



Measuring Emotional Intelligence and Increasing Workplace Performance

Executive Summary

“What traits and skills comprise a great leader?” That’s one of my favorite questions to ask people. The answer given most often is, “I can’t tell you, but I know one when I see one.” I hear a similar response when I ask people how they define an Emotionally Intelligent Leader: they know one when they see one. Frankly, there is no right or wrong answer for either question. The reality is there are as many definitions as there are workshops, publications, and podcasts that address leadership and Emotional Intelligence.

My description of a great leader is fairly simple. A great leader inspires and supports people to show up as their best self. A recent MHS, Inc. study polled 1700 high performing North American executives and discovered the top 21% of those respondents credited Emotional Intelligence (EI) as the key to their success. Business managers and leaders who hone their EI skills engage employee trust more easily, build stronger relationships with clients as well as colleagues, and foster resilient teams whose purpose and performance align to achieve organizational goals.

Whether a business is a start-up firm or a well-structured mature organization, each day brings unique challenges. An Emotionally Intelligent leader is able to observe a situation and choose how they will react to create the constructive outcome they want to happen. From my perspective, Leadership and Emotional Intelligence are action-based terms that signify the capacity for choices and the responsibility that comes with those choices.

My goal in writing this white paper is to discuss Emotional Intelligence in practical, measurable ways to create more Emotionally Intelligent leaders. In other words, I want to encourage leaders to develop the key skills necessary to lead highly motivated teams to achieve desired business results.

This white paper is written for coaches and people who want to help newly promoted managers succeed. The first section discusses the positive impact Emotional Intelligence has on workplace retention and productivity. The middle section describes the EQ-i® 2.0 Emotional Intelligence assessment model and the value it brings to leadership development programs. The final section introduces four workplace situations and how the EQ-i® 2.0 model can be used as a tool for professional development, team building, and the hiring selection process.

The Great Resignation and Emotional Intelligence

A Gallup 2022 workplace study found that 85% of the U.S. workforce is “going through the motions” at work and has left or thought about leaving their jobs because of their manager. This is more apparent when considering The Great Resignation of 2021 and 2022. During March 2022 alone, 4.5 million people voluntarily quit, and the trend continues to rise. The Pew Research Center surveyed adults who resigned as part of the Great Resignation and who are now employed elsewhere.

The researchers found the top five reasons given for quitting a job are:

1. Low pay
2. Lack of respect at work
3. No career advancement
4. Childcare issues
5. Not enough flexibility

When queried, the people who were hired by another company reported they were earning more money, developing a career path, managing childcare more effectively, and enjoying more flexibility.

Despite the initial benefits, one-third of these newly employed people quit their new job within six months (Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey March 2022). People were not resigning a second time based on pay. They were and are leaving because they did not feel respected or engaged by their manager and the organization leadership. Unfortunately, this cycle repeats itself as people move from organization to organization.

Many of the people who left companies due to disrespect point to their direct manager’s constant criticism, micromanagement, etc. Often these direct managers are first-time managers who were promoted because of their expertise without concern for the skills they will need to manage people. All too often, company leadership assumes the new manager will be able to teach themselves management soft skills as easily as they taught themselves complex technical skills. It’s not that these technical experts are bad managers; they simply have not been trained. If these new managers are able to develop their Emotionally Intelligent capabilities, people will feel respected and not resign.

Emotional Intelligence Business Impact

Emotional Intelligence (EI) can be defined as the effective engagement of communication and decision-making skills to create a positive outcome. In addition to the Pew and MHS studies, Daniel Goleman, Ph.D. and Reuven Bar-On, Ph.D. pursued extensive research focused on essential leadership skills across a range of industries. The common thread revealed within the documentation from 50+ years of research is the impact non-cognitive (Emotional Intelligence) capabilities have on individual and organizational success.

Daniel Goleman and his team's research on the impact of Emotional Intelligence in the workplace demonstrate the influence a leader's words and actions have on morale, motivation, and loyalty to an organization. One of their research projects studied the profit and growth trends of 19 insurance companies. They discovered the employees' attitude toward the company accounted for 20-30% of business performance. Nearly 70% of the employees interviewed attributed their positive feelings to the company leadership.

