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### The Use of Emotional Intelligence in 21st Century Organizations

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The Use of Emotional Intelligence in 21st Century Organizations

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Submitted in Partial Completion of the  
Requirements for Departmental Honors in Management

Bridgewater State University

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## Abstract

Emotional intelligence is an increasingly growing trend throughout businesses, and is extremely beneficial to the hiring process in particular. It can be defined as the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, and use the information to guide one's thinking and actions. This knowledge will help obtain better hires and ultimately strengthen the development of employees. It's also an important factor for managers and all employees to have exposure to. Increasing emotional intelligence not only benefits the employee, but their co-workers, customers, and the business as a whole. By now seeing EQ (emotional quotient, or emotional intelligence) on the same level as IQ, people are able to have more positive social interactions. If employees are able to recognize their potential, they will provide an advantage to their company. This paper will discuss what emotional intelligence is, the uses of it throughout businesses, how it is used during the hiring process and post-hire, how and when it should be measured, and other current trends.

## Introduction

The hiring process is rapidly evolving, especially as a new generation of employees enters the workforce. Today's recruitment often consists of "selling" the job to candidates and convincing them why they should join the company. Retaining employees is also much more difficult, as employees demand more than ever from their workplace. The use of emotional intelligence will increase the efficiency of the hiring process, and also maintain the development of an organization's employees.

Emotional intelligence is particularly important for a leader to possess. Along with technical ability and IQ, emotional intelligence is a large factor in what makes a successful

leader. Luckily, it is something that can be learned. Those who work with a leader that has a strong emotional intelligence have the opportunity of being exposed to it. As the face of the workforce changes, leaders need to be emotionally intelligent so they are equipped to collaborate effectively with anyone and set that example for others.

There are several areas that emotional intelligence impacts, such as performance, workplace culture, diversity and inclusion, and even technology advancements. Understanding these effects can put its capabilities into perspective for organizations who utilize it, or need insight on best practices. Increasing the awareness of emotional intelligence can spark an interest in others to improve their levels. This gives the organization a competitive advantage in a highly saturated market.

### Definition

Defining the term “emotions” can come with many opposing views. But overall, emotions are an organized response that typically arise after an event occurs that has either a positive or negative meaning for the individual. The organized response of emotions has the ability to transform into personal and social interactions and become a beneficial experience for individuals. Intelligence can be defined as the capacity of an individual to act purposefully, think rationally, and deal effectively with their environment. Models of intelligence are more organized groups of mental abilities, one of which would include emotional intelligence. It is believed that emotional intelligence may be correlated to other types of intelligence, such as social intelligence. (Salovey & Mayer, pg 185-187)

Social intelligence is defined as “the ability to understand and manage people,” but can also be applied inward. This would then include the ability to understand and manage oneself,

which is where this concept overlaps with emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is described as a subset of social intelligence. It involves the “ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions.” Another model of intelligence closely related to social intelligence, is known as personal intelligence. This includes knowledge about oneself and about others, and the ability to draw upon feelings by understanding them and allowing them to guide one’s behavior, which is a very close representation to what emotional intelligence entails. (Salovey & Mayer, pg 189)

Emotional intelligence is made up of five components, which include self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill. The first three components are all self-management skills, whereas the last two components concern the ability to manage relationships with others. Self-awareness consists of an understanding of oneself’s emotions, strengths, weaknesses, needs, and drives. Those who have a strong self-awareness are honest with themselves, and are balanced between being hopeful and critical. Those people are extremely aware of how their feelings affect not only themselves, but their peers and job performance as well. They are able to predict how a future situation may impact them so they can prepare their actions, and are also very sure of their goals and the direction they are heading in. Someone who has strong self-awareness is conscious of their capabilities and won’t set themselves up for failure, and know when they need to ask for help. The risks that they take are calculated, and they tend to play on their strengths. (Goleman, pg 95-96)

Self-regulation is the ability to control or redirect one’s impulses and think before acting. It’s an extremely beneficial tool to be able to control emotional impulses and channel them in a useful way. Those who have strong self-regulation are reasonable, and able to create a trusting

and fair environment. An important component for the workplace, is that people with a strong self-regulation are more comfortable with change. They look to new information as a learning opportunity and look at the bigger picture as they move forward. When this quality is seen within a leader, it truly sets the tone for their subordinates and creates a team of forward-thinkers.

