

Emotional Intelligence – Discussion Paper

1. What is Emotional Intelligence (EI)

A commercial definition:

“The capacity for *recognising* our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, for *managing* emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships”

- Daniel Goleman, Author of ‘Emotional Intelligence’

A scientific definition:

“The ability to monitor one’s own and other’s feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one’s own thinking and action”

- Peter Salovey and John (Jack) Mayer, 1990

This definition says it all:

“Emotional Intelligence refers to the emotional, personal, social and survival dimensions of intelligence. It is concerned with understanding oneself and others, relating to people, and adapting to and coping with the immediate surroundings to be more successful when dealing with the demands of everyday life”

- Multi-Health Systems, Inc., 2005.

2. Why is EI critical now? (The business case for EI)

- Knowledge *and* relationships are the currency of the new economy
- Changes in the ‘emotional’ brain are possible
- There are EI links to job and bottom line performance

3. Why does the research tell us?

Research has found that there is a strong link between EI and job performance with individuals who are higher in EI tending to be better performers.

Examples of the research include:

- EI accounts for more than 60% of job performance. Top performers in many jobs are 12 times more productive than weak performers and 127% more productive than average performers.

- The impact of EI is strongest in leadership, sales and customer service positions where relationships are the typical commodity. Typically, 80% of high performers are also high on EI
- L’Oreal interviewed potential sales leaders for EI skills instead of traditional competencies and realised a \$91,370 sales increase per head as well as 63% less turnover than those not selected for EI.
- AT&T found that 86% of their top performers were high in EI while only 20% of low performers were high on EI.

What is encouraging is that while some people are naturally more intelligent than others, the research shows that, unlike IQ, high EI individuals can be made, even if they are not born.

4. What are the core EI skills?

Daniel Goleman’s benchmark model, from *Primal Leadership*

	What I see	What I do
Personal Competence	Self Awareness	Self Management
Social Competence	Social Awareness	Relationship Management

5. Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is our ability to accurately recognise our emotions as they happen and to understand our general tendencies for responding to different people and situations. This can be difficult as, these days, most of our time and energy are devoted to our work, with little time available to attend to ourselves. We often ignore what we are feeling. The problem is that without taking the time to recognise and understand our emotions, it can do us more harm than good. It can even be hazardous to our health.

Self-awareness is by far the most important of the four core EI skills. People cannot manage themselves or build relationships without first identifying and understanding themselves and their emotions.

Points to remember:

- When people do not acknowledge their emotions, it can cause them to boil over
- Things that bother us, tend to bother us for a reason
- Our emotions can focus our attention on details that are consistent with our moods and consistent with our beliefs.

6. Self-management

Using good self-management skills is critical to performing at our best in a variety of settings. It involves more than just 'keeping our cool' by using awareness of our emotions to help us use the most appropriate response to a wide range of situations and people. This includes the ability to adapt to change, tolerate stress and avoid making snap decisions. The lack of such skills often has an adverse affect on employee morale, organisational climate, productivity and teamwork.

Research has found that a mild level of anxiety can help focus on the task at hand but, at higher levels, could impair our ability to make good decisions, stifle initiative and leave a mood that distracts and prevents us from performing at our best. The benefits of self-management including coping with change, setting the stage for creativity and taking the initiative.

7. Social Awareness

There is more to social awareness than being charismatic and winning friends. Being competent in social awareness is having the ability to accurately pick up emotions in other people and understand what is really going on. This often means understanding what other people think and feel even if you do not think or feel the same way. At work, better social awareness helps us to relate, communicate and understand what us customers, colleagues, staff and boss are feeling and thinking.

The workplace can be a tense environment. When the going gets tough, tunnel vision sets in and emotions run high. In these circumstances, disregarding emotions is an easy thing to do. However, it is also a time when positively working with emotions can be most beneficial to embrace.

8. Relationship Management

Relationship management skills are important because nearly every aspect of to-day's workplace requires interaction with people. The quality of these interactions can either enhance or impede organisational and personal effectiveness.

Relationships encompass three competing needs – our needs, the needs of the other person and the needs of the working relationship. The best outcome is one where the needs of all three are met, at least at a minimum level of satisfaction, and maximally for a mutually satisfying working relationship that is productive and enjoyable.

9. Emotional Intelligence and ‘CEO Disease’

In *Primal Leadership*, Goleman makes reference to ‘CEO Disease’ which is a “vacuum around a leader created when people withhold important (and usually unpleasant) information”. In effect, CEO Disease refers to how accurately CEOs can gauge the effect their own emotions have on others. The example is cited of a particular CEO who believes others see him as upbeat and reliable whereas direct reports find his cheerfulness restrained, even fake, and his decisions erratic. The implication is that a leader needs to determine how his/her emotional leadership drives the moods and actions of the organisation and then adjusts the leadership style and behaviour accordingly.

About the Author

Roland Nagel is Director of Nagel Consulting Pty Limited and a Registered Psychologist, Accredited Executive Coach and Certified Emotional Intelligence Facilitator. He specialises in performance and productivity improvement issues at work and has identified the need for Australian business to address the significant challenge of developing high potential leaders through solutions-focused and transformational coaching. He is particularly experienced in the use of multi-rater and coaching processes to enhance a leader’s effectiveness in the areas of people interactions, corporate problem solving and the management of change.

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