

## **The Emotionally Intelligent Manager**

Despite the fact that emotional intelligence has been heavily criticized within the scientific community, substantial evidence still supports its relevance in the workplace. Emotional intelligence has been linked to career success across various fields of endeavor and its importance will most likely increase in the years to come. Emotional intelligence is often considered by some to be a better predictor of and more important to career success than cognitive intelligence. This does not in any way diminish the vital role played by cognitive intelligence in the workplace. In an ideal situation, they should complement each other in an individual. People should strive to enhance both their cognitive and emotional intelligences and; the good news is that they can be improved upon. Scoring high on both indices is a clear sign that the individual is benefiting from the best of both worlds.

The benefit of being high on emotional intelligence is underscored by the fact that humans are social in nature and cannot live or work in isolation. Therefore, emotional intelligence enables people to accurately recognize and interpret the emotional signs exhibited by others. It also enables people to manage their own emotions in their relations with people everywhere they find themselves.

### **Prioritizing Emotional Intelligence in Formal Education and the World of Work**

As relevant as emotional intelligence is in our present world, it is still being relegated to the background in favor of cognitive intelligence. Very little effort is being made, if any, to develop and assess social and emotional competencies in the developmental stages of the individual child. Unfortunately, the same scenario plays out in the workplace. Many organizations conduct IQ-inclined aptitude tests in their recruitment and selection processes. These tests examine the numerical, logical, verbal and reasoning abilities of the prospective employees but do not in any way assess their emotional abilities. Case studies and behavioral assessments should be incorporated into the recruitment process in order to examine the emotional intelligence of a potential employee especially those who are seeking managerial positions. This is the reason why emotional intelligence needs to be given a pride of place in all facets of society. In choosing leaders in a school, organization or within any other group, both the cognitive and emotional abilities of the candidates should be thoroughly reviewed. At the moment, there are no generally-acceptable methods or techniques for measuring emotional intelligence because of its somewhat subjective nature but certain tests can point us in the right direction. The issue of emotional intelligence is too important to be left to chance. Key decisions in human

capital development, staff recruitment and promotion should be based on factors like emotional and social intelligences.

### **The Leader in an Emotionally-Intelligent Manager**

There is no gainsaying that the best of managers are those who are able to lead their subordinates towards achieving set goals and objectives. Unless an individual possesses satisfactory leadership abilities and qualities, managing people would be mere formalities devoid of any kind of inspiration. A typical manager is put in charge of human and non-human resources but the former cannot be managed in the same way as the latter. The most valuable assets or resources made available in an organization are its people and therefore should be given utmost priority. When people are managed without being led, the results are most likely to be disastrous especially in the long term. As a matter of fact, the need for interpersonal skills increases as a manager move up the hierarchy within the organization. Therefore, a manager's ability to get along with and lead people is vital to achieving outstanding performance. Without doubt, emotional intelligence is central to a manager's ability to lead people.

An emotionally-intelligent manager should;

- Ask questions whenever in doubt rather than jump into shallow conclusions about people. An emotionally-intelligent manager is mature enough to gather the right facts from the right people before making a crucial decision that will affect an individual(s). The right questions should be asked and answers should be sought from the right persons.
- Be sensitive to the current situation or plight of employees. There has to be a why behind the what. An employee whose performance has suddenly dipped in an unprecedented manner may be dealing with a frustrating subordinate or lack of support from superiors, so it is wise to carefully assess the current situation.
- Probe issues far beneath the surface in order to unearth what people may not say willingly. An emotionally-intelligent manager may have to read between the lines occasionally and spot things that have not been explicitly expressed. For instance, if the actions or decisions of the manager are the root causes of the problem, then that manager may not get such feedback from the employee.
- Make the employee feel valued and important regardless of the employee's status or level of performance. A popular saying in the human resources

profession aptly describes this in a quote - 'people do not leave organizations, they leave their managers.' Emotionally-Intelligent managers inspire people and give them a sense of pride rather than make them feel worthless and expect extraordinary results from them.

- Give a listening ear to subordinates and members of his/her team. Emotionally-Intelligent managers generally talk less and listen more. Effective listening enables them to pick up signals that cannot be easily deciphered by an average person. As a manager, you can have a far greater influence on people better by listening to them.
- Treat an employee as a unique individual and not an insignificant being who is part of a unit or group. An emotionally-intelligent manager may not have the time and ability to focus on the peculiar needs of every individual in a team but can still give some special attention to those who are struggling to meet expectations. Such a manager is a go-to person who team members can talk to when they need help on the job.
- Regulate his or her emotions especially when provoked. Emotional outbursts often cause some harm than good. Emotionally-Intelligent managers often do a good job at managing and controlling their emotions. They may also use anger and/or conflict to achieve desirable outcomes within the team or group.

By convention, an employee becomes a manager at the point where he or she has been assigned with subordinates. Without a relationship where instructions are given and reports are received, one cannot claim to be a manager. Being emotionally-intelligent is important to both managerial and non-managerial staff but it is the former who needs it more.

### **The Role of Empathy in Emotional Intelligence**

Demonstrating empathy is a vital aspect of emotional intelligence as it enables you to place yourself in the shoes of the other person and see things from their own perspective. An effective manager should demonstrate empathy in his relations with colleagues and subordinates; making an attempt to know how they feel or what they are going through could improve decision-making. An emotionally-intelligent manager takes an interest in people and places huge value on them. Such a manager does not consider his/her people as mere resources in the production process but as a vital part of the organization itself. This does not in any way result in subjective decision-making especially when an effective manager is involved.

The Managerial Grid developed by Robert Blake and Jane Mouton is useful in this regard. This grid originally identified five types of leaders in the workplace, namely:

1. **The indifferent or impoverished leader** who has little or no concern at all for the work to be done and the people doing the work.
2. **The country club or accommodating leader** who has a high concern for people and does not care about the work or tasks.
3. **The task master or dictatorial leader** with a high concern for work and without any regard for those doing the work.
4. **The middle-of-the-road or compromise leader** who focuses on both the employees and work activities but does not do so in an effective manner.
5. And the best of them all which is **team or effective leader** who is able to get the best results out of the work activities and also has focuses on the needs of employees.

The Managerial Grid clearly shows us that being emotionally intelligent and/or having a high concern for people does not guarantee managerial effectiveness. Emotionally-intelligent managers are empathic but need to be result-oriented in order to consistently achieve high levels of performance both for the individual and the collective.

Author

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