

New Age Leadership and Emotional Intelligence Exploring the Leadership – EI Connection

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Leading an organization in today's complex and dynamic business environment, calls for special skills and abilities that go beyond academic excellence and technical know-how.

Business in the 21st Century is characterized by change and diversity due to rapidly changing technologies, global competition, and shifts from controlled to open economies. Leadership models must also change to sustain organizational and business growth. Leading an organization in such a complex and dynamic environment, calls for special skills and abilities that go beyond academic excellence and technical know-how. Psychologists and authors, Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee conducted research for decades to study leaders and leadership in high-performing companies. Their findings revealed that what set the high impact leaders apart from mediocre leaders were their outstanding communication skills and people skills, the ability to build relationships, flexibility in managing constant change, skill in building teams and leveraging the strengths

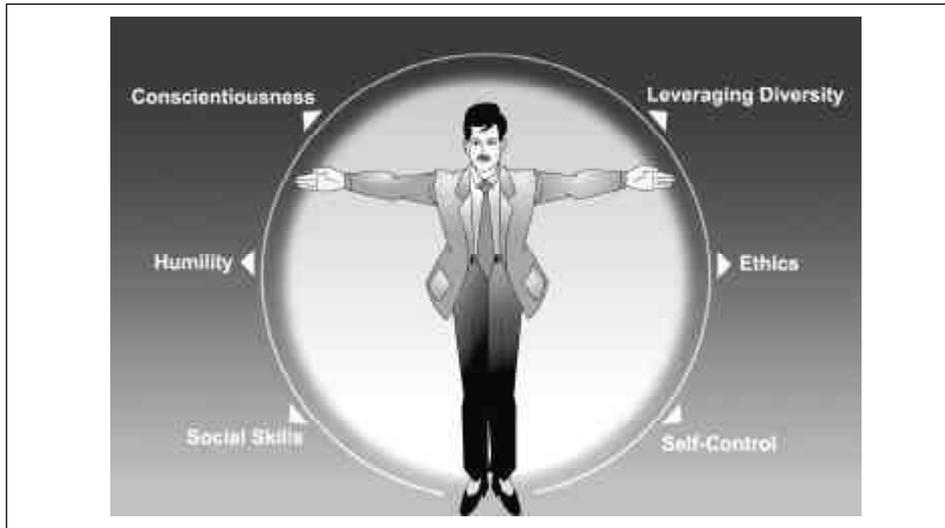
of the diverse workforce. These competencies could be clustered under the umbrella term “Emotional Intelligence” (EI).

This article explores the link between emotional intelligence and leadership in contemporary organizations. The four dimensions of Emotional Intelligence are: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Their associated competencies are also discussed. It also shows how EI dimensions integrate with the six different leadership styles (visionary, coaching, affiliative, democratic, pacesetter and commanding styles) that resonant leaders skillfully employ to ultimately produce business results.

The article emphasizes the need for organizations to encourage emotional intelligence competencies by making them the underlying premise for hiring, for training and in performance appraisals so as to maximize potential for high performance and productivity.

Leadership in the 21st Century

Leadership is not static. Leadership models emerge, occupy center stage, and then become obsolete—making way for newer models to fit emerging new business paradigms. The authoritarian leadership styles that were practical in traditional times are no longer appropriate. Leading by command cannot sustain business in



today's dynamic and complex business world, where change and diversity call for flexibility, collaboration and team work.

Management is no longer concerned only with the processes of production and selling, finance, marketing and branding. Rather, management is centric to people—to human resources—to attracting them, retaining them in jobs, making them more productive and growing them for leadership. As Jack Welch accurately remarked, “Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others.”¹ Thus, the models of leadership are shifting from top-down to side-by-side; from a command-and-control model (decisions and orders dictated from the top), to a model that follows the policy of inclusion.

This involves including employees in decision-making processes and motivating them to participate actively. It is a model where adaptability, initiative, enthusiasm and relationship skills are recognized and rewarded.

This model of leadership is anchored in what is known as Emotional Intelligence (EI). What is EI? Why is it being viewed as the new yardstick for benchmarking leadership in this new global marketplace? What are the EI competencies that will equip leaders to face the challenges of the 21st century?

