



FULLER'S (THE FOX AND GOOSE)

TITLE

Why building an emotionally intelligent workforce should be a business priority in this current volatile economic environment and how employers can train and develop their existing staff to make them emotionally intelligent workforce?

Sandra Tirala (2113304)

DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE SKILLS FOR THE WORKPLACE (BMSW_6106)

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1. Introduction

1.1 Context of the Report

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly transformed work environments worldwide, bringing about unprecedented changes across various sectors, particularly affecting the hospitality industry. This industry, inherently reliant on personal interactions and the provision of excellent customer service, faced significant challenges as social distancing measures, travel restrictions, and heightened health concerns reshaped the way businesses operate. In this new landscape, emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as a crucial skill set, offering a competitive edge in adapting to these evolving conditions. EI encompasses recognising, understanding, and managing emotions while effectively navigating interpersonal relationships with empathy and care. As businesses strive to rebuild and thrive in the post-pandemic era, cultivating EI within organisational cultures has become increasingly important.

This report focuses on The Fox & Goose Hotel, a distinguished establishment in Ealing, London, to examine how the deliberate development of EI among staff can confer a significant competitive advantage in this challenging post-COVID-19 work environment. The analysis extends beyond EI to explore the vision and philosophy of the hotel's founders, shedding light on the principles that have driven the brand's success and expansion throughout the United Kingdom. By understanding the foundational values of The Fox & Goose Hotel and the broader hotel chain to which it belongs, this report aims to highlight how EI can be integrated into the core operational strategies to enhance customer satisfaction, staff well-being, and overall business resilience.

1.2 Founders of the Hotel Chain and Corporate Philosophy

The Fox & Goose Hotel is part of a renowned chain established in the 1970s by John and Elizabeth Hughes. Hughes' vision was rooted in an innovative and customer-centric approach to hospitality, which emphasised the physical amenities offered to guests and the emotional and psychological aspects of their stay. From the outset, the founders were committed to providing more than just a place to sleep; they aimed to create environments that felt like a home away from home. This philosophy was based on the belief that genuine hospitality extends beyond comfort and convenience it is about forging authentic connections with guests, making them feel valued and understood.

John and Elizabeth Hughes recognised early on that the hospitality industry is as much about people as it is about facilities. They believed that the key to success lay in nurturing a workforce that was not only skilled in the technical aspects of hospitality but also adept in emotional and social competencies. This emphasis on EI within their teams was pioneering and set the standard for a new kind of service in the industry. Staff were trained to listen actively, empathise with guests, and respond to their needs with warmth and authenticity. This approach enhanced the guest experience and fostered a positive work environment where employees felt empowered and supported.

Hughes' commitment to these principles helped build a solid corporate culture centred around the values of respect, care, and excellence. This culture has been instrumental in differentiating their hotels from competitors, as it created a loyal customer base that valued the personal touch and genuine care that became synonymous with the brand.

1.3 Expansion & Key Partners

What began as a single family-owned establishment has grown into a prominent hotel chain with a significant presence across the United Kingdom. Hughes's expansion from its modest beginnings to over 50 hotels and 100 pubs nationwide is a testament to the strength of its vision and the effectiveness of its business model. This growth has been strategically managed to ensure that the company's core values—authenticity, quality service, and emotional connection—have not been diluted despite the scale of operations.

A critical factor in the chain's expansion has been collaborating with key partners who share Hughes' dedication to excellence. One of the most influential partners has been James Blackwood, an entrepreneur with extensive experience in the hotel industry. Blackwood's involvement was pivotal in modernising the chain's operations and expanding its reach while preserving the traditional essence that had made the brand so beloved. Under his guidance, the chain adopted new technologies and modern management practices, allowing efficient scaling without sacrificing the personal touch that defined the guest experience.

These partnerships have also enabled the hotel chain to enter new markets and diversify its offerings. Strategic alliances with private investors and hotel

management companies provided the financial backing and operational expertise necessary to navigate the challenges of rapid growth. The continued emphasis on EI within the organisation has ensured that, even as the company expanded, the quality of service and the depth of the guest experience remained high.

1.4 The Fox & Goose Hotel: A Success Story

Among the many properties under Hughes' hotel chain, The Fox & Goose Hotel stands out as a particularly successful example of the founders' philosophy in action. Located in Ealing, a vibrant area of West London known for its rich history and green spaces, The Fox & Goose Hotel has been a favoured destination for tourists and business travellers since its establishment in 1985. The hotel's location offers guests convenient access to central London while providing a retreat from the hustle and bustle of the city.

