

Emotional Intelligence and Sound Business Practices...
How HR and Line Management Can Partner for Results
By Adele B. Lynn

Performance results should be everyone's business. The most successful human resource partners know that their job isn't just about hiring and benefits. The HR professionals that can help line managers deliver measurable improvements in productivity, quality, or cost win the hearts and respect of management and go home at night knowing that they have contributed to the bottom line.

As the term emotional intelligence emerged with Daniel Goleman's book, *Emotional Intelligence*, human resource professionals now have a strategic tool that can help management produce results. Although intellectual brilliance, education and experience are critical elements and are surely important in your business hiring practices, they will not solve your company's most challenging problems. Any workplace can be vulnerable to workplace conflict, poor team interaction, low morale, retention problems, or diversity issues that impact performance. Retention and high morale, creativity, and synergy for teamwork and problem solving are not rooted solely in intellect. If you rely on intellect alone, your company will fall short for driving its purpose and igniting the best and most inspired performance from its employees.

However, when sound processes and analytical brilliance is coupled with emotional intelligence, breakthrough achievements can be gained. As a human resource professional, your role is significant for integrating emotional intelligence skills into the workplace at all levels of the organization - especially in those who have any type of leadership, supervisory, sales or customer service role.

By partnering with management to raise EQ awareness and skills, the focus of your HR efforts is on prevention and moving the business to a higher level of competence rather than waiting around for the next crisis intervention. EQ proves to be a powerful strategic tool in accomplishing your business goals in the following areas:

- * Hiring / Screening - By incorporating EQ competencies in your hiring strategies, you are ensuring that the people who come to work for your company will already possess a high degree of emotional intelligence that will help them perform their job.

- * Training - All training on customer service, sales, supervisory development, leadership, career development, and team interactions should include EQ awareness and skills training. By helping employees focus on the areas of EQ that they can improve, you are providing them with tools that will help the business and improve their job satisfaction.

* Coaching - As an HR professional, you may often be involved in coaching others in the organization, in both crisis situations or daily interactions. You can bring incredible value to your one on one coaching experiences as you model and encourage others to understand how EQ can be used as a tool for solving their current and future dilemmas.

* Competency models / Succession plans - HR can assist the organization by developing competency models and succession plans that incorporate EQ competencies. This action will ensure that the organization of the future will be built based on competencies that have the greatest potential to deliver business goals.

* Performance Development Reviews - Performance and development reviews that reflect EQ competencies will ensure that employees are aware of developmental needs in the emotional intelligence area.

Here are some thoughts on where to begin:

1) Convince Line Management of Benefits

Help line management understand the business case for EQ. With over 25 years of research, ample hard data evidence has been produced that link EQ to the business result. As an HR professional, do your homework and present managers with concrete reasons why a focus on EQ will improve the bottom line.

2) Link to Organizational language

Find the evidence in your company to strengthen the EQ case by examining vision, mission, values, and strategic plans to link the EQ concepts to your company's direction. This type of hard evidence supports your EQ initiatives as a way to contribute and add value to your business.

3) Present Case Studies of Improvements

Look for small areas to make dramatic differences in performance by raising employee EQ. Once the results are improved, let others know how and what was done to warrant improvements.

As HR and line management become skilled partners in improving EQ, many of the common problems that your businesses must address will disappear. You will solve your retention and morale problems, improve your company's creativity, create synergy from teamwork, speed information by way of sophisticated people networks, drive your purpose, and ignite the best and most inspired performance from your employees.

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