

Emotional Intelligence: Collaboration in the Workplace



The current issue of this series on emotional intelligence in the workplace examines those factors that best promote collaborative work. Collaboration is presented as an indispensable practice for business organizations, and is founded on emotional intelligence competencies at both the individual and corporate level. As in previous issues the work of Daniel Goleman, Ph.D. provides the backbone for this article.

As you recall, the business case for **collaboration** in the workplace was introduced in the most recent newsletter. What we now clearly know is that in today's workplace each of us has an increasingly smaller part of the information or expertise needed to get the job done. In the twentieth century more knowledge has been generated than in all the other centuries put together. Therefore, while in 1986 people could work at their job with 75% of the required knowledge in their heads, this had dropped to between 15 and 20% by 1997. Because of this fact, organizations have come to depend on the group mind as never before. Collaborative practice is no longer a choice but a requirement in an ever competitive global market.

Many research studies have compared individual and collaborative performance. In summary, these studies have consistently shown the following:

- When a task is undertaken by a group where collaboration is burdened with personalized conflict and friction the performance of that group is poorer than if the same work was done as individuals rather than a team
- When the group works reasonably well it will outperform individual performance
- Most importantly, however, **when the group has real synergy, it will by far exceed the best individual performance.** Synergy is best thought of as members of the same team feeding off one another in positive ways; as result the "whole" becomes better than "the sum of the parts". Collaboration can actually raise the "group IQ" – i.e. the sum total of the best talents of each member on the team.

Outstanding collaboration is not haphazardly achieved, but is carefully constructed. This point is strongly emphasized by Michael Schrage in his book ***No More Teams: Mastering the Dynamics of Creative Collaboration***. Emotional intelligence competencies in individual team members have been shown to have central importance to achieve collaborative excellence. When these are present they promote those team characteristics that enable outstanding work. High achieving teams have the following in common:

- Interpersonal skills and compatibility
- At least one person with high IQ is essential but not sufficient
- Shared motivation
- Ability to resolve differences and communicate effectively

All in all, **it is the social effectiveness of the group that predicts how well a team will do, more than the individual IQs of its members.** Teams that are most effective have members who are able to consistently demonstrate social competencies such as:

- Empathy, or interpersonal understanding
- Cooperation and a unified effort
- Open, honest communication, setting explicit norms and expectations, and confronting underachieving team members
- Drive to improve, so that the team pays attention to performance feedback
- Self-awareness, in the form of evaluating their strengths and weaknesses as a team
- Initiative and taking a proactive stance towards solving problems
- Flexibility in how they go about collective tasks
- Building bonds to other teams.

To these, Schrage adds the following:

- *Competence* – "a collection of incompetents, no matter how diligent, or well meaning, cannot be successful"
- *Shared, understood goal* – collaboration is a means to an end rather than an end in itself. When it is going exceptionally well people are energized by it; when it is extremely poor, people are talking about it rather than working towards it
- *Mutual respect, tolerance, trust* – as it is with competence, there must be a minimum threshold of these qualities; beyond promoting good team functioning they also serve as the fabric of creating a respectful workplace. These are qualities that are represented in the kind of language one uses in the work setting, in the attitudes that one holds towards co-workers of different personal or professional backgrounds, and in the way that one sees differences as a strength rather than a threat.

So far we have described collaboration as being dependent on competencies that reside in individuals and are applied in interpersonal relationships. However, for these skills to thrive they also require an organizational culture that values collaboration and promotes positive reinforcing of it.

But who has time to grow orchids?

"Outstanding collaboration is not haphazardly achieved, but is carefully constructed."

In the previous newsletter we made reference to promoting collaboration as being akin to growing orchids. Bill Catlette and Richard Hadden in their book *Contented Cows Give Better Milk: The Plain Truth About Employee Relations And Your Bottom Line* argue for making it a priority. Enlightened employee relations that encourage collaborative work have nothing whatsoever to do with social or humanitarian interests, nor superficial platitudes. They involve commitment of resources and time, which are more than recovered in the budget bottom line. According to Catlette and Hagan, best practices are those that provide employees the following opportunities:

- *Meaningful Work* – "Employees need to feel proud of their work. They want suitable challenges, and the freedom to pursue them. They want to be in the game, not on the bench."
- *High Standards* – "They dislike losing organizations and don't want to hang around with losers."
- *Balanced Worth-its* – "A commensurate level of interest and investment in them must be demonstrated, with internal systems which support rather than impede their efforts. Freedom to pursue some things that are important to them."
- *A Level Playing Field* – "Means reciprocal caring, coupled with some sense of justice and an assurance they won't be taken advantage of."
- *To Be And Feel Competent* – A sense of personal competence is best achieved when one is given the necessary tools to do a task, together with ongoing, constructively delivered feedback, and the opportunity for input.