Primal Leadership and Emotional Intelligence

“Great leaders move us. They ignite our passion and inspire the best in us.”² To lead is to influence the behavior or opinion of others. Success, whether in creating strategy, or energizing teams, depends on how leaders influence the ones they lead: how they ignite passion and optimism and inspire the best in us. Daniel Goleman conceptualized the concept of resonance to refer to this effect of igniting such positive emotions. In his book, *Primal Leadership*, Goleman says that leadership is about emotions and the primal task of a leader is to “prime” good feelings in the ones they lead.

For organizations to survive and thrive in today's business climate there is a need for such resonant leaders who can manage emotions (his own and others)

¹ Jack Welch with Suzie Welch: *Winning* Harper Collins.

² *The New Leaders*, Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee Little Brown Publications pp3.

and nurture positive emotions like “hope, excitement, passion, a sense of urgent purpose, and sheer joy in creating something meaningful...” This “positive affect and social bonding is what can build and sustain momentum for change.”³

EI competencies are the drivers of resonant leadership. Each of the four domains of EI—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management—manifest themselves in a cluster of competencies and personal qualities as shown in Exhibit I.

Exhibit I: Emotional Competence Framework	
Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence	Related Competencies
I. PERSONAL COMPETENCE	
Self-Awareness	Self Knowledge; Self-Confidence.
Self-Management	Self-Control; Trustworthiness, Conscientiousness, Adaptability and Flexibility, Creativity and Innovation, Achievement, Drive, Commitment, Initiative, Optimism.
II. SOCIAL COMPETENCE	
Social Awareness	Empathy: Sensing other’s emotions and understanding their perspectives. Organizational Awareness: Reading political currents; decision networks. Service Orientation: Recognize and meet client or customer needs. Leveraging Diversity
Relationship Management	Effective Communication; Motivating with a compelling vision; Conflict Management; Leadership; Building Bonds; Team Capabilities, Collaboration and Cooperation, Developing Others; Acting as – change catalyst.
<i>Source: The New Leaders by Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee.</i>	

Based on research into competency frameworks of almost 500 world class organizations, the authors Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee show that resonant leaders, whether in business, politics, government, sports or education, excel not just through skill and intellect but by connecting with others using EI competencies like empathy and self-awareness. The result is a “contagion of positive emotion that spreads to others within the workforce.”⁴

³ ‘Leadership’: Ronald R Sims and Scott A Quatro, Quest Publishing House pp. 263.

⁴ Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee, *The New Leaders*, Little Brown Publications pp. 7.

Primal leadership resonates positive emotions from top down, in a rippling effect. “The ripple effect of a leader’s enthusiasm and optimism is awesome,” says General Colin Powell.

In true military style he talks of the gung ho attitude that says: “We can change things here, we can achieve awesome goals; we can be the best....”

Opposed to resonance is “dissonance”, the act of sparking off negative emotions like anger, frustration fear and anxiety. While resonance can create a ‘contagion of positive emotions’, so also, dissonance can create a contagion of negative emotions. Leaders who are cynical and pessimistic, who whine and blame, engender the same behaviors among their subordinates. Moods impact results; so, whether an organization withers or flourishes, depends to a large extent on the leaders’ effectiveness to create resonant relationships and the key to make this happen is emotional intelligence.

Significance of Emotional Intelligence in Leadership

“Leadership is many things but mostly it is about emotional intelligence.”⁵

There are several competency models that outline the skills and behaviors underlying the roles of a leader. Leadership involves influencing others, developing others, decision-making, team building, project management, relationship building and other goal-oriented tasks. All these pre-suppose one common truth—the higher the level of the job, the greater the relative importance of emotional intelligence as compared to academic excellence, technical skills and cognitive abilities. The latter are entry level requirements but it is emotional intelligence that distinguishes the outstanding leader and links to outstanding performance.

