

Emotional Intelligence

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE?

Emotional intelligence refers to our ability to recognise the feelings in ourselves and others. It also refers to our ability to manage emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships.

IS IT IMPORTANT?

Whereas the idea of emotional intelligence has previously been considered 'fluffy', we now have science and data to support its importance – particularly in the workplace. We know that emotional intelligence is a key success factor for strong leadership, customer service and sales, and provides the foundation for our relationships with one another. We also know that emotional intelligence is an important determinant in the mental health of young people.

CAN WE IMPROVE OUR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE?

We can absolutely develop our emotional intelligence, but we need to understand what it actually involves. One of the most widely researched frameworks in this area has been developed by a company called RocheMartin. This framework breaks down emotional intelligence into 10 specific areas – or competencies –

categorised into three areas: inner focus, outer focus and other focus.

HOW DO WE BREAK IT DOWN?

In relation to our inner focus:

Self-knowing – our ability to recognise how our feelings and emotions impact on our opinions, attitudes and judgements, our level of self-awareness.

Self-control – our capacity to control our emotions and restrain our actions until we have had the time to think rationally.

Self-confidence – the ability to accept and respect yourself and essentially like the person you are.

Self-reliance – the power to be independent in planning and making important decisions and take responsibility for yourself.

In relation to outer focus:

Adaptability – how we respond to change and adjust our emotions, thoughts and behaviours and whether we are receptive to new ideas.

Optimism – whether we can sense opportunities, focus on the possibilities, be resilient and bounce back from setbacks.

Self-actualisation – the skill that enables us to set and maintain a commitment to long term goals and maintain a view of the bigger picture.

In relation to other focus:

Empathy – our ability to be aware of, understand and appreciate the feelings and thoughts of others.

Relationship skills – our knack for building collaborative and mutually rewarding relationships which are characterised by positive expectations.

Straightforwardness – our ability to communicate our feelings, thoughts and beliefs in an open and straightforward way.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

These questions are designed to prompt team discussion and interaction following the podcast:

- What do you think about the idea of emotional intelligence?
- As a concept, how do you see it relate to our industry?
- Of the 10 emotional intelligence competencies, what do you think you do well and where do you think you need to improve?