

# Emotional Intelligence as a Facilitator of Project Leader Effectiveness

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**Abstract**--This paper presents a framework that examines how emotional intelligence can contribute to the success of project leaders and their teams. We review the interaction of project leaders with their teams and how emotional intelligence can improve interpersonal effectiveness, provides the skills to deal with sponsors and stakeholders and how the emotionally intelligent project leaders can utilize their resources to achieve high performance levels. Specific attention is given to the impact of emotional intelligence upon team development, conflict resolution, leadership, and how emotional intelligence is fundamental to effective leadership as well as in gaining support from team members and stakeholders. Finally, we explore areas for further research such as the potential affect of an emotionally intelligent project leader upon a team that does not possess emotional intelligence, as well as how teams with high emotional intelligence have a propensity for increased innovation.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Emotional Intelligence is a field of study that has become increasingly important to many organizations as they seek to increase the effectiveness of their operations through the integration of operations and the intensive use of cross-functional project teams. We examine emotional intelligence as an important tool in improving the effectiveness of project leaders in managing their teams and their interfacing with internal and external stakeholders. We also explore how the components of emotional intelligence can be applied to the facets of project leadership.

## II. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AS A CONTEXT FOR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Increasingly organizations use project teams to accomplish complex tasks. Such teams are often comprised of a core team, a group of stakeholders including one or more customers and perhaps consultants or vendors, and a team sponsor.

Observers of organizations often note that project management is one of the most important yet difficult roles to perform in organizations. While challenges that project managers encounter may come in the form of technological issues and concerns, many find their roots in interpersonal issues such as interpersonal conflicts, miscommunications, cultural differences, and personality differences. Consider the following three incidents involving interpersonal issues:

- Frank, a project manager with a large radar company, was just finishing his status review presentation when the engineering manager at the back of the conference room

asked Frank why his team had not performed better during the last 2 months. Without a pause, Frank told the manager that if he had ever been a project manager the manager could have answered his own question. Later that day, Frank apologized to the engineering manager for his curt remark.

- Susan, an IT project leader, found that her team had not made any appreciable progress on the corporate-wide CRM project. When she started asking questions about the lack of progress, several of the team members responded defensively by criticizing the project's ambitious schedule and one even personally attacked Susan for her poor leadership of the project. Susan eventually discovered that another IT project had been assigned top priority by one of the SBU managers without informing her. As a consequence, her team members were completely stressed with the work requirements.
- Pat was charged with a major R&D project, which was considered a breakthrough project for the company. The company had spent over five million on developing the project in its labs and now it was time to convert the promising new technology into a major product line. However, the development team experienced considerable "push-back" from the marketing group. Every time the team asked for help, the marketing coordinator for the project either agreed but then did not follow through. Finally, after several weeks of non-responsive behavior, Pat pushed the marketing coordinator for assistance. The coordinator shouted, "We don't care if your new product ever gets to market as it will cause major problems in our distribution channels!"

In each of the above incidents, emotions were involved and they were not handled well when they did surface. We posit that emotional intelligence can be a powerful tool, which can assist project leaders in better dealing with the various issues that develop as project leaders and their teams perform their assignments.

## III. WHAT IS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE?

What is emotional intelligence and how does it affect how people interact and succeed in the workplace? By understanding what makes one person excel beyond their technical capabilities leads us to recognize what is fundamental in creating high performing project teams.

We have seen many theories regarding emotional intelligence over the past few years, especially as the concept has drawn attention. The first complete theory of emotional

intelligence was proposed by psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer, who defined emotional intelligence as being able to monitor and control one's own emotions and understand and modify other's emotions.

We break down emotional intelligence into the following components, similar to the original model of emotional intelligence proposed by Peter Salovey and Jack Mayer in 1997: *self-awareness*, *self-management*, *awareness of emotions in others*, and *relationship management*. This differs from some models of emotional intelligence that include the regulation of emotion in self and others. While managing one's emotions is clearly important, relationship management is more conceivably appropriate in how we use emotional intelligence to develop better interpersonal competence in project work environments. Regulation of emotion implies a coercion of the emotions of others, which we do not wish to imply.

Recognizing one's own emotions, understanding what your personal resources are and what one's personal condition is, is the first part of emotional intelligence and has been referred to as self-awareness. It is the evaluation of one's own emotional state. The ability to analyze one's own thoughts and feelings is an important aspect of emotional intelligence. Everyone at some point feels overwhelming anger, fear, happiness, disappointment, and other emotions that affect the way they complete their work, interpret situations and interact with others. Self-awareness is the ability to understand the emotions that are affecting our conscious and subconscious and moving us to act in a certain way.