Jack Welch, the erstwhile CEO of GE, reflects the same philosophy in his “Authentic Leadership Model” introduced at GE. This model has the underpinnings of his “head”, “heart”, and “guts” model where Head refers to intelligence and competence, Heart connotes empathy and feeling... and Guts meant a level of confidence, the last two both being emotional intelligence competencies. According to Jack Welch, there are many smart managers, but not enough of those who are confident enough to take tough decisions and empathetic

⁵ Jack Welch with Suzie Welch, *Winning*. Harper Collins pp.71.

enough to encourage social bonding and foster openness. This is where training in emotional intelligence becomes an important aspect of leadership development.

The significance and need for EI in those who lead can well be realized when you visualize a leader who lacks EI. This shows up as rigidity—the inability to adapt one’s style to the change in organization culture and business situations (outcome of poor self-awareness). Secondly, lack of empathy shows up in poor social skills. This is reflected in such behaviors as being too harshly critical, insensitive and demanding, and abrasive in communicating. The result is dissonance and alienating others. How can such a leader ever achieve the most primal task of a leader—that of arousing passion in others, in igniting the spark for outstanding performance?

In short, how can he get results? Deficits in Emotional Intelligence carry a high price. Apart from limited output due to low employee morale and demotivation, what really affects the company is high attrition and the consequent cost of employing and training new hires. The emotionally unintelligent leader fails to realize that “you don’t compete with products alone anymore but how you use your people”.⁶

The Emotionally Intelligent Leader vs. the Derailed Leader

What sets the successful leader apart from the mediocre or failed leader are the following dimensions of emotional competencies:

- **Self-control**

The self-composed leader stays calm and composed even under stress. He is seen as confident and dependable. People turn to him for guidance and support in a crisis. On the other hand, angry outbursts, moodiness and rudeness characterize a person with low self-control.

- **Conscientiousness**

Successful leaders take responsibility for their mistakes and failures and then take action to rectify the situation.

⁶ Daniel Goleman ‘*Working With Emotional Intelligence*’ Bloomsbury pp. 7.

- **Ethics and Trustworthiness**

A true leader is ethical and trustworthy in his dealings with subordinates and colleagues; also, he will not step on others to achieve his ambitions.

- **Social Skills**

High on social skills, successful leaders get along well with others and build strong networks of mutually beneficial relationships. The derailed leader is one who has alienated himself from others because of his poor social skills.

- **Leveraging Diversity**

The high performing team leader welcomes diversity and is quick to engage the varied skills to achieve team goals. The derailed leader, because of his rigidity, fails to take advantage of diversity to achieve team goals.

- **Humility**

Successful leaders take responsibility for their mistakes and failures; admit them and take action to fix the problem.

Emotional Intelligence and Change

“Organizations going through greatest change are those which need emotional intelligence the most.”⁷

In an age of change and diversity in the business environment, emotions run high. Change results in ambiguities and uncertainties, thereby causing fear, anxiety, frustration and confusion. In times of change, people look to leaders for stability and direction. In an environment of stress and change, an EI leader engages people, helps them understand the challenges the organization faces, and helps them understand the need to change in order to stay successful. This calls for empathy and emotional self-management. Star performers display this kind of emotional awareness.

The new-age leader needs more than vision and a high IQ. Vision alone cannot sustain business today.

⁷ Daniel Goleman 'Working With Emotional Intelligence' Bloomsbury pp. 42.

What are required are qualities such as adaptability, networking skills (to create social bonds with employees, customers and suppliers) and other EI competencies like self-awareness.

A leader's ability to stay tuned to the things happening around him, which is an important emotional competency, especially today. He has to keep track of new forms of organizations, mergers and acquisitions, new technologies, new rules and policies to enable him in his decision-making process. Limited emotional intelligence in such an unstable business environment spells failure. Leaders of this age must be able to create flexible organizations that change with the demands of the current complex and dynamic marketplace. They have to lead and reshape organizations to meet the challenges of this 21st century business world.

Primal Leadership Styles

The essence of a leader's role is to influence others to do their jobs more effectively; in other words, to get results. How he does it would depend on the style or way he approaches a situation or person, be it an employee a customer, distributor or any other stakeholder. Leaders with outstanding results do not practice just one particular style. They "balance task and relationship styles to assume not only roles of monitors and controllers but also of cheerleaders, orchestrators, conductors, coaches, mentors and followers."⁸

Drawing from research on a global database of 3871 executives, Daniel Goldman, Richard Bonanzas and Annie McKee identified six distinct styles that leaders operate in and underlying each of these are emotional competencies that build resonance. These are briefly depicted in the Exhibit II.

