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Emotional intelligence often crucial to the team's results

The term "emotional intelligence" sounds like an oxymoron. Think about it: We act intelligently when we are able to access the rational, analytical side of our brain. Emotions often get in the way of our ability to act reasonably.

At least that's the conventional wisdom. And as it turns out, it's wrong.



MANAGING THE TEAM

William
Sparks

Today's business reality requires leaders at every level who are both smart and socially intelligent. Research shows that individuals who are most effective possess high degrees of both IQ and EQ. Now those findings are being applied to organizations, and the results are the same. Organizations with high EQ outperform those with lower levels of EQ.

What exactly is emotional intelligence? Simply defined, EQ is your ability to recognize and regulate your emotions, and the emotions of others, to achieve positive outcomes. EQ consists of four competencies — two related to personal processes and two related to social interactions.

Here's the general model for EQ:

- Personal competence: how we manage ourselves.
- Self awareness: an awareness of your emotional state and of your strengths and weaknesses.
- Self management: regulating your emotional responses to others and motivating yourself to achieve goals.
- Social competence: how we manage others.
- Social awareness: using empathy to recognize and understand the emotional state of others and taking an interest in helping them meet their needs.
- Relationship management: building trust among your teammates and inspiring others through your personal example.

While understanding the dynamics of

individual EQ is a critical starting point, many of us work in a team. Group emotionality, which determines the EQ of our team or organization, directly affects us on a daily basis.

Organizational EQ

Appreciating organizational EQ is important for a couple of reasons. First, we spend most of our lives in a group setting. Whether we are at work, at home with our families or on the golf course in our foursome, much of our time is spent in a group.

Although we are responsible as individuals for our behavior, our ability to be effective and successful ultimately resides in our ability to work with others. Second, individual emotions such as anger, fear and love take on extreme and exaggerated qualities in group life. When emotional intelligence is lacking in a group, apathy, fear or the classic "mob mentality" can result. Recognizing and managing these dynamics will increase group productivity, performance and member satisfaction.

I define organizational EQ as the capacity of organizations to recognize and regulate their collective emotionality.

The team culture

Group emotions create unique cultures for teams and organizations, and each culture has distinct implications for organizational performance. Organizational EQ is based on the most primal emotional response we possess — the "fight/flight/freeze" response generated from fear.

Organizational EQ is manifested in five distinct cultures:

- Detached: The "flight" response. Members are apathetic and withdrawn. This level represents the lowest degree of organizational EQ.
- Defensive: The "fight" response. Members are angry and hostile toward each other. This level represents a low degree of organizational EQ.
- Dependent: The "freeze" response.

Members are anxious and rely too heavily on the leader for direction. This represents a low to mid degree of organizational EQ.

•Dramatic: With an underlying emotionality of hope, members hold unrealistic optimism for the future. This culture, which is often warm and friendly but lacks open and honest communication, represents a mid degree of organizational EQ.

•Dynamic: Negative emotions are managed productively in this culture. Members communicate directly, are responsible for their actions and tolerate diverse opinions. This level represents the highest degree of organizational EQ.

Does research in EQ undermine our conception of IQ? Not entirely. It simply reinforces the common-sense notion that being smart means developing social intelligence.

IQ is important. It determines what field we can enter because it reflects our innate capacity for analytical reasoning and problem solving. IQ does not, however, determine our success.

EQ at both the individual and organizational levels is a much better predictor of success.

Whether as an individual, team or organization, we experience emotions every second of every day. Unlike rational thinking or analytical processes that can be suspended, we can't turn off our emotions. Appreciating emotions, and harnessing them to inspire and lead others, allows us to tap into their power and to truly act intelligently.

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