The second trait of emotional intelligence is the ability to manage one's own emotions. Realizing how one feels and having the ability to understand these emotions and then to manage them well is vital to successful human interactions. Overreacting or *under-reacting* can have both negative affects on an individual as well as on interpersonal relations. Self-management is the ability to control one's emotions and prevent one's self from acting on impulse, without taking an inventory of rational thought versus an impassioned reaction.

Turning outward, we focus on the fact that we must deal with external associations and also must understand and relate to other people's emotions as well. This is the third major component of emotional intelligence. Awareness of the emotions of others includes being empathetic: being able to accurately perceive the concerns and needs of others and understand their perspective. Awareness of the emotions of others is an important element of the social competence aspect of emotional intelligence. It is the ability to recognize emotions in others and understand why another individual reacts to an event or situation in the manner in which they do.

Effective relationship management is the ability to use the awareness of others' emotions and appropriately interact, to affect the outcome of a situation. This is necessary to achieve the highest form of emotional intelligence, relationship management. If we are able to accurately identify emotions in others, we then can attempt to modify our behavior and

even the behavior of others in such a way that we can better manage interpersonal relations.

Experienced project leaders know that assembling a group of capable individuals with technical expertise does not lead to effective teamwork. Effective teamwork is the result of an empowered team working together intelligently in an efficient and productive manner. This comes about from many things; we believe that the presence of emotional intelligence is a significant factor in the success of a project team. A team led by an individual displaying the characteristics of emotional intelligence will be a team that will be better equipped to withstand the difficult times, be proactive instead of reactive when dealing with stakeholders and ultimately attain achievement more efficiently than those teams that are lacking in these essential skills.

#### IV. EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The history of the theory of emotional intelligence is at present being written. The term first appeared in a 1985 doctoral dissertation by Wayne Leon Payne, which he entitled "A Study of Emotion: Developing Emotional Intelligence." His thesis on emotional intelligence included a framework to enable people to develop emotional intelligence, much like those whose research followed years later. Payne asserted that many of the problems in modern civilization stemmed from a suppression of emotion and that it was possible to learn to become emotionally intelligent.

Although the term 'emotional intelligence' was not used, it is evident that the groundwork for the research was set in motion long before any official work on emotional intelligence. In 1920, E.L. Thorndike established the concept of social intelligence, which he defined as the ability to act wisely in human relations [13]. Then, in 1983, Howard Gardner introduced his theory of multiple intelligences in Frames of Mind. Gardner developed his theory after working with gifted children and brain damaged adults using cognitive and symbol usage capacity studies. Through this study, Gardner initially formulated a list of seven intelligences that are interlinked, and the final two intelligences are parallel with more recent studies of emotional intelligence. Gardner's seven intelligences were described as follows [4]:

- **Linguistic Intelligence:** sensitivity to written and spoken language and the ability to effectively use language to accomplish one's goals.
- **Logical-mathematic Intelligence:** the capacity to analyze problems logically, detect patterns and reason deductively.
- **Musical Intelligence:** skill in performance, composition and appreciation of musical patterns. Gardner deemed this to be almost parallel with linguistic intelligence.
- **Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence:** the ability to use one's entire body to solve problems; to use mental abilities to coordinate body movements.

- **Spatial Intelligence:** the ability to recognize the use and patterns of wide space and confined areas.
- **Interpersonal Intelligence:** the capacity to understand intentions, motivations and desires of other people.
- **Intrapersonal Intelligence:** the capacity to understand oneself and appreciate one's feelings, fears and motivations.

We suggest that these final two intelligences identified by Gardner are the basis for the study of emotional intelligence. Gardner even linked these final two intelligences as 'personal intelligences.' In his book, Intelligence Reframed. Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century, Gardner examined the personal intelligences and determined that on an advanced level that *'intrapersonal knowledge allows one to detect and to symbolize complex and highly differentiated sets of feelings.'* [5] He explained that this is a capacity that allows one to understand their own emotions, in the simplest form by separating feelings into pleasure and pain, which allows an individual to determine whether to withdraw or become drawn further into a situation.

