

Emotional Intelligence And How Do You Develop It? By Robert Smith

Have you ever wondered why some people are so successful? In this age of knowledge no matter how brilliant, you are or how high your IQ is, *will you succeed?* The answer is not necessarily. So what makes the difference that makes the difference? Evidence shows that those who can influence, think out of the box, create and deliver a vision for self and others, in short, have Emotional Intelligence, (EQ) ***are today's winners.*** This article provides you with the essential strategy to achieve this and to be even more stimulating, creative and generate more enjoyment in the work place.

I will start with a simple definition, followed by some of the evidence that proves just how important EQ is. After that I will give you some in-depth information about EQ and how you can start to improve your own EQ today. The first step you might like to take is simply to go to the internet and do an online test and if you have a high score, read no further.

A simple definition – 'knowing how you and others feel, more importantly, what to do about it.'

So what is the evidence that shows it is so vital to success? Harvard University conducted a survey of over 500 organisations, of which, they looked at the competency models that each had, to measure what made a successful profile for each job. The range of organisations was wide including Global Companies, Healthcare and Academic Institutions and Governmental Agencies. The results fell into three categories - Technical, Cognitive and EQ skills. Technical being the skill to do the job so, for example; an accountant needed to have passed the necessary exams, which of course meant a certain IQ was needed to achieve this. Secondly, the Cognitive skills, which measured the analytical ability of the person. Finally, EQ which proved to be the difference that made the difference. When each organisation was asked to name their star performers, EQ was the defining factor contributing to their success. Star performers' profiles were 85% higher in EQ compared to the average performer.

A practical example of this was the analysis of the contribution to profit in a large accounting company. Firstly, it must be noted that each of them had the necessary IQ to be an accountant. Those with self management skills, a component of EQ, added 78%. Those with another skill of EQ social ability added 110% and those with analytical skills added 50%. Those who had them all added a massive 390% compared to those with low EQ and analytical skills.

EQ falls broadly into four areas self awareness, self management, social awareness and relationship management. All of these skills can be developed by training and/or coaching. Many organisations in this age of knowledge have realised that their top

brains need constant coaching to develop their EQ, so coaching skills have become a vital management tool along with the need for EQ training at all levels.

So to the first area. Self awareness includes emotional self awareness, accurate self assessment and self confidence. Those who are aware of what their values are and how they feel about their work have EQ. This clarity of self enables them to speak about their vision of how to get things done with conviction and as a result they get 'buy in' from others. They can express their feelings and speak openly. One other important factor is that by being aware of their intuition they can deal with the complex nature of the modern world far better and understand the big picture. Take a moment to list down at least seven things that are important to you about your job. Next put them into order from what is the most important through to what is least important and you have your values hierarchy, or the emotions that drive you. How well do those around you understand what drives you? Can you express what is important to you with passion and conviction? If not, some coaching or training is indicated.

Knowing yourself is also a key ability. How well do you understand your strengths and limitations? The good news is that those with high EQ have a sense of humour about themselves, constantly seek to learn and are happy to ask for help. A simple action is to ask for constructive feedback, because I believe that constant feedback is the basis for success. A warning here is that high quality feedback is hard to come by and needs to be provided by someone with excellent coaching abilities.

Self confidence is, of course, a must and the kind of self assurance that comes from channelling emotions in a constructive way. This gives a person presence, acceptance of the stress of modern life and how to deal with it more effectively. I had the honour to model three top CEOs of an international engineering company and a striking feature of all of them, was their ability to monitor their own stress levels and those around them and take action to release the tension. They all had different ways of doing this however they all considered it was an important skill. What healthy ways do you have to manage the stress in your life? Some simple tips are eat healthily, drink plenty of water. Taking some form of exercise is a real must. Tao Te Ching said 'To understand others is to have knowledge. To understand oneself is to be illuminated'.

