

Should you be emotionally intelligent in the Workplace?

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Abstract

Emotional Intelligence is a key component in one's life, career or any other domain. Being emotionally intelligent is very crucial with respect to the importance and awareness it has gained over the years in any specific field. In professional setting, it is one of the crucial areas which have been studied over the years. It is important to note that being Emotionally Intelligent at workplace helps to build a great rapport with team members, peers, subordinates or superiors, since it discovers how people and relationship functions in one's life. Taking in concern the different stages of one's career, it is important to note that Emotional Intelligence at any stage reflect on how the self or others' emotions are handled positively to enhance a positive workforce and a positive surrounding. This paper tries to discover the idea of emotional intelligence at workforce through secondary data.

KEYWORDS: Emotional Intelligence, Organizational Behavior, Workplace, Career, Psychology

Should you be emotionally intelligent in the Workplace?

Emotional Intelligence has been an important part of Positive Psychology, very recent and upcoming school of thought. It has been talked about a lot lately. Emotional Intelligence as understood from the word is being emotionally intelligent with the emotions of other and one self. This focuses on generating one's emotions to stimulate thoughts and to understand and regulate them effectively to promote intellectual growth. It is very important to manage our emotions. Its application in Workplace is another most researched area in this field. In the work place, there are constant interactions which are occurring among the people who work there. While some of these interactions are positive, others are negative. The key aspect, managers and company leaders must understand is that over time, each of these interactions will have a positive or negative effect on the company as a whole. The effect that these interactions have on the company will also have an effect on the company's ability to remain competitive in its given market or industry. Thus, the key fact that must be considered in order to make these interactions more positive is Emotional Intelligence. Humans are emotional creatures, and this is the first key towards understanding Emotional Intelligence. Just as it's important to seek new hires with emotional intelligence, it's vital for managers and other business leaders to operate in Emotionally Intelligent ways to meet the needs of today's workers. Emotional intelligence is applicable to every human interaction in business: from staff motivation to customer service, from brainstorming to company presentations.

Conceptual Note

Advanced Emotional Intelligence is beneficial in many areas of life. However, the usefulness associated with its application is mostly documented in the area of professional workplace. According to Cherniss (2000), the workplace would be considered as a logical setting for the evaluation and improvement of emotional intelligence competencies for the following four reasons. Firstly, Emotional

Intelligence competencies are vital for one to succeed in most jobs. Secondly, most of the adults join the workforce without the competencies essential to excel or succeed in a job. Thirdly, employers have already established motivation and means for providing the Emotional Intelligence training, and majority of the adults tend to spend most of their active hours at work. In the workplace setting, researchers have related Emotional Intelligence to increased success among employees of the same hierarchy level, for instance, senior managers. A strong importance of how emotional intelligence application, is crucial to separate the people involved into both the leaders or managers and the group members (Cherniss, 2000). It impacts both the leaders and the group members in the workplace environment.

Emotional Intelligence

The term Emotional Intelligence was officially coined in 1990 by Dr. Peter Salovey and Dr. John Mayer, they termed Emotional Intelligence/Quotient as the capacity for recognizing one's own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in oneself and in one's relationships. However, as discussed by Daniel Goleman (1995), Emotional Intelligence is described as abilities distinct from, but complementary to, academic intelligence. In his 1995 book Goleman said that Intelligence Quotient only contributes to "at best" 20% of "factors that determine life success." He implied that Emotional Intelligence accounts for the other 80%.

Since the importance of the construct first came into limelight in 1995, it has gained stimulus in the applied and academic settings. Several programs have been designed and implemented to improve Emotional Intelligence for organizational leaders, while Universities throughout the U.S. have introduced courses in developing emotional intelligence (Mayer, Salovey, & Brackett, 2004, 45). However, many researchers have suggested that there is still need for more research to be done on this controversial topic.

