



## EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND MANAGERIAL EFFECTIVENESS

### Case Study: “The Blind Spot of a Rising Star at Arventis Pharma”

#### Background

Arventis Pharma India Pvt. Ltd. is one of the country's fastest-growing mid-sized pharmaceutical research firms. With a strong presence in R&D, hospital sales, and oncology product development, the company attracts high-performing young managers who compete for leadership roles.

Among them was **Rohan Vashisht**, a 29-year-old Product Manager known for his intelligence, energy, and strong academic credentials. Rohan had built a reputation for delivering high-quality analytical reports and spotting emerging market trends quickly. Senior leaders believed he had the potential to move into a national leadership role within the next two years.

#### The Scenario

When Arventis secured approval to launch a new oncology support product, the Marketing Director assigned Rohan as the **lead coordinator** for the strategic rollout plan across South India. He was to work with cross-functional teams: Sales, Medical Affairs, Supply Chain, and Corporate Communications.

Rohan saw this as an opportunity to prove himself. However, he lacked one crucial leadership skill—**self-awareness**.

#### Early Signals

Even before the project began, certain behavioural patterns indicated a self-awareness gap:

- Rohan believed he was the “smartest in the room” and often dismissed others' ideas.
- He spoke confidently but rarely checked whether his communication style was perceived as blunt or aggressive.
- He tended to blame external factors instead of acknowledging his own role in conflicts.

The teams noticed his defensiveness, but Rohan remained oblivious.



## Challenges During the Project

### 1. Breakdown in Team Coordination

In the first cross-functional meeting, the Sales Head questioned one of Rohan's market projections. Instead of acknowledging the concern, Rohan replied sharply:

*"Maybe you're not familiar with the latest data models. I have analysed this thoroughly."*

This response embarrassed the Sales Head and created tension in the room. Yet, Rohan interpreted the uncomfortable silence as "people not understanding his brilliance."

### 2. Unaddressed Emotional Triggers

During a review discussion, a junior analyst pointed out a mismatch in the SKU-level forecast. Feeling challenged, Rohan raised his voice:

*"Next time, check your facts before questioning my analysis."*

The analyst apologised, though later it was found that her observation was correct. Rohan never revisited the issue or apologised—he believed he had "maintained authority."

### 3. Lack of Self-Reflection

As delays began to occur due to miscommunication, the HR Business Partner gently suggested that Rohan take feedback from his team. Rohan responded:

*"The problem is not me. They need to keep up."*

He did not realise that his inability to manage his emotions, tone, and reactions was directly affecting project morale.

## Turning Point

Two weeks before the launch, Arventis held a senior review meeting with the CEO. To Rohan's surprise, the Sales and Supply Chain teams openly expressed their concerns:

- Lack of clear communication
- Feeling undervalued and dismissed
- Stress caused by Rohan's reactive behaviour



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- Poor team morale
- Avoidable delays due to ego-driven decision-making

The CEO paused the meeting and asked Rohan a simple question:

*“Do you understand how your behaviour is impacting this project?”*

For the first time, Rohan had no answer.

He later realised that despite his intelligence, his lack of **self-awareness**—the foundation of emotional intelligence—had alienated his team and jeopardized a high-stakes launch.

## Aftermath

The Marketing Director held a one-on-one meeting with Rohan and recommended:

- A formal **EI development program**
- Regular **360-degree feedback sessions**
- A coach to help him assess emotional triggers and behaviour patterns
- Practising mindfulness and reflection before decision-making
- Weekly check-ins with the cross-functional team

Rohan felt embarrassed but accepted that he had missed seeing how others experienced him. Over the next few months, he gradually learned to:

- Reflect before reacting
- Listen without defensiveness
- Accept mistakes without feeling threatened
- Recognise emotional triggers and regulate responses
- Ask for input instead of imposing decisions

The launch eventually succeeded, not because of Rohan’s intelligence alone, but because he developed a deeper understanding of himself.



## Discussion Questions

1. What specific behaviours demonstrate Rohan's **lack of self-awareness**?
2. How did Rohan's emotional blind spots impact team relationships and project performance?
3. In what ways could self-reflection have changed Rohan's actions during key moments?
4. How can organisations use **360-degree feedback** to develop emotional intelligence in managers?
5. What strategies can individuals adopt to improve self-awareness in high-pressure roles?
6. Discuss how self-awareness contributes to leadership effectiveness and workplace culture.
7. If you were the Marketing Director, how would you balance accountability with developmental support for Rohan?