Building better mousetraps produces smarter mice

Human beings are uniquely capable of regulating their own involvement and commitment to a given task, or endeavour. The extent to which employees fully contribute or withhold is governed more by attitude than by necessity, fear, or economic influence. Put another way, those organizations which have approached employee relations in the same manner as building better mousetraps have only succeeded in creating smarter mice.

Simply stated:

Employee's personal capability minus Minimum Requirements equals Discretionary Effort

If we follow the evidence, an employee's discretionary effort is most easily maximized through good employee relations that also encourage a collaborative culture. When this practice is achieved the work setting thrives by:

- Balancing a focus on tasks with attention to relationships
- Sharing of plans, information, and resources
- Promoting a friendly, cooperative climate

Goleman reminds us that to transform your workplace into an enduring collaborative setting, you need *emotional intelligence* at the individual, but also collective and organizational levels. The same competencies will permanently graft the practices to the values that guide the organization.

Whenever there is a strong team, with clarity about its mission, high standards for its product, and sense of how to do its work, you don't just see fears and uncertainty the way you do in other organizations. Members are then able to put their trust in their teammates, the organization and its leaders.

In the next newsletter we will turn our attention on how to acquire the emotional competencies presented, individually and organizationally.

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Random Thoughts

"It's impossible to learn what you think you already know." – Unknown

"Indecision may or may not be my problem." – Jimmy Buffett

<http://www.sourceline.ca/resources/newsletters/emotional-intelligence-collaboration.asp>

5 Crucial Emotional Intelligence Traits Of Highly Effective Leaders

Do you think ahead, while listening carefully? Are you attuned to the emotional tone of the office?

By Harvey Deutschendorf

THE FUTURE OF WORK

Over the last decade there has been a huge increase in evidence that emotional intelligence is an important factor in leadership. Numerous studies have shown a positive relationship between emotionally intelligent leadership and employee satisfaction, retention, and performance.

"No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care."

Theodore Roosevelt

As organizations become more aware of this, they are looking for ways to recruit and promote from within people that are strong in emotional intelligence.

Here are five factors that are crucial for emotionally intelligent leadership:

1. Self-awareness The basis of any degree of emotional intelligence is awareness of our own emotions, what causes them, and how we react to them. Leaders who are more aware are able to develop skills that will help them manage their own emotions, allowing them to respond more effectively to situations that come up.

Instead of reacting to their emotions, they are able to engage their thinking capacity to come up with better decisions. Leaders who react from their emotions without filtering them can severely damage relationships and increase mistrust amongst their staff.

2. Awareness of others The more self-awareness that leaders have, the higher will be their awareness of the emotions of others around them. Having an awareness of emotions, how they are created, and how they influence people will allow them to not take emotions of others, such as anger, personally. Less likely to jump to conclusions or judgment, they are more likely to get to the root of the issue and the cause of strong emotional reactions of others.

3. Listening skills Most people fall into the habit of thinking of a response, while others are speaking instead of actively listening. Emotionally strong leaders avoid that trap, realizing that they need to understand not only the content of what others are saying, but also pick up the feelings behind the words that are being spoken.

The emotions behind the words are often more important than the words spoken. It is only when those emotions are acknowledged that people feel that they are being heard. Often complaints are about situations that leaders can do little to change. People are often aware of that, but still have the need to feel heard.

Emotionally intelligent leaders hear their staff and by doing so are able to connect with them on a deeper level.

4. Awareness of emotional atmosphere Effective leaders are not only aware of what is going on with their people in one-to-one conversations, they are able to pick up the mood and feelings of their work environment. Tuned in emotionally, they are aware of the many factors that can influence the feelings of their employees.

Fear of job loss, losing coworkers due to death or injury, rumors of financial problems in the organization, and various other factors are common in every workplace and affect the emotional well-being of staff. Feeling that leaders understand their situation and care about their staff will increase trust, loyalty, and performance from them.

It is important that leaders are able to stay tuned in to the emotions of their workplace and effectively communicate that to their people.

5. Ability to anticipate reactions and respond effectively Emotionally intelligent leaders are able to anticipate how their people are likely to react to situations and don't wait until after the damage is done to respond. If they are aware that bad news is coming, such as anticipated layoffs, business closures, and other events, they do what they can to openly to respond to them before they happen.

Realizing that rumors can quickly spread and cause more damage than the actual event, they rely upon their emotional and social skills to help staff through these times.

<http://www.fastcompany.com/3031708/the-future-of-work/5-crucial-emotional-intelligence-traits-of-highly-effective-leaders>

How to Be Emotionally Intelligent

By Daniel Goleman, *The New York Times*, April 7, 2015
Education Life

What makes a great leader? Knowledge, smarts and vision, to be sure. To that, Daniel Goleman, author of “Leadership: The Power of Emotional Intelligence,” would add the ability to identify and monitor emotions —

your own and others' — and to manage relationships. Qualities associated with such “emotional intelligence” distinguish the best leaders in the corporate world, according to Mr. Goleman, a former New York Times science reporter, a psychologist and co-director of a consortium at Rutgers University to foster research on the role emotional intelligence plays in excellence. He shares his short list of the competencies.

