

# The Importance of Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace



Emotional intelligence or, EQ as it's come to be known. It's become a buzz word in the last decade or so. It sounds cool, sophisticated even. But what the heck does it mean? As defined by researchers Peter Salavoy and John Mayer, who coined the term, emotional intelligence means being aware that emotions can drive our behavior and impact people positively or negatively. Furthermore, it is the ability to manage those emotions, especially when under pressure.

With that definition in mind, it's easy to see how EQ, or lack thereof, can have a significant effect in the workplace. In an office where people exhibit low EQ, distrust, frustration, anger and lack of productivity can run rampant. Conversely, when team members exude high EQ, the results are the complete opposite. Trust, communication, openness, happiness and high productivity will likely be found.

If you're curious to learn a little more about EQ and how it can improve your career, read on. We've compiled a list of the top ways that high EQ can be a benefit.

## Awareness and Reflection

The first step to increasing your EQ is to become aware of your behaviors and reflect on them. That doesn't mean finding all your worse traits and beating yourself up. Rather, it involves having an honest conversation with yourself about your strengths and weaknesses. Maybe you've found that you're short and curt with your team of engineers. Upon reflecting on this behavior, high EQ dictates that you set about improving.

# **Fast Decision-Making**

Thanks to technology, we're able to communicate faster than ever. Gone are the days of interoffice memos. Instead, emails, texts and zoom meetings allow information to be shared freely with the masses. As a result, some people are quick to react, positively or negatively, when they hear something new. People of high EQ however, choose to respond, instead of react. They take time to process what they've learned, and consider the implications their response will have for those around them. In other words, they calculate their next move based on a number of factors, instead of shooting from the hip.

# **Increased Perception**

People of high EQ are always aware of what's going on around them. They can sense when big news is on the horizon. They're perceptive enough to notice even the smallest of changes in someone's behavior that might indicate they are struggling. With this heightened perception in their arsenal, they're able to spot issues ahead of time and address problems before they get out of hand.

# **High Morale**

Whether you're leading an entire organization, department or a small team, it's your job to make sure that everything and everybody is functioning as smoothly as possible. You're charged with solving issues of productivity, employee engagement, communication, cohesiveness and a whole host of other issues that arise. In order to do so effectively requires high emotional IQ.

At some point, you'll have to deal with an employee whose being unreasonable in one way or another. You have two choices. Either become angry and escalate the situation (low EQ) or, find a way to mitigate the problem and resolve it as quickly and calmly as possible (high EQ).

# **Foster a High-Functioning Culture**

This is the ultimate for leaders with high EQ. High-functioning cultures directly correlate with high production and profitability. As the leader of such a culture,

you exemplify what high EQ is. You've invested the time and learned the skills necessary to lead others in the most effective way possible.

So, what does a high EQ leader look like? You're able to build and manage healthy relationships with others. You listen actively to what everyone has to say. You maintain a level head and make it a point to respond instead of reacting.

As a VP, Team Lead, Manager, etc., you've proven that you have the skills and know-how to perform at a high level. Your experience speaks for itself, and you're in a position of leadership for a reason. As you know though, there are always ways to improve. Not only for yourself, but the company as a whole. Learning, then demonstrating emotional intelligence is a great place to start. Once you learn what it takes to practice high EQ, the results just might blow your mind. You, and everyone around will stand to benefit. You'll be happier, less stressed, more productive and more profitable as a result.

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## **Methods to Get Your Team to Follow Your Lead**



At some point in your career you've either managed or been part of a team where there was a noticeable disconnect between the person at the top and everyone else. Sure, objectives and responsibilities were explicit, but when it came to getting things done and maximizing productivity, it was a constant struggle. Any number of factors can cause a team to not function at its best, but employee engagement is almost always part of the problem. So, if you're struggling to get

the results you want from your team or feel like you're struggling to get everyone on the same page, read on.

## **It Starts with You**

If you want to get the most out of everyone on your team, you need to show them that you're 100% invested. Sure, you've got your own set of responsibilities, but you have to demonstrate that you're not afraid to get your hands dirty too. Whether that means carving out time every week to help with the more menial activities or just checking in with folks on an individual basis, the people you manage need to see you as one of them.

## **Never Lose Sight of the Bigger Picture**

When work becomes repetitive and the members of your team focus are just getting through the day, you're headed for trouble. Before you know it, productivity begins to slide along with the quality of work being done. All of sudden, doing the bare minimum becomes arduous and it's all you can do to meet deadlines and basic operating goals.

This is why it's important that everyone on your team feels like they are working for something bigger than themselves. When you're able to connect day-to-day tasks with a grander plan, your team members take pride in their work and become more productive as a result. Even though it might not happen overnight, there are plenty of ways to motivate your employees to get behind your mission. Bonuses, paid time off and team bonding activities are just a few.

## **Make Collaborative Decisions**

You have the final say when it comes to making big decisions. But if you want to get the most out of your team, their input needs to be considered before you make a final call. When people feel like they're empowered to share their thoughts and ideas, they automatically become more invested in the process. While your meetings with managers and higher-ups aren't going anywhere, regularly scheduling all hands-on deck meetings with your team fosters an environment of inclusion. And the best part is you'll often find that some of the best and brightest ideas come from the folks that are in the trenches on a daily basis.

## **Recognize Strengths and Delegate**

No one wants to work for a boss that feels like they have to do everything themselves in order get things done right. That's why recognizing people's strengths and delegating responsibilities accordingly is so powerful. Do you have an entry-level employee whose attention to details are impeccable? Great, charge them with reviewing documents or procedures all follow up communication with those involved. Not only will you have more time to focus your attention in other areas, you'll make that team member feel valued as well.

## **Make Your Strategy Visual**

Everyone has different learning styles. Some people need to learn by doing while others just want a set of directions. There's no underestimating the power of seeing something in action, however. That's why video has become so prevalent in the workplace. When people are able to see what success looks like with their own eyes, it becomes cemented in their minds. Seeing is believing and when you're able to make your words come to life, your ability to lead and influence grows exponentially.

In order for your team to reach its full potential, it's paramount that they follow your lead. If you're the type of leader that spends all day in his office shouting orders and circulating company memos, you don't stand on a chance. On the flip side, if you make a conscious effort to lead by example, give people the freedom to utilize their strengths and involve them in the decision-making process, your team can become an unstoppable force capable of achieving the kinds of results you've only dreamed of.