

Success in today's workplace requires supervisors and employees alike to be flexible and able to manage change effectively. A necessary part of being adaptable is the ability to interact with people productively, that is, in ways which get things done and maintain a positive environment. An essential component of this ability is described as "Emotional Intelligence".

This is the second of a three-part series in which The Successful Supervisor will provide information and tips on being emotionally intelligent at work. The focus this month continues to be defining emotional intelligence. The ideas are adapted from the book Primal Leadership by Dr. Richard Boyatzis and "Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace", a workshop developed by Cliff Cohen, EAP Clinical Director.

We are interested in your feedback. Email your questions and comments to the EAP at askeap@eapsolutions.com

"I've been a supervisor for years. My staff works hard and usually meets their goals, but there are times when things don't go well. I'm getting feedback that I'm frustrated a lot and it's having an impact. The group is pretty negative. I'm just human like everyone else. What's the big deal?"

We continue to address this supervisor situation presented last month. *The Successful Supervisor* suggested the supervisor work at creating a boundary between personal and workplace challenges. This means examining what contributes to the frustration and developing a plan to effectively deal with the workplace elements. Success also requires being proactive--putting ideas into action rather than waiting for others to change the situation. These ideas relate to the supervisor being self-aware and taking responsibility for matching behavior with personal beliefs.

This month the 3rd and 4th clusters which Dr. Boyatzis describes are presented and applied to the situation above.

(3) Social Competencies: How to handle relationships, social awareness and social skills.

- Understanding others and taking interest in their concerns
- Recognizing and meeting customers' needs and
- Perceiving political relationships within the organization

These competencies focus on how the supervisor builds emotional intelligence externally, with others. Mr. Cohen identifies "Empathy" as an essential element.

- Considering others' feelings in decision-making
- Taking the time to listen to the concerns of others

This means really listening and taking the information into account, building rapport with others and then putting a plan into action.

No supervisor or employee operates in a vacuum at work. Each is a part of many formal and informal networks of people. Paying attention to *how* things get done, *who* the key person/people are and *how best to approach* that individual(s) so that you can be heard are also part of the Social Competency Cluster.

(4) Relationship Management Cluster

- Inspiring and guiding groups of people
- Helping others improve performance
- Initiating or managing change
- Resolving disagreements
- Getting others to agree with you and
- Creating a shared vision and synergy

These skills are linked to leadership-- that ability that we know when we see it, but often find hard to describe. In the "E.I." sense, it refers to being free from personal baggage or a personal agenda so that the individual can see the broad landscape...in other words have a 'vision' of what needs to happen. Leadership is as much a part of the supervisor role as it is the CEO. The identified skills above are the ways in which the day-to-day work gets done. They are the means by which the supervisor builds the team, develops rapport, maintains the long-term agenda (vision) and manages the team and individuals.

Let's go back to the supervisor situation involving personal frustration and a negative team and apply what we've learned.

- It's understandable that a supervisor gets frustrated ("after all I'm just human just like everybody else"). Expressing it in this way doesn't help the situation, however. By using the social competency of 'empathy' the supervisor will likely find out the concerns of others. This may well help to decrease the supervisor's frustration--a benefit to all involved.
- The use of empathy paves the way for using Cluster 4 skills--taking information learned through listening and applying it to enable the work team to improve. Whether the issue is resolving conflicts (perhaps a part of the frustration) or managing change which moves the team away from negative reactions, the manager is intentionally using social skills to deliver workplace leadership. By thinking through *who* needs to be involved in what areas, *how* the team functions when at its best and *how to approach* each member of the team individually, the supervisor will be using the E.I. clusters to best advantage.