



That successful feeling

A high IQ is good – but a high EQ could be even better.

In his 1995 book on emotional intelligence, Dr. Daniel Goleman popularised the idea that human competencies like self-awareness, self-discipline, persistence and empathy are of greater consequence than IQ.

“A high IQ may secure you a place at college or university, but it is not a predictor of how well you will perform academically or professionally,” says Sussex University graduate researcher Clara Strauss. “IQ measures spatial and verbal skills, but it doesn't take into account factors such as motivation and optimism. It's these variants that can make a difference to academic or career success.”

Stress counsellor Rodney Stoddart agrees. “However good the paper qualifications, they may not translate into commercial success,” he says. “Back in the 1950s, 80 graduate students at Berkeley University underwent a huge number of personality tests, IQ tests and interviews. Forty years later, researchers managed to get hold of most of them and evaluate their achievements. They found that social and emotional competence had been around four times as important as IQ in determining their professional success.”

People with a high EQ are said to be more innovative, flexible and creative, and better able to anticipate and solve problems. They're also more aware of how they're feeling, how those around them are feeling, and what is the most appropriate response.

“Many people are totally out of touch with their emotions,” says Stoddart. “They may have trouble expressing them, or even recognising them in the first place. That makes it just about impossible to manage them effectively. Not only can this affect their professional lives, it can lead to stress and all of its symptoms - poor health, insomnia, relationship problems, aggression, problems with alcohol and more.”

Passing on the message

Stoddart helps individuals and people in businesses of all sizes to develop their EQ. His EQ-up program (www.eq-up.com) consists of eight 90-minute sessions covering a range of topics such as positive emotional control, creativity, dealing effectively with fears and fulfilling personal potential. One of his clients, Jill Chivers, who is

managing director of The Corporate Compass (www.thecorporatecompass.com.au), found that the program had an unexpected impact on her own business as a corporate communicator, trainer and change agent.

"I was really impressed by the insights I gained," she says. "I was particularly interested in developing my intuition and creativity and, shortly after completing the course, I had an idea for a completely new approach to a standard program I run using the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI).

"I realised that many of the traditional approaches to training, and the MBTI in particular, are very head based. When they walk out of a workshop, the most meaningful tool many people take with them is their workbook, and that doesn't really translate into the confidence to use the techniques they've just learned. It's like the difference between IQ and EQ; it's much more powerful to experience something than just be told about it. My Advanced Influencing program grew out of that – it's designed to get straight to the experience."

Chivers was impressed enough to incorporate module one of Stoddart's EQ-up into her program. After successfully trialling the new approach in Sydney, her clients now include major corporations, banks and law firms all over Australia.

"The EQ component is a very different modality – it's always remarked on," she says. "Generally, it is very well accepted. And, in some cases, it really is a raving success!"

Improved performance

Emotional intelligence may sound like a soft option, but it has a backbone of hard evidence.

"All the signs point to the fact that a business which fosters emotional intelligence is more likely to thrive," says Stoddart. "For instance, people with high EQ are more likely to be motivated, proactive and optimistic; I don't think anyone would argue that those qualities make a big difference to performance."

Once again there is research to back the claim. In his work for Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, Martin Seligman found that new salesmen who were optimists sold 37 per cent more insurance in their first two years than pessimists. When, as part of the experiment, people were hired who failed in the normal screening process but scored high on optimism, they outsold the pessimists by 21 per cent in their first year and 57 per cent in the second.

A girl thing?

It is used to be common thinking that women are too emotional to be good leaders. However, a growing number of studies show that people who rise to the top of their field don't function on cold, logical reason alone. In fact, leadership research tells us that proper understanding and use of emotions can be critical in helping workers

become more effective and better communicators. So does that mean women are better at running a business after all?

Psychologist Steven Stein says there are, indeed, gender differences in emotional intelligence. After assessing 4,500 men and 3,200 women, he found that women score higher than men on measures of empathy and social responsibility, but men outperform women in stress tolerance and self-confidence. In other words, women and men are equally as intelligent emotionally, they're just strong in different areas.

Breakout box

The Business Case for Emotional Intelligence

On his EQ Consortium website, Cary Cherniss builds a case for the impact EQ has on the bottom line. These are some of the examples.

- 1) The US Air Force found that the most successful recruiters scored significantly higher in five emotional intelligence competencies including happiness and empathy.
- 2) At L'Oreal, sales agents selected by EQ significantly outsold those selected using traditional procedures.
- 3) The Center for Creative Leadership found that the primary causes for executive derailment involve deficits in emotional competence.
- 4) An analysis of more than 300 top-level executives from fifteen global companies showed that six emotional competencies distinguished the stars from the average.
- 5) After supervisors in a manufacturing plant received training in emotional competencies such as how to listen better and help employees resolve problems, lost-time accidents decreased by 50 per cent.