

BUSINESS ADVICE

Emotional Intelligence at Work!

Corporate Advice



Caryn Walsh

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The days of bosses getting angry and 'spitting the dummy' are well and truly over.

Why? Because they affect everybody else and they are costing you money.

The same goes for your team members, who may ignore you or get angry at others, and then let everybody know by shouting at them, or sulking. Like children in preschool.

People who cannot control their emotions and behaviour at work are expensive – to you and your business.

Emotionally unintelligent behaviour at work (it should be no different at home!) cannot tolerated in modern-day organisations, or it should not be. It's costing you too much money.

In the last column I wrote, I discussed 'Why Lousy Bosses are Killing your Business.' This article takes it one step further.

Emotional intelligence is a core competence in leadership. It is the ability to have strong people skills by relating and communicating effectively with others, creating and maintaining highly performing teams, making optimal decisions and creating a viable profitable team or organisation.

Why leaders and people who get angry easily, say inappropriate or hurtful things or who are moody need to resolve their issue – or leave! It's a lot harder when it's the boss!

What Is Emotional Intelligence (EI)?

According to American researcher Daniel Goleman, EI 'is the ability to manage your emotions well and understand the emotions of others and respond appropriately to them.'



At work, emotionally intelligent people deal with minor aggravations and stay focussed on the tasks at hand that are key to the team's goals.

If you are angry, it's not okay to 'dummy spit' your frustration at others, or punish them by not talking to them – or talking adversely about them.

Leaders, particularly, who show emotional intelligence build trust within their ranks and mostly enjoy loyalty and support.

Angry or unpredictable leaders and team members don't.

Emotional Intelligence is the ability of an individual to understand and manage their emotions (by using their ability to think clearly and reason) and the emotions of others, to facilitate social functioning. Emotional Intelligence is a set of competencies demonstrating the ability a person has to recognise his or her behaviours, moods, and impulses, and to manage them best according to the situation they are facing. (Source: Goleman, Social Intelligence, p 45)

Emotionally Intelligent People Have Better Careers

Emotional Intelligence is not new. It's been around forever, but Goleman termed the phrase in 1985.

And his studies add weight to its importance in all spheres of life. A key outcome of his research is that those people who are emotionally intelligent at work tend to have better careers, make more money and are happier.

'When people get into an Organisation, they are all roughly the same. But once in, it is the individual's ability to use their emotions intelligently that progresses them up the Organisation.' (Goleman)

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at hand that are key to the team's goals.

They stay calm when things get heated and the pressure is on, and they have the empathy to help people if they are struggling.

Recent research has identified that teams with higher Emotional Intelligence perform better than those without it.

They reach their goals more effectively and achieve strategic outcomes more collaboratively.

The Benefits of Emotional Intelligence in Organisations

- **Better decision-making.** Having an awareness of your emotions, where they come from and what they mean, can allow you to take a more rational, well-planned approach to making a specific decision. Thinking things through thoroughly, instead of making instant and spontaneous reactive decisions, can mean the difference between a profit or loss on the balance sheet.
- **More effective relationships.** When a leader is able to understand why they are the way they are and why they react to things the way they do, they gain a greater appreciation who they are, and others, which can in turn lead to stronger relationships, both at work (and at home.)
- **Better health.** Many times, internal turmoil expresses itself as physical illnesses. Harboring negative emotions can lead to higher stress levels in the body, which can temporarily or fatally damage it. By dealing with stress and pressure better, leaders enjoy better health.
- **Others include:** Better career opportunities, more effective problem solving skills, greater resilience when life gets tough, greater competence at work and the ability

to get 'more out of life', getting more enjoyment out of life, less stress, stronger and happier relationships and more profitable Organisations.

How can you as a leader afford not to become emotionally intelligent or create an emotionally intelligent Organisation? Simply, you can't!

Increasing your Emotional Intelligence at Work

There are ten things you can do to become more emotionally intelligent and effective in your role. Give yourself a score out of ten (ten being the highest) to assess how well you think you do on each point. Courageous? Get your team members to assess you!

1. Start with you. Get in touch with your own feelings. What makes you angry? How do you resolve conflict? Are your relationships good or do they struggle? What part do you play when there is conflict in your team or Organisation?

2. Manage your Emotions well. When you get angry, take a deep breath in and say or do nothing. Walk away and calm down. Think things through first, before you react.

3. Think positively. Conflict and facing challenges are part of life. Believe there is a solution to the problem.

4. Create an emotionally intelligent team/Organisation. Get your Team to devise a Code of Conduct that outlines the behaviours expected in the Team, according to which everybody follows. One of them is to be positive and polite to each other, always seeking positive outcomes where possible. Ensure everybody lives by the Code, including you.

5. Create a Learning Organisation. Make ongoing learning and growth a key focus of your strategic plan to develop your people at all levels. Ongoing continuous improvement and growth should

be the foundation of your people strategies, setting clear objectives, goals and processes as often as possible. Learn how to give constructive feedback to them, filled with encouragement and support, not negative criticism.

6. Communicate well and encourage healthy conflict. Conflict is part of everyday life and it is the same in your Organisation. Your people are going to get mad at each other at times, so teach them how to 'fight fair.' Give them healthy conflict resolution skills so that issues are dealt with calmly, appropriately and with emotional intelligence.

7. Be an exemplary role model. Learn how to lead with integrity. Be positive. Encourage your people when they are struggling. Show an interest in them. Be available to help them. Always resolve conflict with the person with whom you have the problem, and not discuss the issues openly with others.

8. Be the change you want to see in your Team/Organisation. Whatever level you are at in the Company, you only have control over 'your patch of grass.' Make it count. If you want to see more effective team meetings held, then start with making the ones you run more effective. If you want people to take more time doing their work thoroughly, then you pay more attention to detail and the quality of your work first. Lead by example.

9. Listen to yourself and others. Often in leadership what people tell us is not necessarily what is going on. Listen to what your people say and watch body language (75% of our communication is through our bodies). Follow your intuition even if your thoughts don't agree. Generally your intuition is right.

10. Be kind and empathic. Show kindness and consideration. These are the reasons that people stay working for specific Organisations.

Key points

Emotional Intelligence is a key competence of organisations. It is not a 'nice' to have. It is 'critical' to have.

Leaders with high emotional intelligence are far more effective than those who don't possess it.

Emotionally intelligent leaders and team members tend to be happier, healthier, they have better relationships around them, and they make more effective decisions and create more profitable organisations.

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CARYN WALSH AWARDS

- 2016: Coach of the 2016 Australian CEO of the Year (APAC).
- Finalist: 2015 Australian Learning and Development Professional of the Year Award (AITD)
- Finalist: 2015 Australian Woman in International Business Award (Premiers NSW Exports Awards)
- Winner: 2014 Highly Commended Award for Organisational Effectiveness (AITD)
- Write to Caryn Walsh at info@puremagicbusiness.com.au or visit Pure Magic's website on www.puremagicbusiness.com.au