Essentially, **TECHNOLOGY DOES NOT DRIVE BUSINESS, PEOPLE DO**. The technology part of business solutions is relatively easy. The greatest challenge for a change solution process is communicating the purpose of the change, its value, and the importance of each person's role in achieving the solution.

Furthermore, Reuven Bar-On describes the skills emotionally intelligent leaders use to bring out the best in people. These leaders:

- Appreciate how others feel and relate with them cooperatively
- Manage activities and the emotions generated by change
- Adapt behaviors and environment to support change
- Solve problems to generate a positive outcome

A student, who attended an Emotional Intelligence for Leaders workshop I taught, shared a workplace EI success story with me. I deeply appreciate this story because it demonstrates the immediate business impact that can be realized when EI is practiced in the workplace. He told me that he planned to fire his administrative assistant the day after he attended the EI workshop. Although she had many fine qualities, she simply did not "get" the urgency of their business. He told me one of his learning points from the workshop was that people handle stress differently. With this in mind, he decided to hold off on the dismissal and observe her for a week. By week's end, he realized while he was getting excited over a stressful situation, she calmly went back to her desk and notified the person who could resolve the issue. By the time he had calmed down, the problem was being resolved. When he saw the value she brought to his company, instead of firing her, he gave her a raise.

Part of the challenge in recognizing the impact Emotionally Intelligent leaders bring to a workplace stem from the reward systems that measure a manager's excellence. These measurements are often, if not always, based on specific metrics rather than leadership capabilities that drive both productivity and retention metrics. Sales organizations measure revenue quotas. Software development measure the quantity and quality of code. Operations measure production costs. There is not a simple metric that maps collaborative abilities (communications, problem solving, and team building) to a designated success criterion. Intangible EI concepts are difficult to measure, but possible.

Measuring Emotional Intelligence

Reuven Bar-On based his research on the question, "Why do some people do well in life while others do not, irrespective of how cognitively intelligent they are?" His research found Intelligence Quotient (IQ) scores helpful when predicting academic success; however, these scores were a poor predictor of how

well people succeed once they leave school. Bar-On's research became focused on defining a *human performance formula* that would be a strong predictor of how well people build relationships and react to daily challenges.

Bar-On's EQ-i® 2.0 human performance formula was developed over a period of 17 years using a rigorous psychometric approach that is used by behavioral scientists to identify and measure human behaviors. The scientific rigor required by the research process assures the results are consistent and free from bias and addresses a multi-cultural, global workforce. The EQ-i model is the culmination of this research and was the first EI measure to be peer reviewed and commercially available.

The current EQ-i® 2.0 model identifies 15 human performance factors that are sorted into five categories: Self-Perception, Self-Expression, Interpersonal, Stress Management, and Decision Making. The human performance factors that comprise Bar-On's EQ-i® 2.0 model are listed in Table 1-1.

Self-Perception	Self-Regard Self-Actualization Emotional Self-Awareness
Self-Expression	Emotional Expression Assertiveness Independence
Interpersonal	Interpersonal Relationships Empathy Social Responsibility
Decision-Making	Problem Solving Reality Testing Impulse Control
Stress Management	Flexibility Stress Tolerance Optimism

Table 1-1

The report delivered to the EQ-i® 2.0 certified coach provides visual scoring feedback via a color-coded bar chart for each of the 15 performance factors along with an in-depth analysis. It is important to remember the scores do not correlate with a traditional academic grading system. These scores identify how a person's behavior compares to others who have been assessed using this methodology. The score assigned to each of the 15 performance factors reflect the relative range compared to that of the benchmarked population.

As a coach, I wanted to be able to provide a visual comparison that could help my clients better understand how the relative ranges between the 15 performance factors related to them and their specific work environment. The visual I found most helpful uses the normal curve to reflect an individual data point and the spatial relationship it has with the other 14 performance factors. This graphic

illustrates an individual's EI profile and allows them to recognize how one human performance factor can impact another.

