



EAPC blog

“Effective leadership and emotional intelligence” – Ron Humphrey

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There are many factors that influence employee’s job satisfaction. Pay, benefits, co-workers, location, the type of work done, even the room temperature can make a difference. However, leaders make a huge difference in whether employees like their jobs or not. As the adage states, employees don’t quit their jobs,

they quit their bosses. A good leader can motivate employees to achieve outstanding results. A bad leader can do the reverse, and prompt dissatisfaction, mass turnover, poor performance, strikes, and even sabotage. We can draw upon our emotional intelligence to improve employees’ job satisfaction, task performance, and organizational citizenship behaviours. Research has provided solid evidence that emotional intelligence is important to both job satisfaction and leadership.

The workplace can be a frustrating place. Problems both big and small crop up every day. When problems occur, employees may feel frustrated, demoralized, and downhearted. Leaders may also feel the effects of the work problems and be irritated. Naturally, leaders may sometimes take their frustrations out on their employees, which would make the employees even more frustrated and distracted, and unable to focus on their work tasks. Both subordinates and leaders can experience emotional hijacking, which occurs when our emotions overwhelm our rational thought processes, and

we respond to events with anger, fear, or panic. Emotional intelligence helps leaders avoid emotional hijacking. Recognizing “trigger points” early on, before the emotional hijacking is well underway, is a key to remaining calm and in control.

Emotional intelligence is more than just about controlling negative emotions; it is also about creating positive ones. Effective leaders know how to transform feelings of frustration into feelings of confidence and optimism. Emotional intelligence helps both employees and leaders generate the positive emotions and motivations that lead to outstanding performance.

Leadership is also about creating positive relationships with others. Emotional intelligence helps leaders do this in a variety of ways. First, emotional intelligence helps leaders understand their follower’s emotions and attitudes, even when their followers are putting on a mask to hide their feelings. Second, emotional intelligence helps leaders create “resonance” with others, where people are in emotional synchronization. By first establishing resonance with followers, leaders can use their emotional bond to move others towards more productive emotional states.

In addition to having employees with high job satisfaction, emotionally intelligent leaders also have employees with higher task performance. Their employees are also more likely to do voluntary “organizational citizenship behaviours”. These good citizen employees help each other out, cooperate more, and do the little tasks that are not in their job descriptions but that need doing anyway.

Emotionally intelligent leaders are also more likely than other managers to have emotionally intelligent followers. Such emotionally intelligent leaders know how to select and hire emotionally well-balanced followers. These leaders also role model emotionally intelligent behaviour and help their followers develop emotional competencies.

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◆ DIRECCIÓ PÚBLICA, EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, INNOVACIÓ, RON HUMPHREY