

*Enhancing the Emotional Intelligence Competencies  
of Leaders and Managers*

*Evelyn P. Gilmore, B.A., M.Sc., Reg. Psychol., Ps.S.I., F.I.I.T.D,  
M.I.A.H.I.P., M.A.C.*

**The following article first appeared in the journal of the Irish Institute of Training  
& Development**

Effective leaders and managers know what's what in their organisation (Pedler, Burgoyne, and Boydell, 2001). They have a command of basic facts such as goals and plans (long- and short-term), product knowledge, and the roles and relationships between various departments. They also possess relevant professional knowledge. This includes "technical" knowledge, such as production technology, marketing techniques, engineering knowledge, and/or relevant legislation, and has knowledge of basic background management principles and theories, such as planning, organizing and controlling (Pedler et al., 2001). This knowledge is necessary but not sufficient for the leader or manager to add value to organisations (Boyatzis, Stubbs, and Taylor, 2002). In this sense, knowledge bases are threshold talents.

To be an effective leader or manager, a person needs the ability to use knowledge and to make things happen. These can be called competencies, which Boyatzis (1982) defined as "the underlying characteristics of a person that lead to or cause effective and outstanding performance" (p. 21). When direct empirical research is reviewed, there are a set of competencies that have been shown, time and time again, to cause or predict outstanding leader and manager performance (Boyatzis et al., 2002). Regardless of author or study, they tend to include five clusters: (1) Cognitive or intellectual ability, (2) self-awareness (3) self-management (4) social awareness, and (5) relationship management.

The latter four clusters make up what are called emotional intelligence competencies (Goleman, 1998).

This article focuses on the challenge of how a leader or manager can enhance their emotional intelligence competencies. Unlike IQ, which is considered relatively stable and unchangeable, research on emotional intelligence indicates that it can be improved through learning (Cherniss & Goleman, 1998, Goleman, 1995; Boyatzis et al., 2002). However, because social and emotional learning is processed differently than is cognitive or technical learning, it necessitates a different training and development approach (Cherniss & Goleman, 1998). This article looks at the development of emotional intelligence, and divides this development into four important stages: in (1) building awareness (2) training, (3) transfer and maintenance, and (4) evaluating change (Tucker et al., 2000).

### ***Building Awareness***

Before training can begin, individuals must be motivated to commit to a change. Social and emotional learning is likely to be challenging, and can take concentrated effort over a period of time. In the workplace, An Introduction to Emotional Intelligence that emphasizes its importance to job performance, job satisfaction, leadership and career success often helps individuals to become more aware of its importance to them, and often motivates individuals to want to learn more.

When individuals become more willing to learn about their own levels of emotional intelligence and its impact on their work, a useful tool at this stage is an Emotional Intelligence Competency Measure. There are a number of emotional intelligence measurement instruments available. The author uses two tools. One is a 360 degree Emotional Intelligence Competency Inventory (Boyatzis, Goleman & Hay Acquisition Co., 2002). This Inventory provides an opportunity for individuals to select their own feedback team from colleagues, peers, managers, and direct reports. Participants are encouraged to select a team of individuals whose feedback they value. The usefulness of 360 degree in this instance is that often individuals are not highly aware of their own

social and emotional strengths and areas for development, and that getting feedback from individuals whose input they value will greatly help with the individual's self-assessment. A second tool the author uses is the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (Bar-On, 1997). This Inventory is a self-report measure, which is computer scored, and generates a computer-generated report. Here, individuals do not get feedback on how others perceive their levels of emotional intelligence, but their scores are rated against the average population scores, and divided into Areas of Effective Functioning, Areas of Enhanced Skill, and Areas for Enrichment.

When using an Emotional Intelligence Assessment tool what is most important is that the learner perceives the tool as a confidential development tool, and, in addition, if the learner perceives the facilitator of the process as being motivated to help him/her succeed, the motivational and emotional impact of the feedback from the assessment tool will be more positive.

According to behavioural change researchers (Prochaska, Norcross, & DiClements, 1994), individuals move through stages of readiness of change.

Stage 1: Individuals deny that they have any need for change.

Stage 2: Individuals see the need to improve, but are not sure that anything can be done or they delay action.

Stage 3: Individuals recognise the problem, and understand that there are alternative ways of dealing with it.

Stage 4: Individuals have a plan, and put it into action.

An Introduction to Emotional Intelligence and the use of an assessment tool can help move individuals from Stage 1 to Stage 2. This, followed by an Emotional Intelligence Training can provide an opportunity for individuals to move into Stages 3 and Stage 4.

