



Britannia Dynamic Logistics: Developing an Emotionally Intelligent Business- A Teaching Note

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ParCeL – Participant Centred Learning in Management Education
Research Group

Britannia Dynamic Logistics Developing an Emotionally Intelligent Business

A Teaching Note

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Britannia Dynamic Logistics

Developing an emotionally intelligent business

Teaching note

Key concepts: a company's beginning, congruence in values, ethical conduct, competitive player in the logistics sector, emotionally intelligence.

i. Synopsis

In this inspirational case study, the emergence of a new freight handling specialist, Britannia Dynamic Logistics [BDL], is outlined. We learn of one of the company's founding members, Mr Nigel Piercy, and the synergistic business impact of his complementary people-centric and logistical skill sets.



Photo: Mr Nigel Piercy

Logistics impacts every phase of the supply chain. Logistical processes are deployed to ensure the timely transportation and storage of goods and products from warehouses and stores directly to customers. Cost-effectiveness processes are fundamental to viable operating. Working alongside other industries, such as retail, pharmaceuticals, events, and automotives, logistics has carved out a significant operational area of the economy.

Piercy's emotionally intelligent aptitudes are shared to establish a professional orientation and skill repertoire which excel under challenging conditions. Aspects of Piercy's daring part in a shared venture are portrayed where relationship competencies are shown to be an essential ingredient to BDL's success.

Factors enabling the company's operations are identified. Attention is given to the intangible yet impactful construct of trust as an assured and reliable currency in the business and its spheres of influence. Resultant effects on the articulation of commercial values, behaviours, and associated interactions with the client base and overall productivity, are depicted. The perplexity of the indelible imprint of emotional intelligence in the process-based industry of logistics, is not lost on all concerned.

ii. Teaching objectives and target audience

The case aims to assist students:

- a. To affirm teaching on Daniel Goleman's (1995) theory of emotional intelligence.
- b. To provide an opportunity to receive formative feedback on the application of emotional intelligence theory.

iii. Target audience

The case is suitable for undergraduate student groups and post-experience/executive learners in leadership and management, and for professional development.

iv. Teaching plan

Conceptual background to Emotional Intelligence

Peter Salovey and John Mayer (1990) introduced the modern concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI) as the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and use emotions in oneself and others to guide thinking and behaviour: -

Salovey, P. and Mayer, J.D. (1990). 'Emotional intelligence'. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9(3), pp.185-211.

Daniel Goleman (1995) popularised EI in the mainstream with his work 'Emotional Intelligence'. He expanded on the concept, emphasising self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills as crucial components of EI: -

Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

The Case

This case study underscores the importance of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in leadership, relationship management, and succession planning within a corporate context. EI skills played a vital role in the performance of the company directorate, focusing on Piercy. BDL's inherent deployment of EI principles are explored by outlining leadership resourcefulness and sustainable business growth conduct in the up-tempo, competitive logistics industry.

How to use this case study

The case can follow a presentation EI and the Goleman (1995) model. Using the EI constructs of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Goleman, 1995), the narrative can be used to identify activities undertaken by BDL and directorate.

EI themes affiliated with the characters and their in-situ decision making and responsiveness can be illustrated by using the Goleman (1995) framework: -

<p><i>Self-awareness</i> The capacity for understanding your own emotions, strengths, limitations, biases, and motivators</p>	<p><i>Social awareness</i> The capacity for understanding what others are saying and feeling, and why they feel and act the way they do</p>
<p><i>Self-management</i> The capacity for effectively managing your motives and regulating your behaviours</p>	<p><i>Relationship management</i> The capacity for acting in such a way that you are able to get desired results from others while reaching your own personal goals</p>

Suggested opening questions

Students can be asked to discuss how this framework was used to achieve the company's goals: -

1. *In what instances did **self-awareness** play a role in Piercy's decisions and actions?*
2. *When did the directorate demonstrate **self-management** to achieve its aims?*
3. *Attention to **social awareness**, how did empathic behaviour shown to customers influence the health of corporate interactions?*
4. *How were good **relationships managed** among the stakeholders?*

The case can be interrogated using each of the EI model constructs: -

Self-Awareness:

- Piercy displayed self-awareness throughout his career by actively seeking opportunities for growth and advancement in the logistics industry.
- Piercy's ability to manage work teams was accentuated by an awareness of his own understated interpersonal skilfulness.
- The founding partners, including Piercy, amassed and maximised its experiential directorate awareness, leveraging it for the good of company prospects.

