

# Emotional Intelligence

## THE NEW CRITICAL COMPETENCE

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*Tom has been with BestCo Foods for twenty-five years. In the early years, he moved up quickly, becoming an assistant store manager within seven years of being hired. He was promoted to store manager in another five years. Tom was good with customers. He could “turn on the charm” when he needed to, and customers often loved him. In the past he had good relationships with his bosses. Things haven’t always been so positive, though, with the folks he’s managed. Good department heads began asking for transfers, and two years ago, as the labor market tightened, he began to have real retention problems. In exit interviews his employees said that Tom would explode when someone made a suggestion he didn’t like or reported something that had gone wrong with a customer. They said that Tom never seemed to care about them - ignored them when their children were born or when close family members died. Tom has recently been moved to a regional staff role at a lower salary, and now has only a few people reporting to him.*

### Introduction

Tom is lacking in Emotional Intelligence (EQ) - the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, the capacity for managing our own emotions, and the capacity for building relationships with others. According to research by Daniel Goleman, Emotional Intelligence is twice as important as any other factor in predicting outstanding performance in the workplace - more important than technical competence or IQ.

At high levels of leadership EQ is even more important. When star senior leaders are compared to average ones, more than 85% of the difference in their profiles was attributable to emotional intelligence factors, not cognitive ones. Research at Turknett Leadership Group shows the same trend. When comparing the best leaders we have coached (those rated highest by their coworkers) with those rated lowest, there is almost no difference in technical skill. The greatest differences come in EQ dimensions - the ability to facilitate teamwork, to motivate others, and to be an inspirational role model.

Research by Center for Creative Leadership, confirmed by our research, shows that arrogance and the inability to manage relationships with others are the top causes of executive derailment.

## The Areas of Emotional Intelligence

- ❖ Self-Awareness: The ability to recognize one's feelings, to monitor them and know how one is coming across to others
- ❖ Self-Regulation: The ability to handle feelings so they are appropriate. Involves the capacity to soothe oneself, to shake off worries, gloom or irritability, and to bounce back from setbacks.
- ❖ Self-Motivation: The ability to marshal one's emotions in the service of a goal. Involves being able to delay gratification, stifle impulsiveness, and stay focused on the task or goal at hand.
- ❖ Empathy: The ability to recognize emotions in others. People who are empathic are more attuned to the subtle social signals that indicate what others need or want.
- ❖ Social Skills: The ability to relate well with others and manage the emotions of others. People who excel in this area are able to interact smoothly with others, are persuasive, and understand how to motivate others.

## Increasing Importance of Emotional Intelligence

Some level of emotional intelligence has always been important for success in the workplace. The old style leaders who moved to top levels in organizations usually had an ability to manage upward and could relate well with customers. They often, however, lacked real empathy, and they didn't spend a lot of time reflecting on their impact on others. They definitely didn't worry about managing emotions. If they were angry, they let it show. They berated bearers of bad news, and taught their underlings by their behavior to "keep your face to the boss and your backside to the customer." They didn't view creating a motivating environment as part of their job. Their attitude was, "You should thank me for giving you a job." Many old style successful leaders were socially astute and self aware enough to manage customers, build superficial relationships, and keep the organization running smoothly.

The situation has changed now. It takes higher levels of emotional intelligence to build a strong company in the information age. It takes empathy, self regulation, and true engagement to get commitment and the best work from today's workers, it takes a higher level of EQ to deal with more demanding customers, and it takes high levels of emotional intelligence to **retain** employees in any kind of business.

There are four major reasons for the increased importance of EQ:

- ❖ The changing nature of work
- ❖ Generation X and what they demand in terms of management
- ❖ The tight labor market
- ❖ Increasing customer demands

Managers who are both self-aware and empathetic are sensitive to the feelings of others and really care about them. Their understanding of and ability to form lasting relationships with employees and customers is much greater. They can tell whether employees are challenged and engaged. According to research by Gallup, one of the twelve questions that makes a difference in whether people stay or leave an organization is “Does my supervisor or someone at work seem to care about me as a person?”

When managers develop the highest levels of emotional intelligence, they have the relationship-building skills that can create an organization that moves fast and solves problems quickly, and whose employees are committed and energized. Managers set the tone so that employees are honest with them - they let employees know that getting issues on the table quickly is important, and they don't explode when they hear bad news. Managers with high emotional intelligence think before acting. They can hear the truth, whether it comes from customers or within the organization. They move around the organization, listening and building relationships. They are able to understand the needs of others, to read emotional reactions, and to motivate through what's important to the other person. They are able to motivate themselves to achieve, and can inspire commitment and hard work from others even in difficult times.

For more information, please call Turknett Leadership Group at 770-270-1723.