



Emotional Connection Improves Board Engagement Transforms Culture and Performance



The Center Club of Orange County brings people together through extraordinary experiences, impeccable service and opportunities to build meaningful relationships. They take pride in creating vibrant communities where everyone is welcome; every day is a celebration of being a part of 200 other golf and country clubs, city clubs, and stadium clubs across 30 states, the District of Columbia, and two foreign countries.

Industry: Hospitality

THE CONTEXT

The GM of the Center Club of Orange County knew that his business needed some improvements. Shahin Vosough and his executive board needed to do something different to improve their board engagement, become more focused, and expand their membership. He began by redefining the traditional board meetings by bringing Emotional Connection to create a new environment. This process was met with hesitation and rejection from some but openness and intrigue from others.

CENTER
CLUB
Orange County

In the midst of the reorganization, the Club also needed to recraft its vision, mission, and core values and select new areas of emphasis. As those discussions took place, it became apparent to the executive team that the board was not working well together; the interpersonal barriers were keeping the board from aligning and unifying around the new strategy.

“Most of the board members were disengaged,” Paul E. Greenwald, the chairman of the board, said. “We avoided confrontations but were unable to have meaningful conversations as a group.”

Instead, board members shared their concerns with people outside the board meetings. Vosough and Greenwald stressed that this ineffective communication delayed action and confused Club members.

OUR ENGAGEMENT

Vosough brought in EmC Leaders to the executive team to use the Emotional Connection process for board engagement. Chairman Greenwald was immediately impressed; however, Vice Chairman Delmonico was hesitant and suspicious.



“When we first started, I had difficulties seeing that this process could bring any value. Having been in corporate governance for nearly 35 years, I didn’t buy into the concept of using emotional connection to create board engagement and involvement,” Delmonico notes, “But that was the differentiator that brought us together. The Process created change in our board meetings, engagement, and direction.”

The entire board, including managers, participants in the training, which took over a year.

“It was clear from the very beginning that it would make a significant difference in our Club,” Vosough said.

THE RESULTS

As the board and the executive team were finishing their training program, Vosough and other board members began to notice a marked difference.

“Our Chairman began to come out of his shell. He learned a way to approach meetings and constituents as he had never done before,” Delmonico said, “We started to interact in meetings differently, which brought clarity to our vision, mission, and core values. It all became simple.”

Since the executive team and management have implemented the skills, the transformation has persisted.

“People became more candid and open, with fluidity in discussions and group sessions,” says Vosough, noting that those who took the training to heart had the most impact on the transformation.

“We see a different level of engagement: people are much more invested in the meeting, and I feel really good that we have raised a level of interconnectivity between the various people on our board,” Greenwald says. “We have a better atmosphere with more laughs, more smiles, and the type of seriousness needed to produce better results.”

The impact of Emotional Connection training has manifested itself in many ways. The following are three examples:

1. Better results and motivation.

Maintaining strong relationships and aligning the board to valued connections helped the Club grow its members at a historic pace.

“The board was completely disengaged,” Greenwald noted, “We didn’t know how to get board members on the same page and motivate them to move in the same direction. With Emotional Connection, we started to shift the dynamics and began to pull board members together to produce better results.”

“Everyone feels a lot more engaged, more connected. Our membership has increased, and the biggest bonus is everyone is having a good time doing it,” Vosough adds.

