



The Three Focuses for Leaders to Build Emotional Intelligence

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In today's world, IQ is not enough to be successful in business nor is it enough to keep your team engaged. During the Great Resignation, burnout took a heavy toll. According to research, one of the main reasons underlying the Great Resignation was chronic stress and disengagement due to increased workloads and unhealthy work environments. Priorities shifted. People quit their jobs more easily, valued their free time more greatly, and prioritized authentic relationships at work. To retain talent, leaders had no choice but to rethink their leadership practices.

Emotional Intelligence (EI), according to Salovey and Mayer, is “a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action.” EI contributes to moving away from a standardized way of leadership and increases a leader's ability to bring profitable results and

foster collaboration in the workplace.

According to Daniel Goleman, there exists three types of focus to implement EI in your daily life as a leader. The inner focus, which translates into being able to master your inner world and know your authentic self; the other focus, which focuses on people and the empathic approach to lead your team; and the outer focus, which reflects on the ecosystem in which your organization operates.

1. The Inner Focus: Know Yourself

Most leaders do not spend enough time to get to know themselves. They often focus on their business goals and less on their ability to tune in with themselves. According to research, the ability to reflect on your goals allows for a deeper sense of well-being, also defined as self-awareness.

In a work culture where we praise constant stimulation and interaction with others, stillness and silence can be more productive when defining your business goals and establishing directions. You may want to make time for an introspective practice to improve your inner focus. Sit and check-in with yourself regularly to get a deeper sense of what is essential to your well-being. It may be a ritual or anything that allows you to reset and recharge.

In a public post, Netflix's Co-founder Marc Randolph, shared that for 30 years he used to leave the office every Tuesday at 5:00 pm to meet his wife for their weekly date night. He wrote, "Those Tuesday nights kept me sane. And they put the rest of my work in perspective. (...) That's my definition of success." Marc prioritized one evening per week for his family and made time for what would make him successful in the long term. In fact, it did.

2. The Other Focus: Create A Safe Environment and Build Trust

"If we don't understand people, we don't understand business" wrote Simon Sinek. Understanding how your people operate and building a safe work environment is key to achieve your business objectives and foster effectiveness. The Great Resignation showed that the nature of leadership has moved away from the objective to obtain results by using commanding leadership. Instead, the emphasis is now on coaching, support and empowerment to increase team spirit and improve collaboration for achieving targets. Put differently, employees do not quit their job, they quit their boss.

Empathy – or the ability to recognize, understand, and appreciate how other people feel – will allow you to build trust and foster collaboration.

You may start by practicing active listening. Take a coworker to lunch, put your phone away, ask genuine questions, and validate their experience. In most cases, your coworker will bring their best to the table if you appreciate what they are willing to share with you. By cultivating empathy among your team, you step into the role of an effective leader. Research shows that effective leadership is crucial to flourish innovativeness

and productivity. Effective leadership may be achieved through collaboration.

Collaboration is fostered when a leader shows genuine interest in people and acknowledges each team members' contribution according to their strengths and weaknesses. Let's take the example of personality types by Erikson. You would not manage



“A leader’s intelligence has to have a strong emotional component. He has to have high levels of self-awareness, maturity and self-control. She must be able to withstand the heat, handle setbacks and, when those lucky moments arise, enjoy success with equal parts of joy and humility. No doubt emotional intelligence is more rare than book smarts, but my experience says it is actually more important in the making of a leader. You just can’t ignore it.”

-Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric

a “red” the same way you would manage a “blue.” A red personality type is most likely to think quickly and wonder why no one in the team is doing the right things when the action plan seems obvious. On the other hand, a blue personality type would not take risks perceived as unnecessary unless the risk assessment is clearly established, and plan B has already been set out if plan A falls apart.

3. The Outer Focus: Inspire and Influence

As a leader, you have the responsibility to anticipate change and catch the new trends in your area of practice. The outer focus requires a high level of awareness of your team’s strengths and weaknesses. By increasing your awareness of the internal dynamics within your organization, you are better suited to anticipate change and adapt to new business trends.

A lack of such awareness may result in a loss of credibility within your team and increase the chances that your independent troops will resist being both led and managed. Your team may resist your directives if your feedback is inconsistent and unmanaged emotions take over your leadership style. The more you start working with emotions, as opposed to repressing them, the more you allow your team members to do the same. Inspiration comes by reproducing the things we admire in others. When you start understanding how your team members think and operate, you step into a leadership role. When management responds to such a dynamic, leadership becomes effective, and your team becomes highly competent and can anticipate change and bring new ideas to the business.

The best remedy to loss of credibility is consistency. How do you move forward when highly independent troops are resistant to being managed? You may have had a terrible morning;

your kid refused to get dressed, you got stuck in traffic and you had to take your first meeting in the car and your phone died instantly. So, you show up to the office in a bad mood. Take a pause before responding to your emails. Acknowledge your emotions and separate yourself from them. That way, they will not dictate your reactions to upcoming events you will have to deal with at work.

Here are some strategies to increase your credibility as a leader:

- Start working with your emotions, as opposed to repressing them.
- Provide consistent feedback and set clear expectations.
- Encourage your team to focus on improving their strengths.
- Know what you are talking about and acknowledge when you are wrong.

The approach of the three focuses is a tool to unleash your team’s potential and bring long-term success to your career as a leader. Ultimately, by being on the leading edge of a high-performing and high-functioning team, you will serve your company better in creating well-being at work and foster business ideas adapted to business trends. +



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