Diagram 1-1 offers an introductory overview to the methodology I use to interpret an individual's EI profile. Transforming the bar chart results to the normal curve format, the mean score is defined as 100. The raw scores (55-145) along the X-axis of the diagram below do not correlate to specific linear values such as traditional academic grading. They measure the relative relationship of an individual behavior as compared with a larger population group. A performance factor score of 100 (the mean) recognizes that a person performs that behavior at level that is higher than 50% of the population and 50% of the population performs at a higher level than they do. For example, a score of 87 does not measure a "B" grade performance. The 87 score identifies that the individual's performance for that factor falls within the midrange of the population.

The vertical lines on the graph identify the standard deviation intervals which interpret ranges for the different performance factors. The range spanning from 85 to 115 represents the largest portion of the assessed population's behavior and is referenced as the mid-range. Moving away from the mean, the next set of vertical lines (70-85 and 115-130) represent the behavior of 27% of the assessed population which fall within these higher and lower ranges. The third set of vertical lines (55-70 and 130-145) identify extreme behaviors of the assessed population.

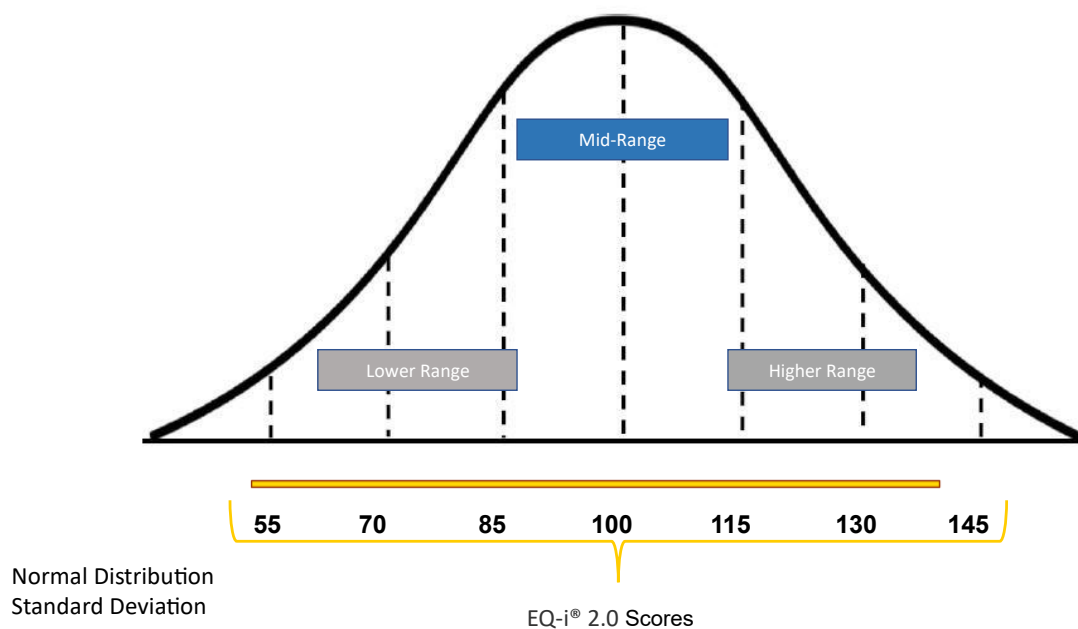


Diagram 1-1

When interpreting the EQ-i® 2.0 results, it is important to remember that the 15 different performance factors work in tandem with each other. A score in the lower range does not necessarily identify poor performance just as a score in the high range does not guarantee success. It is a matter of balance

among the different factors. The next section uses the EQ-i 2.0 framework to discuss three business scenarios and the impact EI can have in the workplace.

Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

The following four scenarios illustrate how performance data provided by the EQ-i® 2.0 assessment scores set an Emotional Intelligence baseline that can be used to measure (1) professional development progress, (2) team dynamics, and (3) position success factors. These four examples describe my work with coaching clients. Their names have been changed for privacy purposes. The interpretations for the scenarios are at a very high level and do not fully unpack a detailed analysis. These scenarios show how the EQ-i® 2.0 tools can be used within an organization to increase managerial effectiveness and improve team engagement.

