



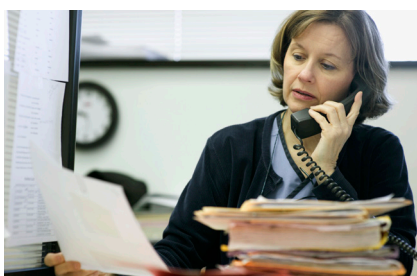
The Leading Edge

2nd Quarter 2016 Manager Newsletter



Five ways to become an emotionally intelligent leader

Leadership is a job that requires social skills. Learn how to build emotional intelligence in five key areas. **More...**



Making time to build staff rapport when you barely have time to read this article

Has work got you so busy that building relationships with your employees sound like a luxury? You'd be surprised by how easy it can be to show your staff you value them. **More...**



The importance of having a game face

Good leaders are authentically themselves. But does that mean it's okay to talk to your employees about a bad day or a stressful workload? **More...**

Five ways to become an emotionally intelligent leader

2nd Quarter 2016 Manager Newsletter



[Return to index page](#)

“Leading” is a people job. Many leaders are good at analyzing and organizing. Yet they may not be naturally strong in people skills like motivating, praising and empathizing. The good news is you can learn and improve these competencies with a little work.

What’s emotional intelligence?

Daniel Goleman is a psychologist who specializes in emotional intelligence (EI). He says EI is “the ability to understand and manage your own emotions and those of the people around you.”¹

According to Goleman, managers who have strong EI enjoy respect and cooperation. Their teams sense they’re fair and tuned in to workers’ points of view and feelings. This helps inspire them to do their best for you.

How do you build EI?

Here are five key areas of EI that can help good leaders become great leaders¹:

- 1. Self-awareness.** Self-awareness means knowing how you feel and how you impact others. You can build self-awareness by slowing down and taking notice of your emotions at work and at home.

Consider keeping a journal. Jot down your thoughts and feelings during the day. When you read your journal after a week or two, you may notice patterns in your moods and behaviors. If you see room for improvement, you can always choose to change patterns and reactions that could be impacting others around you.
- 2. Self-regulation.** Self-regulated people are usually in control of themselves. They rarely make rash decisions or fly off the handle.

You can practice and improve self-regulation by:

- **Staying calm.** The next time you get upset, practice slow, deep breathing. If you have to, remove yourself from the situation until you calm down. Leaders are rarely at their best when they’re angry or frustrated.
 - **Taking responsibility.** Do you tend to blame other people when things go wrong? People with strong EI admit mistakes and take responsibility.
 - **Being fair.** If you’re about to explode, write down your feelings privately. When you calm down, re-read what you wrote. Were you being fair or were you overreacting? Again, this is a way to learn about yourself as you try to increase your EI.
- 3. Optimism and motivation.** You’re a role model. When workers see you upbeat and excited, they’re likely to follow suit. Even in a negative situation, try to find good. This can include the things you’ve learned and achieved. Keep a positive attitude – even when the chips are down.
 - 4. Caring about how others feel.** Leaders with empathy really listen to others. They notice body language, listen for feelings and can put themselves in someone else’s shoes. This translates to showing workers that you’re sensitive to them. You can identify with their situations and you “get” their feelings.
 - 5. Social skills.** The fifth and final aspect of EI is using social skills like good communication, conflict resolution and praise. Good social skills help you manage, give feedback and connect with clarity and honesty.

Overall, leaders with high EI earn trust and respect from their teams. Practice EI to be your best as a leader.

¹www.mindtools.com

Making time to build staff rapport when you barely have time to read this article

2nd Quarter 2016 Manager Newsletter



[Return to index page](#)

Becoming a manager can have its perks. It gives you more authority, more influence and more responsibility. But it also gives you more to do without giving you any more time to do it. You've got to get the job done, make sure the trains run on time, respond to emails, put out fires, get to meetings and more. Chances are, you don't make it through your to-do list on any given day.

So when people talk about connecting with your staff or learning about leadership skills, you might think, "That sounds nice. But when am I supposed to do that?" Maybe you're only making time to read this article because you just need a break from other tasks.

