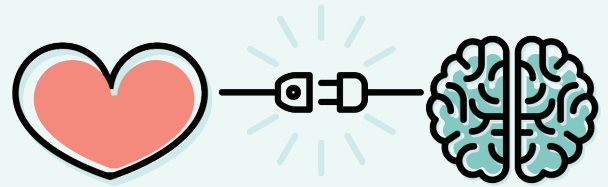


EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AT WORK: Creating the Leader of the Future



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Western thought has largely been shaped by an admiration of logic, as opposed to emotion. Descartes said, “I think, therefore I am.” Stoics like Marcus Aurelius taught that it is best to ignore feelings. Today, however, we have done a complete 180. Business leaders are prized for being multi-faceted and passionate. Qualities once seen as weaknesses, such as empathy and sensitivity, are now viewed as strengths. Emotional intelligence (EQ) has become more than a buzzword. Research has proven that EQ has a significant impact on occupational performance. According to *Time Magazine*, 90% of top performers have high emotional intelligence. Plus, according to a study conducted by Lyle Spencer, Jr., CEOs with high EQ add 127% more to their companies’ bottom lines than average executives who possess lower EQ levels.

There’s no doubt that EQ is now a widely practiced tool embraced by progressive executives to increase their companies’ bottom lines and improve corporate culture. But these questions remain: how did we get here and are we prepared for what is to come?

Origins of EQ

Aristotle is considered the Father of Emotional Intelligence. He is famous for saying, “Anyone can become angry—that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way—that is not easy.” However, this way of thinking didn’t take off until centuries after his time. In fact, the big bad boss (the yelling, top-down leader) stereotype permeated our culture in both white- and blue-collar professions until the 1980s. During this time, Dr. Reuven Bar-On, a clinical psychologist, began studying the answers to two questions: what makes people successful and what makes people happy? The results of those studies started a journey of conceptualizing, researching, and applying emotional intelligence.

Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer coined the term ‘Emotional Intelligence’ in 1990 at Yale University, defining it as “a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and action.” Their tool, the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso instrument, assesses EQ with ability-based testing. Salovey and Mayer worked together to clearly define and measure the effects of emotional intelligence, which piqued the interest of larger corporations concerned with hiring and retaining top talent. Largely thanks to *New York Times* science writer Daniel Goleman, the idea of EQ spread quickly throughout the following decade. According to Goleman, there are five main components that make up EQ—the key building blocks of EQ in action—including self-awareness, self-regulation, internal motivation, empathy, and people skills.

EQ Evolves

In 2005, Dr. Steven J. Stein, PhD, business owner and leading EQ researcher, was interested in finding out what caused his fellow CEOs more headaches and loss of sleep: technical issues or people problems. He initiated a survey to identify possible connections between a CEO’s personal characteristics and how confident they felt about dealing with current business challenges.

In his surprising results, he found out that the need to hire and manage the right people, in addition to managing growth, outpaced the challenges of keeping up with technology or finding capital to fund fast-growing companies. In fact, the ability to manage a growth organization requires skills beyond accounting, marketing, sales, customer service, engineering, and technology.

In order to succeed as an individual, you need to understand yourself and those around you. In order to succeed at managing company growth and culture, another set of skills comes into play as more important: emotional self-awareness, empathy, stress tolerance, reality testing, and interpersonal relationships. Stein found that higher emotional and social intelligence were related to the leader’s confidence in retaining employees and their perceived ability to manage the growth of their company.



The Modern and Future Leader

Emotional intelligence and leadership studies pinpoint social responsibility as becoming an important trend. Many of the good leaders today are assertive, have good self-regard, are optimistic, have good stress tolerance and are flexible. The socially responsible leader prioritizes their people and authentically cares about their well-being. They are different because they value doing the right thing and are not afraid to pivot or change their mind if they receive new information. Driven neither by the past or the future, they are led by opportunity and want to see the world be a better place. They value diversity and they understand that different points of view enrich company culture and thus improve productivity and profitability.

Today, you would be hard-pressed to find a leading company who doesn't have a focus on EQ. Corporations around the world turn to EQ measurement in hiring, promoting, and developing their employees because they know that to foster a community-oriented environment, leaders must be engaging, compassionate, and morally competent.

Companies like MailChimp, for example, have even created positions such as Chief Culture Officer focused on creating a work environment that collectively operates on a high level of EQ. Most modern-day business leaders who have become household names, such as Elon Musk and Richard Branson, are known for their emotional aptitude. Decades of research demonstrates the correlation between their EQ and success. One study published in *Psychological Science* found that a US company was able to reduce turnover among divisional presidents from 50% to 6% by including EQ in their selection techniques. The company later found that those selected because of high EQ were more likely to perform in the top third.

Final Thoughts

Leaders of the past valued consistency, and they looked to history to order to make decisions about the present and future of the company. Moreover, everyone in the company had to be loyal to the leader, who feared looking bad as much as doing bad. Course correction and pivoting did not exist. It used to be considered a sign of great weakness when a leader changed his mind or changed his course midstream.

Today, smart leaders are driven by opportunities and the future, rather than by the past or their egos. They might learn valuable lessons from past triumphs, but they don't attempt to preserve the status quo. Instead of worrying about looking good or staying consistent, they stay vigilant and on top of future trends and are not afraid to embrace the flow of new ideas.

This is the modern and future leader—one who integrates the realms of both logic and emotion. They leverage EQ in a way that goes beyond gauging how employees are feeling, towards successfully navigating complex business situations. They can nurture our strengths rather than pick apart our weaknesses. They create and foster meaningful relationships with a multi-generational and diverse workforce. And while they're no less focused on strategy and competition, the modern leader operates with adaptiveness, compassion, and mindfulness.

Looking forward, it's important for organizations to know that EQ is more than a useful HR tool. Empathy gives progressive companies the ability to not only connect and engage with employees, but with their target audience as well. We live in a world where human connection is vital. As we move into an era that's hyper-focused on mindfulness and self-awareness, the outdated notion of an unapproachable, money-driven leader will become far less common. Those who possess higher social skills and empathetic qualities will drive the companies of our future forward.

About Roberta Moore



Roberta Moore, founder of EQ-i Coach and author of *Emotion at Work: Unleashing the Secret Power of Emotional Intelligence*, utilizes her extensive background as an accomplished business executive and licensed therapist to help executives, business teams, and sales teams achieve workplace and personal success. In her almost two decades as an individual and family therapist, Moore learned that the key skills responsible for successful personal relationships are the same ones that spark workplace success. With this discovery, Moore has been able to help companies succeed by focusing on emotional and cognitive intelligence behaviors and tools. By using specific, practiced skills, individuals learn from Moore the

EQ skills needed to inspire, engage, relate, and ultimately increase productivity and profitability. For more information, please visit www.eqicoach.com.