

## Why people do not leave their Organization?

Widespread research suggests that people do not leave organizations; they leave their managers. The implication of this finding is that managers who are respected and seen as supportive of the people who work with them are indispensable to successful organizations. Without them, competent people may leave their current organization in search of better treatment. The resultant costs of recruitment, engagement and subsequent retention can be enormous. Less tangible are the indirect costs associated with the loss of corporate intelligence and the impact on morale.

I ask participants in management workshops to isolate the characteristics of individuals with whom they have worked who they deem to have been exceptional managers. Their answers seldom focus on the educational background or technical capabilities of those people. Instead they emphasize that exceptional managers are passionate, have vision, are caring, treat people supportively, make work fun, challenge people to be their best, provide lots of feedback, listen intently and encourage teamwork. Traditionally, these skills have been labelled, somewhat pejoratively, as the "soft skills". The insinuation is that they are "touchy feely", too mushy for the real world of work and, in some instances, even inappropriate in a "professional" environment. My experience contradicts this and supports the thoughts of Roger Enrico, former CEO and Chair of PepsiCo, who says that "the soft stuff is always harder than the hard stuff".

Successful organizations must invest in developing the skills that are critical for the managers of their people to function effectively. What are they? For many years we have taught managers that they need to provide clear direction, to communicate better, to vary their management style to fit individuals' level of development and to attempt to engage people in the pursuit of the organization's raison d'être. These skills have certainly helped managers to become more productive. But there is more...

In the mid to late 1990s the topic of emotional intelligence gained prominence in management literature. Research at Harvard suggested that emotional intelligence was at least four times as critical as a predictor of success as either IQ or technical skills. Another study at the Centre for Creative Leadership indicated that for successful managers, emotional intelligence is nearly five times as important as their IQ or technical skills.

Emotional intelligence is the ability to effectively perceive, manage and use one's emotions and to effectively manage emotional connections with other people. While there are eleven components of emotional intelligence, I will only mention a few.

To maximize the contribution of our people and their talents, research into emotional intelligence says that we must support managers as they develop skills in a variety of areas. These include helping managers learn to: assess their strengths and weaknesses; manage their strong impulses; remain optimistic in spite of severe challenges; listen more effectively; become more adaptable to rapidly changing conditions; become more emotionally self-aware; and demonstrate empathy. Managers who refine these skills will be seen as more authentic by those they lead. The outcome will be more people who feel that they are respected and valued by their managers. Under these conditions, people are more likely to be fully engaged in their workplace and to contribute their maximum effort for their manager. They are also less likely to shop the market for other opportunities.

Undoubtedly, effective managers are indispensable to successful organizations.

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Peter has gained a wealth of practical knowledge from consulting with and assisting individuals to develop their skills in many organizations in the private and public sectors. Companies include large and small organizations in manufacturing, finance, healthcare, natural resources, advanced technology, pharmaceuticals and retail sales. In addition, he has worked with a variety of levels and disciplines in federal, provincial, regional and local governments and many not-for-profit organizations. In his practice, Peter has travelled across Canada, the United States and Europe and as far afield as Greece.