We're going to give you some quick and easy tips to help you build relationships with staff, even when you're strapped for time.

Go for quality over quantity

If you're in a hurry, you want to make the most of the few minutes you've got with someone. When you meet with an employee, it may be tempting to multi-task. It's best to let your phone and email wait for a few minutes while you talk.

If it's not a good time, ask to schedule a future meeting or be honest about your limits. You can say, "I have a meeting in 10 minutes but I can give you my attention until then. Do you still want to meet or should we schedule something for later?"

Are you always in meetings? Invite the person to walk with you to your next appointment. Your employees know you're busy. But spending just a few minutes one-on-one can help an employee feel valued.

See people, not jobs

When you're focused on getting the job done, it can be easy to forget your employees are people with personal lives. And you might not have time to sit down and talk to your staff on a regular basis. But small gestures can make a difference. For example:

- **Remember names.** We've seen the boss character in movies who always gets people's names wrong. Try not to be "that manager." Our names shape our identities. So make a point of learning (and remembering) employees' names.
- **Know your staff.** In addition to learning staff names, find out a couple details about them. Are they in school? Do they have kids? Are they buying a house? Getting to know your staff shows you value who they are, not just what they do.
- **Say hello.** Greet your employees each day. It doesn't take a lot of time or energy to acknowledge your staff in passing. Ask how they're doing and then listen closely to their answers.
- **Show gratitude.** Did Sheila work late last night? Did Steve do a great job on a project? Has the team been putting in extra hours? Let your employees know that you notice their efforts. From reward systems to a simple "thank you," appreciation can go a long way.

Building relationships can sound time consuming. But it doesn't have to be. Spend a few minutes listening to someone. Take a couple seconds to say "Hi" or "How's your family?" Share a quick but heartfelt "Thank you." These small, positive acts pay dividends in staff morale. And they might require less time than it took you to read this article.

The importance of having a game face

2nd Quarter 2016 Manager Newsletter



[Return to index page](#)

“Hi, how are you?” “What’s up?” “How’s your day going?” We greet our colleagues each day. This small talk builds comradery. And it’s nice to say “hello” and check in with one another.

But here’s something to consider: How you respond to these questions can impact your employees and how they view you.

Total honesty isn’t always the best policy

Dale Partridge, entrepreneur, says he was once told, “The reason executives get paid more, is to bear the immense weight of the company so others don’t have to.”¹

As a manager, you have a hard job. You have to get the job done, support employees and build a culture that leads to success. So what’s the impact of responding truthfully to the innocuous, “How are you?”

When you complain to staff, even about small stuff, you share negative energy. You place extra stress on them. They might feel like they have to take care of you. And it might damage their perception of you.

Be cool and controlled

Your energy is contagious. When you complain, you might be saying, “I’m having a bad day.” But your staff may hear, “I’m not in control.” If your employees feel like you don’t have a handle on things, they’re likely to worry. They can feel like the workplace is in trouble.

When you’re calm and collected at work, it inspires confidence in your employees. They can trust you to do your job. They’ll trust you to lead them. And this means they can focus on their work, instead of focusing on your ability to manage stress.

Vent to your friends, not employees

We all have bad days. Maybe you got stuck in traffic this morning. Maybe you had a last-minute project sent your way. Maybe people called in sick and you’re scrambling. There’s always plenty to complain about. And it’s not good to keep all your stress inside.

Sharing your frustrations and feelings with others can be good for you. But you have to choose your confidantes wisely. Talk to friends or family members. They can offer you support and encouragement. And it’s okay to be honest. You don’t have to be “in control” with them.

So when your employee asks how you’re doing, remember to put on your game face, stay cool and respond with, “I’m fine. How are you?” Because you’re the manager. And it’s part of your job to inspire confidence.

¹peopleoverprofit.com/5-habits-of-exceptionally-likeable-leaders/

The Leading Edge

2nd Quarter 2016 Manager Newsletter



[Return to index page](#)

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