(Goleman, pg 98-99)

Motivation can be defined as the tendency to pursue goals with energy and persistence, and a passion to work for reasons deeper than money or status. Those with high levels of motivation are prompted by the drive to achieve rather than any rewards, and take pride in surpassing all expectations. People who share a strong sense of motivation tend to seek out creative challenges and love learning new things. They seek out new approaches at work, which is an important characteristic for a team to have. This ensures that the team remains current amongst its competitors and continues to raise the performance bar. A highly motivated person continues to show optimism, even when the going gets tough. Having this characteristic allows someone to create opportunities from any situation, especially the negative ones, which can enable a team to be future-oriented. (Goleman, pg 99-100)

Empathy is the ability to understand the emotions that another person is feeling, and considering those emotions when interacting with them. As a leader, having empathy means that they are thoughtful of employees' feelings amongst other factors when making decisions. Having empathy is a particularly important factor to have, for a few reasons. These reasons include the increase of collaboration, rapid pace of globalization, and the growing need to retain talent. All three reasons go hand-in-hand with one another. When a team of various personalities works together, there are bound to be conflicting opinions. A leader who understands everyone's feelings is able to work towards a solution that makes everyone happy. (Goleman, pg 99-100)

The rise of globalization has made collaborating more important than ever. People all over the world, with different backgrounds and beliefs, are communicating constantly trying to work towards a common goal. It's crucial that these people are led by someone who can understand the cross-cultural dialogue. Lastly, the need to retain talent is greater than ever as a new generation is introduced to the workforce. This younger generation of employees tend to need much more from their place of employment than ever before, meaning that acquiring a mentor/coach can be quite effective. Building this type of relationship opens the door for useful and honest feedback, and a sense for how that employee works best. When employees have opportunities for work all across the world, the chances are higher for losing top talent. Therefore, it's important for employees to feel like they are understood and heard. (Goleman, pg 100-101)

The last component that makes up emotional intelligence is social skill. Social skill can be defined as the proficiency in managing relationships, building networks, and finding common ground with others. In simple terms, it can be described as friendliness with a purpose. Socially skilled people have a wide circle of acquaintances, as they tend to follow their instinct to find common ground amongst many different people. This component plays upon the other dimensions of emotional intelligence. Socially skilled people are able to succeed at maintaining relationships because of their ability to recognize and control their own emotions, and empathize with the emotions of others. They also utilize the component of motivation as they spread their passion amongst their organization. It's crucial for a leader to be socially skilled and play on their strengths of maintaining their relationships, as they rely on others to get work done. (Goleman, pg 101-102)

The structure of emotional intelligence did not always exist this way, made up of five components. This concept developed over quite a bit of time, involving the work of various psychologists, researchers, and educators. One of the challenges they faced was constructing questions that could measure the criteria. Identifying five components of the concept helped build upon the original findings.

### History

The term “emotional intelligence” wasn’t first established until 1990, however the ideas of multiple intelligences were explored beforehand. In the 1920s, Edward Thorndike started the discussions around social intelligence. Following this, David Wechsler identified the importance of emotional factors throughout the 1940s. Wechsler was highly involved in IQ testing, and urged that “non-intellective aspects of general intelligence” be included in any full measurements. He believed that emotional and social intelligence would provide critical details to an overall view. (Stein and Book, pg 14)

Only a few other psychologists and educators explored this idea before 1990, including Albert Ellis and Howard Gardner. In 1955, Ellis explored something called Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy, which was a process that consisted of people being taught how to study their own emotions in a thoughtful way. In 1983, Gardner studied multiple intelligences, and the capacity for introspection. Following the development of the phrase “emotional quotient” or EQ, was the official creation of the term “emotional intelligence” by John Mayer and Peter Salovey. They expanded on Gardner’s work and developed a formal definition of the term, and later worked with David Caruso to create an ability-based test. This ability-based test provides a different perspective than the self-reporting based tests. (Stein and Book, pg 15)

Psychologist Reuven Bar-On created one of the most popular self-reporting based tests, known as the Bar-On EQ-i. His approach to emotional intelligence was more comprehensive than that of Mayer and Salovey. He researched factors of social and emotional functioning that assist people in improving their mental well-being. His testing method consisted of several categories which each have subcategories, captioning a wider view of their skills. (Fernández-Berrocal and Extremera, 2006)

Daniel Goleman was a psychologist who brought a lot of attention to the idea of emotional intelligence with his first book in 1995. He created a model based on one of his theories that predicted effectiveness and outcomes in the workplace. Goleman believed that each dimension of emotional intelligence was the basis in developing other competencies needed in a work environment. Overall, there are many variations of theories regarding emotional intelligence, and all of them have helped it develop into today's tool. (Fernández-Berrocal and Extremera, 2006)

