

High Emotional Intelligence: What EQ Brings to the Workplace

By JUDY W. BELL, PHR

Emotional Intelligence, sometimes referred to as EQ or EI, is a strong indicator of the level of success one can attain in life, both in the personal and business realms. IQ, or Intelligence Quotient, for many years was the standard indicator of intelligence and perhaps even thought to be an indicator of success in life. The intelligence quotient, however, has not been found to be as realistic a factor in predicting success as once thought, thus leading researchers to conclude that a better predictor of success is more often found with a higher level of Emotional Intelligence. Traditional IQ tests measure raw intelligence, particularly logic, reasoning, language, and mathematics. If IQ measures how smart you are, then EQ determines how you will use these gifts. Simply stated, life success can be more accurately and measurably predicted by examining both IQ and EQ. This is the balancing act between results and relationships.

Definition of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand emotions, particularly one's own emotions. "Know thyself" proclaims the ancient Greek aphorism. There are five basic tenets of EQ, but most of the focus of this article will be around Self-Knowledge and Self-Regulation and how they relate to EQ inside the team. These two strengths are the building blocks of EQ.

Self-Knowledge, also called Self-Awareness, is the competency that can heighten stronger self-confidence as well as help determine and assess one's values and belief systems. This competency also helps one identify his strengths as well as weaknesses. Self-Regulation, also called Self-Management, assists us in areas of self-control, trustworthiness, and initiative; this competency also acts as our "impulse control button."

Individual and collective EQ affects the workplace, both positively and negatively. High EQ workplaces experience high employee engagement. Low EQ workplaces experience

high turnover, burnout, low productivity, and declining sales. These symptoms affect the bottom line.

Low EQ behaviors from co-workers and managers – such as angry outbursts, rude comments, incivility, and moodiness – lead to stress and burnout as well as anxious work environments. A study by Pearson and Porath of thousands of managers and employees concluded the following:

- Two-thirds of employees said their performance declined
- Four out of five employees lost work time worrying about the unpleasant incident
- 63% wasted time avoiding the low EQ offender
- More than 75% of respondents said that their commitment to their employer had waned
- 12% resigned due to the low EQ behavior

Harvey Deutschendorf and I were interviewed last year for an article on Emotional Intelligence in Selling. After the interview he sent me a copy of his latest book. In his book, *The Other Kind of Smart*, he cites a study by The Yale School of Management that found 24 percent of the working population reported that they were chronically angry at work. He goes on to state that studies show "your employees can only give as good as they get." This means that a healthy organizational culture will help you set the stage for happy customers.

Emotional Intelligence in Teams

Teams, both work and familial, have a collective emotional quotient. For a team to be truly successful, individual team members must be committed to the greater good of the team.

Collaboration replaces competitiveness.

After all, if you are on the same team, why would you want to operate against each other? A team that has high EQ acknowledges the importance of individual and collective moods, emotions, and relationships. A good team leader is important, but it is critical that all team members recognize the wisdom of collaboration. There is not room for "lone wolves" on an emotionally intelligent team, according to Thomas A. Haizlip, an executive coach and expert on EQ.

Below are some of the characteristics of High Team EQ:

- Work in collaboration
- Higher productivity
- Improved morale
- Increased employee tenure
- Increased job satisfaction
- Use of humor as a strategy
- Job and company engagement
- Better communication
- Effective communication outside of the team
- Improved bottom line

Improving Emotional Intelligence

So, can Emotional Intelligence be improved? Yes... by as much as 40%. The development of EQ is not fixed at birth. Studies do show, however, that childhood is a critical time for the development of EQ. During childhood is when we learn much about how to relate to the world. Living inside our family unit is our first venture into relationships, friendships, and teams. Both nature and nurture come into play with Emotional Intelligence. Taking steps to improve EQ brings immediate benefits to our health, our relationships, our work, and the quality of our lives.

Some of the steps we can take to improve EQ:

- Recognize your emotions
- Understand the cause of your feelings
- Recognize the difference between having a feeling and acting on that feeling
- Monitor your actions
- Know your frustration tolerance
- Express anger appropriately (yes, humans have anger, and that is OK)
- Eliminate self-destructive behavior
- Nurture positive feelings about yourself
- Work with your strengths
- Put your focus and attention on improving your EQ
- Make it a goal and hold yourself accountable

Remember, what gets measured gets improved!

Greater Emotional Intelligence enhances one's life immensely. Our bodies and minds are energy systems. Have you ever walked into a room of people and felt hostility immediately? That is energy. Have you been in the presence of someone who immediately made you feel a strong sense of confidence? That is energy. Have you walked into an empty room and felt peace? That's lingering energy. What about an empty room that feels hostile? That is also lingering energy. And, emotions are energy.

Highly performing teams seem to have a natural ability to obtain buy-in through collaboration. A High EQ team builds a solid foundation for positive branding for the team, and likewise, the company. Successful leaders are those who make sure they have the skills on their teams, both technical and emotional, to build a product, service, or community that has been envisioned. And this can be done without demonstrative and aggressively demanding tactics when there is Collective EQ.

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