The Fox & Goose Hotel is not just a place to stay; it is a holistic experience that combines modern amenities with a charming, traditional atmosphere. The hotel features 73 well-appointed rooms, each designed to provide maximum comfort with a touch of local character. The on-site pub, a classic English establishment, offers guests a taste of the local culture with its selection of traditional ales, hearty meals, and a warm, welcoming ambience. This blend of the old and the new reflects Hughes' commitment to maintaining a connection to the community while meeting the evolving needs of today's travellers.

During the pandemic, The Fox & Goose Hotel undertook a significant renovation, capitalising on the temporary slowdown in business to invest in long-term improvements. This renovation was part of the hotel's strategy to emerge from the pandemic stronger and more competitive. The renovation included upgrading the guest rooms with new furnishings and modern amenities to enhance comfort. The public spaces, including the lobby and dining areas, were also refreshed to create a more inviting atmosphere that aligns with contemporary design trends while preserving the hotel's traditional charm. The renovation extended to the on-site pub, where updates were made to the interior décor and the menu, ensuring the establishment remained a popular spot for guests and locals.

The renovation was not merely cosmetic; the principles of sustainability and efficiency also guided it. Energy-efficient lighting, improved insulation, and intelligent heating and cooling systems were installed to reduce the hotel's environmental

footprint. These upgrades make the hotel more sustainable and provide guests with a more comfortable and enjoyable stay. The investment in these renovations during a time of global uncertainty reflects Hughes' long-term vision and commitment to maintaining high standards of hospitality.

The hotel's success can be attributed to its consistent delivery of high-quality service, deeply rooted in the EI-driven approach championed by its founders. The Fox & Goose staff are trained to anticipate and respond to guests' emotional needs, ensuring that every interaction leaves a positive and lasting impression. This focus on emotional connection has earned the hotel a strong reputation for service excellence and fostered a loyal customer base that continues to return year after year.

In conclusion, The Fox & Goose Hotel is a prime example of how focusing on emotional intelligence, a clear vision, and a solid corporate philosophy can lead to enduring success in the hospitality industry. As the world continues to recover from the impacts of COVID-19, the lessons from this hotel's approach to EI will be increasingly relevant for businesses seeking to navigate the new normal.

2. Key Models of Emotional Intelligence

2.1. Daniel Goleman's model

Daniel Goleman's model of emotional intelligence is one of the most influential in organisational psychology. Goleman defines EI as a set of emotional and social competencies that influence our ability to effectively manage our emotions and relationships. This model is particularly relevant in the hotel industry, where employees' ability to manage their and customers' feelings is critical to delivering high-quality service.

2.2. Mayer and Salovey's Skills Model

Mayer and Salovey conceptualise EI as a set of skills related to emotional processing. Their model focuses on four primary skills: emotional perception, using emotions to facilitate thinking, emotional understanding, and emotional regulation. In an environment such as hospitality, where employees frequently face emotionally intense situations, this model offers a valuable framework for developing training

programs that help staff improve their ability to handle complex and emotionally challenging situations.

2.3. Bar-On Model

The Bar-On model defines EI as interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies that affect personal well-being and success. Bar-On proposes that EI includes self-awareness, empathy, assertiveness, stress management, and adaptability. This approach is especially relevant in high-pressure environments such as hospitality, where employees must adapt quickly to changes in customer demands and working conditions.

3. Importance of Developing Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

3.1. EI's relevance to The Fox & Goose Hotel

The development of emotional intelligence is vital to The Fox & Goose Hotel due to the nature of the hospitality industry, which relies heavily on personal interaction and the quality of customer service. In a post-COVID-19 work environment, the emotional demands on hotel staff have increased significantly. Employees must adapt to new health and safety regulations and manage anxious or dissatisfied customers. Developing an emotionally intelligent workforce can help the hotel overcome these challenges, improving customer satisfaction and reducing staff turnover.

3.2. Relationship between EI and Effective Management Communication

Effective management communication is critical to organisational success, and emotional intelligence (EI) is vital. Emotionally intelligent leaders at The Fox & Goose Hotel can establish more transparent and empathetic communication with their teams, reducing the chance of misunderstandings and conflicts. EI also allows

managers to understand their employees' needs and concerns better, which can improve team morale and increase productivity.

