

The Effects of Emotional Intelligence on Communications and Relationships

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Possession of interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies may explain why some managers are more successful than when their technical skills are not as superior or in fact may be at a lower level. It can also explain how some managers are able to develop better relationships and communicate more effectively with little effort or motivate others with relative ease. Emotional intelligence (EQ) is the ability to analyze and control your own emotions and behaviors to achieve a more positive interpersonal outcome at home and at work. EQ focuses on stress diffusion that eliminates emotional hijacking, personality profiling, self-esteem analysis and pro-active listening.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Communication, Relationship, Self-Esteem, Pro-Active Listening

INTRODUCTION

The lessening influence of the five major areas that influence positive behaviors, family, religion, education, business and society, has created an entire generation that possess a great deal of emotional ignorance and an increase in social and workplace dysfunctional reactions to high stress situations. Individuals who lack emotional intelligence tend to spend time in the past going over mistakes, home issues and rumors, or in the future speculating on what may happen. Being consumed with past or future circumstances negatively affects quality and quantity of work and creativity. Creativity, motivation, and accountability are assets that are essential in a high changing environment and this will not occur unless the mind is mentally in today. Without competent management skills in emotional intelligence, an employee is susceptible to react to stress without thinking. Understanding oneself, having a better understanding of other individuals and learning how to take care of oneself, increases the ability to deal with others effectively.

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE?

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Emotional Intelligence is comprised of five competencies: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. The first three competencies relate to how well we manage ourselves. An individual who demonstrates self-awareness is able to recognize his/her strengths, weaknesses, emotions, worth, and capabilities. An individual who is self-regulated is able to resist

emotional impulses. This individual thinks before acting. Motivation is the internal driving force that enables an individual to focus on the task at hand and persevere to reach the desired goal.

The last two competencies relate to how well we interact with others. Empathy is the ability to understand personalities and relate to their feelings. By understanding the personalities of others, an individual is better equipped to act on those behaviors and successfully respond to their needs. Once the personalities and needs are identified, strong social skills are needed to develop and nurture good working relationships. Social skills require adeptness at listening, conflict management, leadership, and collaboration.

In summary, Emotional Intelligence is the ability to recognize one's own personality and those of others, to motivate one's self, to manage one's emotions, and to develop relationships with others. The emphasis is on Emotional Intelligence, not emotional behavior, which can be dysfunctional.

Because of the constant changes that we are experiencing in today's world, having Emotional Intelligence is essential because it provides the ability to use one's emotions and recognize the emotions of others to better motivate, inform and influence, thereby becoming a better leader, communicator and team player.

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL HIJACKING?

Emotional hijacking takes place when a perceived threat (the unknown) is great enough to cause an individual to be out of control emotionally and physically. A perceived threat causes an adrenaline surge, increasing heart rate, and high blood pressure.

In today's society there is evidence that a great number of individuals are being hijacked on a regular basis. The reason is that we are going through an ever increasing time where CHANGE is the constant. Evidence of change is seen in the business environment, family structure, educational system, and societal values.

When an individual is unable to cope with change, they experience a high level of FEAR because of the unknown that change brings. When one is fearful, they begin to lose CONTROL of how to handle the change. When one loses control of their surroundings, their STRESS level increases proportionately to the level of change. As a result of this constant stress, individuals will experience a high level of doubt and a low level of self-confidence which ultimately leads to low SELF-ESTEEM. Self-esteem is defined as respect for or a favorable impression of oneself.

How does one become emotionally intelligent and avoid emotional hijacking? It is the belief that if individuals want to strive to become emotionally intelligent, they need to become aware of various tools that will assist them in not becoming emotionally hijacked.

Some of the tools that management can use to amplify emotional intelligence are: having an understanding of personality profiling, self-esteem, awareness of negative/positive behaviors, and the utilization of pro-active listening.

PERSONALITY PROFILING

Personality profiling is the ability of identifying behaviors when managers and employees interact with each other. Having a good understanding of individual behavioral traits will help them become better communicators and will help them improve their relationships within the organization.

Personality profiles generally will have four behavioral styles:

- **(Dominant/Influencing/Steady/Compliant)**. An overview of each personality trait and how to communicate with them is as follows:
- Dominant traits are controlling, straight forwardness, excellent leader, thrives on challenge and competition, dissatisfied with status-quo, motivates well and fights hard for their beliefs.