1. SELF-AWARENESS Realistic self-confidence: You understand your own strengths and limitations; you operate from competence and know when to rely on someone else on the team.

Emotional insight: You understand your feelings. Being aware of what makes you angry, for instance, can help you manage that anger.

2. SELF-MANAGEMENT Resilience: You stay calm under pressure and recover quickly from upsets. You don't brood or panic. In a crisis, people look to the leader for reassurance; if the leader is calm, they can be, too.

Emotional balance: You keep any distressful feelings in check — instead of blowing up at people, you let them know what's wrong and what the solution is.

Self-motivation: You keep moving toward distant goals despite setbacks.

3. EMPATHY Cognitive and emotional empathy: Because you understand other perspectives, you can put things in ways colleagues comprehend. And you welcome their questions, just to be sure. Cognitive empathy, along with reading another person's feelings accurately, makes for effective communication.

Good listening: You pay full attention to the other person and take time to understand what they are saying, without talking over them or hijacking the agenda.

4. RELATIONSHIP SKILLS Compelling communication: You put your points in persuasive, clear ways so that people are motivated as well as clear about expectations.

Team playing: People feel relaxed working with you. One sign: They laugh easily around you.

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/12/education/edlife/how-to-be-emotionally-intelligent.html?_r=0

The biggest predictor of career success? Not skills or education — but emotional intelligence

Careers, Ray Williams | January 1, 2014 8:00 AM ET

FINANCIAL POST

Interpersonal competence, self-awareness and social awareness — all elements of emotional intelligence — are better predictors of who will succeed and who won't.

What determines the probable future career success of individuals? Is it intelligence, technical knowledge and skills, their socio-economic background or educational success? Are the forces that make success the same for Generations X and Y as they are for the Baby Boomers? These questions have been researched extensively by recruiters, talent management experts and human behaviour researchers in the past decade. The answers now point to emotional competencies.

First, it's important to note that a distinct North American and particularly American myth has been perpetuated that colours our perspective on career success: The “self-made man” or “anyone can make it to the top” myth. While it may have been true in the last century and the early part of this one, evidence doesn't support its veracity now.

Researchers for the past century have investigated the determinants of career success. While intelligence has been the most consistent factor in determining job success, the definition of intelligence has expanded to include emotional intelligence.

A 2006 study by Accenture of 251 executives in six countries concluded that while intelligence is important for career success, it's a matter of how you are smart. Interpersonal competence, self-awareness and social awareness — all elements of emotional intelligence — are better predictors of who will succeed and who won't.

A recent study, published in the *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, by Ernest O'Boyle Jr. at Virginia Commonwealth University, concludes that emotional intelligence is the strongest predictor of job performance. Numerous other studies have shown that high emotional intelligence boosts career success. For example, the U.S. Air Force found that the most successful recruiters scored significantly higher on the emotional intelligence competencies of empathy and self-awareness. An analysis of more than 300 top level executives from 15 global companies showed that six emotional competencies distinguished the stars from the average. In a large beverage firm, using standard methods to hire division presidents, 50% left within two years, mostly because of poor performance. When the firms started selecting based on emotional competencies, only 6% left and they performed in the top third of executive ranks. Research by the Center for Creative Leadership has found the primary cause of executive derailment involves deficits in emotional competence.

A recent study, published in the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* by Lillian Eby and her colleagues — psychologists at the University of Georgia — looked at predictors of success in the current era of “boundaryless” careers. They conclude linear, lifespan careers with traditional measures of success no longer exist. In boundaryless careers, the importance of psychological success — pride, and personal accomplishment — becomes more important than external or tangible indicators such as salary growth.

The second factor they identify is “knowing whom” or developing positive relationships, including the skill of networking.

The final factor they identify is “knowing how,” or educational/training, and job skills. The researchers conclude that among the three factors, “knowing why” or self-awareness and meaning, were the most important set of predictors for career success.

Can you improve your emotional intelligence? Nearly 3,000 scientific articles have been published on EQ since the concept was first introduced. These studies conclude that while EQ is mostly influenced by our early childhood experiences, it can be improved with substantial effort, guidance, and coaching.

Tomas Chamkorro-Premuzic, author of *The Psychology of Personnel Selection*, argues that career success in traditional organizations favoured the less creatively talented people because of the reliance on command-and-control management structures. In the clear boundary organizations and careers, he says, the prescription for workplace success was “be predictable, minimize your bosses' workload and suck up to them.” He bases these conclusions not on cognitive or psychological assessments but on an observation of what managers want of their employees — get stuff done quickly, be efficient and do exactly what the boss wants. Unfortunately, he says, that precludes many brilliant, talented creative people and those with an entrepreneurial spirit, who are uncomfortable with close and authoritative supervision.