Gardner described interpersonal intelligence at its most developed as turning outward and allowing *'a skilled adult to read the intentions and desires- even when these have been hidden- of many other individuals and, potentially, to act upon this knowledge- for example, by influencing a group of disparate individuals to behave along desired lines.'* [4] Gardner further defined interpersonal intelligences in a later work into four aptitudes, leadership, conflict resolution, social analysis skills, and the ability to foster relationships. Gardner's work reveals that several types of intelligences are present within an individual, and that traditional intelligence measured by an IQ test cannot predict overall competence in any number of areas that remain unmeasured. Clearly Gardner saw the importance of these aspects of intelligence and realized the value in contributing to an individual's overall intelligence factor, not only the traditional concept of intelligence.

Subsequent to Gardner's work on multiple intelligences, Jack Mayer and Peter Salovey published two articles in 1990 on emotional intelligence. Mayer and Salovey defined emotional intelligence as *'the subset of social intelligence that involved the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions.'* [10] Mayer and Salovey proposed a model for emotional intelligence and performed the first empirical studies involving people's abilities to identify emotion in faces, designs and colors [11] The Mayer-Salovey model defines emotional intelligence as the following<sup>1</sup>:

1. The capacity to accurately perceive emotions.
2. The capacity to use emotions to facilitate thinking.

3. The capacity to understand emotional meanings.
4. The capacity to manage emotions.

Mayer and Salovey partnered with David Caruso and developed two tests to determine emotional intelligence, the Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS) and subsequently the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT). The tests were developed to measure how well an individual perceives emotions, facilitates thought, understands emotions and manages emotions.

At the root, Mayer and Salovey attempted to define the concept of emotional intelligence in terms of what it is composed of. They approached the subject from an empirical perspective, realizing that the characteristics of emotional intelligence may be present in an individual, but also that an individual does not exhibit emotional intelligence of all types in all situations. Yet what does this mean? Does emotional intelligence mean that emotions can be intelligent? Or does it mean that we need to have more highly developed emotions in order to have a higher level of intelligence? Since the field is rapidly changing, new theories are being formed as the emotional intelligence field evolves.

In 1995, Daniel Goleman proposed that emotional intelligence is composed of the following four characteristics: emotional self-awareness, emotional self-management, awareness of others' emotions, or empathy, and managing relationships with others [6]. Goleman's bestselling book, Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ, was published and emotional intelligence suddenly was not only secluded in behavioral studies, but became a mainstream concept of how emotion affects one's overall human intelligence factor. Goleman asserted that IQ was not the only important factor in determining human intelligence, that EQ (emotional intelligence) was also an important facet of intelligence. Goleman made important connections in how emotional intelligence can enhance an individual's capabilities in dealing with everyday life.

## V. HOW EI CAN FACILITATE A PROJECT LEADER'S EFFECTIVENESS

While there are several definitions and descriptions of teams, we rely on the following definition to guide our work:

*A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutual accountable [7].*

As management theory infiltrates all types of organizations, from the blue chip, multinational companies to entrepreneurial ventures, an increasing amount of work within organizations is completed by project teams, which are comprised of a cross functional group of individuals who come together to bring their expertise to attain a goal. A project team is a core group of individuals selected from

<sup>1</sup> Mayer & Salovey [10] Emotional Intelligence. [http://www.unh.edu/emotional\\_intelligence/EIAssets/EmotionalIntelligencePoper/EI1990%20Emotional%20Intelligence.pdf](http://www.unh.edu/emotional_intelligence/EIAssets/EmotionalIntelligencePoper/EI1990%20Emotional%20Intelligence.pdf)

various functional areas to accomplish a set goal and the project leader has often been a technical expert. This has changed as senior managers have increasingly realized that project leaders need a broad array of skills that include management and interpersonal competencies to facilitate their projects.

Figure 1 posits the various quadrants that project leaders can be classified according to technical capabilities and emotional intelligence, ranging from high emotional and technical intelligence to low emotional and technical intelligence. At the low end, one would expect that the project leader that exhibits low emotional and technical intelligence would have a limited ability to contribute to the project team in the way of procedural or practical insight, which would cause the team members to look to each other or outside resources for expertise. As well, because this individual also has low emotional intelligence, they would have limited contribution to resolving team conflicts, difficulty dealing with underperforming team members, find it challenging to deal with stakeholders, and generally lack the understanding and interpersonal skills that lead to high performance within project management.

At the high end, the project leader that displays high emotional and technical intelligence will be most likely to lead their team to success through their ability to contribute technical expertise as well as their aptitude for recognizing team issues, empathizing with others and having the relationship management skills that are needed to deal with the internal and external customers as well as the team sponsor.

