

Leader's Emotional Intelligence: An Indispensible HR Conquest for Competent Project Management

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Abstract

With the changing Business Scenario, companies plan interventions that improve their profits and sustain their existence by having cross-functional teams work on various Projects that are global in nature. Dynamic Leadership Style is a one of the potential success factors for project managers. A project manager with expertise is primarily responsible to achieve project objectives by distinctively leading individuals with an appropriate style that can lead to better performance. The Emotional Intelligence School which has been popular since the late 1990s, states "the Leader's Emotional Intelligence has a greater impact on his or her success as a leader and the performance of his or her team than does the Leader's Intellectual Capability". Some researchers have proved that there is a special link between Leadership Style, Emotional Intelligence, and the Success of Multifaceted Projects. In fact, Emotional Intelligence influences project leaders to encourage coherence within team members and to resolve conflicts with win-win situations. Erstwhile research work also agrees that effective project managers should possess a combination of skills such as Leadership Skills, Management Skills and Communication Skills. However, while the general management observes effective leadership as a critical success factor and is of the view that an appropriate leadership style can lead to better performance; this paper emphasis to review the Project Leader's Emotional Intelligence is the key for Effective Project Management.

Keywords: HR Strategy; Leadership; Emotional Intelligence; Project Management.

Introduction

A Project is a temporary group activity designed to produce a unique product, service or result or a specific set of operations designed to accomplish a specific goal.

Project management is the application of knowledge, skills and techniques to execute projects

effectively and efficiently. It is a strategic competency for organizations, enabling them to tie project results to business goals to strive the markets competition. It began to emerge as a distinct profession in the mid-20th century.

According to PMI's a Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide): Project management process follows the steps given under:

Initiating → Planning → Executing → Closing → Monitoring and Controlling

A Leader's Project management knowledge is described on nine areas as given below:

- Integration
- Cost
- Human resources
- Scope
- Quality
- Communications
- Time
- Procurement
- Risk management

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These areas are a matter of concern for every management; nevertheless project management has a unique focus shaped by the goals, resources and schedule of each project in the organization and the same is ascertained by the rapid worldwide growth of project management.

Project management as a discipline has been significantly emergent over recent decades and is expected to have a tremendous growth in the future in the industry, administration and in the academic world. It is the use of operational tools and methodology in the effective implementation of Company's projects worldwide, provided the future expectations are formulated more clearly on the benefits and accomplishments of a standardised Project Management system.

Emotional Intelligence: EI is a new concept that is defined as the cognitive ability and social skills required facilitating interpersonal behavior. While intelligence can be broadly defined as the capacity for goal-oriented adaptive behavior, Emotional Competency focuses on the aspects of intelligence that govern self-knowledge and social adaptation.

Project Management and Leadership Competencies

As Project Management increases in its

complexities; there is a great demand for successful leadership in the organisations. Here is a review of leader's competencies by theorists:

- Effective project managers are usually highly intelligent and have better problem solving abilities than normal project managers – *Rees, Turner and Tampoe (1996)*
- Effective project leaders hold creative problem solving, flexible management skill, credibility and effective communication – *Pinto and Traylor (1998)*
- Effective project leaders hold combination of knowledge (qualification), skills (ability to do assignment) and core personality (motives + traits + self-concepts) – *Crawford (2007)*
- Effective leadership depends on the social competencies needed to form good relationships and stir up common values. As rightly said "**Underperforming organizations are usually over managed or under led**" by *Warren Bennis*, President university of Cincinnati, university of Maryland symposium, Jan 21 1986

Further Down are Some of the Views of Theorist's on Leader's Emotional Intelligence:

- **Goleman et al. (2002) classifies 19 leadership competencies** under 4 categories

Table 1: Domains of emotional intelligence

Domains	Competencies
Self - Awareness	Personal Competence Emotional Self-awareness Accurate Self-awareness Self-confidence
Self - Management	Emotional self-control Transparency Adaptability Initiative Optimism
Social Awareness	Social Competence Empathy
Relationship Management	Organisational Awareness Inspirational leadership Influence Developing others Change catalyst Conflict management Building bonds Teamwork and collaboration

- *Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, (2002)* have identified 4 dimensions of Emotional Intelligence and six leadership styles such as : *Visionary; Democratic; Coaching; Pacesetting; Affiliative; Commanding;*
- *Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991)* identified 6 traits of effective leaders

• Drive and ambition	• Technical knowledge	• Self-confidence
• Honesty and integrity	• Desire to lead and influence others	• Intelligence

• Turner (1999) identified 7 traits of effective project managers:

• Problem-solving ability	• Energy and initiative	• Self-confidence
• Results orientation	• Communication and Perspective	• Negotiating ability

Table 2: Dulewicz and Higgs (2003)- 15 leadership competencies

Group	Competency
Intellectual (IQ)	Critical analysis and judgment vision and imagination Strategic perspective
Managerial (MQ)	Engaging communication Managing resources Empowering Developing Achieving
Emotional (EQ)	Self awareness Emotional resilience Motivation Interpersonal sensitivity Influence Intuitiveness Conscientiousness

Emotional Intelligence in Project Management

Geoghegan and Dulewicz (2008), research suggests that a manager's leadership style can be defined in terms of 3 competency Groups which are statistically related to project performance.

