Improving Workplace Dynamics

Developing Employee Self-Awareness
with Behavioural Insights

What's inside

Understanding the Role of Self-Awareness in the Workplace

Self-awareness has always been important in personal relationships. But did you know that self-awareness is also a trait that can significantly impact individual and team performance within organisations?

From helping leaders become more authentic, fair, trustworthy, and credible to improving decision-making within teams, self-awareness can be a key factor that sets your organisation apart.

On the other hand, a lack of self-awareness can set your organisation apart for the wrong reasons.

To help, this eBook will explore the critical issue of employee self-awareness, present the problems and consequences of low self-awareness, and offer tips on how to overcome these challenges within the context of your organisation.

All you have to do is keep reading!

What Do We Mean by 'Employee Self-Awareness'?

Employee self-awareness refers to the conscious knowledge of one's own character, feelings, motives, and desires. In the workplace, this means understanding how personal behaviours, strengths, weaknesses, and emotional responses impact interactions with colleagues and overall job performance.

Considered the foundation of emotional intelligence, self-awareness is crucial for personal growth, effective communication, and collaborative teamwork within an organisation.
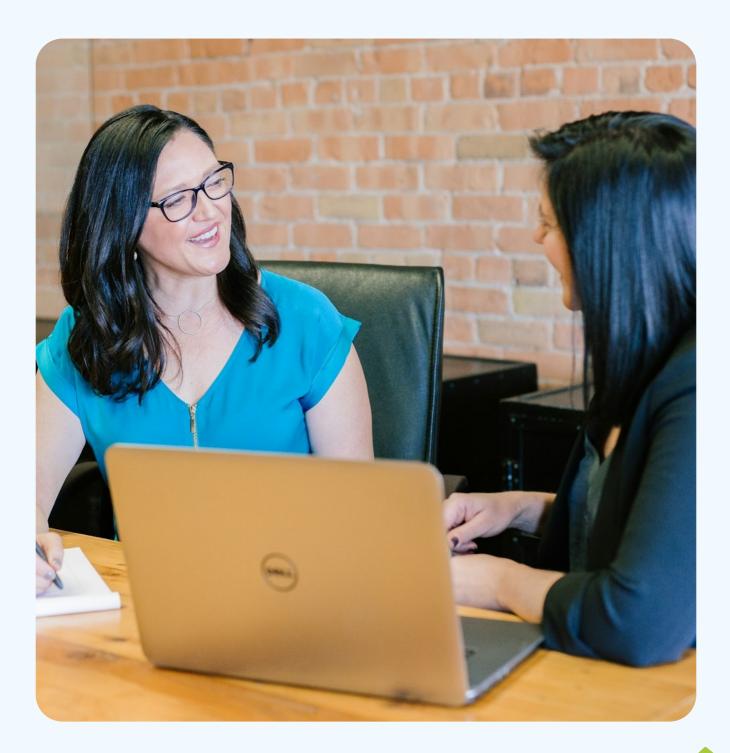
In short, when employees possess a high degree of self-awareness, they're better able to recognise their own patterns, triggers, and biases, allowing them to manage their emotions and reactions more effectively.

They're also better able to receive feedback, adapt to change, set realistic personal and professional goals, and contribute positively to team dynamics.

Sound like something your organisation could benefit from?

First, you'll need to understand just how limited self-awareness is across your workforce.

Did you know?

95% of people think they are self-aware but only 10-15% actually are.

The Challenges & Obstacles Associated with Low Employee Self-Awareness

Understanding the challenges posed by low employee self-awareness is the first step towards addressing them effectively. And, while there are several issues associated with a lack of employee self-awareness, some are easier to spot than others.

If your organisation is currently experiencing any of the 5 following challenges, it might be time to consider if low employee self-awareness is a contributing factor:

1. Ineffective communication

A lack of self-awareness can lead to poor communication. This isn't surprising, given the fact that employees who aren't self-aware often struggle to articulate their thoughts clearly or understand others' perspectives.

This can lead to frequent misunderstandings and miscommunications, which can disrupt workflow, make collaboration efforts more difficult, and lead to communication and organisational silos.

2. Misunderstandings and conflicts

When employees lack self-awareness, they tend to misinterpret the actions and intentions of their colleagues. This can lead to tension and conflicts within teams that can quickly escalate into major disputes, often requiring strong managerial intervention or even disciplinary action to resolve.

This level of tension can not only impact workflows, it can also directly affect company culture and team collaboration.

3. Stagnation in personal and professional development

Self-awareness is crucial for personal and professional growth, especially at a time when industry demands are changing and continuous improvement is essential for staying agile. Unfortunately though, employees who are unaware of their strengths and weaknesses may find it difficult to set realistic goals and pursue development opportunities.

This stagnation can lead to disengagement, a lack of motivation, minimal skill enhancement, and limited career progression.

4. Resistance to feedback

Employees with low self-awareness often stand out as being resistant to feedback. This is because they may perceive constructive criticism as a personal attack, rather than an opportunity for growth.