Scenario 1: Professional Development

The EQ-i® 2.0 Emotional Intelligence assessment can be used by coaches to identify a person's professional performance strengths and performance factors that could be better developed. For example, Malik is a highly skilled, high performing engineer who was promoted to a management position. The company leadership promoted him because they saw his potential. However, Malik lacked confidence and I was asked to work with him to develop skills that would equip him to be successful in his new position.

Malik's October 2021 EQ-i® 2.0 assessment results (shown by the green squares) identified his strong performance factors (e.g. Optimism, Flexibility, Social Responsibility and Self-Expression) and his less developed performance factors (e.g. Self-Regard and Assertiveness). Essentially Malik was a strong team leader with excellent communication skills, but his low confidence held him back. Reviewing the results, we discussed his professional development goals and a path to help him achieve them.

Our first round of sessions focused on communications with his manager and colleagues in other departments. When we began discussing how he could build relationships with company executives, I knew it was time for Malik to take the assessment to measure his professional growth. The results of the second assessment (shown by the brown squares) identified how his newly found confidence pushed the other performance factors forward. The following two diagrams map Malik's growth over the five months. The sole purpose for Diagram 2-1 is to illustrate Malik's overall progress which is seen by the significant to the shift to the right.

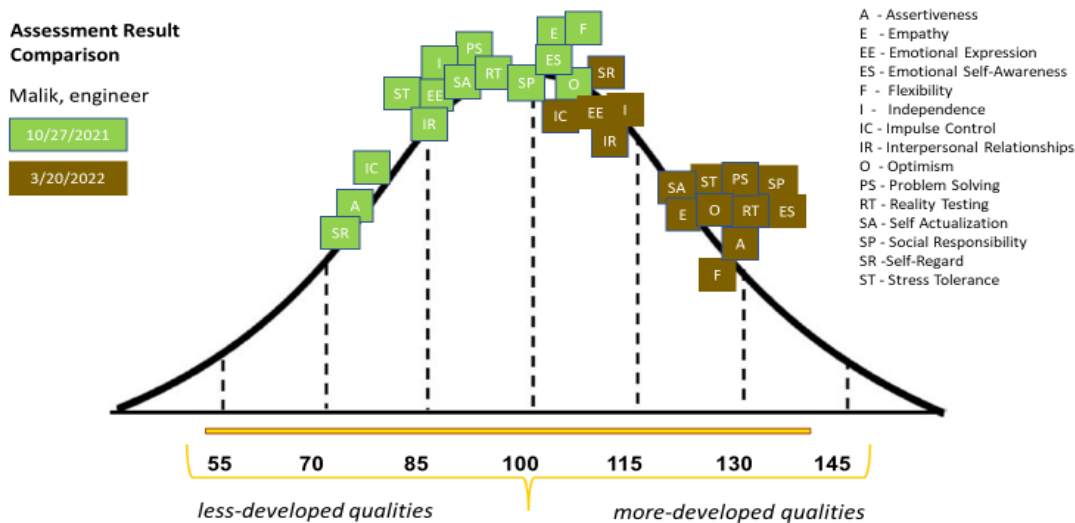


Diagram 2-1

Diagram 2-2 illustrates the enormity of Malik’s performance transformation for the Self-Regard and Assertiveness factors. His relative performance level for Assertiveness increased by 51 points to become his 2nd most well-developed performance factor. His Self-Regard factor increased by 32 points. Some people may look at the 29 point difference between these two factors and consider this a negative; however, this differential has a positive impact on Malik’s working style. When the Assertiveness factor score exceeds 130, it can infer aggressive behavior. In this instance, the relative distance between these two data points provides a level of humility that keeps Malik’s newfound assertiveness from crossing the border and showing up as aggressive behavior. Essentially, these two performance factors work in balance with each other.

