



CIPRIANI COLLEGE
OF LABOUR AND CO-OPERATIVE STUDIES

EMOTIONS

MANAGING

**WORK
MATTERS**

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Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

Creating and maintaining the optimal work environment requires a tremendous amount of emotional intelligence among both supervisors and subordinates alike. Emotional intelligence, initially coined by researchers John Mayer and Peter Salovey, refers to one's ability to understand and manage one's emotions, while simultaneously influencing the emotions of others. It encompasses five critical elements including: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. It should be noted that all of these are fundamental in alleviating a plethora of job-related issues often stemming from stress related triggers.

Being self-aware entails having a deep understanding of one's emotions, strengths, weaknesses, needs and drives. Individuals that possess strong self-awareness, are realistic in their expectations and are consciously aware of their interactions or relationships with others, and this is critical for management as they are tasked with coordinating activities and would need to know the capabilities of staff. Self-aware leaders are proven to be more effective and have more satisfied subordinates which ultimately leads to an increase in productivity within the workplace as superiors set realistic expectations for their subordinates. The issue of self-awareness is also associated with higher job satisfaction and more conducive career decisions as it facilitates good decision making, improves communication and promotes better management of emotional triggers.

In relation to self-regulation, another major aspect of emotional intelligence, this can be defined as the control of one's behaviour through the use of self-monitoring, self-evaluation and self-reinforcement. Self-monitoring involves keeping a record of one's behaviour, both positive and negative, whereas self-evaluation involves assessing the information obtained during self-monitoring. When one critically evaluates his/her behaviour at work, the individual should become more cognizant of desirable behaviours which improve productivity, as well as negative behaviours which creates unnecessary disruptions. The issue of self-reinforcement refers to rewarding oneself for appropriate behaviour or attaining a specific goal. It is being argued, here that by improving self-regulation skills in the workplace, employees become more focused, goal oriented, and are better able to manage their emotions and delay the immediate need for gratification.

Motivation can be seen as the process whereby goal-direct-

ed activities are initiated and sustained. In general, we can identify two broad types of motivation, namely extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation refers to the drive to engage in an activity to obtain external reward, while intrinsic motivation refers to the inherent drive which is derived from engaging in activity for its own sake. Workers should feel both extrinsically and intrinsically motivated at the workplace as motivation increases overall productivity, decreases employee absenteeism, improves worker efficiency, and reduces the employee turnover rate.

Another important aspect of emotional intelligence is empathy, which refers to the ability to view things from another's perspective and imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling. As many people operate in the workplace and have constant contact with each other, the issue of empathy is a critical one; both in terms of employee-to-employee relationships; and management-to-employee relationships. To be sure, empathy improves human interactions in general and can lead to more effective communication and positive outcomes in the workplace.

As human beings, we need to develop social skills, which basically means that we learn competence, facilitating interaction and communication with others in the society in general and in the workplace specifically. It is generally accepted that social skills are essential in building both personal and professional relationships and promotes clear communication, improves teamwork, improves collaboration and improves the working environment.

Conventional means of assessment place high emphasis on the importance of one's intelligence quotient, based on performances derived from a series of tests; where individuals with higher IQ's are regarded as possessing better cognitive abilities as it relates to learning and understanding. However, emotional intelligence is as equally, as powerful, and as fundamental as academic intelligence in the world of work. Employers now value emotional intelligence as an essential asset in the workplace as workers who are emotionally intelligent are more capable of excelling, as success is strongly associated with sound/strong personal qualities. Additionally, it must be noted, that although a high IQ aids in acquiring a desired job, emotional intelligence is what ensures job security and promotion. Moreover, emotionally intelligent workers possess the skills to productively co-exist

and navigate the work environment while coping with and separating all the personal and external hurdles of life. It is noted that emotionally intelligent workers are more motivated, productive and efficient, in comparison to workers who merely possess high academic qualifications. Emotionally intelligent workers help to establish and develop the general rapport among co-workers and managers as they possess the necessary skills to cohesively work in teams which is pivotal to ensuring seamless transitions between employees and administering various tasks in their organizations.

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