

Daniel Goleman: Help Young Talent Develop a Professional Mindset

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[THE CHALLENGE]

There is a chasm between what business leaders expect from recent graduates, and what these new hires offer. In a Hay Group study (<http://web.haygroup.com/worth-their-weight-in-gold>) of 450 business leaders and 450 recent graduates based in India, the US, and China... a massive 76% of business leaders reported that entry-level workers and recent grads are *not ready* for their jobs.

In most cases, these hires are intelligent, ambitious, and technically savvy. They have proven their ability to accomplish the work. They're committed and passionate about rising through the ranks. So what are these new professionals missing?

They're lacking soft skills. These are the traits and behaviors that characterize our relationships with others. Specifically, these new grads are not ascribing enough value to emotional intelligence's place in the workplace. And we know that these qualities are necessary for strong motivation, sustained focus, and productive collaboration. (<http://morethansound.net/shop/the-executive-edge/#.VfHGUM6R84U>) As organizational structures evolve and globalization speeds up, these soft skills are going to be more crucial than ever before.

Now, here's the rub. ***Most new graduates and hires don't realize how much leaders value these skills.***

[THE FACTS]

Consider these statistics about recent graduates in the workforce:

- 69% believe that people skills get in the way of doing their jobs well.
- 70% believe that their technical skills are more valuable than their people skills.

While business leaders and HR directors report the opposite:

- 90% believe that employees with strong people skills deliver a better commercial impact.
- 85% see technical skills as the basic necessity for new hires, while soft skills are what sets them apart.
- 91% believe that employees with refined people skills advance faster.

When organizations conduct inquiries into the skills that make certain employees stars, they generally find that emotional intelligence-based competencies matter more than those based on technical and reasoning skills. It's evident that a strong intellect and relevant experience are basic capacities – what someone needs to land a job. But they're not what make that person soar.

For example, Claudio Fernández-Aráoz, a global hiring expert, did a study of C-level leaders who were fired. He concluded that the majority were hired for their cleverness and hard experience, but ended up being fired for their lack of emotional intelligence (<https://hbr.org/2014/10/ignore-emotional-intelligence-at-you-own-risk/>). (You can learn more about the study here (<http://morethansound.net/2012/10/12/people-decisions-with-claudio-fernandez-araoz/#.VedIdrTF8uo>.)

These EI qualities manifest in various ways. Here are some characteristics of a person with a robust cache of soft skills:

Collaborates well on a team.

As a business leader once told a consultant at McKinsey, “I have never fired an engineer for bad engineering, but I have fired an engineer for lack of teamwork.”

Adaptable.

The ability to adjust to change (http://morethansound.net/shop/thriving-on-change/#.VfG_4s6R84U) signifies good self-management.

Interacts easily with dissimilar people.

An emotionally intelligent person will generally have smooth interactions with co-workers, customers, and clients from different groups or cultures.

Able to reason under pressure.

This requires a mix of self-awareness, focus, and quick stress recovery, which puts the brain in an optimal state in difficult circumstances (<http://morethansound.net/shop/the-competency-builder/#.VfHAF86R84U>).

Lucid, compelling communicator.

An effective communicator (<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-overcome-communication-breakdowns-daniel-goleman?trk=prof-post>) is a great listener and has the ability to understand how another person thinks. This is an aspect of cognitive empathy.

[THE SOLUTION]

So how do you equip recent grads with these skills?

Promote self-regulation

Self-regulation (<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/self-regulation-star-leaders-secret-weapon-daniel-goleman?trk=mp-reader-card>) is a fundamental aspect of emotional intelligence. If you learn to manage your emotions, you will recover quickly from stress. This means that when you feel a strong emotion surface, you're aware of it, you can name it, and let it pass without reacting instantly. Doing so allows you to re-focus with a nimbler mind and relaxed body. **And a state of relaxed alertness is optimal for performance.**

For this, I strongly encourage an emotional self-management method, like a daily session of meditation. This helps in a few ways. First, it resets your brain (<http://morethansound.net/shop/cultivating-focus-techniques-for-excellence/#.VfHBXM6R84U>) so you are triggered less easily and less often by other people. Second, it trains your brain to recover quickly. Third, it gives you a tool you can use immediately in moments of high stress.

