

# EQ, THE MOTIVATOR OF SUCCESSFUL CAREERS

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## SUMMARY

Since the end of the 20th century, new personality traits have become desirable in the world of work. Research results have proved that beside professional knowledge, it is obtaining and developing emotional competencies that lead to individual achievements supporting career success and eventually to the success of the business organisation (Covey 2004). This regularity increasingly prevails during the paradigm shift of the industrial era based on the external control of labour activities and the information society era based on self-awareness and self-motivation.

## INTRODUCTION

The relationship between emotion, thinking and cognition concerned not only ancient scholars. From Aristotle through Augustine, Descartes and Kant to Pascal, this issue has been addressed through the history of all branches of western philosophy (Forgas 2001).

Emotional sophistication is as important a part of education as mathematical or reading skills (Stone McCown et al. 1998). The results of research into emotions have shown that emotional competencies strengthen cognitive functions that are also indispensable in experiencing career paths positively and the way of obtaining and processing information. Moreover, emotions play an important role in outstanding achievements. Apart from accelerated environmental forces, the evolution of emotionally intelligent and emotionally competent labour force is also triggered by the slow biological development of the brain. That is to say, during the past few hundred years no fundamental changes have occurred in the structure of the brain, whereas it has to tackle more and more information. Emotions have enormous significance in selecting, storing and processing information or, what is of more importance, in creatively and effectively increasing elicitation.

The psychological structure of professionalism interiorized as a result of successful career socialisation can also be listed as a reason. The

requirement of realising a career vision is elevating a career to the level of profession. Identification with the values of the profession and practising one's profession can be realised through the integrated functions of the personality. The professionalism of a healthy personality is naturally and vigorously dynamic, infiltrated with emotions and is directed beyond the self towards action (Lengyel 2008). To modern workplaces, employers expect to hire well-prepared and emotionally dedicated colleagues.

## SCOPE OF EMOTIONAL DEDICATION AND CONNECTION WITH CAREER SOCIALIZATION

Career or "occupational socialisation" (Wilbert 1976:56) can be placed in the interval of personality stabilisation; it can also be regarded as a level of the social integration process. Career socialisation occurs during the educational cycle that follows career orientation, from adolescence to the end of the years spent in work. Personality development, orientation, education, identification, integration and proving competent are fundamentally determined by the characteristics of the occupation. Proving competent can be interpreted as the accord between individual competencies and workplace conditions at an advanced stage of socialisation. The socialisation process is influenced by the socialising family, the cognitive and affective competencies obtained through education, and later the activities performed at the workplace.

The career socialisation process, which is controlled by mental forces, can be divided into thematic time intervals: the orientation determining career direction leads to a clarified career choice and the adequate occupational and competence instruction field. At the phase of starting a career, one can gain competence by obtaining knowledge and mapping the personal competencies. "The process is completed by practising the profession. In reality, the objective phases reveal sharp boundaries only in rare cases. It is common to observe development in individually differing transitional streaks" (Csirszka 1985:315). If the process is burdened with con-

flicts and failures, reconversion and a disinterest towards the profession can develop.

G. H. Mead, the father of symbolic interactionism, regards the comparison of social role and the identity supported by self-reflection skills as one of the pivotal issues of the career building process (Baldwin 1987). In his opinion, social roles evolving as a result of the socialisation process operate effectively only, if they are complemented by awareness of one's identity adjusted to the level of mental development, the mental and somatic burden capacity based on stable value orientation. The principal constituent of emotional intelligence is the extent to which one can sympathise with others in a given communication frame of reference. This way one construes a particular reflection of one's self.

### **EMOCIONAL COMPETENCE – EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

Emotional competence is a learnt skill relying on emotional intelligence (EQ). Several researchers have investigated its nature and importance. Salovey, P. defined emotional intelligence as the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them (Salovey 1997). Intelligence, in its intermediary theoretical approach (Erikson 2002) is a passage between sense and emotion. It is transforming mental processes into intelligent answers and competencies in a given context. It can contribute to outstanding work performance; however, it cannot be sophisticated. That is to say, beyond chance, it does not guarantee on its own that the individual really acquires the emotional competencies aiding the success of career socialisation.

D. Goleman, in his book entitled "Working with emotional intelligence" (Goleman 2002) introduces the concept of emotional competence as a new tool of measurement. In the explanation of the conceptual connection, he points out that this learnt skill fundamentally determines outstanding individual achievements. In this sense, conventional intellect (attention, memory, sense of space, construction skills, mathematical thinking skills, etc.) and occupational knowledge are treated as elements of the competence i.e. previously obtained knowledge that is an organic part of work activities, but not a solely determining requirement of efficacy. "In D. Goleman's conception, skills that show the extent to which one can control themselves and their social relationships in different social episodes are given

careful consideration" (Forgas 2007:216). Gaining competence is significantly supported by the skill of successful interaction with colleagues. Social interaction embraces several mental processes that are realised interdependently: perception of the other person, making or shaping an impression, attribution, verbal and non verbal communication, building and maintaining connections expediently.

