



mhca's e-Newsletter

Vol. 3, Issue 10
Published April 2019

Taking a Hard Look at "Soft" Skills

In this time of rapidly advancing technology, it pays to be human!

To future-proof our organizations and thrive in the midst of the whirlwind of technological advancement and industry upheaval, leaders need to focus on honing uniquely human qualities – sometimes referred to as “soft” skills or emotional intelligence (EQ).

EQ is the ability to identify, experience, understand, and express human emotions in healthy and productive ways, and it is the foundation upon which all soft skills, like communication, collaboration and determination, are built. The core of high EQ is self-awareness, which makes sense considering that without understanding our own emotions, motivations and behaviors, it would be nearly impossible to understand and appropriately respond to those of others.

The four pillars of EQ – self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness and relationship management – are essential tools for establishing trustworthiness, expressing empathy, and inspiring confidence. Fortunately, EQ can be learned, and leaders with high EQ can also nurture its development and application within their organizations.

Leaders with high EQ understand how their own emotions and actions impact others and set an example for their team by keeping their own emotions in check, adapting their communications to avoid triggering unproductive emotional responses in others, listening to and observing their team to sense shifts in their moods, and empathizing with them during difficult times. By understanding their employees and caring about them as people, these leaders create an environment where employees feel comfortable enough to suggest ideas, collaborate with their peers and take calculated risks. Their

teams are also more productive because employees are much more inclined to go the extra mile when asked by an empathetic person they respect and admire.

In contrast, leaders with low EQ often lash out at their teams, blame others for frequent misunderstandings, confuse humiliation with humor, and when others become upset, they assume they are just being overly sensitive. Low EQ creates stressful environments where people feel like they're walking around on eggshells, hindering their ability to think rationally and apply their technical capabilities. Employees working in these environments have lower morale and productivity and are much less collaborative because they are afraid of how their leader will respond to new ideas or suggestions.

3 Keys to Nurturing EQ in Your Organization

1. Assessing Current and Prospective Employees

According to the Harvard business Review, hiring talent remains the #1 concern of not only CEOs, but the entire executive suite. With numerous applicants for every position, how can you determine which candidates possess the soft skills needed to help lead your organization in these uncertain times? When hiring, use a mix of behavioral and situational questions to assess soft skills. Ask candidates to solve a problem relevant to their hard skills, then introduce new constraints to see how they respond. Role play a scenario with them to see how well they collaborate with you – are they open to new ideas, or do they become easily frustrated or defensive?

You may also want to administer an EQ assessment, like the [Multidimensional Emotional Intelligence Assessment – Workplace](#) (MEIA-W). This measure from Tett, Wang, and Fox (2006) takes only 20 minutes to complete and can provide you with a personality-based measure of the emotional intelligence of your workforce.

2. Nurturing Leadership Skills

Most vacancies occur when existing employees leave in pursuit of advancement opportunities, and less than 1/3 of these vacancies are filled from within. How can your organization adapt to offer good employees different/bigger roles that will keep them challenged and engaged? How can you help your team members develop EQ so they are prepared to step into leadership roles when you have a vacancy?

According to an article in Forbes, coaching that provides feedback to help employees identify key soft skill deficits is key because, [“There is only around 10% overlap between the skills people think they have, and the ones they actually have \(e.g., creativity, intelligence, EQ, etc.\). In fact, people are especially unaware of their skills when they are unskilled, so there is a big barrier to getting better precisely when you need it the most.”](#)

3. Creating A Collaborative Culture

To contribute to and collaborate on team projects, employees need to know how to build and maintain relationships with their peers, show appreciation for others, and enlist support as needed – but they also need the right work environment, including:

- **Connection to the Mission:** Employees who believe in the organization's mission and understand their roles in achieving it will be more focused, more determined to problem solve and more loyal during turbulent times.
- **Confidence that You Have Their Backs:** The agility required to stay ahead of the curve in rapidly evolving industries like behavioral healthcare means that leaders must trust their teams to move quickly and make bold decisions – but to do this consistently and confidently, employees need to know that being wrong won't mean being fired.
- **Time to Think:** We've heard a lot about the value of white space – taking time to think instead of constantly doing results in more creativity and better solutions that save both

money and precious time that would've otherwise been invested in lesser endeavors.

- **Permission to Peacefully Dissent:** Collaboration doesn't always mean consensus. Employees who feel secure and connected will be more willing to challenge the status quo to find exceptional solutions that strengthen the organization.

Mastering soft skills is hard work: it's hard to make bold decisions knowing we'll occasionally be wrong; it's hard to wait patiently so the best ideas can evolve; and, it's hard to train ourselves to always consider how circumstances and decisions look from another's point of view. Just because it's hard work doesn't mean it's not worthwhile.

While there is a lot of value in our industry-specific conversations and conference sessions, there is equal value in exploring and bolstering our soft skills; because without them, we won't be able to best apply our knowledge and talents to achieve desired results. We hope to see you soon at one of our quarterly conferences where we'll learn about emerging industry challenges and trends and how to apply a variety of solutions and skills to remain effective leaders.

*We hope you enjoyed this original article from **mhca**. If you'd like to author a by-lined article for this publication, email your topic to Lonnie Parizek at lparizek@mhca.com for consideration.*

No More Transcribing Notes After Hours

carelogic | **MOBILE™**



**MAINTAIN PRODUCTIVITY
EVEN WITHOUT INTERNET ACCESS**

[Request a Demo](#)



Winter Conference 2020

We hope you'll plan to join us at **mhca's 2020 Winter Conference** to help us celebrate our 35th Anniversary. Throughout the conference, we will have special activities and events to honor our past, celebrate our successes and prepare for the challenges and opportunities of the future. This exciting event will be held March 3-5, 2020 at the Sandpearl Resort in Clearwater Beach, Florida, and will include a special celebratory reception and casual beach-front buffet dinner on Wednesday evening. The conference agenda and additional event details will follow in November.

[Book Your Room!](#)



Who's Missing from mhca?

The opportunity to connect and collaborate with other innovative entrepreneurs from across the U.S. is one of the most valued benefits of **mhca** membership. Help us identify prospective members that will further enhance the value of your network! Just contact Dale Shreve at dshreve@mhca.com or 850-942-4900 and let him know about any established or emerging leaders in our industry you would like us consider for membership.

Unsubscribe from Monthly Minute Newsletter



1876 Eider Court, Suite A
Tallahassee, FL 32308

1876 Eider Court, Suite A
Tallahassee, FL 32308

TEL: (850) 942-4900

If you don't want to get similar messages from us in the future, you can Unsubscribe here:

<https://mhca.com/index.php?>

[option=com_civicrm&task=civicrm/mailing/unsubscribe&reset=1&jid=&qid=&h=](https://mhca.com/index.php?option=com_civicrm&task=civicrm/mailing/unsubscribe&reset=1&jid=&qid=&h=)