



Career Management Column as published in Leadership and Management Books, L&MB - [Rita Balian Allen](#), Author of *Personal Branding and Marketing Yourself*

## **"5 Ways to Build Emotionally Intelligent Leaders in Your Organization"**

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Emotional intelligence has been identified as a strong indicator and even predictor of effective leadership. It has been studied and researched resulting in evidence that strongly suggests that organizations with emotionally intelligent leaders results in a higher return on investment. We have all read that EQ is defined as our ability to identify and manage our own emotions as well as recognize that of others and groups. It requires effective communication between the rational and emotive centers of our brain – it represents the path between feeling and reason. The brain science surrounding EQ is quite powerful and compelling. As reported by Daniel Goleman in his book, "Primal Leadership, Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence", the four skills that together make up Emotional Intelligence include; self awareness and self management, which are about personal competence; and social awareness and relationship management, which are about social competence. Goleman goes on to state that "Gifted leadership occurs where heart and head - feeling and thought - meet." Studies have found: EQ is a required competency for effective leaders; EQ is the #1 predictor of professional success & personal excellence; and EQ affects organizational profitability and performance.

***Developing emotionally intelligent leaders is a smart business strategy and can start with embracing the following 5 practices:***

**1) *Develop Inner Strength*** - Leadership begins and ends with inner strength requiring the ability to understand ourselves while consistently learning, growing and pushing in new ways. In addition to enhancing self awareness, strong leaders are adaptable to their surroundings, transparent, exhibit positive energy and practice emotional self-control. Effective leaders are empathetic, service-oriented and organizationally aware of their surroundings, reading people and cues well. Lastly, they are relationship builders, inspiring others, influencing effectively, coaches, people developers, team collaborators and able to manage conflict as well as change. All of these are dimensions of emotional intelligence. Ongoing self assessment and exploration is key to leverage strengths as well as create development plans for growth

**2) *Create a culture of compassion*** - Employees need to feel valued, appreciated and acknowledged for their contributions. Showing vulnerability and compassion is a sign of strength and creates an environment of trust. Jeff Weiner, CEO of LinkedIn, discussed his own transformation and appreciation for the power of compassion as a foundation of leadership in his organization. He shared the impact it will have when you create a culture of compassion that guides all decisions, even the difficult ones resulting in a higher level of transparency, credibility and outcomes that are mutually embraced.

**3) *Enhance relationship building across levels and functions*** - Open communications and a focus on establishing, building and nurturing long lasting relationships is essential. Connecting with individuals cross functionally and within other locations, geographies should be expected and encouraged throughout an organization. Engaging across, up and down should be a common standard that is supported with resources and tools to do so effectively. When we provide a venue for this kind of deep and rich relationship building, it creates a platform and norm enabling social competence to be developed and mastered.

**4) *Encourage and invest in continuous learning*** - Working with leaders to understand and build their level of emotional intelligence also develops their capacity to role model behaviors that will empower and enable others to unleash their own leadership skills resulting in a strong talent pool for the organization. Great leaders are life-long learners always looking to further develop their knowledge, competencies and skills. In fact, there are a number of assessments that help us to determine our level of emotional intelligence allowing us to identify elements of strength as well as areas for improvement including the highly regarded

BAR-ON EQ-i self assessment and 360 tool. There are also several resources available on this topic including the book, Emotional Intelligence 2.0 by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves.

### **5) Reinforce qualitative AND quantitative metrics to measure outcomes -**

Learning organizations appreciate the value of using data analytics to make the business case to support development initiatives. There are a number of compelling findings included in Goleman's book that support this point as well. According to the Center for Creative Leadership, the three most significant causes of career derailment for executives involve deficits in emotional competence: 1) difficulty handling change; 2) inability to work well in a team; and 3) poor interpersonal relations. According to Tony Simons, Harvard Business Review, the more associates feel trust in their bosses, an emotional response, the higher the profits for the organization. In one study, a 1/8 point improvement on a survey of employees' perceptions of how much managers earned their confidence increased profitability by 2.5%. That increase in profitability meant a quarter million dollar profit increase per business unit per year. The business case is strong for building emotionally intelligent leaders for positive impact on profitability and performance.

Building emotional intelligence is not only a strong predictor of effective leadership but can contribute to greater productivity, performance and ultimately profitability for all. What level of EQ do you and your leaders possess? Invest in developing your staff and your leadership potential at all levels of your organization. Remember, individuals do not have to be in a leadership role to be a leader. Unleash leadership skills in all!

Rita Balian Allen is the president of Rita B. Allen Associates, a national career management firm specializing in executive coaching, leadership development, management training and career development. She is a lecturer at Boston-area universities, a sought-after speaker and presenter, the author of numerous articles, blogs and the book, *"Personal Branding and Marketing Yourself: The Three Ps Marketing Technique as a Guide to Career Empowerment"*. Rita was voted one of the top ten executive coaches by the Boston Women's Business Journal.