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EDITORS

Dr. V. S. Dhekale

Dr. N. Y. Rajeshirke

Dr. Babu Thomas

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Emotional Intelligence

- A Master Aptitude for Effective Leadership

Shri. S. K. Shirodkar*

With the advent of globalisation, organisations today have to deal with a more competitive environment. Business environment is increasingly becoming competitive and the organizations capable of eliciting best out of their employees would have a competitive edge.

Employees may have hidden talents & potentials to make higher contributions that can surprise their leaders. However all employees are not always willing to put extra efforts in the interest of the organisation. It is at this juncture, leadership has to play its crucial role.

What leadership actually is?

All managers are by definition leaders because they can attain their goals only with the support of their team member who must be inspired or persuaded to follow them. In the words of Koontz & O'Donnell, "Leadership is the ability of a manager to induce subordinates to work with confidence & zeal."

It is a process by which a person encourages & motivates others to attain an objective that makes an organization progress in a unique & in a more innovative manner. Leadership is more of an action rather than preaching. It is the ability to lead from the front with a passion & with a conviction of a great vision, despite many successive setbacks. It is also taking a sense of responsibility setting as a role model with qualities like courage, commitment & conviction. It is a way of calling 'We'. Not 'I', because no leader is successful as an individual. The challenge before the today's leaders is to build a team which is cohesive, self-supporting & knows where it is heading.

"Leadership is an emotional bond, sometimes even a passionate commitment".

Leaders cannot hide themselves behind their positions. They need to understand people & face the innumerable challenges posed by the environment. They are the ones who create followers, instil confidence in those who are frightened, certainty in those who are vacillating, action where there is hesitation, strength where there is weakness, expertise where there is floundering, courage where there is cowardice, optimism where there is pessimism & a conviction that the future will be better.

Emotional intelligence & decision making form an important aspect in any organizations work culture. Leaders have to convert their emotional intelligence into organizational intelligence & must help people develop emotional intelligence at every level in the organization. In the rapidly changing work environment organizations have little option but to become emotionally intelligent. Hence developing an emotionally intelligent culture within the organization is of utmost importance today.

Emotional Intelligence

The world today is changing at a faster pace accompanied by a richer pace in the change of human beings too. The efficiency & effectiveness of an individual is determined by the "Intelligence Quotient (IQ)", "Spiritual Quotient (SQ)" & the "Emotional Quotient (EQ)" on both personal & professional fronts. Emotions breed because of social environment & our reaction to it & hence are reflective of our strength & weaknesses.

*Assistant Professor, M.E.S. College of Arts & Commerce, Zuarinagar-Goa

When we have come a long way from hunter man's life through egalitarian society to the current business world, it becomes more than essential to understand the role of emotions. Decision making, managing & leading all becomes possible if the mind is agitated by the waves of emotions.

Emotional Intelligence according to Daniel Goleman is: "the capacity for recognising our own feelings & those of others for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in ourselves & in our relationships. Emotional skills in combination of intelligence skills in the right proportion are always desired. With emotional intelligence skills are developed optimism, effective productivity, self-esteem, motivation, empathy, personal interaction skills are developed. Emotional Intelligence combined with efficient work skills makes achievement faster, more productive & more effective. With enhanced EQ, people think more clearly under pressure, are calmer & less stressed as they use less energy on internal emotional turmoil.

Emotional Intelligence primarily consists of - Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Self-Motivation, Empathy, Social Skills.

Role of Emotional Intelligence in Effective leadership

Modern organisations are highly volatile dynamic & demand higher productivity. Tasks cannot be accomplished working in fixed or routine ways. Only those who are open to innovate & respond to the mounting challenges survive. The ability of getting things done through & with people is a vital task of a leader. If the leaders are not able to balance their IQ skills with EI, like understanding & empathy, employees might feel insecure & unappreciated. They might even feel underestimated, criticised & disrespected.

These negative feelings can result in dissatisfaction among the workforce resulting into absenteeism, passivity, low productivity & attrition.

Corporate world today is beginning to understand that the success of organization is dependent on emotional intelligence of its leaders. Even, recruitment & selection processes are geared towards selecting those who can balance skills of the head & heart. Emotional Intelligence can lead to effective leadership in following ways:

1. **Strategic Planning** : Management is basically concerned with planning and executing these plans. Emotionally intelligent behaviour helps leaders plan better in many ways. It helps them to: Change plans as per the changing conditions., Be open to variety of possible actions., Dare to brave the status quo., Overcome resistance with persistence., Be ready to keep the plan under the shelves if they are not going to work.
2. **Motivation** : Emotionally intelligent leaders are self-motivated. They understand others and make them feel valued and supported to get them motivated. To be successful, leaders 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.
3. **Decision-making** : Acid test to leadership success is to make decisions based upon strong emotions. When emotions are not properly dealt with in a constructive way it can lead to disastrous decisions. Leaders make 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 a clear heart, Do not let strong emotions blind their wisdom.