### Measuring Emotional Intelligence

There are a few classifications used when measuring emotional intelligence, known as the three EI "streams." Stream 1, also known as ability EI, measures factors related to an individual's conceptual understanding of emotions. Stream 2, also known as trait EI, measures an individual's typical behaviors in emotion-related scenarios and also self-rated abilities. Stream 3, also known as mixed EI, includes a mixture of personality and behavioral items. Mixed EI refers to measures that encompass a combination of traits, social skills and competencies that overlap with other personality components. (O'Connor et al)

Tests that measure ability EI tend to utilize questions that are comparable to those on IQ tests. These types of questions require the participant to solve emotion-related problems that have answers deemed to be correct or incorrect. For example, a question might ask the participant to identify emotions typically felt during a given situation. This can be a good indication of someone's understanding of emotions and how they work. Although they are a good predictor of one's ability to understand, these types of tests don't have the capacity to predict typical behavior and trait based measures. (O'Connor et al)

Trait based measures tend to use self-report items to measure overall EI. Those who measure high in trait EI are found to be competent at managing and regulating emotions of their own and others. These types of tests are also a good prediction of actual behavior in a wide variety of situations. It is believed that trait EI corresponds with a range of work attitudes like job satisfaction and commitment to the organization. The trait EI tests differ a great amount from ability EI tests because they assess how an individual performs on a daily basis, rather than when the individual is at their best. (O'Connor et al)

Tests that measure trait EI can be biased since people tend to have a favorable perception of their own intelligence. It's believed that those who overestimate their EI, actually have a rather low EI since they lack the expertise needed to accurately solve the emotion-based problems. On the other hand, ability EI tests rely on questions and answers that are based on general consensus. A participant can't overestimate their EI in this case, because they either know the correct answer or don't know it. Since these tests measure the participant's knowledge and understanding of emotions, they are typically much more accurate than trying to measure trait EI. (Cote, 2014)

Measuring emotional intelligence can be helpful at any stage of one's career. Many companies use it as a tool amongst current employees, particularly teams, or potential candidates/future employees. When used, it can help employees communicate and solve problems more effectively. It's important for teams to have high levels of emotional intelligence because they are able to build relationships on trust and inspire one another. Teams and employees that experience these benefits are more likely to engage in the workplace, and the company will increase not only their success, but retention as well. (Markley, 2018)

One of the most popular tests that measures ability EI is the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) which was developed by Peter Salovey, John Mayer, and David Caruso in 2000. This test is recommended for recruitment/selection or any situation where an accurate and objective assessment of EI is helpful. The structure of the MSCEIT is based upon four branches/abilities, which include perceiving emotions, using emotions to facilitate thinking, understanding emotions, and managing emotions. Each branch is further measured through two subscales. (Fiori et al, 2014)

“Perceiving emotions” requires the participant to identify emotions by viewing facial expressions and other pictures. “Using emotions to facilitate thinking” has the participant evaluate how certain moods may impact the thinking process, or compare certain emotions with sensations like color, light, and temperature. “Understanding emotions” looks at the way emotions may blend or even develop and change. Lastly, “managing emotions” includes rating the best emotional strategy to manage one's emotions and also the most productive uses of emotions in interpersonal relationships. The MSCEIT went through quite a bit of development before reaching its current state, and the wide range of categories help justify its accuracy. (Fiori et al, 2014)

The trait EI tests can be biased and invalid, and would be put to better use when working with current employees. Participants trying to get hired by a company may overestimate their responses in order to give themselves a better chance. Results from these tests show a well-rounded snapshot of one's emotional intelligence and also the opportunities for development. This type of test could also be an indicator of the participant's mental health, which would shed light on opportunities for the company to improve the well-being of its employees.