Emotional intelligence is a term that was first used by Wayne Payne in his Doctoral thesis in 1985. The development of emotional intelligence was, in fact, started by Darwin's work on survival where the second adaptation stressed on the significance of emotional expression. It is only in the 1900s that researchers began to realize the crucial roles of emotions in determining an individual's intelligence (Goleman 1998,).

There have been many interpretations of this term and different researchers have come up with different definitions of it. The first description of the term, attributed to Peter and John Mayer, was developed in 1990. It defines Emotional Intelligence as "the capacity to reason about emotions, and emotions to enhance thinking, which includes the ability to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist, thought, in understanding emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth" (Mayer and Salovey, 1990 as quoted in 2004,).

Daniel Goleman in his book Emotional Intelligence in 1995 defines it as the ability of one to recognize and regulate emotions in him or her and others. Today, its definition has witnessed development into a more specific and complicated explanation, depending on the situational needs

Emotional Intelligence in Workplace

In situations where employees or workforce suffers from setbacks or challenging situation, it is the time when practically their Emotional Intelligence can be tested. It is important to withhold ones raging emotions of guilt, sadness, depression, anger etc and to overpower with the positive ones. How an individual performs in such situation reflects their Emotional Intelligence in the workplace. Employees with high Emotional Intelligence are able to stop and analyze what they are going through in terms of emotions. They reflect upon them as to how they affect the decisions which they make and the behavioural changes they show in front of others. An Emotionally Intelligence employee will respect the ideas which are generated in a team. He/ She make sure that these ideas if suitable and applicable are utilized to the best of the situation ensuring team spirit and a healthy competition within. This ensures that the negative behavior is eliminated from the group and positivity flows in which help motivating the employees and the workforce. Decisions made by the emotionally intelligent person is thus valued and encouraged by everyone. Thus, such an environment is considered to be a healthy working environment as it ensures integrity and rewarding work relationships, where the potential of the workforce will be further developed and enhanced.

The impact of emotional intelligence has been discussed in an aggressive manner since it was introduced in 1995. It is one of the exceedingly ranked areas to study Emotional Intelligence. Not just in personal life, but also in realistic world, the literature on leadership has come up with various theories outlining the characteristics that compose the most effective leaders. However, the current research in this area describes leadership in two parts, Transactional and Transformational leaders. The transformational leader stimulates interest among colleagues, inspires a different outlook on the work, generates awareness of the goals of the organization, develops others to higher levels of ability and motivates others to consider the interests of the group over their own interests” (Goleman, 2004). Similarly, transformation leadership is comprised of, inspirational motivation, idealized influence, individual consideration and intellectual stimulation. The transactional leader, alternatively, is one who rewards staff according to their performance. He emphasizes task completion, work standards and employee compliance and relies heavily on the organizational rewards and punishments for influencing employee performance.

According to Deutschendorf (2009), when employers are required to assess the top skills, they look up to prospective employees. People’s skills are always at the top of their list. Employees can be taught technical skills, but changing someone’s people-relationship skills or attitude is much more difficult. Today, businesses face huge challenges. Statistics and studies show that there are many companies that are far from the ideal workplace. About forty percent of employee turnover is stress related and millions are leaving their jobs for reasons linked to stress. A survey completed by the Yale School of Management found that 24% of the already working population admitted that they are chronically angry at work (Deutschendorf, 2009, 14). Goleman (1998, 14) in his study revealed that the results he got from a survey of U.S. employers showed that the employers struggle to get the right kind of employees. His study showed that 40% of employees’ depicted trouble relating with others and those that possessed the right discipline and work habit required for entry-level jobs were less than 20 percent.