**Project Leader Performance**

<b>Technical Capabilities</b>	<b>High</b>	Lacks Understanding of Team Issues and Does Not Recognize Many Sources of Interpersonal Issues	Contributes Technical Expertise and Uses Emotional Intelligence to Manage Team
	<b>Low</b>	Lacks Technical Expertise and Interpersonal Skills – Very Low Performance Potential	High Empathy & Strong Interpersonal Skills Yet Lacks Technical Expertise – Team Struggles
		<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>
		<b>Emotional Intelligence</b>	

Fig. 1 The Technical Capability/Emotional Intelligence Relationship

As emotional intelligence comes into the focus of managers everywhere, the question arises- how can emotional intelligence contribute to the success of a project leader? Emotionally intelligent project leaders are respectful of their team, the sponsors, and all stakeholders. They are helpful, foster an environment of cooperation and communication and attempt to bring all team members in by ensuring a clear goal

and that all members of the team are onboard. This type of leader encourages participating through appropriate techniques of motivation, understanding when a team member becomes frustrated or begins to withdraw and can identify what leadership styles to use at the proper time. A project leader with high emotional intelligence will have the prudence to select appropriate team members, who are not only technically proficient, but also have the ability to integrate emotion and logic in their activities and decisions.

In many organizations, at times we see that the most technically capable and highly intelligent individuals are not able to interact well in a team environment, as they are lacking the personal and interpersonal skills that allow them to regulate their own emotions and recognize and relate to others emotions and perspectives. Warren Bennis, scholar and pioneer in the field of leadership studies stated, *“In the fields that I have studied, emotional intelligence is much more powerful than IQ in determining who emerges as a leader. IQ is a threshold competence. You need it, but it doesn’t make you a star. Emotional Intelligence can.”* [12] Emotional intelligence provides leaders with the edge that allows them the understanding and control over their own emotions as well as the empathy to relate to their teams to bring forth higher levels of participation and performance and thus a greater level of success. We now examine some of the areas where emotional intelligence can be beneficial.

#### A. Team Development

Project leaders soon find that they are leading a team of diverse and technically capable individuals that each are bringing their own set of closely held beliefs into the team environment from past team experiences, outside dealings with the project stakeholders, and/or their own preconceived agendas and expectations. When taking a newly formed group to a fully functioning team, a project leader will struggle with team members that are hesitant to share their concerns and disclose the biases that they may be bringing into the team that will affect the efficient functioning of the team. Emotional intelligence can help project leaders uncover issues that team members may be holding back, and allows the team to deal with closed off subjects that may need to be addressed for a project to move forward. Open and honest communication is a cornerstone of successful teamwork and can be one of the biggest hurdles for a team to navigate. A high level of emotional intelligence will help a project leader create lines of communication to provide opportunities for high levels of team openness. Emotional intelligence also allows for honest questioning when a team member is attempting to hide their feelings or not admitting to tension or unease. The emotionally intelligent project leader also recognizes the opportunity to bring levity to a tense situation, to draw out a closed off team member, or how to empathize with an angry team member when they become frustrated and need to let off steam.

### *B. Developing Trust*

Trust is an essential element to building a strong and productive project team and the leader is like the coach of the team, guiding the team and providing the motivation and direction to achieve the team goals. Trust within a project team includes concepts such as having the faith in one's team members that they will accomplish tasks on a set timeline, contribute with equal and enthusiastic participation, and be relied upon to assist in a difficult situation during the project. A project leader provides a team with technical and managerial guidance in many cases and is the individual in the team that is central to creating an environment that fosters creativity and collaboration. The project leader is also critical in the team forming trust, which enables an environment for productivity and teamwork. What qualities does an effective project leader have that provide for this type of success? A project leader with high emotional intelligence has the ability to connect with the team members and relate to diverse personality types that often exist in a project team, bringing those individuals together to communicate constructively. This can be difficult in many project environments. The ability to form trusting relationships with diverse individuals is regarded as social capital as well as a predictor for an organization's effectiveness [9]. Thus, this formation of trust is most important to project teams. A project leader's role is many-sided and therefore the project leader must be able to understand the currents within the team; understand his/her own emotions relating to the project and team, understand the emotions of the team members, their frustrations, concerns, reluctance to open up, and be able to effectively manage these concerns while keeping the project moving forward.

A project leader needs to use not only the ability to listen to the team to decipher the undercurrents within the team, but also must use this ability to 'read' the team members in other ways, such as listening to what they are not saying and watching their expressions, listening to the tones of speech and tuning into their behavior. A team leader that is truly 'listening' to their team will understand much more of what is happening within the team and the team members will also realize that the leader is paying attention and committed to the success of the team. It is difficult to argue that a team that places trust in their leader would not perform at a higher level than one that does not. A team leader that has the trust of the team is likely to be more motivational, establish a team environment that is more positive in nature and the team members are more likely to be inspired to perform to a higher level.