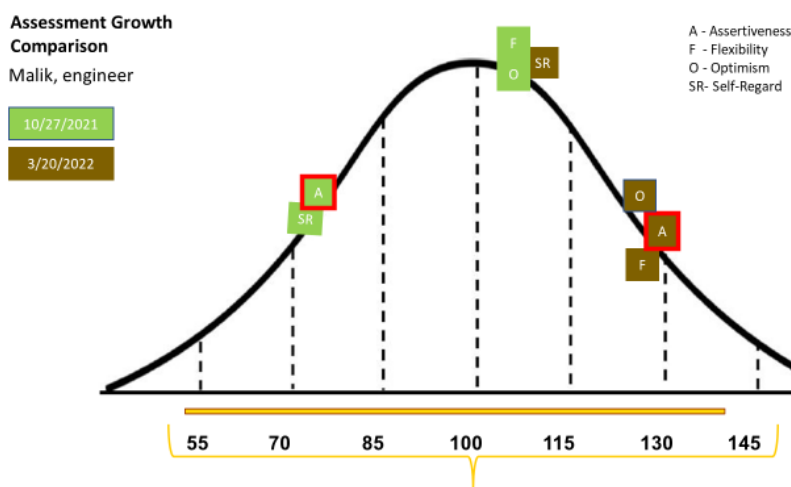


Diagram 2-2

Scenario 2: More Effective Problem Solving Colleagues

The EQ-i[®] 2.0 Emotional Intelligence assessment can be used by colleagues to develop strategies to create stronger working relationships. This second scenario involves Annette, a start-up restaurant owner, and Tom, the head chef and business partner. When restaurant operations are running smoothly, they have a strong business partner relationship. When a stressful situation occurs such as a pipe bursting, a key employee quitting, or the freezer breaking, their strong working relationship suddenly disappears. Since stressful situations are a regular occurrence in the restaurant, this friction needed to be addressed.

Diagram 2-3 provides a comparison of Annette and Tom's EQ-i[®] 2.0 assessment results. The orange squares represent Annette's most and least developed performance factors. The blue squares represent Tom's most and least developed performance factors. The polarity of each of their strongest skills and weakest skills summarizes their communication conflict story.

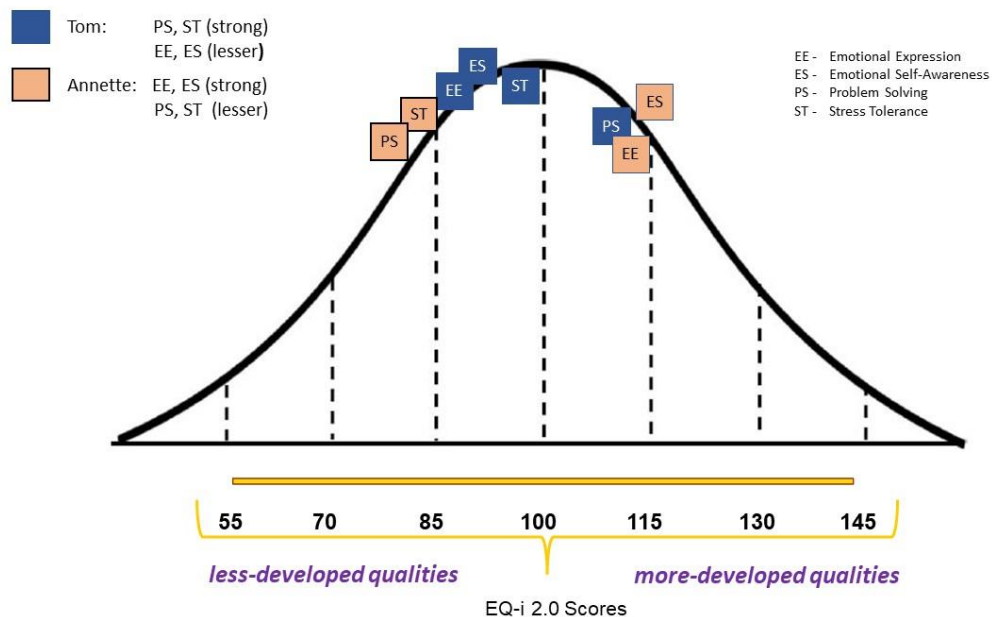


Diagram 2-3

Annette's Emotional Self-Awareness and Emotional Expression performance factors reflect her strong communication abilities. She has relatively low levels for the Stress Tolerance and Problem Solving performance factors. When something happens to cause her stress, she literally freezes. She cannot and does not solve the problem until she has been able to talk through different options with someone.

