

Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

The concept of emotional intelligence became popular after the immense success of Daniel Goleman's book in 1995, *Emotional Intelligence, Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*.

It was followed by a second best seller in 1998 by the same author, *Working with Emotional Intelligence*. The business community was rocked by the research that overwhelmingly showed that *up to 90 percent of one's performance effectiveness was due to emotional savvy rather than technological knowledge*.

In the US where IQ and SAT scores have dominated thinking on who is likely to succeed, the evidence is now clear that people skills are far more important when it comes to the bottom line. For many years it had been considered inappropriate to show or to have emotions in a work situation. An overwhelming amount of research shows that not only are emotions very much a part of the work experience, but to a large degree they set the course that a company follows.

Unlike IQ, which is unchanging from childhood on, emotional intelligence can be developed. In fact, it usually does become greater with age and maturity. The importance of developing one's emotional intelligence is essential to success in the workplace. Utilizing the power and energy of one's emotions leads to high motivation, and improves problem-solving and decision-making.

People work better when feeling good, and feeling good about oneself and others requires good management of emotions. Some people are better at this than others, but everyone can learn the skills.

Understanding emotions contributes toward building an emotionally intelligent organization. An emotionally intelligent organization can be imagined where:

- Everyone communicates with understanding and respect
- People set group goals and help others work toward them
- Enthusiasm and confidence in the organization are widespread

Emotional Intelligence describes abilities distinct from and complementary to academic intelligence, the purely cognitive capacities measured by IQ. In 1983 Howard Gardner, a Harvard psychologist, listed seven kinds of intelligence including *knowing one's inner world* and *social adeptness*.

Peter Salovey of Yale and John Mayer of the University of New Hampshire coined the term “emotional intelligence” in 1990 and proposed a comprehensive theory. Salovey and Mayer defined emotional intelligence in terms of *being able to monitor and regulate one’s own and other’s feelings, and to use feelings to guide thought and action.*

Goleman defines it as *the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships.*

The fact that the term *emotional intelligence* encompasses so many abilities and competencies dilutes the impact of its meaning. Perhaps Hendrie Weisinger in his 1998 definition says it best: *Quite simply, emotional intelligence is the intelligent use of emotions!* It is emotionally intelligent when you intentionally make emotions work for you by using them to help guide your behavior and thinking in ways that enhance your results.

Most people have trouble managing situations that are emotionally charged, especially when the emotions aroused are anger and anxiety. This difficulty is often accompanied by, or causes, poor communications skills. Individuals who are able to handle their emotions— the expression or regulation of them— are also able to internally generate the kinds of emotions that are productive and efficient.

Research into emotions has been greatly enhanced by brain-imaging technologies in the last decade. For the first time ever, scientists have been able to study the functioning of the brain on living subjects and to map out the parts of the brain responsible for thinking and feeling.

As thinking human beings, we value our rationality and cognitive powers that set us apart from the animal kingdom. The neo-cortex, the center for rational thinking and decision-making, is the newer part of the brain that is highly developed in humans. The emotional parts of the brain are located in the more ancient, central parts of the brain called the limbic system, including the amygdala, the center active during anger.

All emotions are in essence impulses to act. The very root of the word is from the Latin verb *to move*. That emotions lead to actions is obvious from watching animals or children. Only in civilized adults do we expect actions to be distanced from emotional reactions. But even as highly intelligent and civilized adults, we can never disengage our emotional brain—it is always there, sending emotional signals to act and react, even when there is no logic.

Most people believe that emotions are caused by events. They are in fact caused by our interpretations of events, which can happen so fast as to be beneath the conscious awareness. Our pre-conscious, split-second thoughts give

rise to automatic emotional reactions. We then have a choice as to how we behave, what we say, and how we handle a situation. The appropriateness of our actions and the effectiveness of our communications make up our emotional intelligence. A person who is highly-developed emotionally becomes sensitive to pre-conscious thoughts, questions their validity and appropriateness, and is able to directly influence feelings, thoughts and behaviors.

Social scientists have long been aware that IQ tests are inadequate for predicting success in life. IQ scores account for as little as 25% in predicting future success in college. In the work environment, technical savvy and knowledge may contribute as little as four to ten percent towards performance effectiveness. *Over ninety percent of effectiveness at work is attributed to one's emotional intelligence.* EQ, a term coined to express the measure of one's emotional intelligence, has been proposed as the answer to why some people with average IQs end up more successful in life than some with brilliant IQ scores.

What Is "EQ"?

IQ is a measure of one's cognitive abilities, and has been quantified and validated by scientists since the first decades of this century. Standard IQ tests measure spatial and mathematical reasoning, verbal comprehension, information and memory.