### *C. Gaining Commitment and Goal Setting*

One of the most daunting challenges that a team faces is having all members on board and being committed to the success of the team. While it seems as though team members should be involved and dedicated to the success of a project for which they are working, it is one of the most difficult areas in project management to maintain commitment. Patrick Lencioni outlined lack of commitment as one of the

Five Dysfunctions of a Team in his bestselling book of the same name [8]. Lencioni explains that commitment is born of clarity and buy-in, and if team members have not openly aired their concerns and discussed alternatives or strategies in worst-case scenarios, they may lose sight of their goals. A successful way to ensure that team members are committed and share a common vision to accomplish project goals is to ensure participation and involvement from all team members.

When it comes to decision-making, members of teams will disagree on some issues. It is important to bring to the forefront why a team member (or members) does not agree with a decision and to allow that individual the opportunity to explain their position and help the team member to understand the other point of view. The project leader with high emotional intelligence is more likely to successfully lead the team through this process, allowing them to open up and not pressure them to concede, yet ensuring that every team member's concerns are considered before coming to a consensus. A level of commitment throughout the team, to establishing team benchmarks and to team goal setting, is essential in successfully achieving success. Commitment or buy in is achieved through a level of comfort within the team, which allows constructive discussions and debates, bringing intelligence that is weighed with emotional input into the line of reasoning. Emotional intelligence allows for emotions to positively influence the direction of debates, discussion, meetings and even decision-making, when a healthy dose of logic is also applied to the situation.

A project leader with high emotional intelligence is more likely to have a superior ability to understand the emotions of others and recognize when they are not on board with the project. If a project leader can recognize that a stakeholder is anxious or angry, then that project leader will have the opportunity to work on the difficulty. Awareness of those who are not satisfied with the goals of a project can prevent issues later on by addressing those concerns up front.

As it is essential to enact meaningful participation from all involved in a project, ensuring continuing commitment and development with stakeholders is also necessary for the success of a project. Leaders face many issues when leading a project, including fostering creativity, involving stakeholders, continuing to move the project forward while staying within the project constraints and protecting the team from outside influence [9]. A project leader needs to focus on the stakeholders and have the ability to understand the slight clues that are present in communication and be ready to respond to promote constructive interaction in resolving any concerns that arise or respond to stakeholders. According to Mayer and Solovey, '*people who behave in an emotionally intelligent fashion should have sufficient social competence to weave a warm fabric of interpersonal relations.*' [10] This use of emotional intelligence should provide the team leader with the proficiency in managing the inevitable trying situations that arise within a project.

Once a team has established trust and all are committed to the team's objectives, the project leader should work with

team members to set goals together to ensure that all members of the team are involved and understand clearly what the team wants to achieve. When a team achieves a level of comfort with one another that is generated from an open sharing of thoughts and ideas, the individuals are more likely to understand the motivations behind the actions and requests of their team members and their project leader, which allows them to come together to work together toward their goal.

#### *D. Managing Conflicts*

Often in a team environment, conflicts arise that are born out of the team members insecurity with each other as they have not formed the necessary bonds of trust that facilitate a more advanced team relationship. Teams that communicate early and often in team development will be less likely to have as many destructive conflicts; however, all teams inevitably have conflicts, and the project leader plays a key role in guiding the team through the turbulent times and helps ensure that the team is working together to resolve their differences. Although some managers feel that members of a team, or any organization, have a role to play and therefore must 'stick with it' to accomplish their goals, regardless of their personal feelings or interpersonal issues; this is not true of contemporary thinking regarding high performing teams or organizations. Teams are made up of emotional beings and in order to successfully accomplish their goals they need to work to improve communication between team members and understand that emotion does affect the success of a project. Such awareness is the essence of the emotionally intelligent project leader. Having the ability to deal with difficult situations and assist their team in working through conflicts and other interpersonal issues can bring about a higher performance.

Most teams experience a difficult situation that culminates in interpersonal conflict or have a team member that displays destructive behavior within the team. In these instances, it may be necessary for a leadership style to be employed that iterates a strong leadership position with a high level of control. Projecting strong leadership can be effective in bringing a team back on track if a crisis has caused a loss of confidence that has escalated to conflict.

