



Coaching at Work road-tests the framework and tools of **Team Emotional Intelligence**

WHEN FEELINGS KICK IN

1 The tool What is it?

The term 'Team Emotional Intelligence' was coined by Professor Vanessa Druskat and Dr Steven B Wolff to describe a methodology and framework for assisting teams to develop the emotional context for high performance. The Team Emotional Intelligence (EI) survey can be delivered to a team (and its leader) to analyse and summarise the team's building blocks for high performance. The model and framework help focus on the steps a team can take.

Many teams want to be innovative, and develop and build trust, safety and risk-taking. The creators of this tool believe these are emotional and social outcomes that require a team culture that acknowledges emotion. Building such a culture involves the development of nine behavioural norms. These are:

- *Individual level:* interpersonal understanding, addressing counter-productive behaviour and caring behaviour
- *Team level:* team self-evaluation, creating emotion resources, creating an affirmative environment and proactive problem-solving
- *Organisation level:* organisational understanding and building external relations

Druskat and Wolff's original work on Team EI was published in *Harvard Business Review* in 2001.

How does it work?

The Team EI survey is an online process, with 68 questions put to all members, including the leader. The members receive their results as a report, which the team coach explores with questioning. An action plan is then formed.

The survey helps teams increase performance by paying attention to the nine norms. Many teams have a regular cycle of development activities; those that don't might engage a team coach. Team coaches can use this approach to access a raft of resources to assist the ongoing development of the nine norms.

The survey would form the backdrop to a series of team coaching sessions. It is administered to all members through an online portal. Members are asked to give direct and honest answers to numbered and open-ended questions.

2 The administrator Using the tool

I have just started using the Team EI framework in my learning and development practice as an independent coach. In the past, I have used individual assessments of EI, but these tell us little, if anything, about how a team works and functions – each has an identity all of its own.

Individual EI assessments are a powerful route to self-awareness. This is also the case with the Team EI tool. It helps to use this tool when a team is aware there are challenges, where they

might experience obstacles or an impasse, or when they find they are too task-orientated.

By accessing information about how the team is functioning, the team gains new insight and clarity. If a team has a specific goal or target, the information from the survey will help put in place new strategies for effectiveness. Part of this can be around removing old patterns that no longer serve the team. And, because the process and decision-making is based on team consensus, the solutions and goals adopted tend to secure strong commitment in the team.

Charles Gale is an independent coach and marketing consultant. He is a licensed team coach using the Team EI framework through Ei World

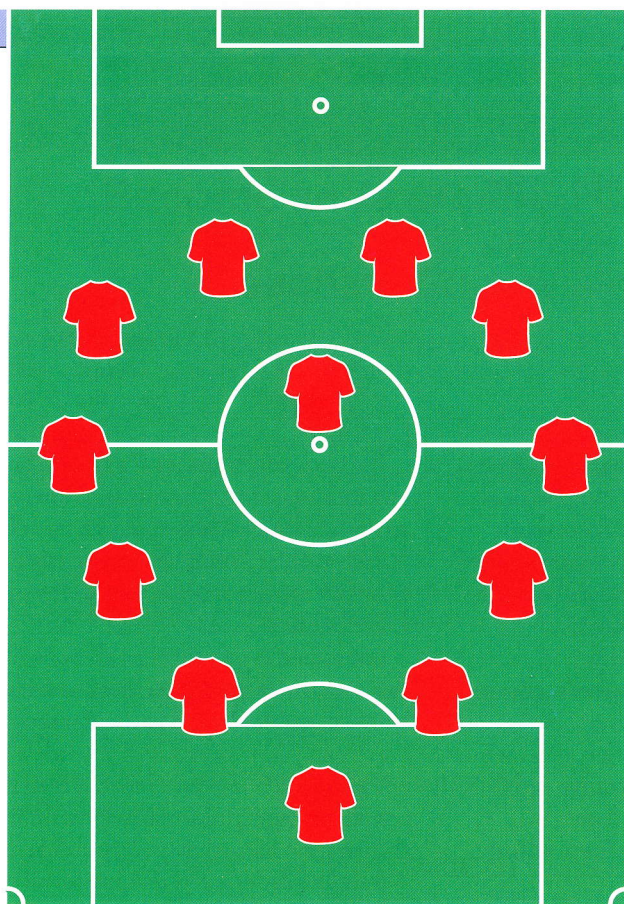
Team EI survey: pros and cons

UPSIDE

- Based on empirical research
- Supports well-being and performance
- Reports summarise survey output
- Ongoing research
- Comprehensive set of tools
- Unique in the field of EI
- Information about team functioning
- Good for new and experienced coaches
- Resources available beyond sessions
- Quick and easy to use

DOWNSIDE

- Must be accredited to use the survey
- No quick fix
- Some jargon and science involved
- Teams must commit time to it
- Some resist working with feelings



3 The experience

The client

I head the National Game Delivery team for the Football Association. We are a dispersed national team of 10 people, with a regular programme of meetings designed to bring us together and build bonds. These meetings are usually a combination of team business (our tasks) and a discussion of how we are working (our process). We had been using our own team diagnostics to track the extent to which we were delivering against our goals. We were curious about the Team EI framework as the team had recently completed a repeat of our own individual EI assessments.

The application

My team were invited to complete the online Team EI survey. We were then asked to review the results during a meeting. I was struck by the vast array of data that the survey produced. This was

the first time our team had really looked, in depth, at the nature of how we were working. I started to realise that, even though we were considered to be a high-performing team, a number of behaviours were counter-productive. It helped me identify actions I could take to support the team to be even more effective.

One of the key points of the session we had with a team coach, was that we were not acknowledging or addressing emotions in the team. Inspired by Nancy Kline's work, we have now built in short 'Time to Think' sessions. Each member is asked to communicate what they are thinking and feeling.

Our conversations have deepened. There is more understanding of individuals in the team and the role they have in helping us unlock high performance. The sessions have increased the level of debate, honesty and challenge within the team.

Another key learning was that if one person's response is significantly different from the rest of the team's, it is important not to gloss over it as this could have a big impact on performance.

It has been fascinating to experience how the team dynamic has changed slightly. Simple things, such as a change in the way I handle and understand emotion, have had an impact on all the team. We are still in the early stages, but I can see that Team EI will help us better achieve our business goals.

Verdict

I believe that the Team EI survey allows teams to access both deeper self-awareness and strategies for self-management. Powerful yet simple strategies help teams unlock higher performance. The nine team norms are practical and easy to understand. I particularly like the way they cover all three levels of functioning: individuals, the team as a whole and the team as part of an organisational context with key stakeholders. All bases are covered.

Helen Croft is a national game delivery manager with The Football Association

- The Team EI survey accreditation programme, delivered under licence from GEI Partners, is offered in the UK by EI World: www.eiworld.org
- The next webinar programmes on Team EI start on 25 June and 25 July. The next Team EI accreditation programme in the UK is on 8/9 October.

For a full programme of team coaching events go to:
www.eiworld.org

Reader Offer

The first 10 readers to get in touch will receive a 30 per cent discount voucher off a Team EI survey or Team accreditation. www.eiworld.org