These tests are also a great resource for the development of leaders and their abilities. Highly ranked leaders rarely receive direct feedback, and they tend to find their EI results revealing. It's easy for leaders to get caught up in the work, but as they are responsible for "leading" others, receiving an EI assessment can drive them to focus more on their people as well. Leaders might work on improving their emotional perception, or using their emotions to assist cognitive tasks more effectively. As they start to embrace their emotional impact at work, they are able to receive more from their team. (Langley, 2012)

One of the popular tests for trait EI is the Bar-On EQ-i which was first developed in 1997 by Dr. Reuven Bar-On. It contains 133 items formatted into short sentences that prompts the participant to rate themselves on a scale from 1-5. This self-report method works to measure typical behavior that provides an estimate of emotional intelligence. The individual responses are combined into a total score which is then compared against five composite scales that consist of 15 subscales. This test has a built-in correction factor that adjusts the scores based on the results from two of the test's validity components. This feature reduces the potential biased responses and overall increases the accuracy of results. (Bar-On, 2006)

With employees more aware and in control of their emotions, they are less stressed at work. Physical and mental well-being is increasingly becoming a more important component of

the workplace and work-life balance. Companies who are looking to attract more employees should leverage these strengths because candidates will look for an organization that invests in their talent. Organizations and business overall will see the benefit of investing in emotional intelligence for its employees, but the employees will see a positive impact on their personal lives as well.

### Relationship with Performance

As organizations operate in a knowledge-based economy, educational resources and development opportunities are more important than ever. This creates a continuous cycle of competition for many businesses trying to remain relevant. These businesses also face high demand from their environment and customers. Emotional intelligence is proven to have an influence on performance, particularly through knowledge sharing, conflict, and structure. Using this skill in various areas will provide an advantage for the company. (Zulfadil et al, 2019)

Knowledge management allows access to experience and knowledge which can create new capabilities and increase innovation. Employees who are enabled to be creative can provide more value to their organization and customers. Knowledge-sharing behavior is the process of giving/receiving knowledge, exchanging ideas to create new knowledge, and efforts from employees to improve performance or utilize innovation. Cooperation amongst teams is much more effective than work done by individuals, especially when that team has a leader with a high level of emotional intelligence. Leadership in teams can help motivate less assertive employees to step up and contribute to the group. Encouraging this type of behavior creates a learning organization, which is a crucial competency for a company to have in today's rapidly evolving and changing environment. (Zulfadil et al, 2019)

Emotional intelligence helps the development of goal setting and planning. Individuals with high levels of emotional intelligence are skilled at managing their emotions during stressful situations and can avoid making changes during negative events, and instead use the opportunities to set goals for the future. Emotional intelligence allows individuals to apply a focused approach to any task while anticipating which emotions may be experienced later on. Businesses who have employees with these skills are able to persevere during moments of downfall or success. (Zulfadil et al, 2019)

Studies show that emotional intelligence positively influences both team and individual performance. However, with emotional intelligence being composed of several branches, individual performance is impacted by some areas more than others. Laura Lam and Susan Kirby conducted a study into this topic by measuring the emotional intelligence, cognitive performance, and IQ of 304 undergraduate students. The participants also filled out a questionnaire regarding demographic characteristics. (Lam and Kirby, 2002)

The two researchers came up with four hypotheses prior to the study, which were as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Overall emotional intelligence contributes to individual cognitive-based performance over and above the level attributable to general intelligence, and the relationship is positive.

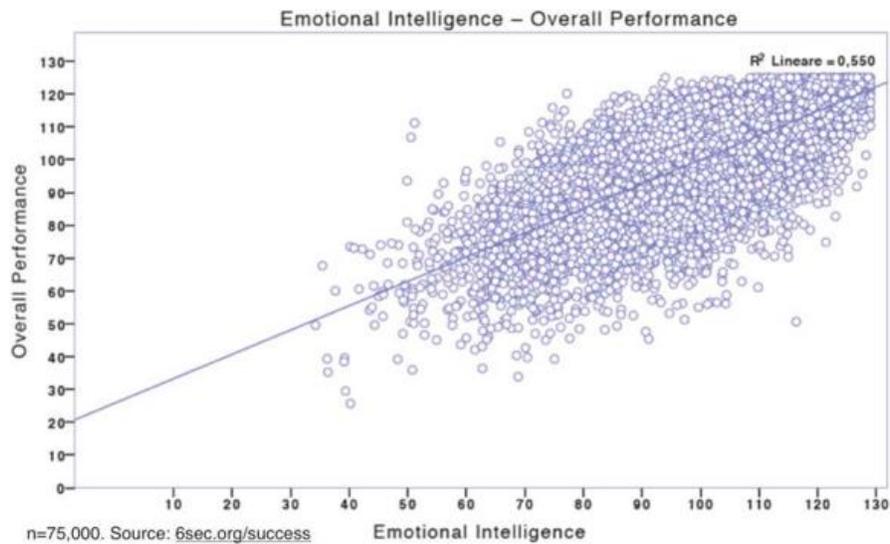
Hypothesis 2: Perceiving emotions contributes to individual cognitive-based performance over and above the level attributable to general intelligence, and the relationship is positive.

