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Leadership Institute: Building Leadership Capacity Through Emotional Intelligence

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Leadership Institute: Building Leadership Capacity Through Emotional Intelligence

Abstract

Given the changing dynamics of society and the pressures on Extension organizations to adapt, leadership effectiveness has become a crucial element of success. The program presented here is designed to enhance individual emotional intelligence. Through in-depth engagement of the participants, they learn to apply dynamics of emotional intelligence, enabling them as leaders to inspire commitment, motivate others, and build lasting relationships for the continued success of their organizations. An evaluation of this professional development program documented enhanced individual emotional intelligence.

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Introduction

Given the changing dynamics of society and the pressures on Extension organizations to adapt, leadership effectiveness has become a crucial element of success. Leaders must possess an eclectic blend of skills and abilities that go beyond standard intelligence and into the realm of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence (EI) is defined as "understanding oneself and others, relating to people, and adapting to and coping with the immediate surroundings to be more successful in dealing with environmental demands" (Bar-On, 2004, p.1).

Competencies related to EI are not innate traits but rather learned abilities (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002), and each of those abilities has a unique and resounding effect on an individual's leadership capacity and effectiveness (Mills, 2009; Cherniss, 2000). BarOn's (2004) Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ~i) measures such competencies. These include:

- Intrapersonal—assertiveness, self regard, self actualization, independence, and emotional self-awareness;
- Interpersonal—interpersonal relationships, social responsibility, and empathy;

- Adaptability—problem solving, reality testing, and flexibility;
- Stress Management—impulse control and stress tolerance; and
- General Mood—happiness and optimism.

Because these abilities are crucial in today's workforce, organizations are implementing programs designed to increase emotional intelligence (Cherniss, 2000). Such programs add personal benefits such as increased motivation, enhanced career success, mood improvement, and better health (Merkowitz & Earnest, 2006). Growing amounts of data are becoming available that support the presence of emotional intelligence as fundamental to an organization's bottom line (Terrell & Hughes, 2008; Cherniss, 1999).

The program presented here is one designed to enhance individual emotional intelligence through in-depth engagement of the participants. The program is ideal for existing managers, supervisory staff, individuals aspiring for higher level positions, and any professional experiencing leadership challenges in their current employment. Participants better understand and are able to apply the dynamics of emotional intelligence, which will enable them as leaders to inspire commitment, motivate others, and build lasting relationships for the continued success of their organizations.

Program Design

Adopting the premise that enhancing emotional intelligence is a process as opposed to an outcome (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2010), the program was intentionally designed for participants to learn about their own EI, explore strategies to enhance EI, apply strategies in the workplace, and process experiences. This program encompassed an initial 2 months of "course work" consisting of two in-person sessions and two Web-based sessions. In its entirety, the program was 12 months in length, between pre and post assessments. Research has shown this to be an appropriate amount of time for participants to practice and employ techniques provided in the sessions and observe sustained changes (Goleman et al., 2002; Boyatzis, 2009). Table 1 outlines the Leadership Institute program design.

Table 1.
The OSU Leadership Institute Program Design

Time Frame	Program Component & Description
Prior to initial session	Complete Pre- EI Assessment Participants completed an on-line self report EI measure (Bar-On EQ-I, 2004). Information was gathered and scored through a host website. Reports were generated and individually compiled into notebooks by program staff.
Day 1	Session #1- full day (9:30am-4:00pm) in person During this session, an in-person introduction provided

	foundational content about EI. Designed to be experiential by reaching participants on a personal level, this session challenged them to eliminate individual excuses and create goals for personal leadership development. Individual assessment reports were given to the participants towards the end of the session, and a general interpretation of results was given to whole group.
Day 2-14	Individual Feedback and Coaching Session- 1 hour or as needed One-on-one feedback and coaching session to answer questions regarding personal assessment reports and help participants realize implications of their individual EI assessment results to their current and future leadership.
Day 20	Session #2- Webinar 75 minutes Through lecture and interaction content the first webinar session was comprised of methods and tips to enhance specific EI components that could be easily implemented in daily routines.
Day 40	Session #3- Webinar 75 minutes Group discussion with participants learning from one another discussing daily experiences and challenges and evaluating progress on individual goals.
Day 60	Session #4- full day (9:30am-4:00pm) in person Session included a brief review of the EI framework evolving into a discussion identifying strategies that have worked to improve participants' EI as well as reaffirming their individual goals. This session was an interactive group discussion celebrating successes and recognizing future challenges as opportunities.
Day 365	Complete Post-EI Assessment Participants again completed a self-report EI assessment. Reports from this assessment were distributed at the convenience of the participants.

At the onset of the program, participants were given resources to explore EI on their own outside the planned sessions. Throughout the entire program the facilitator was available for additional individual coaching or guidance. Because there was significant individual context of this program, participant numbers were limited to 25 or fewer to ensure individual and in-depth engagement.

Results

The program has been offered within Ohio State University Extension for two consecutive years, with

a total of 32 participants. Sixteen participants completed the first year program requirements, and another 16 were pending results in the second year at the time this article was written. Through general conversation after the sessions, the program was described as incredibly motivational and an excellent way to spend professional development resources. An evaluation of the program in its first year yielded results showing an 8.3% increase on participants' overall assessment scores. The pre-test mean scores of the assessment ranged from 75 to 118 ($\mu = 99.94, \sigma = 13.05$), and post-test ranged from 93 to 121 ($\mu = 108.25, \sigma = 9.60$). Increases were seen across all scales and subscales in the assessment. Improvements among individual total scores were seen in 11 of the 16 initial participants, with an average 13-point increase. Based on the results of the program, individual participants showed enhanced EI.

Future Plans/Advice

Further replications of the program described here would benefit from 1) deeper course content in the area of interpersonal relations such as coaching, 2) adding a 360° assessment element beneficial during the individual coaching sessions and aiding in the self-reflection portions of the program, and 3) managing the program as a team effort. The facilitator focuses on the content, while one or two other individuals schedule and arrange assessments and meetings as well as document and organize data.

Costs/Resources Needed

This program was facilitated by an EI-certified instructor and supported by graduate students and office staff.

Table 2.
Leadership Institute 2010 Income and Cost Structure

Expenses (per person)		Income (per person)	
Facilitator Fee (includes all sessions)	\$120	Participant Fee	\$100
Individual Coaching session	\$100	Leadership Development Grant	\$280
EQ~I Assessments	\$110		
Meals/Refreshments	\$40		
Printing	\$10		
Total	\$380	Total	\$380

Depending on the individual situation, additional costs may exist. For this particular program, site fees were not incurred due to availability of classroom space at no charge. Indirect costs included a large time commitment and potential costs related to travel required by the facilitator and participants.

Conclusion

Results of the program and previous research (Mills, 2009; Terrell & Hughes, 2008; Goleman et al., 2002; Cherniss, 1999) show that EI can be improved through professional development. An EI program can be a valuable investment for Extension's bottom line. Incorporating emotional intelligence training within our leadership and professional development has shown to enhance leadership capacity among our personnel, as well as further engage citizens of Ohio in strengthening their own lives and communities.

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