Further, the predominant traditional stereotype of organizational leader as a confident, even aggressive, extroverted male whose strengths are strategic decision-making and performance management, with little concern about emotional competencies is being slowly replaced by leaders whose prime strengths lie in the emotional competencies realm.

So it seems that emotional competencies, and the capacity to build and manage positive relationships are replacing traditional skill based or cognitive assessment as a way of predicting potential and continuing career success.

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Starving for Wisdom

Nicholas Kristof, *The New York Times*, April 16, 2015
The Opinion Pages | Op-Ed Columnist

“We are drowning in information, while starving for wisdom.” That epigram from E.O. Wilson captures the dilemma of our era. Yet the solution of some folks is to disdain wisdom.

“Is it a vital interest of the state to have more anthropologists?” Rick Scott, the Florida governor, once asked. A leader of a prominent Internet company once told me that the firm regards admission to Harvard as a useful heuristic of talent, but a college education itself as useless.

Parents and students themselves are acting on these principles, retreating from the humanities. Among college graduates in 1971, there were about two business majors for each English major. Now there are seven times as many. (I was a political science major; if I were doing it over, I’d be an economics major with a foot in the humanities.)

I’ve been thinking about this after reading Fareed Zakaria’s smart new book, “In Defense of a Liberal Education.” Like Zakaria, I think that the liberal arts teach critical thinking (not to mention nifty words like “heuristic”).

So, to answer the skeptics, here are my three reasons the humanities enrich our souls and sometimes even our pocketbooks as well.

First, liberal arts equip students with **communications and interpersonal skills** that are valuable and genuinely rewarded in the labor force, especially when accompanied by technical abilities.

“A broad liberal arts education is a key pathway to success in the 21st-century economy,” says Lawrence Katz, a labor economist at Harvard. Katz says that the economic return to pure technical skills has flattened, and the highest return now goes to those who combine soft skills — excellence at communicating and working with people — with technical skills.

“So I think a humanities major who also did a lot of computer science, economics, psychology, or other sciences can be quite valuable and have great career flexibility,” Katz said. “But you need both, in my view, to maximize your potential. And an economics major or computer science major or biology or engineering or physics major who takes serious courses in the humanities and history also will be a much more valuable scientist, financial professional, economist, or entrepreneur.”

My second reason: We need people conversant with the humanities to help reach wise public policy decisions, even about the sciences. Technology companies must constantly weigh ethical decisions: Where should Facebook set its privacy defaults, and should it tolerate glimpses of nudity? Should Twitter close accounts that seem sympathetic to terrorists? How should Google handle sex and violence, or defamatory articles?

In the policy realm, one of the most important decisions we humans will have to make is whether to allow germline gene modification. This might eliminate certain diseases, ease suffering, make our offspring smarter

and more beautiful. But it would also change our species. It would enable the wealthy to concoct superchildren. It's exhilarating and terrifying.

To weigh these issues, regulators should be informed by first-rate science, but also by first-rate humanism. After all, Homer addressed similar issues three millennia ago.

In "The Odyssey," the beautiful nymph Calypso offers immortality to Odysseus if he will stay on her island. After a fling with her, Odysseus ultimately rejects the offer because he misses his wife, Penelope. He turns down godlike immortality to embrace suffering and death that are essential to the human condition.

Likewise, when the President's Council on Bioethics issued its report in 2002, "Human Cloning and Human Dignity," it cited scientific journals but also Ernest Hemingway's "The Old Man and the Sea." Even science depends upon the humanities to shape judgments about ethics, limits and values.

Third, wherever our careers lie, much of our happiness depends upon our interactions with those around us, and there's some evidence that literature nurtures a richer emotional intelligence.

Science magazine published five studies indicating that research subjects who read literary fiction did better at assessing the feelings of a person in a photo than those who read nonfiction or popular fiction. Literature seems to offer lessons in human nature that help us decode the world around us and be better friends.

Literature also builds bridges of understanding. Toni Morrison has helped all America understand African-American life. Jhumpa Lahiri illuminated immigrant contradictions. Khaled Hosseini opened windows on Afghanistan.

In short, it makes eminent sense to study coding and statistics today, but also history and literature.

John Adams had it right when he wrote to his wife, Abigail, in 1780: "I must study Politicks and War that my sons may have liberty to study Mathematicks and Philosophy. My sons ought to study Mathematicks and Philosophy, Geography, natural History and Naval Architecture, navigation, Commerce and Agriculture, in order to give their Children a right to study Painting, Poetry, Musick, Architecture, Statuary, Tapestry and Porcelaine."