

Return on Emotion

What is “emotional intelligence”?

Psychologists have been trying for years to define what intelligence is. Cognitive intelligence, which has traditionally been measured with IQ, attempts to indicate one’s capacity to understand, learn, recall, and solve problems.

Our understanding of intelligence evolved during the latter part of the 20th century to take into consideration certain aspects of intelligence that go beyond the cognitive components. The development of the BarOn model of emotional intelligence evolved from Dr. Reuven Bar-On’s early clinical experiences. Based on these experiences, he asked the question: Why are some individuals more able to succeed in life than others? After a thorough review of the factors thought to determine success in general, Dr. Bar-On found that predicting success is not always based on cognitive intelligence. Many cognitively intelligent people flounder in life, while many less cognitively intelligent individuals succeed and prosper.

Emotional intelligence addresses the emotional, personal, social, and survival dimensions of intelligence, which are often more important to successful coping with environmental demands and pressures than the more traditional cognitive aspects of intelligence. In everyday language, emotional intelligence is referred to as “street smarts” or “common sense” (Stein & Book, 2003). Emotional intelligence competencies can be improved through training, and thus, provide an excellent means of identifying potential areas for improvement, as well as measuring the effectiveness of individual and organizational development programs. Studies indicate that emotional intelligence accounts for 15-45% of work success, whereas cognitive intelligence has shown low and insignificant correlations with performance in the workplace (for example, Jae, J. H., 1997). *This means that the most intelligent or highly qualified person for a position may not have the emotional make up to handle the stresses of the job environment.*

Performance Measurement and Enhancement

Organizational challenges in the area of selection and retention include high turnover, training costs, and lost productivity. By measuring emotional intelligence skills, an organization determines the skill sets that are associated with high performance in specific roles within the organization. Such profiles help to make employee recruitment and selection more reliable and efficient by giving a critical perspective about the skills that potential applicants will need to perform their roles, based upon the skill sets associated with those who are currently successful. Screening candidates also provides a way to evaluate fit against organizational culture, resulting in increased potential for success and retention. Training and coaching become more effective, as they are targeted at emotional intelligence skills that are correlated with success, and employees can learn the specific skills they need to move along career paths. Employee functioning and well-being can be assessed to help people with work-related and personal problems that impact negatively on workplace effectiveness.

To date, the largest study undertaken that examined the role of emotional intelligence and success was with the U.S. Air Force in 1996. The Air Force tested 1 500 Air Force recruiters and found that BarOnEQ-i® scores accounted for 45% of success. Five EQ-i® subscales were identified that differentiated those who achieved 100% of their quota versus those who achieved 70% or less. A statistical model for hiring new recruiters was created, and among the initial 250-300 recruiters the Air Force hired using this formula, the retention rate increased by 92%. Factoring in the costs of hiring, training, and settling a new recruit into a position, this translated into a \$2.7 million savings.

Management Assessment and Emotional Intelligence

In terms of management assessment, many candidates who have demonstrated previous success possess strong cognitive skills. Their academic achievements can also attest to this fact. On what basis then, can one determine which members of this group excel in relation to the others? In this context, *a finer discrimination is required to identify those who are the cream of the crop.* Assessment of these candidates with BarOn EQ-i® raises the standard in management assessment by identifying those candidates who possess the emotional and social intelligence needed for the successful interface of their strong knowledge base with their unique workplace environment. Research studies have demonstrated that it is emotional intelligence that predicts effective transformational leadership skills (Barling, Slater, & Kelloway, 2000) and

leadership performance and that the absence of emotional intelligence is related to career derailment (Ruderman, Hannum, Leslie, & Steed, 2001).

Emotional intelligence is what provides a manager with the edge when it comes to reading the political and social environment, and the ability to plan a course of action that makes the most of the situation. Emotional intelligence empowers the manager with the ability to grasp intuitively what others need and want and develop strategies for fulfilling those needs and wants. Emotional intelligence contributes to the magnetic and engaging qualities of the manager who possesses exceptional abilities as a leader. Clearly, emotional intelligence refers to a wide range of emotional and social skills that are invaluable to leaders in all industries.

BarOn EQ-i®

BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory (BarOn EQ-i®) (1997) was the first scientifically validated instrument produced for the purpose of assessing emotionally intelligent behaviour. BarOn EQ-i® was developed from the comprehensive integration of theoretical knowledge and empirical sophistication guided by state-of-the-art psychometric methodology. Age- and gender-specific norms are available based on a normative sample that exceeds 3,150. Development of this instrument, following scientific methodology, ensures that it assesses emotional intelligence in a dependable and consistent manner. Without this careful attention to development, obtained scores could not be compared to a yardstick, so they could not have relevance. If that were the case, obtained scores would merely be numbers, and could provide no useful information. It is a certainty that BarOn EQ-i® has been well researched and developed in accordance with the highest test development standards.

The BarOn model demonstrates how pervasive the role of emotionally intelligent behaviour is in all aspects of coaching, leadership, supervision, and management. It is strongly recommended that assessment batteries include BarOn EQ-i® as vital instruments for a comprehensive understanding of emotional intelligence, emotional health, and potential success.

References

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