#### *E. Leadership Styles*

An emotionally intelligent project leader has the ability to recognize when a team is anxious and can empathize with the struggles that the entire team experiences as well as the issues that team members are dealing with. A project leader who is empathetic to the struggles of the team will understand that projects do get off course, unlike a project leader who relentlessly remains on task, only keeping an eye on the project's schedule and requiring that all deliverables be met. Instead of losing the faith of the team and discouraging participation of the team by pushing the team to frustration due to missed deadlines, an emotionally intelligent project leader will identify with the difficulties that the team may be

experiencing and appropriately work through the problems as they arise.

Facilitative leadership is the concept that brings emotional intelligence into practice in leading teams to communicate openly and work together to solve problems and move forward together to accomplish goals. Facilitative leadership creates feelings of ownership and responsibility within a group and allows members of a team to learn from each other's mistakes and triumphs and to form stronger bonds with the belief that their concerns and opinions are important to the team and organization.

At times, emotionally intelligent project leaders will employ different leadership styles to keep their teams on track. A stumbling block with a team member may be an opportunity for a project leader to use a coaching style to get results from this type of team member. In the same manner as a leader would employ a facilitative approach under usual circumstances, a coaching approach to leadership goes further and offers additional encouragement for team members that need support. The coaching approach focuses on team members' strengths to improve performance across the team. In the following example, one can see how coaching can be an effective leadership style.

Allan was leading a new software project. In the first two status review meetings he noticed that Susan, a key application developer, did not say anything as the other developers were giving their status reports. After the meeting, Susan complained privately that there would be major integration problems with the different subsystem. When Allan heard of Susan's concerns, he discussed with her the importance of dealing directly with issues when everyone could hear her views and why complaining privately to the different team members after a meeting could be destructive and a slow learning progress. In Allan's meetings with Susan it was clear that Susan had difficulty exerting herself in groups. Allan started working with Susan on her confidence and made certain that she always had 'air time' in future meetings to express her ideas and concerns.

#### *F. Stakeholder Relationships*

Project leaders are attempting to satisfy the needs of all involved in a project, and at times the greatest challenge can be managing the stakeholder relationship. A project leader therefore must juggle the needs of all stakeholders when managing a project, and that means being aware of what is going on inside and outside of the team that s/he is leading. This can be a time consuming and somewhat daunting task for a project leader to manage the expectations of not just the project team, but all those involved with the project both within and external to the organization. In some instances, a project leader is a peer or even a subordinate of those s/he is leading on a project team. This can be a source of tension that the project leader needs to recognize. Understanding the source of one's own and other's stresses allows one to act appropriately during these interactions.

The internal customers of a project team may include the engineering department, the marketing department and any number of other internal departments that a project leader and team will be interfacing with for support on a regular basis. It is important to understand the expectations and requirements of these internal customers and work with them on timelines, goals, design decisions, and many other issues that arise throughout the project. Likewise, there are many instances where a project team must also work with external stakeholders, as in the case of strategic partners, vendors, suppliers, and external customers that also have requirements, restrictions and expectations that are affecting the project, as well. A project leader with high emotional intelligence will recognize the varying importance of customer concerns, being fair yet remaining firm in negotiating with customers on project changes and their implications to the overall project. In dealing with both the internal and external stakeholder relationships, it is important that the same high level of emotional intelligence that is applied to internal project team relations is maintained for external relations, as is exhibited in the following example.

Maryann was seeking approval from her senior managers for a new product proposed by the company's marketing group. The proposed product would require significant resources to develop and launch. She presented the development plan and the market launch plan to her company's corporate development group. Unfortunately, one of the key managers on the corporate development group did not attend the meeting. Maryann knew his approval was necessary for her project to move forward. She called him after the meeting but he did not return her calls or her subsequent emails. When she saw him the next day in the elevator, it was clear to her that he was avoiding her. When they exited the elevator she asked him if he had concerns about her project. He then admitted that the resources required to develop her product would likely derail his group's plan for a new strategic venture. By discussing the resource issue with him in two additional meetings, Maryann was able to convince the development manager that both projects were essential and that by working together they would have enough resources to accomplish both their objectives.

A person with high emotional intelligence is more likely to have more meaningful interactions with others and this will lead to the other individuals coming away with positive feelings following meetings or negotiations. When a project leader works together with a sponsor to bargain for additional resources or attempt to explain delays in the timeline of a project, emotional intelligence can help provide the project leader with the ability to regulate his/her own emotions as well as the intuitive abilities to interpret the feedback from the sponsor, both verbal and non-verbal.