"The personality armoured with a cognitive and affective set of competencies has such a considerable impact on the stratification of individual actions that without understanding it one can only have a fragmentary picture of the behaviour of the personality within a business organisation" (Lengyel 2008:68). Therefore, continuing the approach to the emotional features of the personality, the description of a competence model follows complying with D. Golman's theory, which emphasises five different fields of emotional intelligence (Goleman 2002), emotional and social competencies out of the generally accepted twenty-five:

#### **(A) Identity**

It controls the recognition of momentary feelings and making them conscious immediately as well as the utilisation of value preferences in the decision-making process; it is the corner stone of realistic appraisal of one's own capabilities and of justified self-esteem.

#### **(B) Self-regulation**

It provides control for emotions in a way that it promotes rather than hinders the performance of the given task; it enables the enforcement of conscientiousness and delaying satisfaction during the pursuance of objectives; it aids the compensation of emotional off-balance with actions.

#### **(C) Self-motivation**

It serves the mobilisation of the deepest incentives and emotions of the personality for positive purposes in action, so that they can provide impetus, stimulate development and help to persevere among failures and hindrances.

#### **(D) Empathy**

It refers to the recognition and experiencing others' emotions, an ability to adopting perspectives in communicational interactions, and a willingness to contact and adapt to a variety of people.

#### **(E) Social competencies**

The ability to deal with emotions properly in human relations and the accurate understanding of

social situations and systems of connection. It is the sine qua non requirement of maintaining social relations. Together with the smoothness of contacts, it is the application of such skills that is expedient during persuasion, management, negotiations and discussions in achieving cooperation and team work.

F. Ternovszky combines the above elements (B) and (C) differentiating self-knowledge, self-management, community consciousness, collective expertise elements (Ternovszky 2004). Regarding emotional intelligence, it can be seen how many of these emotional intelligence fields are used by the individual with outstanding achievements and how. At the same time, weakness in several fields of emotional intelligence does not give a chance for efficiency in a work situation even if the individual has a high general intelligence quotient and appropriate vocational qualifications. According to D. Goleman, compared to general intelligence and "professional expertise emotional competence helps to assess the state of success with twofold efficiency" (Goleman 2002:64).

Emotional competencies can also be grouped using different approaches. Namely, establishing each group based on a certain element of emotional intelligence. In order to acquire the cognitive competencies that are essential from the point of view of a successful career, these emotional intelligence elements are of high importance. This precept can be easily accepted if its practical usefulness is illustrated by an example:

- (A) if an individual has a scanty identity, they will easily ignore their weaknesses; at the same time, they do not have self-confidence and self-esteem originating in a knowledge of their strengths either, thus
- (B) lacking proper social skills the individual is not capable of self-motivation and of promoting change and gaining career competence.

It is emotionally competent individuals who can adapt the most easily to the changing world of work determined by the social, economic and technological environment. Due to the flattening organisational hierarchy and the application of project focus groups formed ad-hoc within the organisation, they get into contact with fewer leaders. However, by mobilising the emotional fields of the personality, they are able to make decisions constantly and independently as well as to act. In the changing circumstances, learn-

ing that necessarily encompasses the whole life gets priority (LLL). The curriculum partly contains new occupational knowledge in connection with specialised work tasks. The conventional intelligence quotient can hardly be increased in adulthood, thus emotional competence is given larger emphasis in the learning process. From what has been studied, the elements that are associated with emotions become integrated into the existing cognitive content structure. One performs work tasks with the most results if one relates to them emotionally.

### **EQ AND DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE**

In the process of career building, the need to improve is less pronounced. Though emotional competencies can be developed throughout one's life, the personality traits and knowledge already gained and emotionally constructive are more likely to come into prominence. Emphasising strengths enables the foundation of reasonable self-esteem and stable self-confidence.

Several American research groups have investigated the factors of success inherent in the personality. Among them, T. Bradberry and J. Greaves assessed the role of emotional intelligence beside thirty-three skills and abilities in successful careers. They have found (Bradberry – Greaves 2007) that the role of emotional personality traits dominates. Such traits represent 60 percent of all the competencies investigated. Their development is expedient, however, formal education or training might not be enough. Emotional intelligence develops functionally if we are motivated, we want to change ourselves or others, we practise the desired models of behaviour, and pay attention to the feedback from our environment.

Nevertheless, it is not easy to change. The largest hurdle is our own comfort zone. Still, one must be able to find and build themselves even among constantly changing circumstances retaining and developing the mobilisable elements of the personality. The more often we are compelled to step out of the comfort zone, the more flexibly similar, recurring situations can be handled and at a higher mental level. Tolerance, persistence and motivation can be the energy sources of our deeds.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The scope of knowledge presented in this article necessarily reflects the momentary state of knowledge under investigation regarding the

topic. The effect of emotional intelligence on work performance is an exciting issue of social science. The research field is under constant changes, new results occur, while others lose their timeliness. In research into emotional intelligence and competence investigations it is not futile to keep in mind T. Perczel's original perception regarding career shaping (Perczel 1990). In life strategy, the spheres of private life and profession, the importance, order and weight of values are not rigorously determined from one field or to one field. In order to achieve strong motivation and proper work performance, experts dealing with human resource recruitment and development cannot overlook the fact that emotional competencies significantly determine the quality of the workforce.

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