The most effective leader is able to skillfully switch between the various styles depending on the situation. In describing these six styles, the authors draw a graphic analogy between the primal leader and the golf professional. Just as the golf professional decides on his stroke according to the situation to score a point, so also, the high-impact leader skillfully switches between the various styles to suit the situation and achieve results. The point being made here is that the leadership style should match the business reality. The leader may be sensitive when negotiating

⁸ *Leadership*, Ronald R Sims and Scott A Quatro, Quest Publishing House pp. xi.

Exhibit II: Primal Leadership Styles in a Nutshell	
<p>1. VISIONARY How it Builds Resonance: Impact on Climate: When Appropriate:</p>	<p>Ignites positive energy and directs people towards a shared vision. Most strongly positive. When changes require a new vision, or when clear direction is needed.</p>
<p>2. AFFILIATIVE How it Builds Resonance: Impact on Climate: When Appropriate: Inappropriate:</p>	<p>Creates harmony, supportive and emotionally strong climate, especially in teams. Positive. To heal rifts in a team; motivate the team during stressful times or strengthen connections. Too much focus on praise and making people feel-good can make for mediocrity where poor performance is tolerated.</p>
<p>3. COACHING How it Builds Resonance: Impact on Climate: When Appropriate: Inappropriate:</p>	<p>Relates an individual's career aspirations to organization's goals. Highly positive. To help an employee improve performance by building long-term capabilities. If in excess, it can be seen as micromanaging.</p>
<p>4. DEMOCRATIC How it Builds Resonance: Impact on Climate: When Appropriate: When Inappropriate:</p>	<p>Values people's inputs and gets commitment through participation. Positive. To build buy-in or consensus, as well as to get valuable input from employees. To help an employee improve performance by building long-term capabilities. In a crisis situation or where expert knowledge is required.</p>
<p>5. PACESETTING How it Builds Resonance: Impact on Climate: When Appropriate: When Inappropriate:</p>	<p>Meets challenging and exciting goals. Values people's inputs and gets commitment through participation. Positive. To get high quality results with a motivated and competent team. Excessive use could lower employee morale, provoke anxiety and constrict innovative thinking, leading to exhaustion and decline in productivity.</p>
<i>Contd...</i>	

<i>Contd...</i>	
6.	<p>COMMANDING</p> <p>How it Builds Resonance: Soothes fears by giving clear direction in an emergency.</p> <p>Impact on Climate: Highly negative as it is often misused.</p> <p>When Appropriate: In a crisis, to kick start a turnaround, or with problem employees.</p> <p>When Inappropriate: Counter productive in a team comprising competent self-motivated individuals. Provokes resentment.</p>
<i>Adapted from The New Leaders by Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee.</i>	

a merger, but be commanding in a crisis situation. The visionary style would be most effective when there is a need for radical change and a new vision; for example, the leadership style of Jack Welch, when he took over as the CEO of GE.

The first four styles are positive styles. The last two lead to negative results and are to be used with caution. The best leaders are adept at four or more leadership styles and skillfully interchange these according to circumstances.

Conclusion

In today's organizational culture with its emphasis on teams, flexibility and strong customer orientation, leaders would do well to employ the Primal Leadership Model with its emphasis on emotional intelligence.

Encouraging emotional intelligence competencies (like relationship skills, self-motivating and self-management skills, team spirit, and skills in mentoring and motivating others) is a vital component of any high performing organization's management philosophy and should be the underlying premise for hiring, for training and in performance appraisals.

Creating organizations that are emotionally intelligent are ultimately the leader's responsibility. By using resonance-building leadership styles, leaders can bring out the best in their people and build resilient, flexible organizations. Further, by encouraging managers and executives to create and sustain resonance in their own relationships, teams, and organizations, they can maximize potential for high performance and productivity.

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