The ability to channel emotion is also important for self-management. The star performers can direct their emotion and impulses and use the energy in a positive way to change their feelings in a moment. This allows them to stay calm in a crisis and handle the situation. You can learn this easily if you understand the mind body connection. There are only three things you need to change: firstly, physiology, secondly, your focus and beliefs and thirdly, the language patterns you use. There is not enough space here to give a full explanation, but consider that we have 90,000 thoughts a day and it is estimated that 60,000 are the same. So, if you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you have always got. The Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius said 'A man's life is what his thoughts make of it'. You can learn to direct your emotions by knowing how to change these three areas.

People with high EQ are aware of their values and live by them, their behaviour is transparent or put simply you know where you are with them. A willingness to admit to mistakes and confront unethical behaviour is also apparent. The ability to confront is one of the areas I find people have most difficulty with, particularly when faced with a bully. They also know how to juggle the many demands of today, can adapt to new challenges and are comfortable with ambiguities. They are optimistic, take the initiative and set themselves high standards. They constantly set measures and are excellent at calculating risk. A survey done at Harvard University in 1979 and followed up ten years later showed that only 3% of the students had written down their goals. This 3% 10 years later, were ten times wealthier than the others! Above all, star performers are committed to continuing learning and teaching without fear that they are going to make themselves redundant. They believe that you don't have to be ill to get better and that it is for everybody's benefit, that we all continue to grow.

Their high level of social awareness goes beyond being good listeners, which undoubtedly they are. They attuned to other people's perspectives, backgrounds and cultures. This ability is becoming more and more important as we progress towards a global village. I have worked with people from 40 different countries in the past few years. I have noticed the lack of understanding between the different value systems and have realised the true value of developing peoples EQ skills. One technique I use, is called perceptual positions. A classic example I heard about when I was working at Birmingham University in the UK. At the time I lived in the same building where Gandhi had met with the British government. Gandhi had another room set aside, which he had laid out in the same seating arrangement as the main conference room. Every night he sat in each of the seats to gain insight into the thinking of each of the delegates. His genius of really getting into the shoes of all the other delegates at the negotiation, finally led to the freedom of India.

Star performers have a strong sense of service and understand the importance of the customer. I once worked for a director of IT for a international logistics company who wisely insisted that all staff were trained in relationship management. They were there to serve the company and not what appears to happen so often in organisations, when the rest of the company feels they are at the mercy of IT. This made a major impact on making sure that the company got the most effective IT solutions to enhance the profit margins. She was politically astute, had an excellent network and a thorough understanding of the key power relationships. She has long since moved onwards and upwards and still today has regular coaching from both me and a colleague of mine.

And so to the final skill set relationship management, an area I feel is in constant need of refreshing. I remember as a young trainer many years ago being stunned when working with the top salespeople of a world-leading computer company at their sales school. Their enthusiasm to keep learning about how to improve their relationship management was truly inspiring.

That is one of the things star performers do is to inspire, they create a compelling vision and a sense of common purpose. In short, they make work exciting! I was

also reminded that as a trainer and coach you are always learning, it is an endless process. Another key component is to be able to get buy-in by influencing others in a way that appeals to the listener. I remember working for an airline, where HR wanted the training, but we had to sell the idea to 4 very different Directors. I have a 2 minute proposal format (we only had 10 minutes with each) so brevity was important as it is so often these days. We presented the same information in 4 different ways and got the business. If you want to improve your influencing ability, find out the other person's concerns and motivations. As Covey says 'First seek to understand only then seek to be understood'

The star performers have a genuine interest in developing others. They are the team coach and have developed the ability to give timely and constructive feedback. They are a catalyst for change and are willing to challenge the status quo. They ask, as you can, why are we doing it this way? How can we do it better? Their ability to see things from different perspectives and to understand different value systems helps them manage conflict. They can draw out others and acknowledge their feelings, find common ground and direct the energy in the room towards finding a solution. Finally, they understand the power of the team and spend time on the relationships well beyond the requirements of their work obligation. They know that it might be in the knowledge of age, but the way to success is through people thriving. Whether they are a team leader or the CEO of a multi national company, they know how to make the workplace an exciting and inspiring place to be.