



MANAGING KEY LEADERSHIP DERAILERS

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE skills drive leadership performance. Working effectively with all the different and difficult types of people in the workplace, from co-workers to customers to suppliers to higher-ups, is not easy. Success hinges on the ability of your employees to manage their emotions and the emotions of others to avoid miscommunications, resolve conflicts, reduce stress, reach consensus, build a cohesive work environment, improve relationships, well-being, and get things done.

The qualities of effective leadership are well known. We can all point to experiences we had being led by others and say whether we feel that was good or bad leadership. But if it is so easy to identify positive leadership behavior, why is great leadership so rare?

One of the reasons is that leadership does not typically occur in comfortable, low stress, and simple environments. Instead, it is transacted in often frantic, high-paced situations by leaders who are overworked, tired, and frustrated. Leading well is tough.

David McClelland, the late Harvard psychologist, demonstrated that division presidents with higher levels of emotional intelligence competencies outperformed performance targets by 15 to 20 percent and had a 94 percent retention rate. On the other hand, division presidents who rated lower on emotional intelligence competencies underperformed by 20 percent and had a 50 percent retention rate.

So, what happens when a leader hits a leadership derail? According to the Center for Creative Leadership, A derail is not just a weakness. We all have many weaknesses that we may never choose to improve or need to master. A derail is a weakness that requires improvement if we are to realize our potential. Based on years of research, these are four key leadership derailers, as described by Drew Bird, author of "The Leaders' Guide to Emotional Intelligence":

Impulse Control: When it comes to EI, it is a person's ability to resist impulsive and tempting behav-

iors and decisions, especially when it comes to emotionally charged situations. Most commonly, this presents itself when a leader interrupts others during conversations, makes hasty decisions, or talks too much.

Problem Solving: In the context of EI, Problem solving refers to our ability to solve emotionally challenging problems, as opposed to solving logistical or technical problems. Some examples include dealing with a staff member's performance issue or deciding who we must layoff because of budgetary constraints. Both decisions involve emotions.

Stress Tolerance: This is the way we manage and deal with stressful situations. It involves the ability to cope with the situation and manage stress levels, as well as the way we express stress. Leaders with lower levels of stress tolerance may become easily flustered when things get difficult. They often allow their stress levels to be seen and to affect those around them.

Independence: This is our ability to be self-directed and free from emotional dependency on others. For independent leaders, decision making, planning, and daily tasks can be completed autonomously. Leaders with a low level of independence will tend to care too much about what other people think of their actions and as result, may shy away from decisions that will impact people in the group. Conversely, leaders with a very high level of independence may not connect sufficiently with the people they lead and may operate too independently of the group.

If you are interested in increasing your leadership skills using emotional intelligence, visit the AlliancesHub website to learn more about "The Emotionally Effective Leader" Workshop. ●



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