



# Taking the **Lead**

## How High is Your EQ?

Donna Rawady

**W**hen we reflect on what's affected business over the past decade, we might list technology and globalization, along with increasingly aggressive and more complex mergers and acquisitions as the most significant variables. We know that these variables affect human emotions and behavior. And we're learning that in order to effectively lead, we need to understand and respond to the human side of business. This is why we see the wave of information and interest in emotional intelligence grow as it's recognized as a crucial component of effective leadership.

Google the phrase "emotional intelligence" and you'll come up with nearly 700,000 links. Explore the library or business section of your favorite book store and you're sure to learn more about it because over 200 books have been published on the subject referred to as "EQ" or "EI" or "emotional intelligence." Review ancient history and you'll find EQ referred to conceptually by Socrates, Frances Bacon, and Freud. In the early 80s Howard Gardner, a Harvard psychologist, proposed the widely regarded model of "multiple intelligences." All this encourages us to go beyond cognitive thought and tap into our inner selves.

In the early 90s, it was Daniel Goleman who introduced the term, popularized emotional intelligence, and continues to be regarded as an EQ expert. He co-founded and co-chairs the Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence, providing a wealth of information on the subject ([www.eiconsortium.org](http://www.eiconsortium.org)). Goleman's model reflects the following as the five components of emotional intelli-

gence: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill. As it relates to the workplace, emotional intelligence is the ability to be attuned to one's own feelings and emotions and the feelings and emotions of one's employees and/or associates. EQ can be learned, unlike our IQ, which is fixed. In fact, some believe that emotional intelligence increases with maturity.

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The business case for being emotionally intelligent is clear. Without it, we run a higher risk of failure, regardless of our technical or intellectual prowess. Where there are emotionally intelligent leaders, we see a higher retention of talent and an increase in employee satisfaction and drive. Goleman cites Hay/McBer's research outcomes in his book *Working with Emotional Intelligence*. "Based on their research with hundreds of top executives at 15 global companies, the results were stunning. Just one cognitive ability distinguished star performers from average: pattern recognition—'big-picture' thinking. But with this one exception, intellectual or technical superiority played no role in leadership success. Rather, emotional competence made the crucial difference between mediocre leaders and the best."

So, as leaders, how do we begin to raise our emotional intelligence? It may help to consider these behaviors (among others) exhibited by emotionally intelligent leaders:

- Ask probing questions with the motive of seeking to understand those you communicate with.
- Thoughtfully consider employees' feelings when making business decisions.
- Seek input from others who may support or challenge your perspective.
- Regularly ask yourself what it might be like to be in someone else's situation.
- Be conscientious about regulating your emotions.
- Trust your intuition.
- Be honest with yourself about your own strengths and limitations, and be aware enough to get help when you need it.
- Make the effort to be comfortable and make others comfortable in social situations.
- Serve as a model for remaining calm and engaged during uncertainty.

This glimpse into the definition and importance of emotional intelligence may offer you an introduction to the topic or it may validate what you already know. Keep in mind that there are a myriad of resources and much to learn about EQ, your own potential to be more emotionally intelligent, and your ability to hire more emotionally capable employees. Explore the topic further, apply what you learn, and reap the benefits of being an emotionally intelligent leader.

**BSM**

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