

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.