

# Why Emotional Intelligence Is Crucial For Effective Leadership

**Sanjay Sehgal** Forbes Councils Member

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*Sanjay Sehgal, CEO of [MSys Technologies](#), an entrepreneur, startup advisor, keynote speaker and philanthropist.*



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When talking about leadership qualities, emotional intelligence is becoming more and more significant for leaders worldwide. In fact, experts argue that it should be as important as any skill a leader can have, if not the most. So, why this sudden rise in

discussion about emotional intelligence, especially in leadership? Let's find out.

## What Effective Leadership Looks Like Today

The paradigm shift in leadership is the main reason behind this increased focus on EQ, or emotional intelligence. While, previously, a leader was someone who could only drive a team of followers, today's leaders are different. They are self-aware and care about fostering relationships rather than just giving directions. Today's leaders are more accountable and attuned to their peers and subordinates, and they understand emotions. This understanding and empathetic approach is a direct result of emotional intelligence.

In short, emotional intelligence creates leaders who are accountable, self-aware, value and foster trusting relationships, and understand and regulate emotions in the most positive ways.

## What Is Emotional Intelligence?

By definition, emotional intelligence is our ability to understand and regulate our own emotions as well as recognize and influence others around us. In 1990, researchers John Mayer and Peter Salovey first coined the term. Later on, it became popular with psychologist Daniel Goleman.

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In 1998, Goleman penned an article titled "What Makes a Leader" in *Harvard Business Review*. He stressed emotional intelligence in leadership and said:

*"The most effective leaders are all alike in one crucial way: They all have a high degree of what has come to be known as emotional intelligence." It's not that IQ and technical skills are irrelevant. They do matter, but they are the entry-level requirements for executive positions. My research, along with other recent studies, clearly shows that emotional intelligence is the sine qua non of leadership. Without it, a person can have the best training in the world, an incisive, analytical mind, and an endless supply of smart ideas, but he still won't make a great leader."*

## The Benefits Of Emotional Intelligence In An Organization

Leaders are responsible for setting the tone of an organization. That's why emotional intelligence is as important a skill set as communication and technical skills are. In today's complex, competitive world, for a business to survive, a leader must be emotionally intelligent in order to ensure that the organization survives in the environment.

Emotional intelligence in leadership can be beneficial in that it can help leaders:

- Create a positive work culture within the organization that will increase efficiency and productivity
- Encourage growth, innovation and creativity in the organization
- Help everyone in the organization put their best foot forward
- Make the right decisions in the face of challenges
- Build a strong bond between the leader and team members

# **Components Of Emotional Intelligence In Leadership**

There are four major components of emotional intelligence in leadership:

## **1. Self-Awareness**

This quality makes a leader aware of their strengths and weaknesses. In a complex or challenging situation, they can regulate their emotions while taking the right step in the direction of the solution. It is important to be self-aware as a leader, as leaders need to guide the team to manage and accomplish the tasks at hand. It will not only help in decision-making but also ensure individual and organizational growth. Leaders must be able to rely on 360-degree feedback and be conscious of their behavior to be self-aware.

## **2. Self-Management**

This is a vital component of an emotionally intelligent leader, and it refers to the ability to manage one's emotions in any situation. For a leader, it's also essential to promote a positive outlook for the team in any situation, and self-management on the part of the leader can lead to that. Having this quality enables a leader to tackle difficult situations and retain their mental peace and calm to make the right decisions.

## **3. Social Awareness**

A business organization has to be aware and conscious of the social environment they want to thrive in. This is important to formulate strategies, implement plans, develop adaptability goals for employees, and, in the end, encourage satisfaction within and outside the organization.

Social awareness for a leader is important not only for dealing with the outside world of the business, the customers, but also for

the people who are integral to the organization. Only empathy can enable a leader to regulate the emotions of such a large number of people. An empathic leader with an understanding of human behavior can take the organization to the next level of success.

#### 4. Relationship Management

A leader plays a crucial role as a coach. They are responsible for resolving conflicts, motivating the team, and directing them towards the accomplishment of the task at hand. On the other hand, it is the responsibility of a leader to ensure clear and concise communication with clients and customers. Hence, relationship management is an important component too. A leader can influence how welcoming and encouraging a work environment will be and how people will work together.

In a nutshell, we can say that emotional intelligence is a non-negotiable quality for a leader. Therefore, a leader must work on their emotional intelligence with the same dedication as any other technical or communication skill.

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