Self-Management:

- The original directorate demonstrated self-management by adhering to the explicit terms of reference and responsibility for the observance by each respective party.
- Piercy's ability to adapt and thrive in the professional environment, coordinate work teams, and develop others within the company showcased self-management skills.

- The BDL directors exercised self-management by effectively overseeing the company's progression without the need for external investments or bank borrowings.

Social Awareness:

- Piercy's emphasis on treating people with courtesy and dignity exemplified social awareness and compassionate interpersonal relationships.
- The BDL directorate established rapport with its client base, showing social awareness of customer needs, cultural variations, and market dynamics.
- BDL's *raison d'être*, to 'provide a reliable service for an honest price' sought to reflect supplier and customer interests by ambitiously attending to all that concerned the client base.

Relationship Management:

- Piercy's career progression involved building strong relationships within the logistics industry, which contributed to his success.
- The BDL directorate prioritised developing and maintaining true relationships with clients and suppliers.
- BDL purposefully sought domestic and international industry accreditation with bodies BIFA and FIATA indicative of company efficacy and yielding confidence in its brand.

Further questions

The case presents a positive approach to organisational problems when taking forward a business venture. Student attention can be directed towards the question: *How did the main 'actors' in the case create a collaborative motivational climate in a startup company?*

Specific questions might target how the constructive aspects of BDL's company make-up could be sustained and built upon: -

1. *What are the considerations for ongoing succession planning to ensure the best of the company practices are recognised and used as a platform for progression?*
2. *What can the leaders do next to ensure the success factors are sustained and developed as the company grows?*
3. *How can BDL's hard earned and learned wisdom be used when it is faced with transformational change?*

Examples from the text to support the questions

Succession Planning:

- BDL's recognition of a sequential succession plan to preserve its ethos and values received traction to fulfil the business-critical positions in the 'here and now' for the purpose of future proofing the endeavour.
- The need for succession planning within BDL highlighted the centrality of robust and sincere group dynamics. It required an accurate appreciation of the candid agendas and contributions of each member and how their departure may have impacted the company.

Trust and Integrity:

- Piercy's belief in treating people with decency and maintaining frank business relationships highlighted the importance of trust in the logistics industry.
- Aligned with transformational leadership, sincere internal interactions were congruent with external activities.
- BDL nurtured the hallmark of integrity through behaving with principled probity and reliability. BDL's triumphs were felt to be synonymous with customer wins.

Leadership Transition:

- The lively and potentially risky transition of leadership from directors Piercy and Storry to new appointees merited cautious scrutiny.
- Managing a corporate-wide change while preserving the company's character called for a steady operational hand, ongoing business tenacity, and a clear galvanising vision for BDL.
- A concerted spirit and will to inspire the next generation of leadership featured across the company.

v. Case analysis

Analysis of how BDL could have used Emotional Intelligence for advantageous impact

Emotional Awareness: Emotional awareness encompasses the aptitude to discern not only our own emotions but also the emotions experienced by those around us. It serves as the foundation of EI, facilitating empathetic connections and fostering harmonious relationships in both personal and professional spheres. Such proficiency within a process-dominated industry would appear to be a coveted gain. Yet this premium capability was not formally or fully recognised by the BDL directorate.

Relationship building: Piercy emphasised the importance of creating and maintaining ethically bound authentic relationships with colleagues, suppliers, and customers. The company acknowledged that its accomplishments relied on industry rapport, evolving from stalwart communications. To enhance this aspect further, BDL could have invested in EI training for its employees to improve their interpersonal skills and facility to connect with

diverse stakeholders. This would mitigate for any potentially 'personality-led' performance facilitators, such as the over-reliance on key team members. Strengthening relationships and regarding this as a creditable strong suit, would embed the person-centric practice at the heart of its company operations.

Team dynamics: The BDL directorate demonstrated a keen understanding of team dynamics. It recognised the social capital and payback when knowing team members, not just as colleagues but also as individuals. Piercy's perception that "*you can't manage people you don't know, and you can't manage your friends*" resounded EI principles. A pivotal component within the emotional awareness brought to the fore in many of BDL's interactions was emotional literacy (Steiner, 2003). This potent skill set equipped the workforce with confidence to engage with and withstand ambiguities in the operational environment and identify apt accountability. Emotionally literate practice for BDL was depicted by team members articulating feelings with respectful clarity: - the directors discussed potential conflicts of interest, and in advance, engineered satisfactory means for all concerned to review and revise terms and conditions of employment and when exiting the company.

