

A Different Kind of Smart - Employees Working with Emotional Intelligence

By Adele B. Lynn

The ability to solve quadratic equations may be a function of a person's IQ, but the ability to deal with everyday job stresses, shifting priorities, demanding customers, and difficult co-workers is a function of EQ or emotional intelligence.

In fact, those employees who score high on the EQ scale work with a different, yet vitally important kind of intelligence. That's not to say that intellect or IQ is not important. Incredible progress has been made in business over the years by applying our intellect to our toughest problems. We've engineered some of the very best equipment and machinery. We've reduced our costs. We've driven our productivity up. We've improved our processes based on sound facts. And, we've based our financial decisions on good solid data and reasoning power. So, make no mistake, intellect has proven invaluable and will continue to be invaluable to drive our businesses to success. However, if we want to soar beyond our present horizons, we must blend the progress that we've made in business using intellect and IQ with the invaluable competencies of emotional intelligence or EQ. It is our emotional intelligence that will solve our retention and morale problems, improve our creativity, create synergy from teamwork, speed our information by way of sophisticated people networks, drive our purpose, and ignite the best and most inspired performance from our people.

So just what is emotional intelligence? With the risk of oversimplifying, emotional intelligence is the dimension of intelligence responsible for our ability to manage ourselves and our relationships with others. Included are skills that drive our internal world as well as our response to the external world. There are five components of emotional intelligence. They include: a well-honed timing for emotional expression and emotional control; empathy for others; social expertise that allows us to develop strong working relationships; personal influence that helps us advance our purpose with others; and an integrity that aligns us with our life's purpose.

Each day in the workplace, an employee's emotional intelligence is put to the test. Most often, how an employee reacts to situations will build goodwill and co-operation with customers and co-workers or will further drive wedges into tenuous relationships. When an employee can master appropriate internal emotional reactions to situations and also master his external response, the

employee is working with a high level of emotional intelligence. Too often, feelings of self-doubt, frustration or anger will take over and control a person's outward expression in a particular situation. How many times have you heard a person say, "I just couldn't help it, I was just so frustrated I had to react the way I did?"

As an employer, it's important that you recognize that those reactions can also paralyze the work that gets done. Underlying tensions and emotions make their way to every meeting and every encounter in the workplace. Yes, I know, you have probably been taught that emotion doesn't belong in the workplace. But the reality is that it's inescapable. Emotion is present in the workplace. Everyday. Everywhere. Therefore, as you have improved your business by way of applying intellectual resources, now is the time to recognize that you can also make dramatic improvements that will help you reach your business goals by improving the emotional intelligence of your workforce. Unlike IQ, which tends to remain fixed throughout a person's lifetime, emotional intelligence can be improved over time.

Adele B. Lynn is founder of Lynn Learning Labs. She is the author of *The Emotional Intelligence Activity Book* (Amacon) and *In Search of Honor, Lessons From Workers on How to Build Trust* (BajonHouse) She is located at 609 Broad Ave, Belle Vernon, Pennsylvania, 15012 and can be reached at 724 929-5352 or lynnlabs@westol.com.

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