3.3. Competitive Advantage through EI

Developing an emotionally intelligent workforce can give The Fox & Goose Hotel a competitive advantage. Employees with a high level of EI can better provide personalised and empathetic service, which improves the customer experience and builds loyalty. EI can determine long-term success in a highly competitive market such as the hotel market, where differentiation through customer service is vital.

4. Critical Evaluation of Applied Emotional Intelligence Models

4.1. Evaluation of the Goleman Model

Goleman's model is widely used in business because it focuses on practical competencies that can be developed through training. However, a common criticism is that Goleman's model may be too broad and complex to apply in specific situations. In the context of The Fox & Goose Hotel, the focus on social skills and empathy is highly relevant. Still, the effective implementation of these concepts requires ongoing training and support.

4.2. Evaluation of the Mayer and Salovey Model

Mayer and Salovey's model offers a more structured and cognitive approach to EI, which can be beneficial in an environment like The Fox & Goose Hotel, where employees face emotionally challenging situations regularly. However, this approach may be too theoretical for some employees, and its practical application on a day-to-day basis may be limited. Training based on this model must be complemented with more valuable techniques and specific examples from the hotel sector to be truly effective.

4.3. Bar-On Model Evaluation

The Bar-On model is beneficial in The Fox & Goose Hotel because of its focus on stress management and adaptability, essential skills in the post-pandemic hotel environment. However, one criticism of this model is that it may underestimate the importance of the cultural and organisational context in the development of EI. The successful implementation of this model at The Fox & Goose Hotel would require an adaptation to the work environment's particularities and the hotel staff's specific needs.

4.4. Model Comparison

In short, each of IE's models has strengths and weaknesses in the context of The Fox & Goose Hotel. Goleman's model offers a comprehensive and practical approach but may require a customised adaptation to maximise effectiveness. Mayer and Salovey's model is helpful for situations that require cognitive and emotional management but may need more practical contextualisation. Bar-On's model is highly relevant to stress management and adaptability, but it must be implemented in a way that considers the specific organisational dynamics of the hotel. Combining these models could offer a holistic approach to developing EI at The Fox & Goose Hotel.

5.1 EI Development Strategies

Based on the evaluation of IE models, it is recommended that The Fox & Goose Hotel implement a multidimensional approach to developing emotional intelligence in its staff. Here are some key strategies:

5.1.1. Customized EI Training

One of the most effective strategies is implementing specific training programs based on the Goleman model for each staff level. These programs should focus on developing empathy, self-awareness, and self-regulation skills. Training can include workshops, role-playing sessions, and case studies that simulate everyday situations in the hotel environment.

5.1.2. Conflict Resolution Training

Since the hotel sector can be a high-pressure environment where conflicts can quickly arise, staff must be trained to handle them effectively. Using Mayer and Salovey's model, The Fox & Goose Hotel can offer specific training in the perception and regulation of emotions, allowing employees to de-escalate tense situations and improve customer satisfaction.

5.1.3. Wellness and Stress Management Programs

Bar-On's model emphasises the importance of stress management and adaptability, which are especially relevant in today's environment. The Fox & Goose Hotel should consider implementing wellness programs that include stress management techniques, such as mindfulness and breathing exercises, and psychological counselling to support employees during times of high pressure.

5.1.4. Continuous Evaluation and Feedback

The Fox & Goose Hotel must adopt a continuous improvement approach to developing EI. Regular evaluation systems, such as work environment surveys and 360° feedback, should be implemented to measure progress in the staff's emotional and social competencies. These systems can help identify areas for improvement and adjust training programs as needed.

5.2. Implementation of a Mentoring Program

A mentoring program can significantly develop emotional intelligence among employees at The Fox & Goose Hotel. In this program, more experienced employees with high levels of EI can be paired with younger or newer employees to guide and support them in developing these skills. Mentors can offer practical advice on handling difficult situations, communicating effectively with guests, and maintaining high self-control during times of stress.

5.3. Integration of EI in Selection and Evaluation Processes

Emotional intelligence (EI) should be a key criterion in selecting and evaluating The Fox & Goose Hotel personnel. By integrating IE testing into the hiring process, the hotel can ensure that its team members have the emotional capacity to manage the demands of the work environment. Also, during performance evaluations, EI should be one of the factors evaluated, along with technical skills and knowledge of the sector.