To measure one's emotional functioning is a more complicated task. Goleman summarizes emotional intelligence into the following components:

1. Emotional self-awareness
2. Managing one's own emotions
3. Using emotions to maximize intellectual processing and decision-making, including self-motivation
4. Developing empathy
5. The art of social relationships and managing emotions in others

In 1997, Dr. Reuven Bar-On developed the "E.Q.-I", an "emotional intelligence inventory" published by Multi-Health Systems, Inc. Although they were so small as to be statistically insignificant, there were some gender differences. More specifically, women are more aware of their emotions, show more empathy, relate better interpersonally, and act more socially responsible than men. Men appear to have better self-regard, are more independent, solve problems better, are more flexible, and cope better with stress.

A look at what the "E.Q.-I" measures contributes to an understanding of the components of emotional intelligence.

1. Intrapersonal Components	3. Adaptability Components
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A. Emotional Self-Awareness	A. Problem Solving
B. Assertiveness	B. Reality Testing
C. Self-Regard	C. Flexibility
D. Self-Actualization	4. Stress Management Components
E. Independence	A. Stress Tolerance
2. Interpersonal Components	B. Impulse Control
A. Empathy	5. General Mood Components
B. Interpersonal Relationships	A. Happiness
C. Social Responsibility	B. Optimism

There is no way yet to accurately measure one's emotional intelligence, and all tests purporting to do so are really measuring one's self-perception. Nevertheless, such information can be useful in designing coaching programs and planning goals for personal and professional growth.

The use of 360-degree surveys are perhaps a more revealing way to measure emotional intelligence, because such surveys ask colleagues, boss, direct reports and even family to rate the person on emotional competencies. One of the most widely used of these 360's is the Emotional Competency Inventory, ECI, published by the Hay Group. It is based on extensive research. It should only be administered by certified practitioners who are trained in feedback delivery. With effective feedback, coaching and follow-up, the results can be outstanding in developing one's "E.Q."

Other tests that propose to measure "E.Q." are the Simmons Personal Survey, and Robert K. Cooper's "EQ Map." All allow an individual to chart strengths and vulnerabilities on emotional intelligence components.

Why EQ Is Crucial

When Daniel Goleman first talked about emotional intelligence he made a big point about how everyday we are assaulted by news in the media of someone gone berserk. People lose control of their emotions and go on rampant shooting sprees. Since 1995, we have been further shocked by several occurrences of school children killing other children.

On another level, what is happening in this country with financial, technological, and business systems that are supposed to be advanced and sophisticated? The evidence of emotional dysfunction and personal discomfort is apparent on every level from the school room to the board room of major corporations.

There is a need to teach how to relate to others using emotional intelligence, how to develop one's EQ, and how to apply the knowledge of emotional intelligence in the work place.

More than ever, one's competency at work will be determined and evaluated on emotional intelligence. In today's world of diminishing job security, one's personal growth and development must include strengthening of emotional capacities in order to survive and be successful.

Although many authors have jumped on the current popularity of the concept, there are only a few books that are adept at providing steps to improve one's E.Q. Three books stand out in their ability to teach the tools of emotional intelligence:

1. Robert K. Cooper's *Executive EQ: Emotional Intelligence in Leadership and Organizations* (1997).
2. Hendrie Weisinger's *Emotional Intelligence at Work* (1998).
3. Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, *Primal Leadership* (2002).

Daniel Goleman makes a strong case for working with a coach to improve one's E.Q. in a recent article in the *Harvard Business Review*. Indeed, emotional competencies would be difficult to learn from a book, and must be strengthened by working with another individual, preferably a professional familiar with the individual's needs and environment.

Teaming and Group EQ

When emotions are acknowledged and guided constructively, they enhance intellectual performance. Robert Rosenthal, a Harvard expert on empathy, has shown that when people administering IQ tests treat their subjects warmly, the test scores are higher.

In meetings and in group settings where people come together to collaborate, there is a strong sense of a group IQ, the sum total of intellectual knowledge and skills in the room. The most important element in a group's intelligence is not the average or highest IQ, but emotional intelligence. A single participant who is low in EQ can lower the collective IQ of the entire group. Robert Sternberg and Wendy Williams of Yale have studied this "group EQ."

Thus, a group may be able to work smarter than its members' collective intelligences would suggest, but it can also rapidly work dumber by not allowing people to share talents and by allowing destructive discontent, domineering, or infighting to degrade performance and stymie progress.

This has obvious impact on the effectiveness of teams and work groups. Today's fast-changing work environments require more open and fluid work styles. Teaming, in order to be effective, requires people to have a high degree of both intellect and EQ. People need to be able to handle their own and other's emotions in order to trust and team up for problem-solving and decision-making.

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