Questions
1. What factors do you think make some organizations ineffective at managing emotions?

2. Do you think the strategic use and display of emotions serve to protect employees, or does covering your true emotions at work lead to more problems than it solves?

3. Have you ever worked where emotions were used as part of a management style? Describe the advantages and disadvantages of this approach in your experience.

4. Research shows that acts of co-workers (37 percent) and management (22 percent) cause more negative emotions for employees than do acts of customers (7 percent). What can Laura’s company do to change its emotional climate?

Sources:

CASE INCIDENT 2 Can You Read Emotions from Faces?

We mentioned previously that some researchers—the psychologist Paul Ekman is the best known—have studied whether facial expressions reveal true emotions. These researchers have distinguished real smiles (so-called Duchenne smiles, named after French physician Guillaume Duchenne) from “fake” smiles. Duchenne found genuine smiles raised not only the corners of the mouth (easily faked) but also cheek and eye muscles (much more difficult to fake). So, one way to determine whether someone is genuinely happy or amused is to look at the muscles around the upper cheeks and eyes—if the person’s eyes are smiling or twinkling, the smile is genuine. Ekman and his associates have developed similar methods to detect other emotions, such as anger, disgust, and distress. According to Ekman, the key to identifying real emotions is to focus on micro-expressions, or those facial muscles we cannot easily manipulate.

Dan Hill has used these techniques to study the facial expressions of CEOs and found they vary dramatically not only in their Duchenne smiles but also in the degree to which they display positive versus negative facial expressions. The accompanying table shows Hill’s analysis of the facial expressions of some prominent male executives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive</th>
<th>Positive Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Bezos, Amazon</td>
<td>51% positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren Buffet, Berkshire Hathaway</td>
<td>69% positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Dell, Dell Computers</td>
<td>47% positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry Ellison, Oracle</td>
<td>0% positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Gates, Microsoft</td>
<td>73% positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Jobs, Apple</td>
<td>48% positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phil Knight, Nike</td>
<td>67% positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donald Trump, The Trump Organization</td>
<td>16% positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It’s interesting to note that these individuals, all of whom are successful in various ways, have such different levels of positive facial expressions. It also raises the question: is a smile from Larry Ellison worth more than a smile from Bill Gates?

Questions
1. Most research suggests we are not very good at detecting fake emotions, and we think we’re much better at it than we are. Do you believe training would improve your ability to detect emotional displays in others?

2. Do you think the information in this case could help you tell whether someone’s smile is genuine?

3. Is your own impression of the facial expressions of the eight business leaders consistent with what the researcher found? If not, why do you think your views might be at odds with his?
One research study found people’s ratings of the positive affect displayed in CEO’s faces had very little correlation to their company’s profits. Does that suggest to you that Hill’s analysis is immaterial?

4. Assuming you could become better at detecting the real emotions in facial expressions, do you think it would help your career? Why or why not?


ENDNOTES


9. See Ekman and Davidson (eds.), The Nature of Emotions.


28. Eid and Diener, “Norms for Experiencing Emotions in Different Cultures.”


31. Ibid.


40. Watson, *Mood and Temperament*.