4. **Team Effectiveness** : Self-awareness helps leaders become aware of their strengths and weaknesses, which help in their interaction with other employees in the team. Emotional Intelligence helps the leader in keeping the team together. It is said that 1% improvement in emotional climate creates a 2% increase in revenues. Emotional Intelligence helps the leaders : To understand their own emotional reactions as well as of others in various circumstances, Strike a personal emotional balance to manage anger and frustration, In making a work place an enjoyable experience, Influence people & create synergy, Create sense of belongingness, Be a role model & lead by example.
5. **Stress Management** : In addition to mounting tasks, leader's inability to manage relationships with others contributes to the stress at work place. Interpersonal problems at workplace are considered to be one of the most significant causes of burnout. Emotionally intelligent leaders can enable employees manage their stress & sustain their enthusiasm to handle challenging task at ease.
6. **Conflict Handling** : When people are working together, differences of opinion & approach are inevitable. Conflict can create problems in work productivity. To prevent, manage & resolve conflict, it is important to understand the emotions of all concerned in any situation.
7. **Reduce Attrition & Increase Retention** : Employee attrition is one of the serious challenges before a leader. This is due to improper work environment and resultant job discontent. Emotional Intelligence helps the leader in understanding the employees better & resolve this problem.
8. **Relationship with the customers** : Attracting a new customer is far more difficult than retaining an existing one. It is not only important that the leader should be emotionally intelligent but at the same time emotional intelligence is required at every level in an organization. Hence creating an Emotional Intelligence culture within the organization is of utmost importance.

Creating an EI culture within the organisation : Creating an EI culture within the organisation involves the following stages:

1. **Creating the EI Team** : An EI team should comprise of those with good facilitation skills & an affiliative approach selected from the organisational development team, HR team, inspired individuals dedicated to reinventing the organisation and external consultants hired for expertise to transfer knowledge and skills by training and coaching the internal EI team. The internal EI team should be than empowered to take on this responsibility by giving its members extra capabilities.
2. **Identifying the change required in the organisation** : The next step in creating an EI culture is identifying the change in the organisation. The change can be in the following areas:
 - a) Organisational Policies & Procedures
 - b) Work Environment
 - c) Leadership Styles
 - d) Relationships
 - e) Attitude and Behaviour
3. **Closure of issues surrounding the old culture and discovering new culture**

When a new approach is adopted people may feel that previous work goes unrecognised, which may stop them from supporting the new ideas and methods. For this purpose, it is very essential to discover what values people are wedded to on a daily basis and how they compare it with any new values. If they sense that, one views the old culture as wrong

and new culture will put the things on right place, than it is not going to work at all. To overcome this one needs to really appreciate from the heart what has been achieved under the previous culture to date, to show respect for the same.

4. Two-way Communication

Effective Communication is key to success of any organisation. The communication must be effective both the ways i.e. while reporting from top to bottom and vice versa. People behave as they are rewarded hence the strategy must ensure all staff in the new approach clearly stating the benefits including the financial ones. The strategy must also ensure that there is strong support for the management of the organisation.

5. Designing the programme to deliver the dream

A culture change programme to be sustainable and profitable, should consider the two most important steps for the organisation. These are:

- a) Self Awareness and b) Self Control.

Here the EI team should create a "Critical group" of advocates and exemplars of the new culture that assist in turning this dream into reality.

6. Piloting the design pragmatically : This is the stage where the programme designed is implemented on a pilot basis to test its efficacy. While deciding the area of change to begin with, utmost care should be taken to see that, only that area is selected where the chances of success are more. Even if it is found that, if a particular area is the worst area where the change is most desirable, it should not be taken up at least to begin with, as it may become too difficult for the EI team to handle it. And if the EI team is not able to handle it well than it would be really demoralising for them. Hence such difficult area of change should not be handled by the EI team, but should be handled by the trainers of the EI team i.e. by the consultant team. Hence one should start with the winner first. To sustain the new culture it is essential that those who will judge competence are reliable and consistent. The pilot would then enable the organisation to decide to what extent it can be implemented throughout the organisation.

7. Reviewing the Pilot : No change would come overnight. The things are not going to change at a lightning speed. But within a time span of three months the people working within the organisation would begin evidencing and reporting personal perceptions of benefits. They may be able to quote specific examples where their new emotional intelligence competencies generated new business, protected existing business or increased sales or how well customer grievances were handled. Organisation can convert a dissatisfied customer, into a potential advocate by handling his problem really well. And this is very much possible with the help of EI competency. The organisation can, then move ahead with its "Forest Fire" approach i.e. by providing the EI team members with further coaching.

8. Completing the cycle : This is the final stage where the following things should be considered very carefully.

- Considering the psychological process that people will have to go through as they perform the task, the change programme should be accordingly planned.
- Both formal and informal chains of communication should be used.
- See that everyone in the organisation receives the two important courses i.e. self awareness and the self control.
- If the organisation has volume limit than it can afford to leave the middle level for some time and begin with

- executives or first line supervisors as they generate more risk living with the old culture.
- e) Sometimes the trainers may confront with a problem where the participant is not able to adjust with the subject matter. This usually happens due to the attitude problem i.e. they do not know what they do not know. Hence the trainers here should anticipate it well in advance and give individuals extra coaching.

Conclusion

Humans are born with certain emotional potentials, and that by recognising these potentials, it can be used to enhance thinking.

Emotional skills with the combination of intelligence skills in the right proportion are always desired. High Emotional Intelligence combined with efficient work skills makes achievement faster, more productive & more innovative. With enhanced EQ, people think more clearly under pressure, are calmer & less stressed as they spend less energy on internal emotional turmoil.

Hence a leader with high level of EI would certainly be more effective in his area of action than his counterpart. Thus emotional Intelligence is a master aptitude, a capacity that can affect all other abilities in a leader, resulting into effective leadership.

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