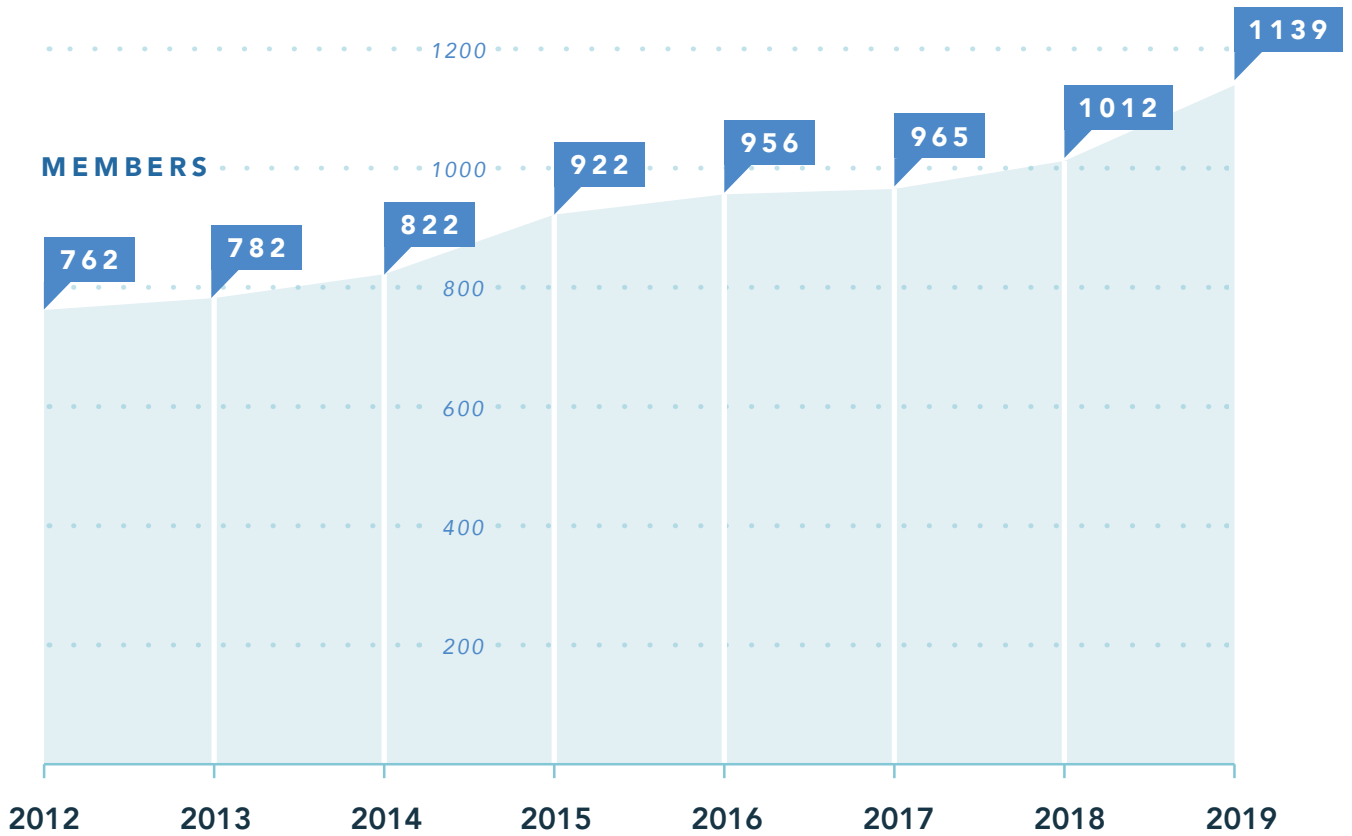
2. Greater loyalty and improved culture.

The board members were so excited about the progress that they were making that they devised a plan to share it with their Committee members by offering the Emotional Connection training throughout the Club. All seven Committees participated.

“We hoped that by empowering committees with the EmC tools, our committees could be more effective in dealing with their membership base and support each other better to grow and develop their committees.

“The training we offered paid off in a heartbeat. Each committee leader and member felt empowered, valued, and not alone in dealing with issues and expanding their membership base to its new way of creating new programs and making a difference for their members,” Vosough said.

Vosough continued the program and included it to be a part of the onboarding and leadership retreats.



3. More opportunities to expand the Club.

“The multi-million dollar remodeling project that we did in 2012 had not produced the results that we all hoped for,” Vosough said. “With using emotional connections in place, the board began to see new perspectives on the potential of the Club. And how the transformation took place played a big role. We made major changes to how the board acts and performs without drastically alarming anyone, undoing or redoing how we approach issues.

Achieving that balance has been essential, allowing for people to have fun and, at the same time, move forward in getting things done as a team.”

“It was quite a transformational shift,” said Greenwald, “Previous board leadership was static for some time, and we needed something that would shift us to become more open and holistic in our thinking, more collaborative, and act more like team players.”



RESULTS AT A GLANCE

- Membership grew in the midst of being static for over a decade
- Increased loyalty within its management and staff, and the community
- Expanded the value of Committees, creating a culture of belonging and engagement
- Improved communication, confidence, and satisfaction



– ABOUT –

EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

Emotional Connection is centered around the systematic and systemic exploration of emotions present during moments of great stress, uncertainty, and volatility through a proven process that is at once experiential and holistic. The EmC courses give people the skills to transform negative interactions into dialogue for bonding relationships and improved results. With EmC, people can share emotions in an open, honest, and respectful way; individuals start to collaborate better, create safer work environments, and foster cultures of trust and respect. The EmC courses are available in virtual and in-person learning formats.



Transforming organizations through emotional connection



– ABOUT EMC LEADERS –

We offer training programs and professional services in the areas of Emotional Intelligence, Leadership Development, and Conflict Resolution, focusing on creating a culture where people can bring their whole selves to work. With over hundreds of cases under our belt, we create a pathway for people to thrive. Our impactful courses include The Fundamentals of Emotional Connection®, Negative Interactions and Preserving Connections®, Bonding Conversations to Strengthen Connections®, The EmC Master Class for Mastering Emotional Connection®, and Trainer Certification.

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