

Emotional Intelligence Defined

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We have been programmed since we were little children to care about our Intelligence Quotient (IQ). Because we know that people with high IQs are typically smart – and consequently very successful.

However, we now know that business leaders with strong Emotional Intelligence (EQ) competency also have an advantage in the workplace. The reason is, they make an effort to relate to others, interact positively, and demonstrate compassion toward coworkers.

Emotional intelligence is defined as a leader's ability to read the signals of others and to manage the emotional response to those they lead and interact with. Emotional intelligence skills don't always come naturally but can be learned and developed.

Having a strong Emotional Intelligence self-awareness is a sign of professional maturity, but can take years to develop, and a lifetime to master. There is an ongoing debate as to whether Emotional Intelligence comes naturally or is learned. Regardless, emotional intelligence is an important leadership competency.

We all have emotions that influence our response to the world around us. However, leaders with a high competence of emotional intelligence often can manage emotions and not allow their feelings to influence their responses to the environment.

The simple truth is... people don't follow people who can't control their emotions.

7 Competencies of High Emotional Intelligence

1. Emotional Intelligence Self-Awareness

Leaders need to be aware of their strengths, weaknesses, and their ability to manage themselves and others. It is important for all of us to be honest with ourselves, and doing a self-assessment is the first step toward self-awareness.

The practice of a self-assessment requires humility that seeks honest feedback from others. A 360° feedback tool is a great way to solicit honest feedback from those who know you best.

2. Self-Regulation

The workplace can be a landmine of emotional issues that need to be addressed. Leaders with high emotional intelligence skills can regulate their responses to this often volatile environment. These skilled leaders can demonstrate self-control and self-management to do the right thing.

3. Trustworthy

Employees need to trust their leadership. A leader's effectiveness succeeds and fails on their trustworthiness. Leaders earn the trust of those they lead by saying what they mean and doing what they say and operating with the highest ethical standards. This trust is earned over time after consistent demonstration of trustworthiness.

Employees often hang on to the words of their leaders, making it essential for leaders to follow through on promises made – or communicate a change in plans.

4. Inspiring

We all look for inspiration, particularly in those we look up to. Inspirational leaders motivate others which results in the achievement of goals. Employees look for the inspiration that comes from an optimistic outlook and the ability to initiate progressive movement toward organizational .

5. Compassionate

We must never lose our ability to empathize and be compassionate toward others. Leaders who demonstrate compassion and empathy quickly gain commitment and trust from those they lead.

Compassionate leaders have an innate understanding of others and can discern when someone needs to talk or needs help thinking through an issue. This awareness helps employees feel comfortable asking for help.

Leaders have a servant's heart and understand their role in encouraging, coaching, and mentoring others to develop the next generation of leaders.

6. Social Skills

We all socialize differently. The different social styles teach us that we all communicate and interact differently. None is right; none is wrong but mastering the ability to get along with others is a crucial to learn.

The goal of effective leadership is to influence the behaviors of others. This influence is based on a leader's ability to communicate and positively interact with others. The ability to manage conflict, collaborate with others, and demonstrate a team focus are all essential characteristics of strong social skills.

7. Influential

Great leaders challenge the status quo and are continually looking for ways to improve the organization and how work gets done. These influential leaders inspire by sharing the vision and encouraging others to take action.

They can recognize employees for doing the right thing and celebrate success when goals are accomplished. Leaders of influence continually strive to improve how they interact with others and their intellectual and emotional intelligence. The path to becoming a great leader is a journey and not a destination.

Successful leaders are humble, understand their weaknesses, yet strive to constantly improve themselves and others. They do all of this by being self-aware, demonstrating the ability to self-regulate, and by maintaining deep compassion for others.