### ***Training***

A Training Programme designed to enhance the emotional intelligence of leaders and managers needs to be highly experiential in order for the necessary behavioural changes to take place. First, the workshops need to provide an opportunity for participants' to further explore their dreams and aspirations as leaders. Secondly, the programme also needs to help individuals to further explore, through additional assessments and activities, their current behaviours, their strengths and areas for development (Boyatzis et al, 2002). Thirdly, the training needs to maximise on self-directed change, providing opportunities for participants to set clear goals, providing frequent opportunities to practice throughout the training, building in feedback and support, and maximising opportunities to enhance personal insight (Cherniss & Goleman, 1998). And finally, a positive relationship between the instructor and the learner is crucial if individuals are to succeed (Grencavage & Norcross, 1990; Horvath & Symonds, 1991).

First, Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) point out that the crux of leadership development is self-directed learning: intentionally developing or strengthening an aspect of who you are or who you want to become, or both. This requires, first and foremost, getting a strong image of your ideal self, who you want to be. During a training, participants need to go through a process of exploring their hopes, dreams, and aspirations. This can be done using a variety of exercises, including Visualisation and Mission Statement Writing. When individuals go through the discovery of uncovering this ideal vision of themselves, the image is often powerful enough to evoke passion and hope, and this further becomes the fuel that maintains the drive they need to successfully work through the process of change.

The second discovery in Self-Directed Learning involves individuals developing a strong sense of their current self, their strengths and areas for development. The Emotional Intelligence Assessment Tool provides an important role in this discovery. One additional useful tool for gaining greater awareness on an individuals major strengths and areas for development is the Critical Incident Exercise (Boyatzis, 1982; Flanagan, 1954; Spencer & Spencer, 1993). This exercise invites individuals to write about three work incidences in which they felt effective and three in which they felt ineffective.

Individuals are encouraged to write as much detail as possible including describing the situation, the characters, their own thoughts, emotions, and desires, and finally the outcome. Then, individuals assess these incidences, and look at what emotional intelligence competencies helped them to be effective in the first three situations, and what emotional intelligence competencies, if they were to be developed, would help them achieve a different outcome in the ineffective situations. Although this exercise can be done individually, it is often much more useful for individuals to work in pairs and/or in small groups in order for them to assess the situation together, and to discuss ideas in a supportive manner.

Thirdly, individuals can prepare a learning agenda which will help them bridge the gap between their ideal selves and their current selves. Individuals learn to set clear goals for themselves and undertake a variety of exercises, both homework assignments and in-class activities, that enhance intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. Intrapersonal exercises include activities for improving self-awareness and self-management. For example, one simple activity that individuals can learn to enhance self-awareness is a Relaxation Technique which helps individuals to become more in touch with their bodies and the different emotional sensations that they feel. Individuals can also be invited to participate in a Faces Exercises in which they are asked to identify from a whole series of faces which emotion they are experiencing at a particular time. From this exercise, individuals can learn to simply name their emotions, and often learn that conflicting emotions can be present at any one time.

The Critical Incident Exercise (Boyatzis, 1982; Flanagan, 1954; Spencer & Spencer, 1993) can also be very useful here in gaining greater emotional self-awareness and enhancing self-management. Individuals can use this tool to write about a work incident in which they experienced emotion which they found difficult to manage, and in which they felt ineffective. While working in pairs and/or small groups, individuals can avoid becoming “stuck” in their own thinking, they often become less emotionally involved in the situation, they can brainstorm with others various approaches to the situation, and can get valued feedback and support.

Interpersonal exercises include activities for enhancing social awareness and managing relationships well. Experiential activities, such as Role Plays, Group Discussions, and Simulations are particularly useful here (Cherniss & Goleman, 1998). Watching behaviour modelled, analyzing the observation, and emulating positive actions are particularly enriching for social and emotional learning. For example, by watching others experience and deal with “difficult” behaviour that can occur in the workplace, individuals develop insight into their own emotional reactions around that particular behaviour, but also, gain insights into the necessary skills for dealing effectively with those behaviours themselves.

And finally, a Positive Relationship between the Instructor and the Learner is crucial if individuals are to succeed. The more successful behavioural change agents are empathic, warm, and genuine, as opposed to directive and confrontational (Blatt, Zuroff, Quinlan, & Pilkonis, 1996). In addition, the more successful instructors adapt the training to match each student’s needs, goals, and learning style preferences.

### ***Transfer and Maintenance***

Research shows that the transfer and maintenance of specific skills are directly correlated with the degree to which the organisation values learning and development in general (Tracey, Tannenbaum, & Kavanagh, 1973; Senge, 1990). In addition, it also highlights the importance of a supportive environment over time for the development of social and emotional competencies (Hand, Richards, & Slocum, 1973). Therefore, individual success in the transfer and maintenance of social and emotional skills is largely contingent on the support given by the organisation. Organisations can reinforce, encourage, and enhance individuals’ skills by modelling desired competencies, reminding individuals to use the skills, and reinforcing the individuals’ use of the desired skills. In addition, because self-awareness is at the heart of emotional intelligence, reflection can be especially valuable during the transfer and maintenance phase (Cherniss & Goleman, 1998).

### ***Evaluating Change***

At the end of each year, individuals can complete another Emotional Intelligence Competency Inventory to gauge their progress. This provides an opportunity for a continuous improvement process.