Teach Time Management

Offer your new employees very specific methods for time management (<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/secret-time-management-daniel-goleman?trk=mp-reader-card>). A professional workspace is a unique environment and it's crucial they don't become too scattered.

Here's a tip I like. When you're interrupted, practice asking yourself: *Can this wait? Can I put it aside?* You'll find that the answer is almost always *Yes*. Then communicating this with goodwill is a great training practice. Because leaders need the capacity to decide what matters now and then make that clear... kindly.

Create a feedback culture

It's important that new recruits feel comfortable in a feedback culture (<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/want-loyal-team-choose-kindness-over-toughness-daniel-goleman?trk=mp-reader-card>), where they're able to give and receive feedback. (This must of course include both the positive and the negative.) Hay Group recommends that you start building self-awareness in your recent grads from the get-go; give them feedback on their interview performance!

Set up a mentor program

The best part about having a mentor is hearing about the *mistakes* they made along the way. This is a great opportunity for new grads to hear interesting career stories, make connections, and practice face-to-face communication. This will also give them a chance to see another aspect of the organization, offering a bigger picture perspective.

Train them

The best news here is that emotional intelligence can be taught. It's been shown that interpersonal skills, stress management and even empathy can be learned, with quick results (<https://hbr.org/2013/05/can-you-really-improve-your-em>). In their *Journey* (<http://journey.haygroup.com/>) development program for new young hires, Hay Group offers tips, feedback and exercises to do just that.

Not only will these soft skills boost performance and potential at work, but they improve relationships and levels

of contentment *outside* of work.

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Remember that self-discipline, resilience, empathy, collaboration, and communication skills are all emotional intelligence-based competencies that distinguish star performers from average. An organization that underscores the importance of emotional intelligence in their new recruits will attract the type of talent that knows how to stay engaged, adapt, and excel much more quickly than employees with expertise alone.

Additional resources:

The L&D Primer (<http://morethansound.net/shop/the-ld-primer/#.VfHGqc6R84V>) offers a mix of practical instructions and best practices for fostering emotionally intelligent leadership skills, based on the latest research and expert insights. Ideal for emerging leadership training.

Thriving on Change: The Evolving Leader's Toolkit (<http://morethansound.net/shop/thriving-on-change/#.VfHG686R84U>) integrates the necessary proven-effective skills, tools, and practices to ensure leaders expertly respond to uncertainty, conflict, and inevitable distraction.

The Competency Builder (<http://morethansound.net/shop/the-competency-builder/#.VfHHU86R84U>) program was created to assist workers at all levels learn how to work more mindfully, improve focus, handle daily stresses better, and use these skills to increase their effectiveness.

The EI Overview (<http://morethansound.net/shop/the-ei-overview-2/#.VfHH2M6R84V>) offers actionable findings on how leaders can foster group flow to maximize innovation, drive, and motivation to deliver bottom-line results.

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About Daniel Goleman



Welcome to the website and blog of psychologist Daniel Goleman, Ph.D., author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Emotional Intelligence* and *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships*. Dr. Goleman is an internationally known psychologist who lectures frequently to professional groups, business audiences, and on college campuses. Working as a science journalist, Goleman reported on the brain and behavioral sciences for *The New York Times* for many years. His 1995 book, *Emotional Intelligence* (Bantam Books) was on *The New York Times* bestseller list for a year-and-a-half; with more than 5,000,000 copies in print worldwide in 40 languages, and has been a best seller in many countries. Read more » (<http://danielgoleman.info/biography/>)