

The really intelligent businesses!

(Part 1 of 3 parts)

The surge of interest in Emotional Intelligence followed the publication by Goleman of his now classic book *Emotional Intelligence*. It carried the Sub-title "Why it can matter more than IQ". With the ever increasing rights of the labour force and the emerging new generation of university and college leavers who are determined to prioritize interests other than just cash and careers, an environment which characterizes a mature, empowering, transparent and engaging approach towards employees is going to be crucial.

The importance of Emotionally Intelligent workplaces is set to increase with labour forces becoming more mobile. There is, however, a distinct difference in the way an emotionally mature workforce is developed, as opposed to almost all other training skills employees undergo.

An EQ environment depends for its lifeblood upon the influence and drive of top leadership in a company. EQ skills are not developed like technical skills where one is trained, gains knowledge and shows measurable improvement by passing a test. EQ skills are much like leadership skills; we know and identify with them as soon as they are discussed and we can quickly and easily recite the key issues that constitute EQ abilities. But knowing them is not the same as practicing them!

Firstly, the problem is not learning the skills but doing them. It is imperative that the CEO and his team are seen to be practicing and encouraging them amongst management. Nothing is more persuasive than a committed CEO to the development of an EQ environment. No other catalyst can replace the role of a CEO in establishing an emotionally intelligent culture in a company. We often forget that what makes us human is not so much our capacity to think and reason, important though these are, but our ability to engage and interact with people in both agreeable and disagreeable situations. It is this type of maturity which staff want to see in their leaders.

The most powerful way to develop an EQ culture is for the leadership to practice it, both amongst themselves and with those reporting to them. Civility, a sense of community, empowerment and the healthy expression of emotions, in both good and stressful times are more persuasive to staff than any number of banners and posters on a wall. Every leader is telling a story about what she or he values, and incongruence is quickly identified. In short the EQ of the CEO has a very persuasive affect upon the EQ of his organisation.

This subject is being delivered over the next three months, so the balance of this article will be covered in the November and December issues. If ever we can be of assistance in improving the emotional quotient of your team, we would be delighted to be contacted.

Until next time, Yebo!