Goleman (2004) found no significant disparity between men and women's EI. In others, women emerge better while the opposite happens at other times. When performance indicators are used, such as Multifactor Intelligence Scale, clear differences are seen with women predominant when compared to men (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2002)

Goleman defines motivation as “a passion to work for reasons that go beyond money or status; a propensity to pursue goals with energy and persistence.” In other words, motivation is one's ability to remain optimistic and continue striving even when faced with barriers, setbacks and failure. Motivated persons display key indicators such as optimism even when it seems like they are about to fail, a strong drive to achieve and organizational commitment (Goleman, 2004). Salovey and Meyer mentioned motivation as part of emotional intelligence, but did not include it in 1997 presentation of their 4 branch model of emotional intelligence. On the other hand, Dan Goleman found a connection between motivation and EI. Goleman implies that someone with a high level of emotional intelligence has a higher motivation

In his publications, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ and Working with Emotional Intelligence*, Goleman presents five categories of emotional intelligence. He studied that during the time of recruitment and selection specifically at entry level, to ensure that the prospective employee will thrive in the workplace for long, the candidates with the following pillars were selected. The pillars discussed by Goleman were:

1. Self-awareness: It is observed if a person has a healthy sense of one's self-awareness, he/she understands their strength and weaknesses. They also analyze how their emotions will affect others. In scenarios where constructive criticism is to be faced, such individuals are better able to deal with the situation in a positive manner.
2. Self-regulation: It is seen that a person with a high Emotional Intelligence is able to maturely deal with his/her emotions and is able to exercise restraint when required. Instead of hiding or avoiding ones feelings, expression of emotions is done without any restraint or control.
3. Motivation: Individuals who are Emotionally Intelligent are known to be self-motivated. Their motivation is not a result of the salary or the post they possess, but it is based on how motivated they are doing what they are doing. Usually, when under a stress driven situation, they are found to be resilient and optimistic.
4. Empathy: An empathetic person is known to be compassionate. They understand of human nature and are able to connect with other people on an emotional level. This allows a person to provide great service and respond genuinely to others' concerns.
5. People skill: Emotionally Intelligent people are able to build rapport and trust with others on their teams. They avoid power struggles and backstabbing and usually enjoy others company. They show respect to others and their opinions.

Just as it's important to seek new hires with emotional intelligence, it's vital for managers and other business leaders to operate in emotionally intelligent ways to meet the needs of today's workers.

Emotional intelligence at work is about how people and relationships function:

- Relationships between colleagues, between directors and staff;
- Relationships between the organization and its customers, stakeholders, suppliers, competitors, networking contacts, everyone.

It is about leadership, teamwork, management skills and partnership. Founded on excellent practice and understanding of communication, the emotionally intelligent business consistently excels in all these areas and has insight into how this happens. It has been observed that an Emotionally Intelligent organization has professionals are Motivated, Productive, Efficient, Aligned, and Committed. They also show Effectiveness and Confidence in being Likeable and Rewarding to their workforce.

Significance of Emotional Intelligence at Workplace

Emotional intelligence at work is about how people and relationships function:

- relationships between colleagues, between directors and staff;
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Emotional intelligence is applicable to every human interaction in business: from staff motivation to customer service, from brainstorming to company presentations. But the subject is far deeper and wider than these examples, and emotional intelligence must be able to understand and deal with:

- how we assess people
- how relationships develop
- how our beliefs generate our experience
- As well as resistance to change, power struggles, judgment, competition, vision, leadership, success, and much more.

A business in which the staffs are emotionally intelligent is one which enables them to work together to maximum effectiveness. This can only increase the organisation's success, however measured.

Conclusion

The importance of Emotional Intelligence is not just at the entry level, but at each stage of one's career. To understand others emotions in order to positively reflect and give suggestions to them Emotional Intelligence holds equal advantage. At the entry level, in order to develop an understanding of the place and to settle, it is important for the individual to be reflective of one's emotions. Though at the entry level, it may not be reflected more on others emotions as you are yet to build and create a space for your own. But to gel in a team or to break the ice, it is always important to reflect your real side. Genuineness is the key, and Emotional Intelligence act as an indicator for an important aspect of your personality. At the mid or higher level, you are responsible of a team under your supervision or have a set of workforce working with you. Building a team is important to make a successful organization and enhance productivity. In order to effectively manage the workplace, a higher Emotional

Intelligence at this level will be beneficial for the growth and development of the organization, self and the peer and subordinates.

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