



### EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OR EI OR EQ

Everyone seems to be talking about it – the importance of it and how it impacts on performance at work. But what is emotional intelligence and how is it linked to greater success?

Emotional Intelligence or EI or EQ as it is sometimes known, simply refers to the learned ability to perceive, understand and express our feelings accurately, and to control our emotions so that they work for and not against us. This is not new information; it has been around for years – just labelled differently.

A person with emotional intelligence has the ability to understand and relate to people. This is now considered to have greater impact on individual and group performance than IQ.

Individuals with the highest EI excel at 4 interrelated skills:

- The ability to persist and stay motivated in the face of frustration
- The ability to control impulses
- The ability to control their emotions
- The ability to empathise with others

Studies show that a significant part of organisations profitability is linked to the quality of its worklife, based largely on trust and loyalty within the organisation and with outside people such as customers and suppliers. It now seems that gone are the days where IQ was the most important attribute an employee could have; it is EI not IQ that underpins many of the best decisions made within an organisation.

Of a range of characteristics star performers have compared with average workers, EI is the biggest predictor of workplace success. Interestingly an individual's success at work is 80% dependent on EI and only 20% dependent on IQ. For instance one study showed that derailed executives, who had burnt out, usually did so because of an interpersonal flaw rather than a technical inability.

Some of these included:

- Having poor working relationships
- Being too authoritarian
- Placing personal ambition above all else
- Having continuing conflict with other staff members/management

What we are now seeing is that Companies here and overseas are taking seriously the idea that more time spent on the 'touchy-feely' skills so often derided (in the not so distant past), may in fact pay rich dividends. Add to that the fact that managers with high emotional intelligence can get results from employees that are beyond expectations – and it makes sense to upskill on EI techniques.

When you consider people at your place of work, it won't seem surprising that workers at every organisational level 'are hungry for direct emotionally straight-forward interactions'. Emotional bankruptcy is alive and well in workplaces throughout NZ and devalues us all. By having your staff learn some simple EI strategies, this, and other related problems has the potential to dissipate.

The cornerstone to emotional intelligence is a sense of self awareness, of being smart about what we feel. This allows us to exercise some self-control. It leads onto a deeper understanding about ourselves and the importance of using empathy, which quite simply - are skills any leader needs in building a successful organisation. In addition EI is good old street smarts which include knowing when to share sensitive information, laugh at jokes, or speak up in a meeting. In corporations its inclusion in training department helps employees to co-operate better, thereby increasing motivation, productivity and profits.

The more emotions are integrated into your daily life the higher your EI is likely to be. Some requirements to raising EI include:

1. A desire to change
2. Self reflection
3. Listening to your self talk
4. Developing emotional control
5. Practicing empathy
6. Validating the emotion of others

Wouldn't it be incredible if we could all work in places where the people around us had these skills, but this can only occur if Management see the benefits in it. Unfortunately one costly consequence of the relentless demands on leaders time - is their propensity to turn away from emotional issues and to stick as closely as possible to the realm of facts and intellect - to value only things than can be ordered, analysed, defined, dealt with, controlled and contained. To a busy Manager - emotions seem leaky. But what we are now seeing is that emotions, properly managed can drive trust loyalty and commitment to create greater productivity gains, innovations and accomplishments within an organisation.

As organisations have shifted more to a team based workplace, they are asking employees for commitment and passion to bring both their brains and heart to the job. Along with this they have to expect people will bring their emotions to work too. Leaders worldwide are discovering, attention to emotions have been shown to save time, expand opportunities, and focus energy for better results.

Just imagine the outcomes at your place of work if you were to implement some EI skill training. The effects on you and your staff could be both enlightening and rewarding.

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Please contact us if you would like the workshop outline on this topic.