WINGSTOP LEARNING

Flavor Champions Program

Module 01

Communication and Emotional Intelligence

SolutionSpark



Reference Guide

Introduction

Purpose

This reference guide is designed as a quick, practical resource on communication and emotional intelligence skills and how these skills strengthen high-impact leadership. It offers clear strategies and reminders you can apply directly on the job.

What's Inside:

1. The importance of communication and emotional intelligence in leadership
2. Practical communication and emotional intelligence strategies you can use daily
3. Key competencies that shape how you lead under pressure and resolve conflict

Importance of Communication and Emotional Intelligence



Managing Across Restaurants

- Lead Teams across Restaurants, often remotely
- Communicate clearly to align efforts toward shared goals
- Drive accountability and ensure everyone stays on track



Motivating and Influencing Teams

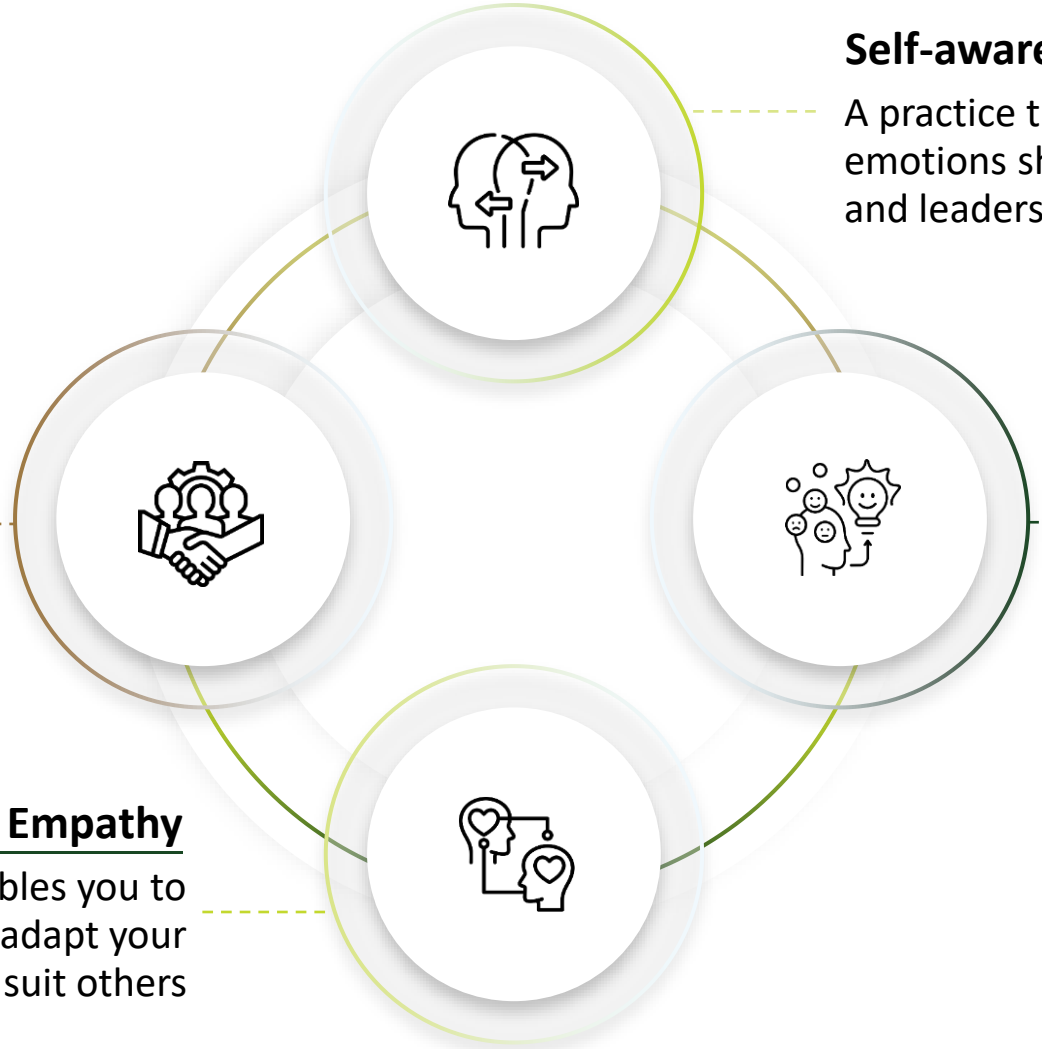
- Build trust and give direction
- Help connect with Teams, keeping them focused
- Improve performance through genuine influence



Fostering Trust and Collaboration

- Create psychological safety
- Strengthen relationships
- Increase collaboration
- Deliver better results
- Drives Wingstop Way culture

Link Between Communication and Emotional Intelligence in Leadership



Self-awareness

A practice that helps recognize how emotions shape communication and leadership presence

Relationship Management

A strength that uses communication to build trust, influence, and alignment

Self-regulation

An ability to support calm, constructive communication even under pressure

Empathy

The aptitude that enables you to listen actively and adapt your message to suit others

Strong Communication in Action

Communication Skills That Shift Conversations

Dos

- Hear all concerned parties in conflict so that they don't feel left out.
- Paraphrase their concerns to help all of them feel acknowledged.
- Give clear and forward-focused feedback.
- Provide solutions, clarify expectations, and rebuild trust.

