

Emotional intelligence, management concept: a contributing factor for effective service delivery

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Abstract

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is defined by Goleman (1998), as the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in us and in our relationships. Success actually depends on a set of emotional and social competencies that builds on EI, in the same way that specific cognitive abilities may be linked to general intelligence as measured by the IQ test. The original model developed by Goleman (1995) and self-reviewed in 1998 was based on two hundred competency models, had identified twenty five social and emotional competencies that most strongly predict superior performance in many occupations. He organized these competencies into the five dimensions of *self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social awareness, and social skills*. Recent research using the emotional competence inventory, a measure of EI developed by Boyatzis, Goleman & Rees (1998), led to a refined version of the original model, consisting of four (4) dimensions and 19 emotional competencies: *self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, social-skills*. Today, this model is commonly applied to management within the public sector and more so in corporate business organizations; the belief also in the strong link in human resources development and effective delivery of service.

Introduction

Service performance can quickly slide to mediocrity unless the basic attributes are moored into a philosophy that recognizes the delicate balance of internal dynamics (e.g. competence and motivation of staff, shared values, leadership, authority relations, decision processes, (Nowanko & Richardson, 1994). These express and create patterns of behavior, create and awareness of where an organization is coming from; what it strives to achieve; its purpose, norms and values; and make a clear role of organizational members before, during and after service encounters. The above excerpt demonstrates the important role that interpersonal skills (patterns of behavior) contribute to the effective service delivery of any organization. Such skills include, win-win situation, be assertive and confident, be clear on parameters when making decisions, treat people with respect, treat conflict as an opportunity for improved relationships and manage emotions (emotional intelligence). This aim is to discuss the development and application of the concept for public sector effective service delivery, in the practice of EI.

Definition

EI is define by Goleman (1998) as the capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in us and in our relationships. Success actually depends on a set of emotional and social competencies that builds on EI, in the same way that specific cognitive abilities may be linked to general intelligence as measured by the IQ test.

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The original model developed by Goleman (1995), was reviewed by Goleman in 1998 based on 200 competency models, had identified 25 social and emotional competencies that most strongly predict superior performance in many occupations. He organized these competencies into the five dimensions of EI Goleman (1995): *self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social awareness, and social skills*. Recent research using the emotional competence inventory was a measure of EI developed by Boyatzis, Goleman & Rees (1998) led to a refined version of the original model. This generic competency framework consists of four dimensions and 19 emotional competencies, condensed from a handful of studies (U.S. Office of Personnel Management 1996; Spencer & Spencer 1993).

Dimensions and competencies

Goleman reviewed his earlier paper and instead of five he proposed that the four broad dimensions of Emotional Intelligence are *self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, social-skills* – are interdependent and, to some degree, hierarchical.

The four dimensions and the nineteen emotional competencies is exemplified as follows:

Self-awareness – knowing one's internal states, preferences, resources, and intuitions

(1) *emotional self-awareness* – recognizing one's emotions, (2) *accurate self-assessment* – knowing one's strength and limits, (3) *self confidence* – a strong sense of one's self-worth and capabilities;

Self-management – managing one's internal states, impulses, and resources to facilitate reaching goals

(4) *adaptability*- flexibility in handling change, (5) *keeping disruptive emotions and impulses in check*, (6) *conscientiousness and reliability* – taking responsibility for personal performance; maintaining standards of honesty and integrity, (7) *initiative and innovation*-readiness to act on opportunities, being comfortable with novel ideas, approaches, and new information, (8) *achievement drive* – striving to improve or meet a standard of excellence; persistence in pursuing goals despite obstacles and setback;

Social awareness – awareness of others' feelings, needs, and concerns, (9) *empathy* – sensing others feelings and perspectives and taking an active interest in their concern, (10) *service orientation* – anticipating, recognizing, and meeting customers' needs, (11) *organizational awareness* – reading a group's emotional currents and power relationships, (12) *developing others* – sensing others' developmental needs and bolstering their abilities; and

Social skills – adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others, (13) *leadership* – inspiring and guiding individual and groups; aligning with the goals of the group of organization, (14) *influence* – wielding effective tactics for persuasion, (15) *change catalyst* – initiating or managing change, (16) *communication* – listening openly and sending convincing messages, (17) *conflict management* – negotiating and resolving disagreements, (18) *collaboration and building bonds* – working with others toward shared goals; nurturing instrumental relationships and (19) *team capabilities* – creating group synergy in pursuing goals.

Case study and analysis

Take the example of a flight attendant, Sione on a Polynesian Airlines flight to Auckland who was confronted by an angry passenger. To deal effectively with the situation, Sione first needed to be aware of his own emotional reaction because the passenger's behavior could cause Sione to experience emotion ranging from apprehension to annoyance. If Sione was *unaware of his own emotional reaction*, it could interfere with his effective action. Awareness, though is rarely enough Sione also had to *control his emotional response*. By calming himself, he was ultimately able to help the passenger calm down. Once Sione became calm, he could tune in to the passenger. By understanding the passenger's feelings

and the reason behind the feelings, Sione was able to take action, he offered to hold the fussy infant squirming on the passenger's lap, and he did so in way that did not make the passenger more embarrassed and angry.

The flight attendant used competencies associated with each of the four dimensions of Emotional Intelligence. Although it happened very quickly and without conscious awareness, Sione's self-awareness made self-management possible, and self-management made empathy possible, all of the three of these abilities made it easier for the attendant to use effective social skills.

The case study also reveals a point suggested by Goleman (1998) that to be star performer, one needs a sufficiently high level of about six different competencies spread across all four dimensions. It is not enough to excel in self-awareness or self-management or even social skills. Furthermore, competencies needed for success differ with the nature of the job; depend on one's level in the organization and the organization culture and strategic focus.

Conclusion

1. EI and its competencies are learned; they are not innate. People are not born with a high-degree of self-confidence or achievement drive (Goleman 1998). From the example, Sione, the flight attendant underwent effective service delivery training with the company, whilst the response to the situation was effective;
2. EI dimensions and competencies are interdependent and, to some degree, hierarchical as again demonstrated in the case study presented – self-awareness, self-management social skills and social awareness skills were applied to the existing disagreement;
3. The case study also points to another important aspect of the model: A high degree of competence in just one of the four dimensions of EI usually is not enough to achieve superior performance, one needs a sufficiently high level of about six different competencies spread across all four dimensions; and
4. Finally EI has a far-flung application to communal environments and extended family culture. It is a concept that should assist in creating mutual understanding amongst conflicting parties.

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