Hypothesis 3: Understanding emotions contributes to individual cognitive- based performance over and above the level attributable to general intelligence, and the relationship is positive.

Hypothesis 4: Regulating emotions contributes to individual cognitive-based performance over and above the level attributable to general intelligence, and the relationship is positive. (pg 135)

The results supported all hypotheses, except for hypothesis 3. This meant that understanding emotions had no impact on individual cognitive-based performance. Understanding emotions includes describing the resemblance of emotions in a given scenario. This ability to explain emotions and their connection to sensory experiences has little impact on one's ability to utilize emotions when performing cognitive tasks. General intelligence did make a significant impact on individual performance, but emotional intelligence provided additional positive impacts on performance. (Lam and Kirby, 2002)

Another study that was conducted by Joshua Freedman and Lorenzo Fariselli included 75,000 individuals who were primarily in the workforce. They analyzed this sample to identify any correlation between emotional intelligence scores and success scores. Their results showed that 55% of the variation in success scores was predicted by scores of emotional intelligence.



The success factor was made up of four components, which each had two sub-factors. The four components include effectiveness, relationships, well-being, and quality of life. Effectiveness is the capacity to generate results, and also includes the sub-factors of influence and decision making. Relationships is the ability to build and maintain networks, and includes the sub-factors of network and community. Well-being is the capacity to maintain optimal energy and functioning, and includes the sub-factors of balance and health. Lastly, quality of life is the ability to maintain balance and fulfillment, and includes the sub-factors of achievement and satisfaction. (Freedman and Fariselli, 2016)

Discovered from this study was that empathy was one of the more powerful competencies. Someone who has a high amount of empathy can form stronger bonds with others by listening to them and understanding their emotions better. Those who increase their empathy will also experience a better understanding of others at work, home, or even in their social life. Overall, the individual will feel better about life and gain a stronger network. Knowing that empathy plays a role in success confirms the idea that people need to connect with one another in order to succeed. (Freedman and Fariselli, 2016)

## Use of Emotional Intelligence in Hiring and Other Trends

There are several circumstances in which emotional intelligence can be useful and provide helpful insight. Amongst these circumstances is the hiring process, where this tool can help an organization gain top talent. Some other trends surrounding emotional intelligence are diversity and inclusion, globalization, and technology. Ultimately, it would be a great addition to any company's recruitment. However, it can be costly and time consuming, and might not be possible for all situations.

A company that is hiring for emotional intelligence means they are striving to create an environment where all employees can perform at their best. These employees will be capable of adapting to change, which is important in today's society. The success of an organization depends on the quality of interactions between people and how they motivate one another. Sometimes these factors are overlooked because it's easy to get caught up in the intellectual qualities of a candidate rather than looking at the bigger picture. A candidate may not have a prestigious degree, but could have the ideal skills and abilities to succeed in a job. This is why it's important for hiring managers and recruiters to consider a candidate's emotional intelligence when interviewing. (McKee, 2016)

There are a few important points to keep in mind when beginning to incorporate emotional intelligence into the hiring process. The first is to talk to references provided by the candidate. This gives the interviewer an opportunity to ask people who have worked with the candidate questions on how they tend to react in typical situations. The interviewer can also gain perspective on how the candidate works with other people or how they display EI competencies. (McKee, 2016)

Another way to gauge a candidate's emotional intelligence is to use behavioral interview questions. Asking a candidate directly about EI competencies can lead them to respond in a biased way based on what they think an ideal answer would sound like. During the interview, ask the candidate to pick a situation that they were successful in, and have them talk about what happened and how they thought or felt. Afterwards, ask them to repeat the same steps using a time they were unsuccessful. This allows the interviewer to hear about how the candidate thinks in situations that involve stress, challenges, and working with other people. The interviewer will get to see if the candidate is aware of their feelings and how they manage them. (McKee, 2016)

Emotional intelligence plays a large role in diversity and inclusion by bringing people together who are different in many ways. An inclusive environment must be created by a leader who is highly skilled in emotional intelligence. The perspectives of diverse people are greatly valued in this type of environment. Those who are self-aware have the ability to recognize their own biases, and those with strong social skills are able to act on their biases and make a point to connect with diverse employees to encourage their engagement. Having self-awareness helps one show empathy and understand barriers for minorities. (Sellie-Dosunmu, Meloney, 2016)

