

What Recruiters Need to Know About Emotional Intelligence

Is Emotional Intelligence more important than IQ? How to attract and retain talent with high EI? Here are some thoughts.

The need to hold on to great talent with desirable behavior is increasing in today's world with competition soaring high amid an acute scarcity of good professionals. These candidates may be dissatisfied with the way they're treated in a company to find employment elsewhere. This calls for the integration of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in your management philosophy.

Looking at it from a different perspective, there's also the risk of making a bad hiring decision which, according to the US Department of Labor, can lead to a surge in costs that can amount to 30% of that candidate's first-year earnings. In the light of this, many organizations are deviating from traditional hiring practices and are trying to hire candidates with high emotional quotient (EQ) rather than those with high IQ. Without a doubt, EI is going to become more relevant than ever before in the world of business in the near future.

What is Emotional Intelligence and what does it have to do with business?

EI refers to the ability to aptly perceive other people's emotions and use this knowledge to improve transparency in communication, the quality of teamwork and mutual respect among employees and superiors; and thus embark upon an ongoing healthy professional relationship. An employee with a high EQ is naturally effective at controlling and expressing his/her own emotions at the workplace, which is bound to have a healthy impact on the attitudes and behaviors of others around him/her.



Inversely, not being able to control one's emotions can lead others to develop a negative impression of that person. In fact, according to a survey conducted by OfficeTeam in which 607 HR Managers and 809 workers participated, 86% workers admitted that if a colleague fails to control his/her emotions, it causes them to lose confidence in that person's professionalism.

Why is it crucial to consider EI as a predominant factor in hiring a candidate?

In the same OfficeTeam survey, 30% of HR managers believe that most employers don't give weightage to the candidate's EQ during the hiring process. In the same survey, 40% of HR managers revealed that it is more difficult to teach the workers soft skills than technical skills. This makes perfect sense, because one's ability to communicate effectively, solve problems, resolve conflicts, adapt to situations and surrounds and improvise on actions largely depends on the EI of that individual and not his/her IQ.

If you ask me, it makes sense to hire candidates with EI and then train them on technical abilities rather than hire those with high IQ who are less likely to build a bond with the management or the organization and more likely to leave the organization in search of a better pay. I believe it is easier to retain an employee if the management can build and establish a healthy relationship with him/her, which is possible when the emotional quotient in the relationship is high. Emotionally intelligent managers see their staff as people with feelings and emotions first and workers second and; emotionally intelligent employees are likely to put in equal efforts to build on the professional relationship.

Furthermore, EI comes with high morale, leadership qualities, improved collaboration and conflict management skills. Emotionally intelligent employees are better at making decisions, communicate diplomatically and resolve problems faster regardless of what may come their way. In fact, as Travis Bradberry, the president of TalentSmart, puts it, emotionally intelligent people are most effective when they are solving problems. But someone who is simply book smart may lack the EI to evolve with challenges and thus may find it hard to learn from mistakes.

According to Kerry Roberts, an HR Advisor who worked for 16 years in the airline industry with WestJet, integrating EI into their hiring philosophy helped achieve targets while reducing overall personnel and operational costs and mitigating poor behavior and missed deadlines. Recruiting emotionally intelligent staff, he adds, arms the business with improved sales, better understanding of client needs, improved customer satisfaction and an insightful and intelligent workforce to transform your business into an industry leader.

How to find emotionally intelligent candidates?

Some companies use behavioral assessments and psychometric tests, while many base their assessment of a candidate's EI through reference checks. Some rely on big data and some ask a behavioral-based question in the interview. But there's no doubt that employee referrals are the best way to source high-quality workers, and when you look at it from an EI perspective, your own employees are a rich source of human capital for your organization. Employees know who to refer and who do not as they are the best judge of character of those they want to refer. So, employees themselves act as an essential layer of pre-screening candidates and will handpick from their network to find you the right fit or at least furnish you with a variety of talents.



How to leverage EI to be a better recruiter

Remember, recruitment is not about onboarding the candidate and then forgetting about him/her; you need to support the employee as they become an integral part of the organization. As a recruiter, your goal is also to help them succeed in their job and to achieve this, you need to communicate with them in non-transactional ways and enhance the experience of all parties involved.

How to build your EI and be a better manager

Be self-aware; know your management style and understand how it impacts the behavior of your team members.

If something upsets you at work, before you exhibit a visible emotional reaction, take into account the bigger picture and reassess the actions you choose to take.

Motivate the employees you lead by working with their strengths; empower them by giving them the resources they need.

Listen adequately; tune in to the conversation and don't interrupt unless you have something to build on or improve the conversation.

Improve your soft skills by directing conversations, handling conflicts and maintaining a friendly disposition while communicating with your team members and colleagues.

Don't be a "yes person"; a research conducted by the University of California states that if you have difficulty saying no, you are more likely to be stressed and depressed. Say yes only when you know you can and you want to.

Source: <https://tinyurl.com/yblxrp34>