Don'ts

- Jump to conclusions as it may backfire
- Take sides with one person.
- Use blame language as it can shut people down.
- Delay hard conversations as it often makes the problem worse.

Core Communication Skills

Clarity and Simplicity

- Communicate in a simple and direct way.
- Avoid ambiguity, fluff, or jargon that could confuse or dilute the message.
- Practice clear messaging to help Teams act quickly, stay aligned, and deliver consistent results.

Questions and Active Listening

- Show genuine curiosity by asking thoughtful questions.
- Listen without interrupting or formulating your response while someone else is still speaking.

Nonverbal Awareness

- Ensure nonverbal cues reinforce your message, not contradict it.
- Keep a calm tone, an open posture, and steady eye contact to boost confidence and clarity.

Constructive Feedback

- Focus on actions not personalities.
- Use tools like “Feedback Sandwich” to keep your message balanced, specific, and forward-focused.

How Communication Skills Impact Leadership

Build trust by clear, consistent, and honest communication thereby making the Teams feel safe to speak up, ask questions, and share concerns without fear of judgment.

Enhance collaboration with open, two-way communication, and welcoming inputs thereby breaking silos and encouraging cross-restaurant Teamwork.

Model leadership through clear, respectful, and consistent messaging thereby amplifying leadership impact across Restaurants.

Drive operational excellence by aligning goals, plans, and roles there by improving performance, and running operations more smoothly.



Emotional Intelligence in Action

Emotional Intelligence Strategies That De-escalate Tension

Dos

- Pause and breathe before responding.
- Name your emotion internally (e.g., “I’m feeling frustrated”).
- Acknowledge others’ concerns without taking them personally.
- Redirect the conversation towards shared goals.

Don’ts

- React emotionally or defensively.
- Dismiss concerns or say “We don’t have a choice”.
- Make assumptions about intent.
- Let frustration show through tone or body language.

Core Components of Emotional Intelligence



- Notice your emotional triggers
- Understand their impact on tone and decisions especially in tense moments



- Avoid reacting on impulse
- Pause before reacting
- Respond with reflection and calm



- See it from others' view
- Offer support that's genuinely helpful and not just procedural.



- Lead through consistency, compassion, and credibility
- Communicate with emotional presence

How Emotional Intelligence Impacts Leadership



Stay composed to lead with clarity under pressure. It avoids emotional outbursts or shutdowns that can erode trust and morale.

Build credibility by leading with calm and empathy. It signals consistency, professionalism, and reliability.

Foster trust through empathy and emotional awareness. It let's Teams know that they can bring concerns and be met with understanding and not judgment.

Leading Through Crisis In Action

Emotional Intelligence Strategies to Lead Through Pressure

Dos

- Pause and create space before responding.
- Acknowledge stress without absorbing it.
- Validate each GM's concern with empathy.
- Align the Team by refocusing on shared outcomes: guest experience, business continuity, and Team success.

Don'ts

- React from frustration or urgency.
- Dismiss resistance with phrases like "Just make it happen."
- Escalate the tone or match defensiveness.
- Ignore the emotional undercurrent driving the tension like unspoken stress, burnout, or fear.

How Key Competencies Shape Leadership in High-Pressure Moments



Conflict resolution calms tension, refocuses the Team on shared goals, and guides the conversation toward unity and problem-solving.

Emotional self-regulation sets the tone for calm, thoughtful leadership.

Crisis communication builds trust with clear, timely, and steady messaging.

Leadership under pressure means modeling composure and prioritizing solutions and solution-focus.

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Summary



Clarity Builds Trust

Clear, consistent communication and active listening create alignment and foster trust across Restaurants and Teams even when you're not physically present.

Emotional Intelligence Drives Success

Self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation help you lead with professionalism empathy, patience, and resilience, build stronger relationships, and manage challenges with confidence.



Composure Shapes Morale

In high-pressure moments, your ability to remain composed directly influences guest experience, Team performance, and operational stability.

Opportunity Knocks Daily

Every huddle, message, and shift walkthrough is a chance to model Wingstop's leadership values and reinforce a culture of accountability and care.



Homework and Practice Assignments

To be completed within 2–3 weeks

Assignment	Objective	Description
Clarity in Action	Strengthen communication by using clear, structured messaging.	Choose one upcoming GM huddle or shift briefing. Apply “clarity-first” communication (e.g., bullet points, recap key points at the end). Track your Team’s response and note any improvements. *(Due: Week 1)*
Trust-building Action	Reinforce empathy and connection with your Team.	Initiate one action that builds trust — for example, a 1:1 check-in, personal recognition, or a supportive conversation. Ask your GM how it impacted their sense of support. *(Due: Week 2)*
Trigger Reflection	Improve emotional self-awareness and self-regulation.	Reflect on one recent leadership moment where you felt emotionally triggered. Note what caused it, how you responded, and how you might respond differently using self-regulation strategies. *(Due: Week 2)*
Motivating Through Coaching	Apply communication and emotional intelligence to motivate your Team.	Plan and deliver a short coaching conversation (formal or informal) using active listening and constructive feedback. Reflect on what worked and what you would adjust next time. *(Due: Week 3)*



Conclusion

- Lead with Clarity, Composure, and Care to build a thriving Team culture
- Communicate with intention, lead with emotional intelligence, and stay composed under pressure.
- Seize everyday moments to model leadership values and create a culture of trust, accountability, and excellence.