

# Emotional Intelligence FAQ

## Emotional Intelligence: what is it?

There seems to be as many definitions of emotional Intelligence as there are people developing their own profiles. Often we agree with part of the definitions they give but believe that they are missing out on some important elements. More often we find that the definitions are reasonable but the measures are put together with a view to measuring the aspects that make someone perform well and that these are then labeled EQ but are not. We have compiled a list of definitions currently being used by the various people in the field;

Emotional Intelligence consists of competencies that can predict success at work. These are self-awareness, emotional resilience, motivation, interpersonal sensitivity, influence and persuasion, decisiveness, conscientiousness and integrity. *ASE.*

Emotional Intelligence isn't one thing, it's a profile of self awareness, of managing your feelings, of motivation, of empathy, of social skills. *Daniel Goleman.*

Emotional Intelligence is the ability to appropriately guide one's emotional responses to events and to act on these emotions in a suitable manner. *Dr Rich Handley.*

Emotional Intelligence is an array of personal, emotional and social competencies and skills that influence one's abilities to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures. *Dr Reuven BarOn.*

Emotional Intelligence is another kind of 'street smarts' and involves things like the ability to stay healthy under pressure, to develop trusting relationships, to creatively sense and pursue opportunities for one's future. *Esther M Orioli.*

Emotional intelligence is the practice of: noticing feelings, paying attention to them, giving them significance, thinking about them, and taking them into account in deciding how to act. This applies both to one's own feelings and those of others. *Tim Sparrow.*

Emotional intelligence is the ability to engage our emotionality in intelligent ways in order to facilitate constructive outcomes in our relationships. *Dr. Michael Rock*

## Emotional Intelligence - is it just a fad?

We think that it isn't - except in one aspect, which we will tell you about shortly. The people who are promoting it are not talking about anything new.

We have all known about the importance of interpersonal skills and having positive attitudes for some time now. Soft-skills training is familiar to businesses - but having a hard financial case for developing these has been lacking until now. What has been less familiar to the business world is the importance of intrapersonal skills, like the capacity to tolerate stress, having meta-mood skills, and the capacity for empathy.

The recent development of EQ tests has meant that these aspects are now measurable and with this has come the possibility of developing the capacities they measure and being able to plot the changes and outcomes as the training takes place.

There are other reasons why Emotional Intelligence is not just a fad. These reasons we have called supply reasons and they are:

- **Educational research** - in the last 20 years steps forward have been made in defining and understanding the nature of intelligence. Now it is thought that each individual has multiple intelligences and that the emphasis that has been placed on only two of these, the rational/logical and the linguistic, has meant that intelligent and talented individuals have been missed because their intelligence profile did not conform to these two types. Two of the seven currently identified intelligences are Interpersonal Intelligence and Intrapersonal Intelligence.
- **Brain research** - brain research has taken big strides in the last ten years with greater knowledge and understanding of the brain function and its neurophysiology. Now we know about links and connections in the brain that we didn't know before. Scientific research has demonstrated that decisions CANNOT be made without reference to the limbic system, which is the emotional centre of the brain. We must be able to tell what we are feeling because without that knowledge we are rudderless.

There are also what we have called demand reasons which are as follows:

- **Globalization** of business has risen and with it so has competition. With increased competition and the faster rate of change through technological advances the need for creativity & flexibility have risen - these are Emotionally Intelligent traits.
- **Bureaucracy & hierarchy** in companies has decreased and the need for self- & relationship management has got greater.

- **Teamworking** in organizations has increased and with it the need for relationship management skills to cope with the collaborative working methods.
- There has been a **movement from things to people** and so the need emerges to move from management to leadership styles.
- **People can and do move** around much more than before and they take with them vital knowledge of your company and culture, this is an asset that they are taking away with them. They need to be kept and this means motivating them.
- **Considering people as assets** and as assets that need to stay with a company means that they can be invested in through development programs. These programs are no longer limited to technical skills but must encompass the whole person.
- **Specialization** is becoming rarer in the work place particularly in sales and customer service. Now everyone in the company is supposed to be responsible for sales. This means everyone must be emotionally intelligent and strong in interpersonal skills as well as their own role.
- Finally there is **delaying** which has brought its own brand of stress and with it the immediate need for self-management techniques.

This is the case for Emotional Intelligence and why it is not just a fad but something to be considered very seriously as one of the few remaining areas in an organization that can be developed to make a very significant impact on the bottom line.

The reason why it could be seen as a fad and dismissed by people unwilling to investigate a little deeper - it has a guru.

Daniel Goleman has become the voice of EI and as such gives it a flavour of a personality lead fad. This however does not seem to us to be Daniel Goleman's fault. A mild mannered and self-effacing man, he appears to have hit upon an important concept at the right time and being articulate has been able to bring it to the attention of many people. It seems to us that the business world has responded to him out of a recognition of their need for developing high performance individuals and not out of his need to have followers.

## **The business applications of EQ measurement and development**

There are two main areas where EQ measurement and development play a big part in organizations. In both cases it is centred upon the ability EQ has to predict job success and high workplace performance. The first is in the selection and recruitment of good candidates and the second is in developing the staff and executives that you have already.

Here are the areas where understanding and developing EQ are invaluable:

- Profiling star performers
- Recruitment/selection on the basis of these profiles
- Identifying & meeting individual, team and organizational development needs
- Designing training
- Measuring training outcomes
- Individual/team/organization diagnosis
- Developing outstanding executive leaders
- Continuing development programs attract and keep the best graduate recruits

Here are 3 examples how high EQ has had a significant financial impact in organizations:

**Insurance Sales** - sales agents who were relatively weak in EQ competencies such as self confidence, initiative and empathy sold policies that were worth half the premium value of those sold by colleagues who had strong competencies in at least 5 out of 8 key skills.

**Executives** - who were recruited by a global consumer beverage company without testing for EQ scores had a turnover of 50% within a two-year period and cost the company \$4 million in executive search fees. Once the recruiting policy changed and new candidates were tested for EQ the turnover dropped to 6%.

**Computer programmers** - those programmers who are in the top 10% of EQ on the following scales; willingness to collaborate, disinclination to compete, sharing information out-produce the average programmer by 320%. Those few programmers who are 'star performers' outperform them by 1272%.

## Other FAQ's

### **Is Emotional Intelligence just soft skills dressed up?**

We think not. We think that emotional intelligence includes Intrapersonal as well as Interpersonal intelligence and therefore self management as well as relationship management.

It also includes the deeper levels of our values and attitudes and is not just about skills and competencies.

### **Is Emotional Intelligence just personality measures dressed up?**

No. Personality variables are by definition relatively unchanging whereas **all emotional intelligence components are open to change.**

### **Why choose to develop it?**

This is an easy one to answer because there are so many areas of life that having high EQ improves. For example, it helps you in all your working relationships, whether horizontal or vertical.

Although you can be born with a higher or lower potential in either intrapersonal or interpersonal intelligence you can improve them both significantly at any age.

Having high EQ makes you a superior performer. This is shown clearly by the research on performance and EQ.

People with high EQ are optimistic and realistic. They tend to envisage good outcomes, which they then make happen.

People with high EQ are far less likely to suffer badly from stress-related illnesses or depression.