to success, regardless of how you define it. If a mediator, facilitator, or trainer is unaware of the effect that his/her behavior, thoughts, or beliefs can have on the clients, the result can be detrimental and disempowering. Furthermore, if we are not self-reflective then our ability to regulate our behavior is diminished and our motivation to move ahead and succeed is less than desirable. Openness to learning and reflecting about our role, about who we are, and about how we affect others is essential and will lead us towards the path of success in life.

Source: www.mediate.com