Over the years, Emotional intelligence is the most sought after characteristic in a project manager and there are substantial proofs that competencies required by the managers handling projects are quite similar to the leadership competencies. Statically, also there have been enough researches to prove that Emotional competency correlates significantly with success in high-performing projects.

'The higher the EI of a Project Manager, higher will be the rate of success'. Herkenhoff (2004) argues that in environments of strategic change, successful leaders require both the intellectual competencies to meet cognitive challenges and the emotional capabilities to inspire and empathise with others.

Application of Emotional Intelligence in Project Management

Business Environment goes through a lot of changes which needs to be managed at global level with virtual and multicultural dimensions and this globalization requires every manager to put together a reasonable level of intelligence.

The one characteristic that makes a distinction of a manager to a leader is their emotional response to the organizational situations. Along with the Technical knowledge, the success of a project depends on a leader's ability to recognize the role and value of emotions in the workplace.

Project leaders with high Emotional Intelligence have a tendency to practice accommodating and collaborative styles. To substantiate these several studies demonstrate strong Leadership style and emotional Intelligence as the key factors, a project manager must consider improving their project performance and a couple of other factors such as:

- *Building trust* with others through actions that demonstrate honesty and integrity
- *Commitment* to achieve the project's goals and must motivate others while practicing self-motivation. Commitment to the project's goals comprises completing the project as planned or getting relief from the requirements.
- *Effective communication* with different levels of workers and managers. A good communicator knows when to speak and when to listen. Being assertive in arguments and using the proper tone to emphasize items is essential to convey the message. Listening to others and understanding the context as well as the meaning of what is being said is important to ensure effective communication.
- *Negotiation skills* are important to achieve project goals. It is a planned activity that attempts to obtain a win-win situation where both sides gain and there are no losers. The best outcome is when all parties are pleased with the agreement reached.
- *Improvement on their emotional intelligence competence*: studying new model of project management; having a mentor to assimilate the experience and good judgment of a successful senior person; capitalizing on personal strengths and improving on weaknesses.

The first time the term appeared was in Wayne Payne's doctoral thesis, "A study of emotion: Developing emotional intelligence" (1985) and later the term was popularized by Goleman in his book, "Emotional Intelligence" (1995). In the year 1999, Goleman describes Emotional Intelligence as "managing feelings so that they are expressed appropriately and effectively, enabling people to work together smoothly toward their common goals."

Project Leadership Styles

Business Environment today demands leaders with creativity and one who understands the challenging world of multigenerational teams which has a combination of Baby Boomers, Generational X and Generational Y people. In this context, many organisations are working towards developing leadership potential in aspects of human behavior.

Leadership Style is a one of the potential success factors and something which is very hard to measure. The impact of leadership style is predominantly great, when the project manager is able to determine the most appropriate leadership style for each project

team. An effective Leader demonstrates various leadership styles and the key is to use each style at the right time, some of them are given below:

1. *Coercive Style*: is a style that is used when a leader wishes to issue orders when there is a lack of time, or subordinates has no idea on how to craft a solution. It is a direct in such a manner that there is only one direction to go. It is a direct instruction given on the assignments that hinders the thinking pattern or creativity and therefore many avoid discussing controversial topics.
2. *Authoritative Style*: is used when the project manager shares their vision with the team, but allows them to use their various talents to come up with a collaborative solution. The leader values each team member's contribution and motivates the team, so that the members feel honoured to be part of the knowledgeable leader's team.
3. *Affiliative Style*: is where a team leader allows lot of flexibility in terms of communication and coherence of the team. The objective here is to encourage each member to think of themselves as part of the team and feel responsible to contribute to the organizational goals while balancing on individual's career goals.
4. *Democratic Style*: is when everyone has a say however, the final word is of the leader. While this style may cause the planning and execution stages to be time consuming, morale is high.
5. *Pace-setting Style*: involves focuses on high productivity without a focus on quality. This identifies employees who are slow learners, while other members may feel constant pressure to compete and not feel they are providing any meaningful contribution to the creative process.
6. *Coaching Style*: involves leader's willingness to teach and allow people to work on their strengths and weaknesses. The coach challenges all to do better and encourages learning through failures.

Factors Affecting Leadership Styles

- *The personality and maturity of the manager*: will evaluate the circumstances and vary management style to match the situation.
- *The urgency and criticality of the situation*: deals with conflicts and issues and focuses on the development of the individuals and the team
- *Maturity level of team members*: with more experience benefit more than inexperienced
- *Maturity Level of the team*: Long established well motivated teams may be managed better with a

Referent/Laissez Faire approach than a newly established team, who may need more of a Consensus/ Transformational emphasis.

- *Structure and working model of the team:* Teams which are co located and meet face to face frequently may benefit than a virtual or dispersed teams who may need a more directive leadership style because they have less direct communication.
- *The culture of the company or organization:* Culture influences in the development of the team member's skill and the team's spirit.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Emotional intelligence (EI) is "the ability to accurately identify and understand one's own emotional reactions and those of others, and to regulate one's emotions and to use them to make good decisions and act effectively" according to *Goleman*. In fact, the application of the leader's emotional intelligence in project management has competencies that make the biggest difference in individual's effective performance at work.

Moreover, Emotional intelligence of a leader provides a lot of benefits for individuals as well as organizations, exploring the benefits of emotional

intelligence for project leadership and conflict management and resolution.

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