5.4. Promoting an Organizational Culture Based on EI

For emotional intelligence (EI) development strategies to be sustainable, The Fox & Goose Hotel must promote an organisational culture that values and supports EI at all levels. This means that leaders and managers must lead by example in emotionally intelligent behaviours such as empathy, active listening, and open communication and foster an environment where these behaviours are rewarded and valued.

An effective way to achieve this is by integrating EI principles into organisational policies and procedures. For example, feedback and performance appraisal processes may incorporate EI-related criteria, such as an employee's ability to manage stress, resolve conflicts, and maintain positive working relationships.

In addition, The Fox & Goose Hotel may create initiatives that reinforce these values, such as celebrating EI-related achievements (e.g., successfully resolving a conflict situation with a customer) or implementing recognition programs for employees who demonstrate high emotional competence.

6. Analysis of the Impact of Emotional Intelligence at The Fox & Goose Hotel

6.1. Impact on Customer Satisfaction

Emotional intelligence directly impacts customer satisfaction, a crucial aspect of the hotel industry. At The Fox & Goose Hotel, emotionally intelligent staff can appropriately perceive and respond to guests' needs and emotions, resulting in more positive and personalised experiences.

For example, a receptionist who detects that a guest is tired and in a bad mood after a long trip can offer a quick check-in and a complimentary drink, which improves the customer experience and increases the likelihood that the customer will return or recommend the hotel to others.

6.2. Reduced Staff Turnover

High staff turnover is a significant challenge in the hospitality industry, but the development of EI can help mitigate this problem. Employees with high EI tend to have better skills at managing the stress and challenges of the job, which reduces burnout and increases job satisfaction.

At The Fox & Goose Hotel, a culture that supports the emotional well-being of its employees can translate into increased staff retention. This, in turn, reduces the costs associated with hiring and training new employees and maintains a more stable and experienced workforce.

6.3. Improved Internal Communication

Effective communication is essential to the smooth running of any hotel. EI improves internal communication at The Fox & Goose Hotel by enabling employees to express themselves more clearly and constructively, better understand their coworkers' perspectives, and manage conflict more effectively.

For example, a supervisor with high EI can recognise when a team member has difficulty meeting their responsibilities due to stress or personal problems. Instead of approaching the problem solely from a performance perspective, the supervisor could offer support and temporarily adjust expectations, which helps the employee overcome the situation and strengthens the team's relationship.

6.4. Organizational Adaptability and Resilience

Adaptability and resilience are critical to success in today's dynamic and challenging environment. EI contributes to these capabilities by helping employees and leaders at The Fox & Goose Hotel manage uncertainty, adapt to rapid change and recover from setbacks.

For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, EI was crucial for the hotel to adapt to new regulations and restrictions while maintaining team morale and customer satisfaction. Emotionally intelligent employees could manage additional stress and stay flexible in the face of changing situations, thus ensuring continuity of service and minimising negative impact on the business.

6.5. Strengthening the Corporate Image

Finally, developing an emotionally intelligent workforce at The Fox & Goose Hotel can strengthen the hotel's corporate image. Customers value positive and memorable interactions, and a reputation for exceptional service can set The Fox & Goose Hotel apart from the competition. An organisational culture that promotes EI improves the customer experience and reinforces the hotel's brand as an attractive workplace, making attracting and retaining talent easier.

7. Conclusions

7.1. Summary of Findings

The development of emotional intelligence is crucial to The Fox & Goose Hotel's success in today's increasingly challenging and competitive business environment. By implementing EI training programs, strengthening the organisational culture, and integrating EI into the selection and evaluation processes, the hotel can significantly improve customer satisfaction, reduce staff turnover, improve internal communication, and increase organisational adaptability and resilience.

7.2. Reflection on the Founders' Philosophy

The founders of the hotel chain to which The Fox & Goose Hotel belongs established a solid foundation based on authentic hospitality and quality of service, which remain fundamental to the hotel's success. Adopting emotional intelligence as a strategic pillar aligns with the founder's original vision, who always valued the importance of personalised service and a welcoming environment.

7.3. Future Recommendations

To maintain its competitive position in the market, The Fox & Goose Hotel should continue to invest in the development of EI among its staff and leaders. This includes constantly updating training programs, adapting management practices to the changing needs of employees and customers, and promoting an organisational culture that prioritises emotional well-being and empathy.

In addition, it is recommended that The Fox & Goose Hotel consider implementing technologies that support EI's development, such as e-learning platforms that offer online training modules or mobile applications that allow employees to monitor and improve their emotional well-being in real time.

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POSTER SANDRA TIRALA