### ***Conclusion***

And, finally, then, effective leaders and managers need to be able to use their knowledge in order to make things happen in organisations. Research has shown that these competencies include five clusters: (1) Cognitive or intellectual ability, (2) self-awareness (3) self-management (4) social awareness, and (5) relationship management. The latter four clusters make up what is called emotional intelligence competencies (Goldman, 1998). This article has looked at the challenge of how leaders and managers can enhance their own emotional intelligence competencies, and has outlined this process in four stages (1) building awareness (2) training, (3) transfer and maintenance, and (4) evaluating change.



## REFERENCES

- BarOn, R. (1997). The emotional intelligence inventory (EQ-I): Technical manual. Toronto, Canada: Multi-Health Systems.
- Blatt, S. J., Zuroff, D. C., Quinlan, D. M., & Pilkonis, P.A. (1996). Interpersonal factors in brief treatment of depression : Further analyses of the National Institute of Mental Health Treatment of Depression Collaborative Research Programme. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 64, 162-171.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (1982). The competent manager: A model for effective performance. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Boyatzis, R. E., Stubbs, E. C., & Taylor, S. N. (2002). Learning cognitive and emotional intelligence competencies through graduate management education. Academy of Management Learning and Education, 1(2), 150-162.
- Cherniss, C., & Goleman, D. (1998). Bringing emotional intelligence to the workplace. Technical Report issued by The Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organisations. (On-line). Available: <http://www.eiconsortium.org/%5freport.htm>
- Flanagan, J. C., (1954). The critical incident technique. Psychological Bulletin, 51, 327-335.
- Goleman, D. (1995). Emotional intelligence. New York: Bantam Books.
- Goleman, D. (1998). Working with emotional intelligence. New York: Bantam.
- Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R. E. & McKee, A. (2002). Primal Leadership: Realizing the power of emotional intelligence. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Grencavage, L. M., & Norcross, J. C. (1990). Where are the commonalities among the therapeutic common factors? Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 21, 372-378.

Hand, H. H., Richard, M.D., & Slocum, J. W. (1973). Organisational climate and the effectiveness of a human relations training programme. Academy of Management Journal 16, 185-195.

Horvath, A. O., & Symonds, B.D. (1991) Relation between working alliance and outcome in psychotherapy: A meta-analysis. Journal of Counselling Psychology, 139-149.

Pedler, M., Burgoyne, J., & Boydell, T. (2001). A Manager's Guide to Self Development (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). London: McGraw Hill.

Prochaska, J. O., Norcross, J. C., & DiClemente, C. C. (1994). Changing for good: The revolutionary program that explains the six stages of change and teaches you how to free yourself from bad habits. New York: W. Morrow.

Senge, P. (1990). The fifth discipline. New York: Doubleday/Currency.

Spencer, L. M., Jr., & Spencer, S. M. (1993). Competence at work: Models for Superior Performance. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Tracey, J. B., & Tannenbaum, S. I. & Kavanagh, M. J. (1973). Applying trained skills on the job : The importance of the work environment. Journal of Applied Psychology, 80, 239-252.

Tucker, M. L., Sojka, J. Z., Barone, F. J., McCarthy, A. M. (2000). Training tomorrow's Leaders: Enhancing the Emotional Intelligence of Business Graduates. Journal of Education for Business, 75 (6) 331 – 338.

*Evelyn P. Gilmore, B.A., M.Sc., Reg. Psychol. Ps.S.I., F.I.I.T.D.*

*M.I.A.H.I.P., M.A.C.*

### *Profile*

Evelyn is a Consultant Work & Organisational Psychologist, a Psychotherapist, and a Business and Executive Coach. She is joint Director of Coach Institute of Ireland and Galway Leadership Center. Evelyn has an Honours Degree in Psychology from the National University of Ireland, Galway, (NUIG) and a First Class Honours Masters in Work & Organisational Psychology from Dublin City University. She trained in Psychotherapy at the Tracht Psychotherapy Centre in Kinvara, Co. Galway. Evelyn has worked at a senior level with World Class Organisations, and her current clients include individuals, groups and organisations from both the public and private sector. She is a Registered Psychologist with the Psychological Society of Ireland (P.S.I.), a Fellow of the Irish Institute of Training & Development (I.I.T.D.), a member of the Association for Coaching (A.C.), and an accredited member of the Irish Association for Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy (I.A.H.I.P.). In addition, Evelyn has conducted research on Leadership and Emotional Intelligence and has lectured on Organisational Change in the Department of Management in NUIG. She is currently doing a Professional Doctorate in Consultation and the Organisation with the Tavistock Centre in London. She can be contacted at Coach Institute of Ireland, No. 1 Devon Place, The Crescent, Galway.

Telephone: 091 – 861638. Mobile: 087 – 7944048. E-mail:

[evelyngilmore@eircom.net](mailto:evelyngilmore@eircom.net). Web: [www.coachinstitute.ie](http://www.coachinstitute.ie)