As well, project leaders with high emotional intelligence exhibit the ability to form relationships with a higher level of

trust with the sponsor. The risk to a project leader with high emotional intelligence is ensuring that they do not allow the sponsor too much consideration in negotiations, allowing for compromises that will limit their ability to obtain needed resources for their project. The goal of the project leader is a healthy balance of understanding and empathizing with the sponsors' need for maintaining control over the project and allowing the sponsor concessions where appropriate, yet pushing for the requirements that will lead the project to success.

#### *G. Communication and Building Trust*

Project leaders with high emotional intelligence are more likely to foster an environment of open communication within their teams. It is necessary to become familiar with one's team members to be able to understand their concerns, fears, and motivations and to adequately perceive what the cause of their reactions are to the situation or the source of their actions within the team.

It is not always clear what the path to constructive communication is within the team environment. Does a team need to first communicate to build trust by opening up to one another and becoming vulnerable to establish a level of intimacy within the group? Or is it rather that a team begins to openly communicate after they build a basis for trust? Either way, we know from previous research that teams without trust usually struggle. Without trust, team members do not feel comfortable sharing ideas and communicating openly with one another. A project leader with high emotional intelligence will empathize with team members about their fears in opening up and will assist them in constructing an environment where they feel comfortable sharing with one another. To reduce tension, it would be wise for a project leader to offer something of themselves to the team members, to gain trust and show sincerity.

#### *H. Managing Disappointments/Negativity*

Emotional intelligence assists project leaders in recognizing and managing negative emotions in a team environment as well as encouraging and creating positive emotions. Negative emotions can actually be an opportunity to turn a team disappointment into a starting point to motivate the team to achieve more. It is important to keep in mind that emotions can actually enhance our thinking [1]. Team members who react unconstructively may be expressing the feelings of the entire team, if the team is experiencing a setback or has received disappointing feedback. The emotionally intelligent project manager will recognize this and work with the individual in understanding the root of the emotional outburst, and turn the negative energy into positive by developing a solution or improvement. This may be an opportunity to reappraise a situation and view a problem from a different perspective to come up with a better idea.

## VI. HOW CAN EI IMPROVE A TEAM'S EFFECTIVENESS?

Traditional teams operate without emotion at the forefront of their interaction, thereby removing the motivating emotions such as enthusiasm and happiness and ignoring the emotions of fear, helplessness, and other emotions that need to be addressed and dealt with to move the project toward success. If team members learn to recognize their inner feelings when situations arise within the group and they recognize what the stimulus is for the feelings that they are experiencing, they will have more of an opportunity to deal with those emotions and will be less likely to inappropriately react or lash out at their team members. Taken further, when individual team members begin to become aware of their own emotions, the team as a whole is more likely to work symbiotically to sense the feelings of the team and start to identify with the entire groups' emotional state. This is the first level of emotional intelligence within the team. In this manner, the team then has the opportunity to self regulate as needed to keep the team on track, as well as aligned for success, potentially avoiding a major pitfall in recognizing when the team begins to go off course. Instead of suppressing emotion and avoiding the potentially volatile and upsetting emotions that can arise within a close working relationship, the emotionally intelligent team will sense when the team is experiencing apprehension, fear or a sudden feeling of being overwhelmed and then have the ability to address these emotions within the team. Similarly, this team with emotional intelligence would identify fervor or passion running within the team and exploit this to help achieve project success.

The more difficult a task or project, the more emotional intelligence becomes important to achieving success. A lack of emotional intelligence may hold back someone with very strong technical skills from appropriately accessing those skills to contribute to a project, as well as limit their ability to interact with team members in drawing out needed information. Without emotional intelligence, a technically strong team member also may hold back vital information to their team members or to stakeholders, compromising the success or effectiveness of a project.

## VII. GROUP EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Druskat and Wolff define group emotional intelligence in "The Emotionally Intelligent Workplace" as:

*"the ability of the group to generate a shared set of norms that manage the emotional process in a way that builds trust, group identity and group efficacy"* [2]

		Team Capabilities	
Emotional Intelligence	High	<b>High Communication and Potential for Teamwork</b> <b>Team Struggles with Performance</b> <b>Customer Problems Develop</b>	<b>Most Likely to Achieve High Team Performance</b>
	Low	<b>Poor Performance</b> <b>Project Failure Likely</b> <b>Lack of Support</b>	<b>Poor Teamwork</b> <b>Misunderstandings</b> <b>Team Struggles</b>
		Low	High
		Technical Capability	