To mature team dynamics, BDL could have conducted regular team enhancement exercises and workshops to improve communication, address and resolve warranted conflicts, and foster a conducive work environment for predictable and unstable conditions. On this basis, emotional literacy within the company would accrue.

Succession planning: BDL showed foresight by implementing succession planning to continue company feats by envisaging a leadership pipeline. Succession planning is a strategic process that can benefit from EI principles. The company could have conducted EI assessments to map its prevailing tendencies and preferred styles, reveal signature strengths excelled in to date, along with shadow strengths that were latent or inadvertently passed over by the company.

Customer-centric approach: BDL's customer orientation exuded a laudable service accountability yet training in the EI micro skills of empathy and active listening would assist client-facing employees to notice expressed needs and concerns at a deeper level and help resolve these in a tailored manner.

Adaptation and flexibility: Organisationally, BDL displayed adaptability and flexibility in responding to challenges, such as driver shortages and alterations in freight costs. A change readiness strategy to fortify EI the principles of adaptability and resilience, could have been devised to assure this deftness.

Referring to an individual basis, the modelling of self-care with time management, unobstructed communications and addressing of emerging stress factors in a versatile way, would make for a more resilient team. How to maintain and renew sustainable energy for being at work, ringfence 'out-of-work' and invite innovation would reduce or avert needless negative outcomes such as staff turnover.

Global awareness: Dealing with international business requires an earnest appreciation of collaborators respective cultures. BDL's approach to looking after client's currencies and mitigating national and societal norms demonstrated their consciousness of the connectedness of the bigger picture. To surpass BDL's initiatives in international relations, cross-cultural EI training would grant employees a sensitive awareness of cultural variations. Proficiency in navigating valued differences would make for an outward looking adaptive proviso in BDL's corporate support portfolio.

In summary, BDL's journey brought to the fore a plethora of individual and team-oriented resources and capabilities of benefit to its company prowess. By synthesising its operations with EI principles, an emotionally resilient organisation would underpin improvements in its productive practices and enrich its proven business impact.

vi. Closing questions

Students can address the generalisability of EI principles to other organisations and industries. Specific questions can include:

1. *Are there any types of situations or organisations where the EI approach exemplified in this case, would need significant modification? If so what kinds of situation/organisation and on what basis?*
2. *How can organisations derive EI-informed change from a culture with low self-awareness and/or where EI has been poorly demonstrated?*
3. *Given the experience of BDL what would be the 'hard case for soft skills' when selling the approach to sceptical organisations?*

vii. Additional readings and references

Goleman, D. (1996). *Emotional Intelligence*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC.

Salovey, P. & Mayer, J.D. (1990). Emotional Intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9(3), 185-211.

Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence - Why it Can Matter More Than IQ*. London: Bantam.

Steiner, C. (2003). *Emotional literacy: Intelligence with a heart*. Fawnskin: Personhood Press.
[https://cchangeandassociates.com/wp-content/uploads/Emotional Intel 8pgs.pdf](https://cchangeandassociates.com/wp-content/uploads/Emotional_Intel_8pgs.pdf)

viii. Feedback

The case was first delivered in October 2023

What worked well: Learning about how a new business was created, of the vision and underpinning strategies alongside the personal and professional stories of the protagonist.

What is suggested for improvement: Asking more questions on the case study delivery.

ix. What Happened Next

Contributing his industry knowledge, business acumen, and canny people skills to the success of BDL, Piercy enjoyed a colourful career. As a founding father of the company, Piercy was motivated to support the succeeding generation of BDL. The directorate's streamlined preparations for continuity and renewal were realised with new appointments to the senior management team. BDL's continuation as a first-class logistics provider within the industry was secured.

x. Exhibits

In 2023 the Worcester Chamber of Commerce Small Business of the Year award recognised Britannia Dynamic Logistics as an outstanding business. The award was received as a validation of the company's achievements and in celebration of the dedicated team's commitment to striving for excellence and innovation in the ever-evolving logistics industry:



<https://www.worcesternews.co.uk/news/23655674.britannia-dynamic-logistics-win-small-business-year/>