

Emotional Intelligence #3

A business is as successful as the strength of all its parts. Most likely your most important parts are your employees. Successful employees can be identified by taking a look at their level of emotional intelligence.

The Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence (EI) in organizations published the Emotional Intelligence Framework. Comprised of Personal Competence and Social Competence, the framework delineates ways to identify workers who possess the ability to manage emotions intelligently.

Skill sets of employees who possess Personal Competence comprising of self-awareness, self-regulation and self-motivation have been presented in the prior two EI articles.

This, the third and final article in the series on emotional Intelligence, will examine the final trait of the EI Framework, Social Competence. Social Competence is comprised of Social Awareness and Social Skills.

Social Awareness can be broken down into five components: empathy, service orientation, developing others, leveraging diversity and political awareness.

Employees who possess empathy, the ability to sense others feelings and perspective, are attentive to emotional cues and listen well. Employees demonstrate service orientation by seeking ways to increase customers' satisfaction and they gladly offer appropriate assistance.

When an employee in a managerial position offers useful feedback and assignments that challenge a person's skill, they are sensing what others need in order to develop. They are developing others.

Employees with the ability to respect and relate well to people from varied backgrounds are said to leverage diversity. They challenge bias and intolerance and see diversity as an opportunity.

Political awareness is the last of the Social Awareness skills. Employees with political awareness are able to understand the forces that shape views and actions of clients, customers, or competitor.

Social skills are identified through skills in influence, communication, leadership, change catalyst, conflict management, building bonds, collaboration, and team capabilities.

The ability to influence is exhibited through an employee's ability to persuade and to build consensus among members of a group. Linked to the ability to influence is the ability for effective communication. Employees with this competence deal with difficult issues straightforwardly, foster open communication and stay receptive to bad news as well as good.

Leadership in any work environment is necessary for the success of a company. People exhibit effective leadership through their ability to articulate and arouse enthusiasm for a shared vision and most importantly, they lead by example.

An employee who can be identified as a change catalyst will recognize the need for change and remove barriers, they will champion the change and enlist others in its pursuit and they will also model the change expected of others.

Emotional Intelligence is also demonstrated through effective conflict management. They can handle difficult people and tense situations with diplomacy and tact. They have the ability to orchestrate a win-win solution.

Cohesiveness in a work environment is strengthened through relationship building. Employees, who are capable of building bonds, work to build rapport and keep others in the loop. They cultivate and maintain extensive informal networks.

Collaboration and cooperation are demonstrated through employees who work with others toward shared goals. They share plans, information and resources. They also identify and nurture opportunities for collaboration. Effective collaboration will serve to strengthen work team capabilities. Teams led by persons with this competence are able to draw all members into active and

enthusiastic participation. They not only protect the group and its reputation but they share the credit as well.

Identifying the Emotional Intelligence of your employees will enable you, the business owner, to identify areas of strength and weaknesses in your employee base. The Small Business Development Center is prepared to offer guidance in your quest. Please contact us.

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