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WHY EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE MATTERS

Why does one person with the skills and credentials to do well in a position flounder and stagnate, while another soars from success to success?

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the single most important factor in determining why people of equivalent skills have wildly different career paths.

People with high EI are better able than others to:

- Create strong relationships with colleagues, clients, and customers.
- Generate shared enthusiasm and commitment.
- Develop productive sales relationships.
- Communicate effectively
- Think clearly under pressure.
- Adjust to change.
- Create a vision, and a coalition to support it.
- Outperform their peers.
- Win promotions.
- Exceed expectations.

Conversely, weak EI and the poor interpersonal skills that result are associated with poor performance, conflict-prone behavior, and career derailment.

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE?

Harvard psychologist Daniel Goleman has defined EI as “the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our

relationships.”

EI involves not just self-knowledge, but awareness of others. And more important perhaps, not just understanding, but being able to use that understanding productively.

A number of “emotional competencies” associated with specific attributes and skills have been identified as components of EI. The best known framework recognizes five principal competencies that cover both the *inner* aspects of EI (*self-awareness*, *self-regulation*, and *self-motivation*, which cover aspects like self-assessment, self-control, initiative, adaptability, trustworthiness, and self-confidence) and the *social* side (*empathy* and *relationship management*, e.g. teamwork, influence, conflict management and organizational awareness).

People with these skills tend to “play well with others”—at work, as elsewhere.

NOT JUST ANOTHER FAD

One of the first things to know about EI is that there’s a lot of heavy-duty research behind it. Most management trends, when you look at them closely, are just based on an accumulation of anecdotes, case studies, and assumptions. The theory of EI, on the other hand, is rooted in the fundamental neurobiology of human thought and behavior. Although the terminology and conceptual

framework are relatively recent, the patterns they describe are central to the dynamics of all human interactions, regardless of culture and context.

Another important fact: your level of EI is not fixed in stone. If you want to improve your command of any of the emotional competencies, and you’re willing to work at it, you can learn what you need to improve your ability to succeed.

A KEY SUCCESS FACTOR

The traits associated with EI—confidence, assertiveness, optimism, cooperation, self-control, and the ability to inspire and influence others—are the core of leadership. Great EI is the one thing that virtually all great leaders have in common.

Whenever you need to connect directly with other people—superiors, subordinates, peers, customers, suppliers, anybody—your ability to put yourself in their shoes, to accurately predict their reactions, and to shape your own approach to create the reaction you want is key to achieving your goals. Used effectively, EI can be a tool that puts you in control of your own success. And that’s no fad!