Globalization is much more prevalent in today's organizations, as they do business all over the world and communicate with people from all backgrounds. Social interactions are heavily influenced by culture, and social norms can differ immensely. Leaders need to especially understand the traditions and expectations of those they are working with. Self-regulation provides leaders with the skills necessary in adapting to other cultures. There is also a need for political awareness and demand for a certain level of collaboration when working in different cultures. (Sellie-Dosunmu, Meloney, 2016)

The increase in technology and social media use within businesses has weakened the emotional abilities of the workforce. Much of the work-related communication is done via email or other virtual tools. This means that people are missing out on face-to-face interactions, which can be essential for many conversations or meetings. Although this technology allows new ways to communicate, especially during a time of globalization, these messages can sometimes be misinterpreted and taken out of context. Tools that were designed to make people more efficient are succeeding at that, but making their connections less personal. (Sellie-Dosunmu, Meloney, 2016)

It is recommended that professionals practice mindfulness when dealing with technology, as it can often negatively affect emotional intelligence and distract people from communication. Those who practice mindfulness will pay attention to the present moment and not pass judgement. This technique helps to build self-awareness and social awareness. People also tend to say more offensive things when using technology because it is less confrontational. A good piece of advice is to wait before responding to a message that will trigger a strong emotional reaction. But those who can self-regulate are able to use technology to communicate effectively with little effort. (Sellie-Dosunmu, Meloney, 2016)

Employers who decide to invest in emotional intelligence for their workforce will find it to be worthwhile, as studies show it is possible for one's emotional intelligence to improve. A global organization conducted a study with 54 senior managers, made up 50% of men and 50% of women. The group completed a 30-hour training, spread out amongst seven weeks, and had their emotional intelligence evaluated before and after the training. There was also a follow-up evaluation completed one year after the training. A control group, who did not complete the training, had their emotional intelligence evaluated at the same times. The emotional intelligence

scores were evaluated by using mixed EI models and ability EI models. Results showed a stable emotional intelligence score for the control group, but a large increase for the experimental group after completing the training. (Gilar-Corbi et al, 2019)

As technology increases throughout the workplace and society continues to rapidly evolve, emotional intelligence is a great skill to leverage. Companies are looking more diverse than ever and require a deeper understanding of other cultures. A workplace that cares about and invests in emotional intelligence is an attractive company to work at for many potential candidates, and could even influence passive candidates to consider a new job. Work-life balance and a healthier work environment overall is never going to be the reason top talent turns down an opportunity.

### Recommendations

There is no “bad” practice for emotional intelligence. Those who are aware of their own and others’ emotions have the capability of communicating more effectively and solving problems efficiently. However, because it can be costly and time consuming, it’s important to use it for the right situations. Retention is also becoming more difficult as employees feel a lack in career development opportunities and feedback/recognition. If companies use a skill such as emotional intelligence to invest in and develop their employees, they will be more likely to stay at the organization.

A company that wants to start incorporating emotional intelligence into the workplace should start with simple behavioral interview questions when recruiting new employees. This is a free technique that can increase the quality of new hires and set the tone for an emotionally intelligent organization. Following up on the candidate’s references can be a good indicator as

well. The interviewer will have a chance to ask questions about the candidate's ability to work with others, and how they react in certain situations.

After implementing these methods into the hiring process, a company should start to evaluate the emotional intelligence of current employees. It may be put to best use when looking at teams or those in highly ranked/leadership positions. The organization can offer training on emotional intelligence to increase their employees' scores. Leaders have the most power on other employees and can help teach emotional intelligence just by acting as an example. Others will find it an important skill to learn if someone in power uses it. Employees who work for a leader with emotional intelligence tend to work better together, because the person managing them sees the bigger picture

Evaluating the emotional intelligence levels of a team can be extremely useful for deciding which areas are weaknesses and present as opportunities for improvement, or which areas are strengths and blend well together. Measuring these levels throughout a team can help strengthen future recruitment for positions on that team by highlighting which areas of emotional intelligence they need to find in a candidate. A leader can't fill in the gaps if they aren't aware of any holes.

Emotional intelligence has developed a great amount over many years, and proves to be more impactful as the world changes. This skill has many impacts on areas both inside and outside of the workplace. Although it may not be realistic for all organizations to use, there are simple ways to be mindful of its components. Increasing awareness of its ability can be beneficial enough to make the investment worthwhile.

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