On the other hand, Tom is a problem solver and jumps into action to fix whatever needs fixing. He is not a strong communicator and does not see the need to discuss different solutions since he prefers to figure out how to fix it on his own. In fact, he physically avoids Annette when she wants to discuss a problem situation. Both are frustrated and feel the other is totally unreasonable.

When we met to discuss the EQ-i® 2.0 assessment results and their communication difficulties, they began to understand the source of their friction. We then began to discuss how they could adapt their work styles to be a more effective team. One strategy they discussed was training Annette to use the restaurant trouble tracking system that Tom and his assistant, Carlos, used to monitor the resolution of small and large problem situations. They also agreed on a priority level system that determined when an immediate conversation was needed, identified an alternate staff member who could assist with certain situations, and when the discussion could wait for another time. These new skills helped Tom and Annette address the day to day operations and the problems that will inevitably show up more effectively.

Scenario 3: More Effective Decision-Making Colleagues

Another example of when two colleagues were able to create stronger working relationships involves Robert and Peter. Robert is an entrepreneur who initiated an innovative business services company. As the start-up business began to grow, he hired Peter to run operations. They work well together. Robert creates opportunities and Peter makes them happen. Over the past few months small annoyances that both ignored have started to escalate. The crux of the friction: Robert believes Peter makes decisions too slowly and Peter believes Robert makes decisions too quickly.

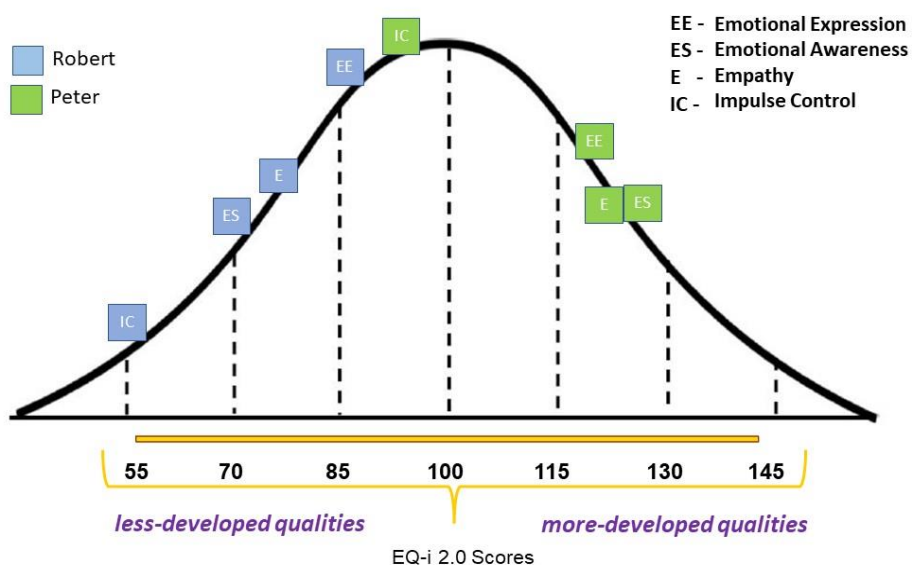


Diagram 2-4

Diagram 2-4 provides a comparison of Robert and Peter's EQ-i® 2.0 assessment results. The blue squares represent Robert's most and least developed performance factors. The green squares represent Peter's most and least developed performance factors. The polarity of each of their strongest skills and weakest skills summarizes their decision-making conflict story.

Robert's Impulse Control, Emotional Awareness, and Empathy performance factors reflect his laser focused ability to create and drive innovative ideas. He believes in the opportunities and is confident his entrepreneurial efforts can be executed successfully.

