

WHY SOME LEADERS MAKE IT AND SOME DON'T

“THIS GENERATION DOESN'T WAIT LONG FOR ITS LEADERS TO CORRECT THEIR PERCEIVED MISTAKES; THEY CHANGE JOBS TO FIND ANOTHER BETTER LEADER.”

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id you ever wonder why some people make it to the very top of their organisations even though they might not appear at first glance to be the cleverest people in their company?

Sometimes you might even notice that these people are not necessarily the kind of 'traditional' leaders that we have been taught to expect. Until some 20 years ago, we expected our leaders to be like the mili-

tary leaders who were the idols of our history books, they certainly seldom listened to the 'troops'; they expected to be obeyed without question and certainly didn't expect comment on their leadership style! Many of the leaders who are currently being replaced in the countries around the Middle East today fit this description.

Leaders today face many choices, often complex

THE LEADER WITH HIGH EQ WILL OFTEN SERVE A "HIGHER CAUSE", IN BUSINESS TERMS THIS WILL BE EXHIBITED BY THE CHOICE OF THEIR GOALS AND THE ORDER IN WHICH THEY PRIORITISE

- TEAM
- OTHERS
- SELF

TODAY'S SUCCESSFUL LEADER NEEDS TO UNDERSTAND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE BECAUSE

TODAY'S WORKFORCE INCREASINGLY DOES NOT ACCEPT THE AUTOCRATIC STYLES OF YESTERDAY

LEADERSHIP NEEDS TO EVOLVE TO MEET THE GROWING DESIRE FOR A DEMOCRATIC FORM OF GOVERNANCE

EMPLOYEES TODAY WILL SIMPLY GO AWAY AND FIND ANOTHER PLACE TO WORK IF THE DON'T LIKE THE LEADER!



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decisions, they can seldom be expected to have a deep technical understanding of the issues they face and yet they must 'lead'. How can they achieve this successfully?

And today's workforce is not the same compliant one which inhabited the office 30 years ago, the new generation is different in many ways. They have grown up with the technology which allows them to communicate with each other at literally the speed of light (the time it takes for a message to reach a friend down a fibre optic cable on facebook or twitter). So the opinions about leaders which were previously only spoken about in hushed whispers are now shared openly.

This generation doesn't wait long for its leaders to correct their perceived mistakes; they change jobs to find another better leader. These leaders will often be different in one very important aspect, they will possess above average Emotional Intelligence (often measured by EQ – the Emotional Quotient).

EQ is difficult to measure, although there are psychometric tools which do try, but we can certainly describe some of the attributes of the Leader who possesses above average EQ.

The leader with above average EQ will want to be constantly improving, he will not believe he/she is perfect and in order to achieve this he/she will ask for and want to receive honest feedback.

He/she will not constantly want to be the centre of attention, rather they will be listening to others and guided by an inner voice which allows them to recognise the difference between the path which is selfish and the path which is 'right'.

The leader with high EQ will often serve a 'higher cause', in business terms this will be exhibited by the choice of their goals and the order in which they prioritise

- Team
- Others
- Self

The Leader we are describing will be courageous and will not find it difficult to make decisions, because they are guided by an inner sense of what is the 'right' decision.

You will notice these Leaders and start to recognise them eventually; they spend more time on the shop floor than the average leader who might never come out of his/her corner office. They take an interest in the people who work for them, at first it seems strange that they ask questions which have little or nothing to do with work; 'how is your mother-in-law by the way?', until we realise that they are genuinely interested in the people they are leading. By building up an

'emotional' bond with their teams they are building a credit bank, for the times when they need to either.

- Ask them to go the extra mile for a short period of time to meet an important and short duration business goal.
- Correct them for an error or misunderstanding.

Leading by example

You might be surprised by Leaders who don't just tell other people what to do, they demonstrate by doing it themselves, and they certainly don't consider themselves to be too good to do the job themselves.

We call this Leadership by example and it is a trait of those with a high EQ. These people are 'servant leaders' they possess humility, as we said earlier they don't believe they know it all.

So why are these leaders so successful? One might imagine that actually the very reverse would be true. In many countries we see people issuing instructions and expecting to be obeyed instantly.

We know that for many people the consequences of not following orders can be disastrous – the loss of a job, being sent home, even in the worse case imprisonment. But how can we expect such behavior to result in loyalty?

Will this kind of leadership evoke respect or encourage the worker to think for themselves, take decisions, ask questions before making mistakes – I doubt it very much.

The leader with a high Emotional Intelligence understands this well, he/she doesn't want to be involved in every decision, in fact they don't need to be, they have empowered their teams to make the decisions which they know they can make and they trust them implicitly at a number of levels

- ↳ They will ask for help if the need it, because they won't be afraid of the consequences.
- ↳ Their decisions will be in the best interests of the organization – by default, because that's the standard which our leader has set.
- ↳ They will be honest

The ability to be able to delegate in this way is crucial for our successful leader who is high in Emotional Intelligence. He/she cannot possibly be involved in every decision, the pace of business these days is just too frantic, and otherwise their desire to make every decision would simply throttle a fast moving organisation. He/she will trust the judgment of those people in the organisation who have superior (technical) knowledge.

In years of sitting through reviews of various technical projects and later as a team leader, manager and director myself I watched the successful leaders, and tried to emulate them. They were well prepared cer-

tainly, they had always done their homework, they always asked intelligent questions and they never tried to embarrass the people who they were asking in public. I have learnt a very good rule of thumb, and it works for the people we are leading, our colleagues at work or at home, and most especially my boss!

Never embarrass anyone deliberately in public, at best it will annoy them, at worst they will find an opportunity to do the same to you!

The understanding of the importance of Emotional Intelligence has been around since the 1980s when Dr Reuven Barr-On did research on successful leaders, but the wider understanding of the topic owes much to the publishing of Daniel Goleman's bestselling book in 1995 – Emotional Intelligence.

Today's successful leader needs to understand Emotional Intelligence because

- Today's workforce increasingly does not accept the autocratic styles of yesterday
- Leadership needs to evolve to meet the growing desire for a democratic form of governance
- Employees today will simply go away and find another place to work if they don't like the leader!

There is an argument that this rather 'modern' concept is not acceptable in the Middle Eastern culture, and I would be the first person to agree that we do not simply wish to impose the latest leadership fad on Qatar.

I believe strongly in adopting a leadership style which is respectful of culture. But I observe that much of what has happened in the United States and Europe in the workplace is happening even faster here, at least as far as the younger generation is concerned.

- ↳ Technology is sweeping through the region, blackberry, facebook, twitter are in constant use.
- ↳ The voice of a discontented youth is being heard, although thankfully in Qatar we benefit from a wise and stable government
- ↳ Young skilled Qataris have massive choice in their place of work and this is likely to continue as the economy grows

So there are a number of leaders who would benefit from a better understanding of the benefits of emotional intelligence. Every way we look at it, there is a compelling reason for understanding why Emotional Intelligence is the reason why some leaders make it and others don't in today's world. At the very least being able to trust the people in your organisation to make decisions will allow you a better quality of life and more time with the family, which after all is a Qatari cultural norm which we should cherish ■

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