

SKILL BOOSTER 6: HOW TO SHARPEN YOUR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE



REIGNITE DEVELOPMENT
Reflect, Refocus, Results

What is Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional intelligence (EI) can be characterised as a set of skills and competencies – such as initiative, empathy, trust-building and personal discipline – that affect an individual's ability to cope under different pressures and circumstances. In a work context, this could mean knowing when to share a joke with colleagues, or speak out in a meeting, or the ability to handle an indecisive manager.

Why is it so important?

Emotional intelligence is increasingly being regarded as a valuable people skill that distinguishes the top-performers from average performers.

“People respond well to those they respect and trust, and this is why it is important to realise EI is not just about ‘being nice’ – it is also about achieving superior business outcomes.

A typical example of the 5 building blocks of Emotional Intelligence can be found below:

Emotional Intelligence Domains and Competencies

SELF-AWARENESS	SELF-MANAGEMENT	SOCIAL AWARENESS	RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT
Emotional self-awareness	Emotional self-control	Empathy	Influence
	Adaptability		Coach and mentor
	Achievement orientation		Conflict management
	Positive outlook	Organizational awareness	Teamwork
			Inspirational leadership

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Where do I start?

While a great deal of EI is essentially common sense, the best way to get a detailed picture is to read up on the theories. There is no shortage of thinkers or research to use as entry points.

The term was coined by US academic psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer in 1990, but it was Daniel Goleman who popularised it with his international bestseller *Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can Matter More Than IQ*. His second book, *Working with Emotional Intelligence* – which focused on the importance of EI in the workplace – is largely responsible for placing it on the corporate agenda.

Learn more about yourself

Sharpening your emotional intelligence quotient (EQ) involves both an understanding of your own ambitions and sensitivities and the viewpoints of others, so it is necessary to have your emotional intelligence assessed. There are many websites that offer free interactive EQ testing, and although some are little more than straightforward personality tests, the better ones should help to improve your awareness. Google ‘free EI assessments or questionnaires’.

Seek as much objective feedback as possible

Frank and impartial feedback is a key element of understanding how you are seen by others, and heightening self-perception. If you are open in seeking a broad range of opinions, you will have a good idea of the ways in which you need to raise your EI.

If you only do 5 things:

- Read up on EI theories
- Assess your own EQ
- Get feedback to validate your assessment
- Become self-aware and focus on raising your relationships with others
- Take responsibility for your own behaviour