

# Competency Center



## Emotional Intelligence & Relationships

### Key Takeaways

- Emotional intelligence is a broad competency, comprising self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.
- Emotional intelligence gives employees, managers, and executives a set of tools for conducting business relationships and producing results from them.
- Emotional intelligence is not easily taught, especially during short-term training. It is best developed via longer-term, one-on-one coaching.
- Emotional intelligence applies not only to individuals but also to teams.

### Executive Summary

For many years, emotion did not have a role in the workplace. But now companies recognize that emotional intelligence is essential to effective, productive business relationships with colleagues, direct reports, superiors, and customers.

Emotional intelligence, more than intellect and training, sets exceptional employees apart from average employees, and excellent leaders apart from mediocre leaders.

The five core components of emotional intelligence are:

1. Self-awareness
2. Self-regulation
3. Motivation
4. Empathy
5. Social skill

### Impact on Company

*Impact of self-awareness:* Self-aware professionals know their strengths and weaknesses, accept feedback and assistance willingly, and know how to address problems. Those lacking self-awareness unconsciously sabotage their team's and their own success.

*Impact of self-regulation:* Self-regulators are more adaptable to change and they think before reacting, thereby creating a calm, respectful workplace, which boosts morale and productivity.





*Impact of motivation:* Motivated people have energy and passion for learning and meeting or exceeding performance standards.

*Impact of empathy:* Listening and empathy help build a foundation of workplace trust, respect, support, and cooperation.

*Impact of social skill:* Employees with social skill create cooperative, productive relationships with their team members, supervisors, and direct reports.

### Techniques for Development

Emotional intelligence is a skill that can be learned, and usually increases as people mature. But it cannot be learned via linear logic in seminars and with self-help manuals, which is the approach taken by many corporate training programs. Feelings and emotional intelligence are functions of the brain's limbic system, which learns via feedback, motivation, practice, and more feedback. This process requires one-on-one coaching rather than group training sessions.

Before investing in such coaching, companies must assess employees' willingness to change, and coaching clients must commit to measurable goals.

As others respond positively to the employee's new behavior, they reinforce his or her emotional intelligence skills. Reinforcement should also come from the company; they should hold the employee to emotionally intelligent standards and not ignore backsliding.

### Managers & Executives

Recognizing the correlation between emotional intelligence and business success, growing numbers of companies are seeking leaders with

emotional intelligence and are developing this asset in their leaders. They are looking for leaders with the following qualities:

*Self-awareness:* Senior executives often mistake an admission of a shortcoming for weakness when interviewing managerial candidates. But this acknowledgment represents self-awareness, a strength that enables leaders to assess not only themselves but also job candidates, employees, competitors, and business challenges.

*Self-regulation:* When faced with problems and crises, managers and executives who self-regulate react thoughtfully and focus on causes and possible solutions.

*Motivation:* Executives with motivation excel, and they hire and inspire managers who also excel.

*Empathy:* Empathy enables team leaders to assess team members' agendas and feelings, accommodate cultural differences when working with foreign clients and colleagues, and more effectively coach and motivate employees.

*Social skill:* Socially skilled managers and executives can rally the troops to achieve business goals and transform vision into reality.

Many managers and executives keep their direct reports at an emotional distance, believing detachment maintains authority. But if employees know their managers care about them and support their success, they will be more responsive to feedback. Managers and executives should praise staff sincerely and frequently because it lowers turnover, boosts productivity, and improves customer loyalty.

Managers and executives also must display emotional intelligence when employees need corrective feedback. Vague, subjective criticism, (e.g., "You don't pull your weight") or venting anger can be



detrimental. Instead, managers must be observant, stay calm, and communicate objectively and specifically.

Examples of objective, specific feedback include:

- “I’d like to talk to you about [topic].”
- “I noticed [specific behavior or performance].”
- “As a result, [impact on the job].”
- “From now on, I’d like you to [expected performance or behavior].”

### Teams

Emotional intelligence is not just for individuals; it is also vital for teams, who have become the workhorses of business. When emotional intelligence becomes a team norm, the team develops trust, group identity, and group efficacy—the keys to group creativity and productivity.

To foster emotional intelligence in teams:

- Establish ground rules for maintaining a respectful, supportive environment.
- Help identify each team member’s personality type, work style, values, and communication style, and describe how these may affect the team (e.g., members can discuss their preferences for creativity, punctuality, risk-taking, or caution).
- Ask team members to role-play each other’s opinions and behaviors in order to foster empathy, trust, and cooperation.
- Observe whether team members are upset or out of sync with the rest of the team.
- Avoid jumping to conclusions about team members’ behaviors.
- Ask information-gathering questions; listen to members’ concerns fully and without judgment; and address concerns.

- Ask all team members for their views and whether or not they agree with decisions under discussion. This is called “perspective taking.”
- Use humor to point out team-sabotaging behavior (e.g., gently tease someone who is chronically late or throw a soft toy at someone who shoots down an idea during a brainstorming session).
- Set aside time at meetings to discuss conflict. Divide the team into small subgroups or pairs and encourage members to give and receive feedback.
- Set aside a few minutes for team members to vent and blow off steam. After negative feelings are released, remind the team of its mission and its past successes in the face of challenges.
- Teach ways to give constructive, nonjudgmental feedback.
- Express gratitude on a regular basis (e.g., after every meeting, team members can toast the person to their right to recognize their contribution to the team).

### Obstacles

Some employees are content with the status quo and are not interested in career advancement so may not be motivated to develop emotional intelligence. In addition, some people—especially men—are uncomfortable exploring their emotions and resist the notion. Male-dominated industries, such as construction, may not be amenable to developing emotional intelligence. Other obstacles include:

- Self-regulation may serve the organization but not the individual. Workers may feel pressured to conform and not act genuinely.
- Forced attempts at emotional intelligence often backfire.



## Related Resources

### Emotional Intelligence

*Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*

By Daniel Goleman

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=qbh&AN=34314385&site=ehost-live>

### The Other Kind of Smart

*Simple Ways to Boost Your Emotional Intelligence for Greater Personal Effectiveness and Success*

By Harry Deutschendorf

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=qbh&AN=47748909&site=ehost-live>

### The Talent Advantage

*How to Attract and Retain the Best and the Brightest*

By Alan Weiss and Nancy MacKay

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=qbh&AN=52174706&site=ehost-live>

### Leading With Emotional Intelligence

*Hands-on Strategies for Building Confident and Collaborative Star Performers*

By Reldan S. Nadler

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=qbh&AN=78142779&site=ehost-live>

### Put Emotional Intelligence to Work

By Jeff Feldman and Karl Mulle

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=qbh&AN=54593983&site=ehost-live>

### Emotional Intelligence for Managing Results in a Diverse World

By Lee Gardenswartz, Jorge Cherbosque, and Anita Rowe

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=qbh&AN=36901473&site=ehost-live>

## Further Reading

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