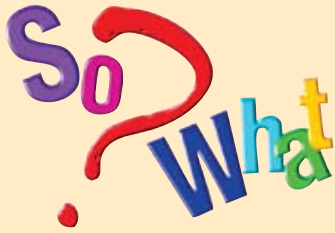


How Smart Are You Really?



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 expect to be asked these questions, and many want to demonstrate this ability, too.

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 emotional intelligence and its role in the workplace.

Objectives

A Describe aspects of emotional intelligence.

B Discuss the benefits of emotional intelligence.

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.



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▲ How would you react if an angry customer yelled at you?

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 book on the topic that caused people to talk about emotional intelligence as a new definition for what it means to be smart. Some people have come to believe that emotional intelligence matters more than the traditional measure of intelligence—a person's IQ (or intelligence quotient). And, still other people feel that emotional intelligence might be the best predictor of success in life!

What is emotional intelligence?

Although the concept has been defined in different ways, emotional intelligence is usually described as being aware of your own emotions, responding to them appropriately, and then doing the same with the emotions of other people. Emotional intelligence is *not* the same as being an emotional person. Someone with high emotional intelligence is not necessarily more emotional, nor does s/he “manage” emotions by ignoring them. Two very different people, one who cries easily and one who never shows his/her emotions, can have the same level of emotional intelligence.

What makes EQ?

Despite the various definitions of emotional intelligence, the concept can be divided into four areas of specific skills, based on Daniel Goleman's model.

Self-awareness—Knowing your emotions

- **Awareness of emotions.** This refers to how well you know your own emotions, including your moods and behavior tendencies. Let's say that you've just started a job as a stock clerk at the local toy store. Your boss has agreed to limit your hours because of your school schedule. At first, everything works out fine, but then you find that you are being scheduled for more and more hours. You feel nervous and anxious about the situation, but you feel absolutely terrified at the idea of speaking to your employer. This awareness of your emotional state is the first step in being able to manage it.



▲ Self-aware individuals are also self-confident individuals, willing and able to stand up for themselves.

- **Accurate self-assessment.** How would you assess this emotion? You know you'll be nervous when you talk to your employer. Will your annoyance be communicated, too? Do you want to let your employer know that you are annoyed, or would it be better to have a businesslike discussion? If you have an accurate self-assessment, you are aware of your strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. In this case, you know that you have a difficulty in making your point across verbally when you are nervous. You want to be sure you are taking the right approach. You ask your boss for help in finding the right way to communicate.

- **Self-confidence.** Your awareness of your emotions gives you the confidence to deal with them. Instead of leaving your boss a voicemail (at a time when you know he won't be available to answer the phone), you ask to speak to him at the end of your shift. In a calm voice you say, "You might not have noticed that you have been scheduling me for more hours than we had agreed to. I would like to get back to my regular schedule." In just a few moments, you've made your case (and most likely had your hours reduced) and left a favorable impression with your boss.

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Self-management—Managing your emotions

- **Self-control** is what keeps you from slamming the door, throwing small objects, or otherwise acting foolishly in response to your emotions. You might think that a friend who betrays you deserves a verbal thrashing, but holding your tongue shows that you can restrain yourself. When you learn that you don't **have** to do what your emotions are telling you, you understand self-control.
- **Transparency** means being who you say you are. Your motives, beliefs, and actions are just what they seem to be. You have nothing to hide and are trustworthy, never behaving in a manner that is "two-faced." If you say that you support a change in the management of the business, for example, you won't advocate keeping the same managers. Instead, you'll promote change because that's what you believe in.



▲ An important aspect of self-management is self-control—the ability to restrain or control your feelings, words, and actions.

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 are able to interact effectively and to inspire and persuade others.
- *Recognition of others* is acknowledging the significance of other people. When you interact with others in a way that builds a relationship, instead of in a way that attempts to build your own image, you are demonstrating emotional intelligence. And, when you reach out to a new employee at work in spite of the fact that s/he is different from you in some way, you display a high level of emotional intelligence.
- *A sense of teamwork* means that you are cooperative, willing to share information and plans, and able to draw others in. Let's say you're working on a group project at work. Allowing others to contribute to the project, even encouraging them to do so, demonstrates a high level of emotional intelligence.
- *Negotiation skills* are important because they help you to settle disagreements. Small differences of opinion can turn into major problems if you are not willing to see another person's point of view and perhaps "give in a little" to reach an agreement. People with high emotional intelligence are able to negotiate and resolve conflict in a way that is as fair as possible.
- *A change catalyst* is someone who recognizes the need to improve a situation and who works to make it happen. When you see an unjust situation, for example, are you likely to do something about it? Stopping a business scam, advocating for better employee benefits, and improving business processes are examples of being a change catalyst.



Summary

Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize and manage emotions in ourselves and others. It is different from traditional intelligence—and may, in fact, be more important. To raise your level of emotional intelligence, you can study and practice particular behaviors within four areas of specific skills: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.

1. What is emotional intelligence?
2. How does emotional intelligence compare with traditional intelligence?
3. Describe the significance of an EQ test.
4. Explain the following skill areas of emotional intelligence:
 - a. Self-awareness
 - b. Self-management
 - c. Social awareness
 - d. Relationship management

THE GRAY ZONE

Sometimes, emotional intelligence is knowing how to be. Do you tell someone the whole truth, right from the start? Or, do you give the truth and reveal the details later? Your answer might depend on the situation.

Imagine you're applying for a job that requires you to be fluent in Spanish. Although you're doing pretty well in your second-year Spanish class, you're not "fluent" by any stretch of the imagination.

So when asked how fluent you are in Spanish, you say, "Really fluent? Fairly fluent? Not-so-fluent? Now, consider how your answer might change if the interviewer could speak Spanish fluently him/herself—or or couldn't speak the language at all.

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Leaders and emotional intelligence

One reason the business world has taken note of emotional intelligence is that research tells us that the most effective leaders have a high level of emotional intelligence. Here are some examples of how emotional intelligence and leadership overlap:

- **Proactive behavior.** Leaders are expected to take action before problems develop. As you develop your emotional intelligence by being a catalyst for change, you begin to demonstrate the foresight and know-how that leaders need.
- **Perseverance.** Leaders are often the people who keep trying in spite of setbacks and seemingly impossible obstacles. With self-control, a positive attitude, and the motivation that comes with emotional intelligence, leaders learn to outlast disappointment and fatigue.



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- **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. What are six benefits of emotional intelligence?
3. How is emotional intelligence important to leadership?

Make It Pay!

How emotionally smart are you? Consider a stressful situation that you experienced recently—perhaps dealing with an angry customer, a tight deadline, or getting into a fender bender. Did you demonstrate emotional intelligence? How did you respond to them appropriately? Better yet, did you recognize the feelings of others? How did you manage those individuals' emotions in a suitable manner? Consider what you did to manage your own emotions, including self-control and displaying empathy, as well as how you could be more emotionally intelligent in the future.

SAMPLE PAGE



1375 King Avenue, P.O. Box 12279, Columbus, Ohio 43212-0279 Ph: (614) 486-6708 Fax: (614) 486-1819

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