Peter's responsibilities include the people, schedules, and budgets needed to execute Robert's entrepreneurial ideas. His Empathy, Emotional Awareness, Emotional Expression, and Impulse Control performance factors reflect his abilities to engage and build rapport among the company's staff and business partners. Before making a decision, Peter must review how the company's staff will be impacted by the decision. If people can be adversely affected, Peter will hold off moving forward until he can adapt the plan to avoid any negative impact.

When we met to discuss the EQ-i® 2.0 assessment results and their different decision-making styles, they began to understand the source of their friction. We started our conversation by discussing specific situations that frustrated them. Peter recounted a time when Robert made a promise to win an account without considering the associated logistics. Robert shared a time when Peter got mired in the details of the deal that he didn't think should be discussed in front of the client.

Each realized they were not going to be able to change the other's inherent decision-making style. They also agreed that neither of them wanted to create conflict in front of the customer. Their joint desire to avoid disagreement during client meetings launched a brainstorming conversation on how they could let the other know when they were becoming frustrated with the direction the meeting was taking. Their solution was to create a code phrase that would alert the other that they had a concern without an indication of conflict. The person speaking could transition the conversation or call a brief side bar. Our conversation provided Robert and Peter the opportunity to recognize how their different work styles complement each other; as well as new skills to discuss possible solutions to minimize frictions that might arise.

Scenario 4: Position Success Factors

The EQ-i® 2.0 assessment process also can be used to assist with hiring procedures to assure the right person is being hired for the right position. Diagram 2-5 illustrates how the EQ-i® 2.0 assessment can be used to identify performance traits that make a person successful for one role and might prove challenging as they take on a different role.

Keiko is a highly successful architect who has recently taken on leadership responsibilities. One of the teams she manages had a difficult time working with her. From Keiko's perspective, this second group did not meet her stringent work ethic or technical expectations. She did not believe it was her role to motivate them because they should know what she expects. Several of these team members explicitly complained about her management style and cited her as the reason for their resignation. The architectural firm wanted to help Keiko become a more effective manager and asked me to work with her to improve her relationship building and communication skills.

Keiko's EQ-i[®] 2.0 assessment results were reviewed and interpreted through the dual context of an architect as well as a leader. Her most well developed performance factor is Impulse Control. Her least developed factor is Flexibility. As an architect, she can't make rash decisions or deviate even slightly from established building standards. If she makes a mistake, a major disaster could happen because the building was structurally unsound. Her architectural expertise is based on her ability to be precise.

