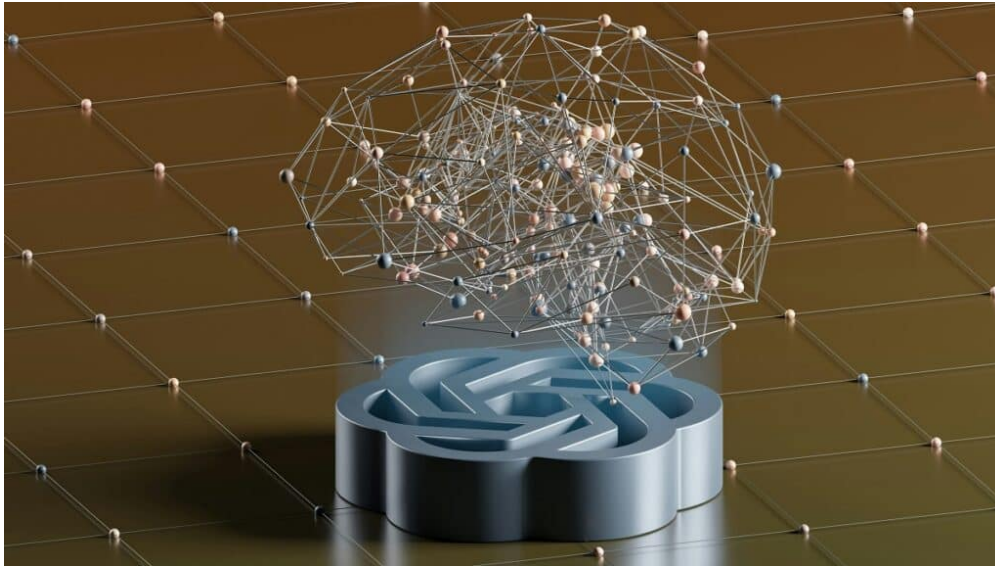


Emotional Intelligence: The Secret Weapon of Successful Project Managers

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Insight from [Capterra](#)

Project managers have a vast arsenal of tools at their disposal, but one essential skill is often overlooked: emotional intelligence (EQ). A new Capterra survey explores how project managers can leverage EQ to overcome challenges and excel in their roles.

Project management is a dynamic and multifaceted discipline. Success hinges on possessing a diverse skillset that extends beyond technical expertise. While project management tools streamline technical aspects, project managers who can effectively navigate interpersonal dynamics are the ones who truly thrive. This is where EQ comes into play.

Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and utilize your own emotions, as well as the emotions of others. By employing EQ-based techniques, such as active listening and open-mindedness, project managers can foster stronger relationships with stakeholders and make more informed decisions.

To gauge the impact of EQ on project management, Capterra surveyed 2,500 project professionals across 12 countries. The study revealed:

- **Growing Recognition of EQ's Importance:** Nearly half (47%) of project managers always integrate EQ into their work, while 51% do so frequently. Furthermore, 87% report a significant or moderate increase in their EQ utilization over the past two years.

- **Self-Awareness Under Pressure:** The ability to identify emotions under pressure is crucial for project managers. Encouragingly, 96% of surveyed managers claim they can accurately recognize their own emotions in stressful situations. However, this self-awareness may be overestimated, highlighting the need for ongoing EQ development.
- **EQ's Impact on Project Outcomes:** A clear majority (95%) of project managers believe their company leadership recognizes the importance of EQ in project management. This is unsurprising, considering 97% of managers acknowledge that high EQ within project teams significantly or moderately impacts their ability to achieve goals.

Investing in EQ development for project teams is a wise strategy. Training workshops and EQ assessments can significantly enhance team dynamics and project outcomes. Combining project management tools with EQ assessment tools like the Emotional Capital Report (ECR) or Emotional Quotient Inventory can offer valuable support in this area.

Project managers juggle a multitude of tasks, and some benefit more from EQ than others. The survey found that decision-making is the area most positively impacted by EQ skills, according to 60% of respondents. Problem-solving (58%) and team management (49%) follow closely behind.

Interestingly, while project managers acknowledge the positive impact of EQ on team management and goal achievement, the same doesn't hold true for senior-level stakeholder interactions. Only 17% of project managers believe EQ significantly impacts interactions with senior stakeholders.

Effective Communication: The Key to Senior Stakeholder Management

Emotional intelligence should permeate all project interactions, regardless of hierarchy. However, liaising with senior stakeholders requires a tailored approach. Here are some key EQ traits to cultivate:

- **Empathy and Understanding:** Prioritize understanding senior stakeholders' perspectives, concerns, and priorities. This mutual understanding forms the foundation for effective communication strategies that address their specific needs.
- **Clear Communication:** The ability to convey complex information clearly, concisely, and persuasively is paramount. Effectively communicating project goals, progress updates, and potential challenges builds trust and credibility with senior stakeholders.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Senior stakeholders may have competing interests, leading to potential conflicts. EQ equips project managers with the skills to navigate these conflicts diplomatically, find mutually beneficial solutions, and maintain positive relationships.
- **Influence and Persuasion:** By understanding stakeholder motivations and concerns, project managers can effectively frame proposals and recommendations that resonate with senior stakeholders, garnering their buy-in for project initiatives.

- **Adaptability and Flexibility:** Changing priorities or market dynamics may necessitate project plan adjustments. EQ, when combined with Agile management skills, empowers project managers and teams to adapt quickly to evolving circumstances while ensuring alignment with senior stakeholder objectives.

Overcoming Challenges: EQ and Conflict Resolution

While project managers excel in many EQ aspects, some areas require improvement. Conflict resolution presents the biggest challenge, with 45% of respondents reporting difficulty. Other challenges include communicating needs or expectations (36%) and identifying emotions (30%).

How to leverage EQ for conflict resolution

As a project manager, use the following EQ-focused strategies to overcome conflict management challenges:

- **Self-awareness:** Only 27% of project managers say they have difficulty managing their self-awareness. If you are like them, consider yourself fortunate because you can use this awareness to reflect on your own emotions, triggers and biases. By understanding your own emotional responses, you can better regulate your emotions and approach conflicts with a calm and composed demeanour.
- **Active listening and effective communication:** Practice active listening to understand the perspectives and concerns of all parties involved in a project. You should also foster open communication and use the necessary communication tools to reach these objectives. By communicating assertively and transparently, you can clarify misunderstandings, build trust and facilitate conflict resolution.
- **Problem-solving skills:** Learn problem-solving techniques, tools and strategies to address conflicts collaboratively. Some [learning management tools](#), for example, offer courses on conflict management and interpersonal skills. Similarly, some [employee engagement systems](#) provide feedback mechanisms that encourage continuous communication and dialogue between project team members, which can help address conflicts proactively. If you're consistently running into conflict resolution challenges, ask your senior project manager or project director to provide the tools to address conflicts effectively.

A combination of technology and EQ can help deliver successful projects

Emotional intelligence is pivotal for successful project management, as it complements technical skills with the appropriate social abilities to ensure teams or senior stakeholders respond positively and collaborate to achieve project success. As with all projects, challenges may arise, and it is up to businesses to equip their project managers with the tools, mechanisms and support required to develop emotional intelligence.

As a project manager, you can benefit from integrating project management tools with appropriate EQ assessments to oversee projects and teams efficiently. This synergy also sets the stage for exploring the role of technology that can assist you in excelling at your job. In the second part of our study, we will explore the role and potential of artificial intelligence in further augmenting project management processes and manager capabilities.