



So What?





During an interview, what do you think employers look for in a potential employee? Do you think they look for evidence of technical skills? Certainly. Do you think they look for relevant job experience? Of course. Most job applicants are nervous about an interview, and this is not always about this.

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More and more, companies are looking for employees with a high level of **emotional intelligence** (sometimes referred to as EQ). Knowing what this term means—and how to demonstrate it—can positively affect your personal and career success. Read on to learn more about the growing interest in emotional intelligence and its role in the workplace.

Objectives

-  Define emotional intelligence.
-  Discuss the benefits of emotional intelligence.

How Smart Are You Really?

Bradley is a brand new employee at a sporting goods store. He doesn't know that much about the inventory, but he is doing his best to learn. One day, an angry customer comes in, walks up to Bradley, and begins to loudly complain about the quality of the items he has just purchased. The customer is so angry that he is actually rude to Bradley. Before long, Bradley becomes angry himself and is tempted to yell back at the customer.



Instead, Bradley takes a deep breath and composes himself. He tells the customer that he understands how frustrating it must be to buy defective merchandise. He calmly tells the customer that he will ask a manager to explain the refund policy and promises that they will do what they can to make sure the customer is satisfied.

You've probably had an experience like Bradley's in which you've been tempted to do one thing, but instead checked your emotions and behaved in a different way. In this situation, Bradley exhibited **emotional intelligence**—the ability to recognize and manage emotions in ourselves and others.

Emotional intelligence has become a popular topic in the business community. The concept has been around for some time, but the work of psychologist Daniel Goleman is credited with popularizing the idea. He wrote a successful



Social awareness—Knowing and understanding the emotions of others

- *Empathy* means understanding the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of another person. Without empathy, or seeing the world through another person's eyes, you might focus only on your own needs and not relate to the needs of others. Empathy will help you understand why a worker has difficulty being productive under a particular manager at your business. It may even help you see what can be done to improve the worker's productivity.
- *Organizational awareness* refers to a person's ability to see the larger picture in an organization. A person with organizational awareness knows who the decision makers are and is sensitive to social expectations. If the CEO expects each company division to operate independently from the other divisions, there is not likely to be much overlap. As an employee of the company, you'll need organizational awareness—an understanding of the relationship between the divisions.
- *Service* means being willing to help others, whether in everyday situations, such as helping a coworker find the answer to a question, or in a formal context, such as participating in a business-wide project. If helping others is important to you, you are demonstrating emotional intelligence through service.

Relationship management—Managing the emotions of others

- *Effective communication* is a big part of emotional intelligence. If you are able to listen carefully and use words and body language that accurately reflect your thoughts and feelings, you will be able to interact effectively and to inspire and persuade others.



The Gray Zone

Sometimes, emotional intelligence is knowing *how* transparent to be. Do you tell someone the whole truth, right from the start? Or, do you give the general picture at first—and details, in time? Your answer depends on the situation.

Imagine you're applying for a job that requires you to be fluent in Spanish. If you're doing pretty well in your Spanish class, you wouldn't be considered "fluent" by any stretch of the imagination.

So when asked how fluent you are, what would you say? Really fluent? Fairly fluent?

Not-so-fluent? Now, consider how your answer might change if the interviewer could speak fluently him/herself—or if you could speak the language

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¿Habla Español?





- *Positive working relationships.* Leaders have to get along with a wide variety of people, sometimes encouraging others, and sometimes inspiring them. The positive relationships that come from effective communication and a genuine interest in others are hallmarks of emotional intelligence.
- *Confidence.* Leaders need to be confident that they are doing and saying the right things. The awareness of self and others developed by emotional intelligence can reassure a leader—helping him/her to become an expert at assessing emotions and at responding in appropriate ways.

As you interact with others at work—and as you respond to new situations—use your emotional intelligence as a guide. Don't let your emotions get in the way, though. You need to demonstrate a high EQ to be successful.

Summary

Emotional intelligence is especially important today because collaboration is becoming a standard method of achieving business goals. As we use our emotional intelligence at work, we experience the benefits of communicating our needs effectively, responding to criticism appropriately, solving problems, being flexible, understanding other people's needs, and responding appropriately to difficult people. Since the most effective leaders have a high level of emotional intelligence, things such as proactive behavior, perseverance, positive working relationships, and confidence are characteristics of both leadership *and* emotional intelligence.



1. Why is it important to pay attention to emotional intelligence in today's world?
2. Give an example of a benefit of emotional intelligence.
3. How is emotional intelligence important to leadership?

Make It Pay!

Most hiring managers are looking for well-rounded employees. This means they want not only technical skills but also the soft skills such as communication, cooperation, and empathy. To determine if you "have what it takes," these hiring managers use behavioral-type interview questions. Here are some examples:

- Tell me about a difficult challenge that you faced. What did you do?

• Give me an example of a goal that you set. What did you do to be able to achieve it?

• Describe a time when you had to work with a difficult person to accomplish a task. How did you go about completing it?

Remember, when a potential employer is asking *you* these questions in an interview. How would you answer? Your responses tell a hiring manager quite a bit about how you handle stress, how you work in a team, and how you communicate with others.

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