

GET AHEAD WITH EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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you need to give you the winning edge.**

By



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Get Ahead with Emotional Intelligence

You have good IQ, you are academically qualified, you work hard, but why are you not getting ahead in your career? Emotional intelligence is the requisite skill you need to give you the winning edge.

For many of us, we have always known what sets apart the average performer from the high performer. Having a good IQ and emerging amongst the top of the class does help. But this is not always the definitive way to get ahead in your career. We have all experienced it in our lives where successful people seem to have the qualities and attributes that inspire us, motivate us, and lead us; and the ability to read people and understand them.

To excel in the competitive business environment, organisations need members who can move beyond cognitive intelligence (IQ). Creativity, initiative, team leadership, cooperation, persuasiveness, resilience, optimism and many other skills are essential for business success. These attributes may contribute more to individual and organisational effectiveness than cognitive intelligence.

In the last two decades, there has been significant research conducted to discover intelligences other than IQ. In 1990, psychologists John Mayer and Peter Salovey coined the term “Emotional Intelligence” or EI (commonly known as EQ) to describe a set of abilities that forms the foundation of people skills.

Mayer and Salovey classified emotional intelligence into four components:

- **Identifying Emotions**

This is the ability to be aware of one’s emotions as well as those of others.

- **Using Emotions**

This is the ability to generate a mood or create emotions and to integrate your feelings into the way you think, such as having empathy for others.

- **Understanding Emotions**

This is the ability to understand the causes of emotions. It is about what motivates people and understanding others’ points of view in order to effectively handle team interactions.

- **Managing Emotions**

This is the ability to manage one's emotions and figure out effective strategies that use your emotions to help one achieve a goal.

Over the past several years, emotional intelligence is regarded as one of the key indicators that are useful in understanding and predicting individual performance at work. In order to be well adjusted, productive and successful, one must possess both IQ and EQ. Unlike IQ, which is largely predetermined, EQ can be learned and developed. It is now a commonly held view that it takes more than just brains to succeed in one's career and in relationships.

Let us look at some of the ways in which emotional intelligence can be applied in the workplace:

Management development

Emotional intelligence enhances management skills. It can assist managers in the following ways.

- **Flexibility**

Managers who are emotionally intelligent are able to adapt their plans readily. They do not ignore uncomfortable facts. Emotionally intelligent behaviour helps managers plan better. They are confident and do not allow ego to get in the way of adapting their plans to suit changing needs.

- **Motivation**

Emotionally intelligent managers are able to understand their emotions and those of others, in order to help motivate their staff and themselves. They are resilient; they always pick themselves up if they fail at something. They get people going despite adversities.

- **Decision-making**

Sometimes managers make decisions based largely on strong emotions. When these emotions are not managed constructively, it can lead to bad decisions. Emotionally intelligent managers make better decisions by balancing their thinking and their feelings. They do not let strong emotions blind them. They do not react out of anger but still make good decisions despite feelings of anger.

Team effectiveness

Emotional intelligence becomes even more important when working in a team environment. The key is to work efficiently with others. When working in a team, social effectiveness allows you to accomplish the desired goal. Emotionally intelligent team leaders foster trust and confidence. They are empathetic and are perceived as being authentic. They are good at influencing the team.

Creative thinking

Emotional intelligence is conducive to generating new and creative ideas and solutions to problems. Co-workers are willing to offer ideas and work cohesively without the fear of criticism or ridicule. Fostering emotional intelligence within a group allows employees and managers to view problems from different perspectives.

Emotional intelligence is one of many important components of career satisfaction, leadership effectiveness or workplace success. Amongst all the bright and high performing employees in a company, it is emotional intelligence that sets them apart. Emotional intelligence should not be a replacement or substitute for ability, knowledge or job skills but it is an important determinant.

Emotional intelligence enhances your career success, but it does not guarantee it in the absence of relevant job skills. Individuals who want to improve their work and organisational performance should seek to develop their emotional intelligence skills.

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