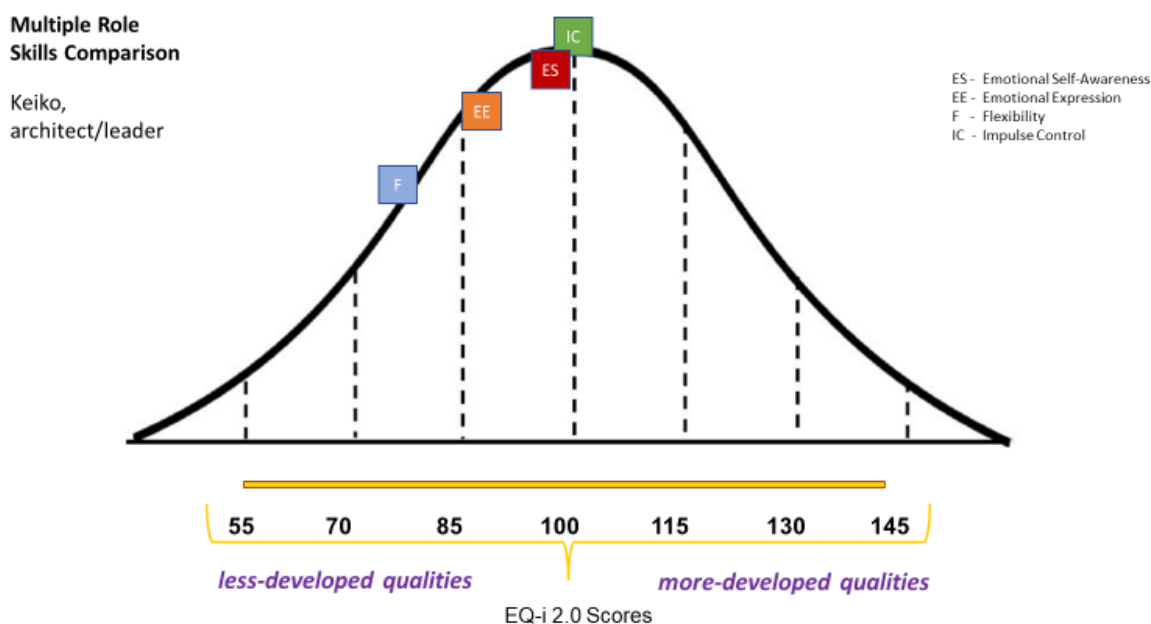


Diagram 2-5

Flipping the lens to interpret her leadership style, the performance factors that made her an expert architect hinder her ability to build relationships and work with people who communicate differently than she does. Keiko's Emotional Self-Awareness performance factor identifies the clarity with which she perceives her expectations for herself and others. The lower score for the Emotional Expression performance factor limits her ability to express these expectations or initiate difficult conversations with the teams who report to her.

Based on her well-developed Impulse Control performance factor, she did not always communicate in a timely manner because of her desire to choose her words carefully. This leads to a negative cycle where,

while Keiko is trying to find the right words to communicate her message, her team continues working without her counsel and the outcome does not meet her expectations. Keiko then becomes angry, criticizes the team, and often takes the work to do herself so it can be done “right.” The team is demoralized. Although Keiko has the best of intentions, she does not recognize the team’s need for her to clarify her expectations and provide interim check-ins to help them stay on track.

Her rigidity regarding building codes and standards that make her a successful architect does not help her provide appropriate support and counsel for the project teams who report to her. Her low Flexibility score hinders her effectiveness as a leader.

During our work together, we discussed specific workplace situations and explored alternative methods Keiko could use to better communicate with her staff. She learned to pause and assess the role she needed to play. She acquired skills to frame her message so that it was received (heard) as she intended. Her teams better understood her expectations and are able to deliver high quality work together.

Summary

Emotionally Intelligent leaders bring out the best in people as they adapt behaviors and procedures to solve problems and support change efforts. As the previous four scenarios illustrate, Emotional Intelligence is not a one-size fits all solution. Malik found his voice to actively join leadership conversations. Annette and Tom continue to balance their different stress management and problem solving styles. Robert and Peter are working to balance their different decision-making styles and enable positive company growth. Finally, Keiko is working to build stronger project teams by finding more effective ways to communicate with people who think differently than she does.

Managing people is much harder than it looks from the perspective of “not-yet managers.” Technical expertise does not guarantee or prevent leadership success. The process of becoming an Emotionally Intelligent leader begins by paying attention to situations and the people involved before leaping into action. New leaders who pause to learn and to practice will be able to measure their progress using actual business metrics such as improved personal performance, better employee engagement, and increased retention rates.

About the Author

Susan Schwartz is a leadership and management coach who transforms expert professionals into excellent leaders. She takes a practical Emotionally Intelligent approach to equip professional experts with tools to build cohesive, collaborative, and happy teams. Her passion is fostering inclusive workplaces that encourage people to bring their full human-being to work.

She's led global teams and coached professionals to their next career level for more than 20 years. Her Expert To Excellence® programs are designed to help knowledge experts make sense of intangible leadership concepts and equip them to create tangible action plans.

Susan published *Creating a Greater Whole: A Project Manager's Guide to Becoming a Leader*, which unlocks the not-so-secret secrets of how aspiring managers can become strong leaders. She is an adjunct instructor at several universities and a guest lecturer at Georgetown University.

Contact: Susan@riverbirchgroup.com
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/susangschwartz/>
<http://experttoexcellence.me>

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