

The Case for Emotional Intelligence

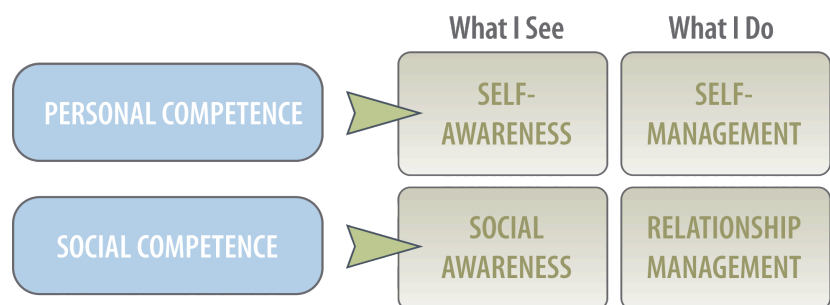
“A leader’s intelligence has to have a strong emotional component. He has to have high levels of self-awareness, maturity and self-control. She must be able to withstand heat, handle setbacks and when those lucky moments arise, enjoy success with equal parts joy and humility. No doubt emotional intelligence is more rare than book smarts, but my experience says it is actually more important in the making of a leader. You just can’t ignore it.”

– Jack Welch, Chairman of GE speaking to the Wall Street Journal

When emotional intelligence first appeared in 1995 (Goleman), it served as the missing link in a peculiar finding: people with the highest levels of intelligence (IQ) outperform those with average IQ just 20% of the time, while people with average IQs outperform those with high IQ 70% of the time. This anomaly threw a massive wrench into what many people had always assumed was the sole source of success – IQ. Subsequent years of research show that there are other variables that explain success above and beyond one’s IQ, and the findings now point to emotional intelligence (EQ) as a critical factor.

The reason IQ by itself is not a very good predictor of job performance is because education and hiring practices weed out those who can’t master “what they need to know on the job.” Most physicians who pass their boards and go on to practice medicine are similarly qualified. The same is true of lawyers, sales professionals, administrative assistants, and most professions you can name. What makes one person shine over another and what *does* predict job performance is the combination of a person’s ability to learn (IQ), who that person is (personality), and how they handle themselves and others on the job (EQ).

Emotional intelligence is this third major contributor to a person’s success. It is made up of personal and social competence skills: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.

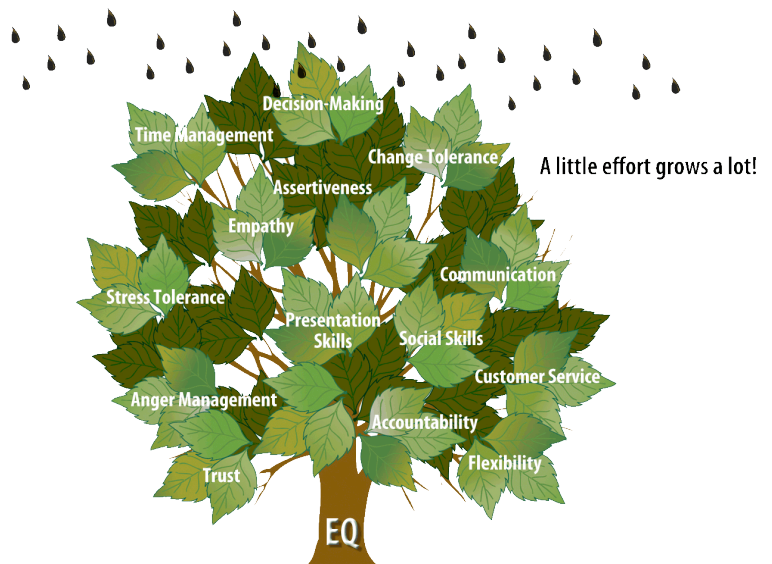


What is it about EQ skills that impact a person’s job performance? Whether we are aware of them or not, emotions surface in everything we think, do, and say each day. Awareness of our own emotions and tendencies (Self-Awareness) opens doors for us to manage ourselves more effectively (Self-Management) by making better decisions, and responding to challenges productively and proactively. Awareness of the emotions in other people (Social Awareness), including unspoken cues, enables us to

influence others and build and deepen relationships more effectively (Relationship Management). Employees who increase their EQ skills increase their ability to communicate effectively, make good decisions, handle conflict, be a team player, respond to change well, handle stress better, and provide top-notch customer service.

Perhaps the best thing about emotional intelligence is that it's a highly flexible skill. With practice, people who measure low in EQ can work to improve a specific EQ skill within 6 months to a year. During the last two decades, research shows that people who develop their emotional intelligence tend to be successful on the job because the two go hand in hand. These findings hold true for people in a variety of professions across industries, at all levels, all over the world.

Emotional intelligence skills are integral to performing well on the job.



The Case for Emotional Intelligence at Your Organization

Organizations who were early adopters, working to increase the EQ of their workforce, reaped tremendous benefits that garnered significant media attention in the 1990s, including *The Harvard Business Review's* most popular piece of all time (*What Makes a Leader?*). EQ skills can be improved, yet they are not typically taught in college or post-graduate degree programs. Companies who teach these skills to their workforce achieve tremendous gains. Studies at Johnson & Johnson and the US Air Force paved the way; and now major corporations, universities and government agencies are making emotional intelligence an integral part of their employee training, talent development, and leadership development initiatives.

"People who score low in emotional intelligence and job performance can match their colleagues who excel in both – solely by working to improve their EQ."

- Drs. Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves, *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*

A Summary of EQ Research

- ▶ **The Importance of IQ:** Sternberg (1996) found that across studies, the importance of IQ varies from 4% to 25% in predicting performance, and that 10% may be the realistic estimate.
- ▶ **The Importance of EQ:** Emotional intelligence is not a new concept. Thorndike mentioned social intelligence in 1937 and EQ skills have their roots in social psychology. Daniel Goleman pointed out that psychologists have studied the skills associated with emotional intelligence for years, and the body of research suggests that these skills are linked to success in life.
- ▶ **EQ at Work:** EQ alone isn't the most direct predictor of job performance (Goleman 1998; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 1998) but EQ skills provide the foundation for the soft skills that are. For example, the ability to identify and understand what another person is feeling boosts a person's ability to influence. Similarly, people who are aware of their emotional and physical reactions to pressure will find it easier to structure and manage their time to their advantage.
- ▶ **EQ Development:** Since the 1990s neuroscience research discovered the plasticity of the brain. Practicing high EQ behaviors helps form new neural connections in the brain, cementing learning and behavior change. This explains how people increase their EQ.



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