This resistance can prevent them from learning and improving, ultimately stalling their professional development and impacting their ability to thrive within your organisation.

5. Poor decision-making

Without self-awareness, employees may also struggle to make informed decisions. Generally, this happens because employees don't fully understand how their biases, emotions, and behaviours influence their choices — making it more difficult to see even the most basic strategies clearly.

This can lead to poor decision-making, which can affect the success of projects and the overall direction of your organisation.

How to assess the presence of low employee self-awareness within your organisation
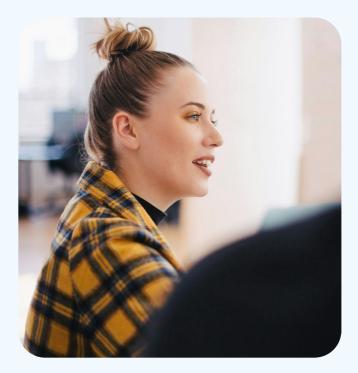
While the 5 key challenges mentioned above are a great starting point for identifying a lack of self-awareness in your workforce, it's also important to have a more comprehensive strategy in place.

With the right approach, your organisation can get ahead of employee self-awareness issues and even prevent them from arising.

Here are some tips on how to assess the presence of low employee self-awareness within your organisation:

✓ **Conduct feedback assessments:** Implement a feedback mechanism where employees receive constructive feedback from peers, subordinates, and supervisors. This helps identify areas where self-awareness might be lacking.

✓ **Utilise psychometric assessments:** Use tools like C-me to assess employees' behavioural tendencies and self-awareness levels. These assessments can provide valuable insights into how employees perceive themselves versus how they're perceived by others.

✓ **Monitor communication patterns:** Observe interactions during meetings and collaborative projects. Employees with low self-awareness may exhibit poor listening skills, dominate conversations, or struggle to articulate their thoughts clearly.

✓ **Evaluate emotional intelligence:** Assess employees' ability to manage their emotions and empathise with others. Low self-awareness often correlates to limited emotional regulation and empathy.

✔ **Track conflict resolution skills:** Pay attention to how employees handle conflicts and disagreements. Those with low self-awareness might avoid addressing issues, blame others, or escalate conflicts unnecessarily.

✔ **Survey employee engagement:** Conduct regular engagement surveys to measure job satisfaction and emotional connection to work. Low self-awareness can contribute to disengagement and low morale.

✔ **Analyse performance reviews:** Look for patterns in performance reviews that indicate a disconnect between self-perception and actual performance. Employees with low self-awareness may consistently overestimate their abilities or fail to recognise their weaknesses.

✔ **Encourage self-reflection:** Promote self-reflection practices like journaling or self-assessment exercises to help employees become more aware of their strengths and areas for improvement.

✔ **Facilitate team-building activities:** Use team-building exercises to observe how employees interact and collaborate. This can reveal insights into their self-awareness and its impact on team dynamics.

✔ **Review developmental progress:** Regularly review employees' progress on personal and professional development goals. A lack of improvement or engagement in development activities can be a sign of low self-awareness.

The Impact of Low Employee Self-Awareness on Productivity, Engagement, and Retention Rates

Once you understand the challenges presented by low employee self-awareness and can identify the signs, it's time to consider the broader impact these issues can have on your organisation.

The consequences of low self-awareness extend far beyond individual performance. In some cases, it can affect the overall performance of your organisation.

Here are some of most high-risk consequences organisations with low employee self-awareness experience:

1. Decreased productivity

Low self-awareness among employees can significantly reduce productivity. Miscommunications, misunderstandings, and conflicts stemming from low self-awareness can slow down processes and prevent teams from working efficiently.

According to research, un-self-aware colleagues can even cut a team's chances of success in half — a harsh wake-up call for organisations that want to thrive in an increasingly competitive market.

On the other hand, self-aware employees have a heightened ability to manage their time and resources effectively. This helps them anticipate and mitigate potential issues, reduce downtime, and minimise disruptions.

2. Lower engagement

Employees who lack self-awareness may feel disconnected from their work and colleagues. This disengagement can lead to lower job satisfaction and reduced morale, ultimately affecting overall team performance and innovation.

Low engagement rates can also result in employees feeling undervalued and unmotivated, further impacting their productivity and willingness to contribute to your organisation's success.

Engaged, self-aware employees are more likely to go above and beyond in their roles, driving the business forward without the need for micromanagement or frequent intervention from superiors.

3. Higher turnover rates

Following on from the previous point, self-awareness is also linked to better job satisfaction and engagement.

In fact, low self-awareness can lead to as much as a 20% increase in employee turnover (Gallup, 2022) — something no organisation wants to deal with during a skills shortage that's actively impacting various industries.

Self-aware employees are more likely to stay with their employers long-term and support future growth phases by contributing historical knowledge, experience, and continuity.

4. Increased costs

As low employee self-awareness leads to high turnover rates, employers are also likely to experience increased recruitment and training costs. Hiring new employees and bringing them up to speed requires significant resources, and candidates with solid skills are tough to find.