You communicate and build relationships with **Dominant** personalities by:

- Being brief and to-the-point
- Sticking to business; focus on bottom line

- Keeping it short and simple
- Letting them talk
- Avoiding beating around the bush
- Focusing on end results rather than means to achieve
- Outlining possibilities; let them decide how to “get there”
- Providing opportunities for advancement, more authority
- Allowing freedom of action, activities
- Avoiding one-upmanship
- Letting them know that their limits are
- Rewarding them with more difficult assignments, more freedom, variety, more authority
- Asking for their ideas and input

Influencing traits are outgoing and persuasive, prefers communicating in concepts not detail, optimistic, inherent trust and acceptance of others, excellent delegator, and will respond to chance for prestige and personal recognition.

You communicate and build relationship with **Influencing** personalities by:

- Being enthusiastic and friendly
- Letting them talk
- Being prepared to keep them “on track” and provide follow-up
- Focusing on “fun”
- Avoiding being one-up with them
- Allowing lots of time to socialize
- Relieving them of detail work
- Not trying to control or supervise too closely
- Asking for their opinions
- Giving them incentives
- Rewarding them with public recognition, verbal praise, being included
- Providing lots of “strokes” and feedback on their performance

Steady traits are loyal, friendly, good team player, conceals feelings well, natural healer, wants everyone to get along, dislikes urgency and deadlines, loyal to organizations, and very supportive of individuals around them.

You communicate and build relationships with **Steady** personalities by:

- Being sincere; take time to build trust
- Being patient; go slowly
- Drawing them out; get them to express ideas
- Watching for non-verbal indicators of disagreement, conflict
- Expressing interest in their family
- Providing lots of details
- Letting them work as part of a group
- Providing their own work space, limited territory
- Helping them make decisions, take action
- Building their loyalty to you, to the company
- Giving them detailed plans for achieving results, reaching goals
- Avoiding high pressure situations

Compliant traits are proceeds in an orderly way, detail facts oriented, conservative and cautious, tentative in decision making, very creative in turning data into information, more comfortable working alone, and enjoys mental challenges and analytical exercises.

You communicate and build relationships with **Compliant** personalities by:

- Being prepared with details and facts to support your points

- Providing pros and cons; stick to logic
- Avoiding criticism, or the appearance of it
- Providing many explanations in a patient, persistent manner
- Giving step-by-step plans for achieving the desired results
- Allowing enough time to check for accuracy
- Providing limited scope, territory
- Giving them Standard Operating Procedures and a predictable environment
- Praising them for doing things correctly
- Rewarding them with the opportunity to evaluate the work for others

Again, as was noted earlier, knowing how these individuals behave will assist management in getting a better understanding on how to interact with each personality style.

SELF-ESTEEM

An individual's self-esteem determines the level of negative or positive behavior. When an individual is faced with a perceived threat, their level of self-esteem will cause them to react accordingly. If their self-esteem is constantly low, they will react using "CHEAP FUEL". Cheap fuel examples are: excessive sarcasm, condescension and manipulation, hate, revenge, and ignoring. The reason is that they don't feel good about themselves, and the only way they can deal with reality and make themselves feel better is to make others feel worse. Remember, you can't give what you don't have. If you don't feel good about yourself, how can you feel good about others?

If an individual's self-esteem is constantly high, they will react using "GOOD FUEL". Examples are: self-acceptance, forgiveness of others, treating themselves better, providing help to others without expecting help in return, always creating a positive atmosphere, and catching others doing things right.

Again, if employees feel good about themselves, they will have the ability to focus on wanting to help others become positive. Using good fuel will lead an organization to being more creative, highly motivated, and accountable for its actions. This will lead to higher quality of work, higher quantity of work, and less stress at work.

PROACTIVE LISTENING

Proactive listening occurs by keeping all senses alert, focusing on the individual's words but more importantly their feelings. When individuals communicate emotionally, their message is 93% feeling and 7% content. Therefore, proactive listening is the process of taking mental notes and then paraphrasing responses without using restatement. This means that individuals at all levels within the workplace are using their words which allow them to tactfully control the conversation by listening. Being proactive in listening promotes shorter conversation through validating their feelings (emotions) and at the same time protecting their self-esteem.

CONCLUSION

Some of the benefits of having emotional intelligence are that one will learn: not to take things personally, recognize and control their emotions, customize communications to individuals, build their own self-esteem and that of others, use "good fuel" to reinforce productive behaviors, use pro-active listening to increase understanding, and deal with change productively. In summary, having good emotional intelligence will lead to greater employee commitment to the organization, more proactive ideas on quality improvement, and higher productivity.

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