

# Summit

## ***WHY DO MANAGERS NEED EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE?***

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Many organisations undervalue emotional intelligence due to a misunderstanding of what it means and how it can benefit organisational efficiency and productivity as well as employee wellbeing. Too many see excellent technical competence as the only requirement for a successful manager, underestimating the importance of skills such as self-awareness, flexibility, and empathy when it comes to managing a team of people. Here are just some of the ways emotionally intelligent managers can benefit their teams and organisations.

## ***A MANAGER SETS THE STANDARDS:***

When it comes to setting the team's standards of behaviour, all eyes are on the manager. How they act, communicate, and make decisions sends signals to the team members as to how they should behave. If a manager does not understand this – or know how to use their influence positively – they risk creating an unhealthy emotional climate in the workplace that disables rather than enables their team.

## ***ADAPTING TO REMOTE MANAGEMENT:***

Remote working often magnifies our personal impact. What would be seen as expressive and assertive management in person can seem unnecessarily harsh when done remotely. To avoid damaging relationships and team morale, it is important managers have the self-awareness to understand their personal impact on others, and the flexibility to adjust their management style to each team member's needs by using the correct levels of assertiveness and emotional expressiveness for each.

## ***MANAGING STRESS:***

Some people manage stress better than others, but this is not innate and a manager can learn how to manage the pressures they face in a more productive way. Those who handle stress better do so because they have the self-awareness to notice when they are beginning to feel stressed, and thus can step back and find a way to mitigate the effects before they fall into 'survival mode.' Failing to do this can lead to poor decision-making and a workplace where the emotional climate is not conducive to effective working.

## ***RESPONSIVENESS TO ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES:***

is able to balance the resolve to stick with their decisions when best for the organisation with the flexibility to adjust them when necessary to accommodate external changes or face new challenges. It is equally important that the manager keeps their team informed of, and involved with, these decisions, and communicates effectively to them regarding what is needed from the team – and conversely, what the team needs from their manager.

## ***WILLINGNESS TO HAVE THE TOUGH TALKS:***

However uncomfortable it may be for a manager to set out a new relationship with team members that used to be peers, these kinds of discussions are a key part of creating the shared understanding and productive relationships that are necessary for a manager and their team to carry out their roles effectively. The ability to confidently initiate these hard conversations and navigate them successfully is a skill that requires emotional intelligence in order to communicate and cooperate effectively with others.

## ***BOUNCING BACK FROM SETBACKS:***

A successful manager needs to be able to both respond effectively to setbacks AND to anticipate potential problems before they arise. An emotionally intelligent manager considers both the best- and worst-case scenario that could arise and prepares in advance to prevent or mitigate any issues.

## ***HAVING EMPATHY:***

As well as ensuring efficiency and productivity for the organisation, it is a manager's responsibility to look after their team, so it is essential a manager can support each team member's varying needs. Especially in the time of remote working, it is important a manager has the empathy to understand how people may be feeling working without in-person contact, and the flexibility to adjust their own working to provide more regular contact to those who would benefit from it.

## ***CREATE HIGH-TRUST RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEAM MEMBERS:***

For most employees, avoiding their manager's disapproval is important for their psychological safety and stability. If the relationship between a manager and their team is not strong enough to provide this security without the need for approval-seeking, team members will often feel the need to guess what their manager wants from them rather than using their resources effectively on tasks they have discussed collaboratively with the manager.

## ***MANAGING EXPECTATIONS:***

The desire to seek approval from one's superiors is as common in managers as in non-managers, and often it leads to managers accepting unrealistic deadlines and workloads on behalf of their team, causing excess stress and eventual feelings of let down when these unreachable goals are not attained. To avoid this, it is essential a manager has the assertiveness to manage their own manager, to create a shared understanding of the team's workload and a productive relationship that allows deadlines to be set on a cooperative basis.

## ***HANDLING CONFLICTING DEADLINES, MULTIPLE PRIORITIES, AND DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS:***

The manager's role involves the careful balancing of priorities, which requires effective planning and delegation strategies to ensure deadlines are met and projects completed to standard. To be successful, a manager must have the awareness and impulse control to ensure they are effective, not just busy – focusing on the few tasks that are most important rather than those that can be easily delegated to others.

## ***ENABLING TEAM MEMBERS TO THINK FOR THEMSELVES:***

A good manager is an enabler, not the fount of all knowledge for team members to consult before performing each and every task. Team members must feel confident to think for themselves, with support to develop decision-making skills (such as how to view a situation from a variety of perspectives), and be free to make decisions regarding their work. Of course, some decisions must be made on a managerial level, but a high trust relationship between a manager and their team will allow for the setting of clear boundaries as to which decisions these are, and which are up to their own discretion.

## ***HAVING HUMILITY:***

It's important that a manager understands that the bulk of the success of the team is down to the work of the other team members, not the manager. A manager that claims all the credit and thinks they're the most important person in the room is not one that is going to engage their team, so it is important that a manager has the self-awareness to acknowledge that their role is to facilitate those they are managing, not take credit for their work.

***TO SEE HOW YOUR ORGANISATION COULD BENEFIT FROM MORE EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT MANAGERS, TAKE A LOOK AT SUMMIT'S MANAGEMENT TRAINING COURSES.***

# Summit

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