Fig. 2 Group Emotional Intelligence/Technical Capability Relationship

Once you have a team that has a project leader with high emotional intelligence as well as team members that also have the ability to recognize and manage their own emotions and then understand others emotions and manage relationships with their coworkers accordingly, you have a team that exhibits emotional intelligence. However, if you have individuals with high emotional intelligence, this does not create a team which functions with a high level of emotional intelligence. The team must progress to the point where they have developed trust and open communication within the team to enable the team to move to the point where emotional intelligence at the team level is possible. As we saw on an individual basis, the same applies to group emotional intelligence. This means that the group will feel comfortable enough with one another to call to task an individual or the entire team as the need arises, appropriately engaging withdrawing team members, supporting team members that may be in need and displaying other characteristics of emotional intelligence.

As a group learns to listen to one another and communicate effectively, they are taking the first step in working together effectively. When groups form and begin to get to know each other, prior to formation of a real team environment, they initially fear emotional release and vulnerability and potentially withdraw or mask their true feelings. It is also important in building team emotional intelligence that the team members recognize discomfort or tension in a teammate and support that individual instead of antagonizing them, causing further discord. The team builds emotional intelligence by identifying the source of the difficulty and bringing team members back into the group so that they can be productive.

When groups become more comfortable with one another and begin to open up and share, the level of emotions begins to rise. This can lead to a stimulating work environment, fostering the free flow of ideas, yet also can be a potentially touchy situation when emotions and tensions reach the tipping point. Groups that evolve to the point of trust will

openly sharing with one another. This is the type of team that is likely to reach group emotional intelligence, allowing the group to sense the burgeoning tensions that shape the group's emotions. As Caruso and Salovey assert in The Emotionally Intelligent Manager, managing emotions does not mean that one never feels emotions or acts emotionally, but that one's emotions are integrated into decisions and behavior in ways that improves one's life and the lives of those around the individual [1]. Basing one's actions upon emotions is usually a good idea, however, incorporating moods into decisions or actions can be detrimental to productivity. Being emotionally intelligent means having the ability to differentiate between how emotions that will positively influence a situation and how it is appropriate to integrate your emotions into your overall view.

As a team raises their emotional intelligence, the team also feels more comfortable looking to others to improve their performance and seeks outside assistance in times of difficulty. In 'Building the Emotional Intelligence of Groups' Druskat and Wolff stated "emotionally competent teams don't wear blinders; they have the emotional capacity to face potentially difficult information and actively seek opinions on the task processes, progress, and performance from the outside." [3] This extends as well to the team also assisting others that are outside the team, assessing their concerns and needs, especially as they relate to successful completion of the project goal. This may mean putting in extra effort to assist a manufacturing group or spending extra time with a customer that needs reassurance or support.

### VIII. IMPLICATIONS FOR PROJECT LEADERS

For many who are intrinsically emotionally intelligent, the process comes naturally as emotions and intelligent contemplation is intertwined. Yet, this does not mean that emotional intelligence cannot be learned. Although some may have a higher propensity for adopting the characteristics of emotional intelligence, everyone is capable of learning the fundamental components and thus become more cognizant of how to be more aware of one's emotions as well as the emotions of others. Just as one can learn technical intelligence, one can learn emotional intelligence; the difference lies in the willingness of the individual to adopt the characteristics of emotional intelligence that will lead to higher performance. As well, there are various facets to emotional intelligence and there are differing degrees of emotional intelligence. Even those inherently emotionally intelligent do not have the same capacity for all components of emotional intelligence. It is possible for a project leader to improve their emotional intelligence through thoughtful attention paid to their reactions and actions to everyday events and situations. By keeping track of how one reacts to

events and interpersonal interactions, one can begin to improve upon their understanding of their own reaction and develop in their capacity to relate to others, eventually making headway to improve their emotional intelligence.

### IX. SUMMARY

Through a greater understanding of one's own emotions as well as the emotions of others, emotional intelligence allows a project leader the ability to begin to positively affect their situation by creating an environment of open communication, enhanced trust and greater empathy. As organizations become increasingly aware of the importance of these vital skills that allow for a higher level of communication within teams, with customers and suppliers and all stakeholders, emotional intelligence is coming into focus as an important characteristic for leaders to possess. Project leaders encounter many difficulties in leading their teams to success, and we now realize that technical capability is not enough. One must look beyond pure technical skill to uncover the competence that lies within every individual and begin to advance our emotional intelligence to bring performance to a higher level.

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