

Chapter 9

Harnessing Emotional Intelligence for Strategic Leadership: A Contemporary Approach

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines how emotional intelligence (EI) plays a crucial role in developing effective leadership in today's complex and rapidly changing organizational landscape. It examines how self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, which are at the heart of EI, fit into transformational, transactional, and servant leadership theories. In addition, case studies that demonstrate the tangible impact of EI on organizational success are provided in the chapter, which also draws attention to the historical development of EI and its growing importance in strategic decision-making. Furthermore, strategies for leaders to develop and improve their EI skills are emphasized as practical applications of EI in leadership practices are discussed. The chapter ends by looking at the connection between employee engagement and positive organizational outcomes like increased financial performance and employee engagement.

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INTRODUCTION

In the present highly dynamic and competitive business world, the aspect of EI crucial in leadership has emerged. Perceiving, understanding, and managing emotions has become the core of what people call emotional intelligence and has been cited widely as a crucial determinant of leadership effectiveness. People with high EI are likely to handle relational aspects of the workplace, promote effective organizational environment, and mobilize the personnel toward achieving common organizational objectives. Emotional intelligence is crucial when it comes to the aspects of conflict, change, and team as the aspects suggest. In the times of constant innovations and digital changes, employee's and organizational emotions have never been so central, especially during moments of crisis as a result of technological disruptions, and global pandemics, emotionally intelligent leaders are perceived as strategic in the management and provision of direction in such unpredictable times (Connors, 2020). Of all the areas that may be affected by EI in leadership, one is talent management. Proponents of such leadership genres are capable of not just relating to workers on the emotional level but also of recognizing and empowering the ability within their personnel. This means that various goals such as engagement, motivation as well as retention of employees get enhanced. For instance, when a leader is able to observe and understand how the team members feel to an extent that he or she can offer the much-needed support during such a time, the team members will always be loyal to the organization (Malone 2021). Again, such leaders can foster organizational culture that recognises, accepts and appreciates employees, hence increasing organisational commitment and performance. The goals of the present chapter are to discuss the importance of emotional intelligence in the contemporary leadership and to outline the application of EI to improve leadership performance. The chapter will explore the concepts such as definition of EI, theories, leadership practices, building and using of EI in organizations. Also, this chapter will explore how emotional intelligence interacts with other competencies namely decision making, strategic and innovative thinking. When people embrace the complex character of emotional intelligence, the leaders will be in a position to meet the requirements of the current business settings and foster the achievement of their organizations in the long run (Ayalew & Ayenew, 2022). In addition, the chapter is also going to introduce ideas for EI application into leadership development initiative and organizational culture. These programmes will showcase examples of where leaders have scored excellent results when they apply tested emotional intelligences to enrich and rise beyond adverse circumstance. These examples will be a source of inspiration in showing how EI can help turn around organisational culture and change people's mind-set in order to foster creativity and operate more effectively in the face of adversity (Bertrand, 2023). Therefore, through an analysis of what theoretical and practical aspects of

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