

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND LEADERSHIP

Emotional Intelligence is increasingly recognized as a “major success factor” in business. Actually, the components of Emotional Intelligence (EI) have always led to success in business. Now the term itself is gaining popularity and more attention is being given to its components and its benefits in leadership.

Succeeding as a leader in business today requires a new approach. More is demanded of leaders than the mental abilities to manage and lead initiatives in sales, customer service, quality, etc. More work is performed in teams and organizations are flatter, with more direct reports per manager. In addition to good problem-solving and decision-making skills, successful leaders today must have the qualities of EI.

What Is Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional Intelligence refers to our ability to manage and regulate our emotions in a healthy and balanced manner in order to achieve personal and business goals. EI incorporates the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions in ourselves and in our interpersonal relationships.

Although popular literature today has a variety of definitions of Emotional Intelligence, most include five elements: self-awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy for others, and handling relationships.

Emotional Intelligence assumes that our specific comprehension of situations dictates our subsequent reactions. The definition of EI has been stretched to include many personality characteristics, thus blurring the distinction between Emotional Intelligence and other dimensions such as people skills, insight and “street smarts.”

Can Emotional Intelligence Be Learned?

Although not enough research has been conducted to determine whether EI can be learned, recent articles suggest that, like personality in general, Emotional Intelligence becomes well established in early adulthood and can be modified only to a minor degree thereafter. Another school of thought suggests that EI can be gained through a peak experience of some kind in one’s personal life.

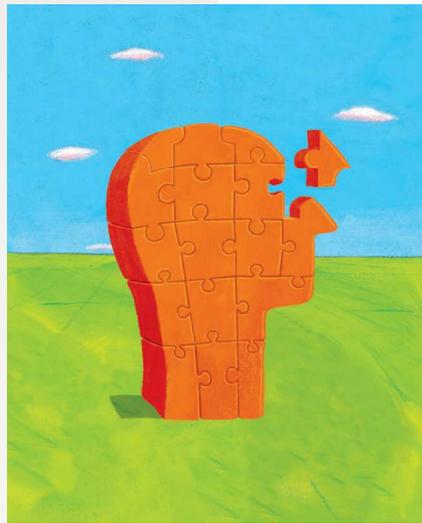
While EI itself can be difficult to learn as an adult, some problematic behaviors can be improved through reinforced feedback and coaching, especially if they are tied into performance goals. To date, few formal training programs in EI have been developed. While a number of adult education programs are available in certain aspects of Emotional Intelligence, such as self-awareness, managing emotions, or relationship-building, no programs seem to be effective in training all five aspects of EI.

Therefore, companies need to be aware that training for EI is still in its infancy.

Can Emotional Intelligence Be Measured?

Rather than rely on a questionable training program, it makes much better business sense to hire an individual who already displays the qualities inherent in EI. The question is, “Can EI be reliably measured?”

As with any new hot topic in management, there are several tools on the market to measure Emotional Intelligence. Some are available on the Internet and seem to be poorly designed and researched. This is the case, in part, because there is no agreed-upon definition of Emotional Intelligence on which to build a measurement tool. Some of the available tools are simply advertising devices used to sell training or consulting services.



Inasmuch as the five main aspects of EI parallel personality characteristics, several well-researched behavior measurement tools **are** available to measure the components of Emotional Intelligence. PSP’s Work Behavior Survey, Leadership Style Survey, and Wyvern 360° Survey measure self-awareness, empathy for others, ability to build relationships,

frustration tolerance, and self-motivation, all components of Emotional Intelligence. In this sense, PSP has been measuring EI for years without calling it “Emotional Intelligence.”

In its extensive research on successful leaders, PSP has found that an empathic, supportive, participatory style, coupled with execution skills and a results orientation, provides the most effective approach to leadership.

Leadership without one of these components yields less successful results.

Since Emotional Intelligence is gaining popularity in business circles, it is important that companies not be mistaken about it. Extroverted social skills often are mislabeled as Emotional Intelligence. In addition, some candidates try to embellish their backgrounds or interview conduct to get the job offer. Fortunately, PSP’s Work Behavior Survey has the capacity to determine whether an individual is exaggerating about personal qualities, social skills and work behaviors. Our Wyvern 360° Survey actually prevents an individual from purposely making himself “look good” in order to distort an accurate perception of his performance.

Armed with validated, scientific measurement tools such as these, PSP can assess Emotional Intelligence and its inherent personality dimensions **before** the important decisions on hiring or promotion are made.