Without the continuity and institutional knowledge of experienced employees, the constant cycle of hiring and training new staff can drain the time and energy of management personnel.

But, with self-aware, engaged, and loyal employees on board, organisational leaders can allocate time and funds more effectively and focus their energy on strategic initiatives for growth and development.

Are your organisation's leaders self-aware?

Leaders who understand their strengths, weaknesses, and impact on others can inspire and guide their teams more effectively. This is why assessing the self-awareness of your leadership team is key to understanding their effectiveness and the overall health of your organisation.

Just some of the key traits of a leader that lacks self-awareness include:

✔ **Blaming others:** Rather than take responsibility for their actions, leaders who lack self-awareness tend to blame external factors or other individuals for their own mistakes or shortcomings.

✔ **Inconsistent performance:** Leaders with low self-awareness may also find it difficult to understand the factors that contribute to their success or failure, making it challenging to replicate successful outcomes or address areas needing improvement.

✔ **Limited emotional regulation:** People with low self-awareness may struggle to recognise and manage their emotions effectively, leading to frequent mood swings, outbursts, or emotional reactions in the workplace.

✔ **Resistance to change:** Managers or team leaders lacking self-awareness may also exhibit resistance to change or new ideas, preferring to maintain the status quo rather than adapt and grow.

✔ **Tunnel vision:** Leaders with low self-awareness may have a narrow focus and struggle to see the bigger picture. This can lead to difficulties in understanding the impact of their actions on their teams, and on the organisation as a whole.

✔ **Lack of empathy:** Leaders with low self-awareness may struggle to empathise with the perspectives and emotions of their colleagues, resulting in communication breakdowns and poor interpersonal relationships.

Overcoming Low Self-Awareness Obstacles

Overcoming the challenges associated with low employee self-awareness requires a strategic and sustainable approach that not only targets personal growth, it also improves team dynamics and helps your entire organisation thrive.

Before getting started though, it's important to lay the groundwork.

To do this, we suggest:

✔ **Defining your objectives:** Clearly outline your goals for addressing low self-awareness, whether it's improving individual performance, encouraging better team collaboration, or cultivating a culture of self-awareness throughout the organisation.

✔ **Assessing organisational readiness:** Evaluate the readiness of your organisation to implement changes aimed at improving self-awareness, considering factors like leadership buy-in, resource availability, and existing cultural norms.

✔ **Identifying key stakeholders:** Identify the individuals or departments responsible for driving initiatives related to self-awareness improvement, ensuring alignment with organisational goals and priorities.

✔ **Developing a tailored approach:** Adapt your approach to overcoming low self-awareness based on the unique needs, challenges, and dynamics within your organisation, considering factors like team structure, communication channels, and organisational culture.

✔ **Establishing metrics for success:** Define key performance indicators (KPIs) and metrics to measure the effectiveness of your efforts in overcoming low self-awareness, allowing you to track progress, identify areas for improvement, and celebrate successes along the way.

Enhancing Self-Awareness with Modern Psychometrics

To effectively address the issues associated with low employee self-awareness, organisations need tools that provide clear, actionable insights into individual employee traits, as well as their preferences and optimal ways of working.

This is where C-me comes in.

A platform that gives users instant access to modern psychometric tools designed to enhance self-awareness and drive organisational success, C-me is a firm favourite with organisations trying to stay on top.

Giving both employers and employees the opportunity to better understand their behaviours, preferences, and communication styles, C-me offers a user-friendly way to assess self-awareness and provide opportunities for growth.

Here are just a few of C-me's highlights:

✔ **Personalised development plans:** Based on the results of C-me's assessments, your organisation can create personalised development plans. These plans can be adapted to each employee's unique strengths and weaknesses, providing targeted strategies for personal and professional growth.

✔ **Team compatibility analysis:** C-me enables your organisation to assess the compatibility of team members based on their traits and communication styles. By identifying complementary strengths and potential areas of conflict, your teams can collaborate more effectively and achieve better results.

✔ **Comprehensive trait analysis:** C-me offers in-depth assessments of individual employee traits, providing detailed, non-judgemental insights into their behavioural tendencies, communication styles, and working preferences. By analysing these traits, your organisation can gain a deeper understanding of its workforce and identify areas for improvement.

✔ **Continuous feedback loops:** C-me promotes ongoing feedback and communication between employees and managers, facilitating regular check-ins and progress updates. This continuous feedback loop cultivates a culture of transparency and accountability, driving continuous improvement across the organisation.

✔ **Training and support resources:** In addition to assessments and development plans, C-me includes a learning platform that offers a range of training and support resources. From enhancing soft skill development to supporting leaders in their roles, C-me offers strategic learning tools your organisation can use to thrive.

Create Higher-Performing Teams with C-me

With C-me's comprehensive suite of tools and resources, organisations can tackle the challenges associated with low self-awareness and unlock the full potential of their teams. Ready to transform your workplace dynamics and boost your bottom line?

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