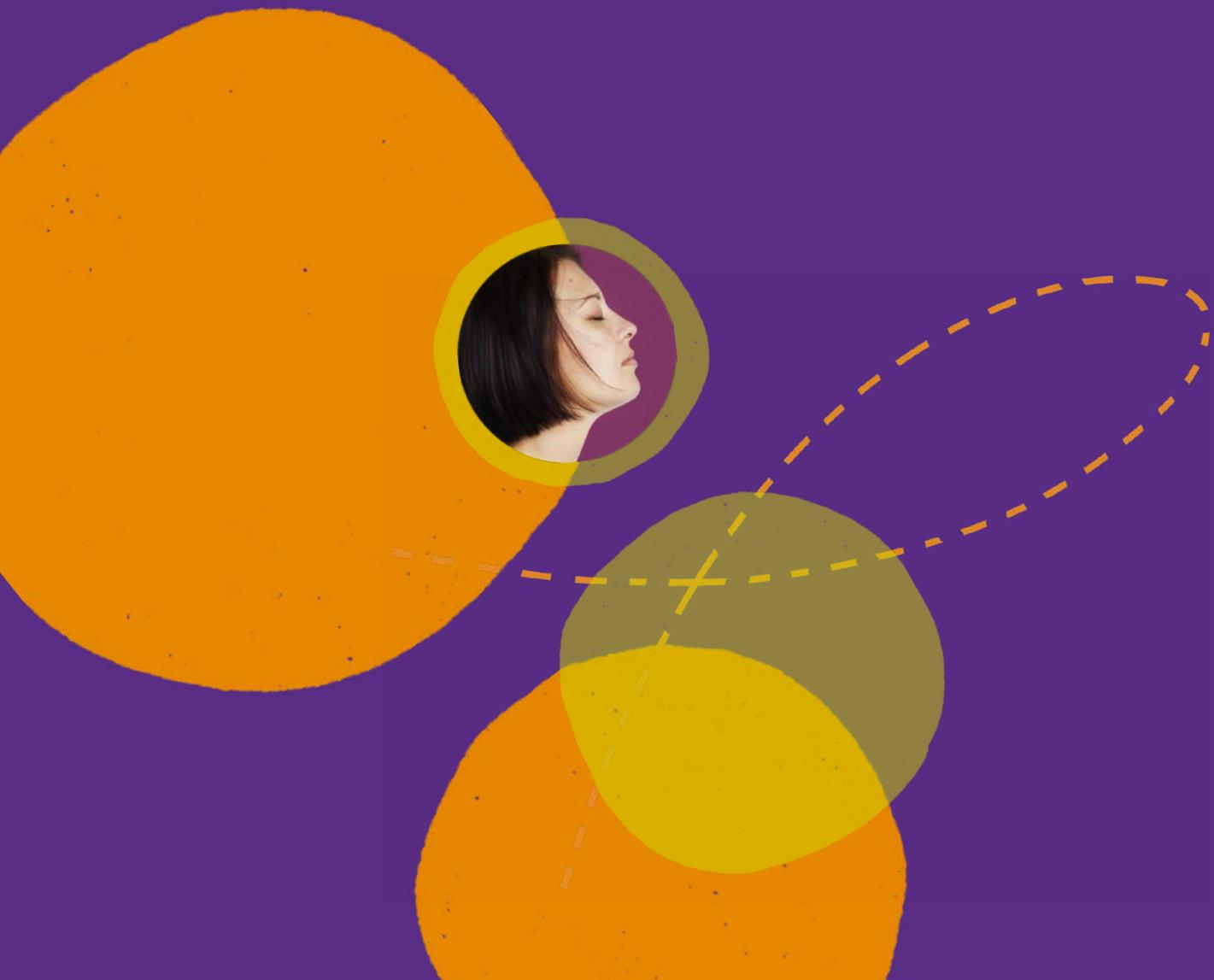


*The Link Between*

# Emotional Intelligence and Employee Experience



## *Why the hype over emotional intelligence?*

Emotional intelligence has become one of the most talked-about skills to hire for over the past few years, and it's easy to see why. There are countless benefits of emotional intelligence in the workplace, from being able to communicate more effectively to dealing with stress better. Most importantly, it's a determining factor in a manager's ability to successfully lead their team.

Emotionally intelligent managers can build stronger relationships with their employees, which impacts their overall experience at work. In turn, employees are more likely to be engaged and productive. In fact, a manager with a high emotional intelligence quotient (EQ) can be thought of as the linchpin in an organization's employee experience (EX). While there are many elements that make up EX—culture, technology, office space—the employee-manager relationship can undermine all of them. You know the saying, "people don't leave companies, they leave managers."

But what exactly does emotional intelligence involve and how can you be sure you have it?



**It's not that IQ and technical skills are irrelevant. They do matter, but...they are the entry-level requirements for executive positions.**

Daniel Goleman, the psychologist who coined the term "emotional intelligence"



## *What is emotional intelligence?*

It's common to assume that emotional intelligence is synonymous with empathy, but empathy touches on just one aspect of emotional intelligence. Empathy is a function of the introspective element of emotional intelligence—our ability to acknowledge, understand, and manage our own emotions. Its extrospective element, on the other hand, covers our ability to acknowledge, understand, and influence the emotions of others. Keeping the introspective and extrospective aspects in mind is crucial when applying emotional intelligence to leadership.



# The five components of emotional intelligence

Like any learned skill, there must be some guidelines by which we can measure success. The following five components of emotional intelligence are specific to leaders and managers. A manager's EQ is determined by how they perform in these five areas:<sup>1</sup>

## 1. Self perception

Your introspective journey into emotional intelligence starts with who you are at your core—or at least, who you think you are as a manager. Self-perception also includes the skill of self-awareness, or how in-tune you are with your true feelings and emotions.

Ask yourself:  
Am I aware of my emotions?  
Am I happy with myself?

## 2. Self expression

Making a clear and deliberate choice of how you express yourself to your team (and the world) is key to emotional intelligence. This includes verbal and non-verbal expression as well. What you say, how you say it, and how you carry yourself all speak to your individual brand of self-expression.

Ask yourself:  
Am I being my authentic self? How do I present myself to my team?

## 3. Interpersonal skills

Your ability to accurately perceive and influence the emotions of others contributes a great deal to your EQ. This is where empathy lives. The focus here is on how well you can pick up on others' emotional context clues and then communicate with them in an appropriate manner.

Ask yourself:  
How well do I connect with others? How do others perceive me?

## 4. Decision-making

When making tough choices, it's easy to let our current emotions sway our decisions. Positive and negative emotions each have the opportunity to influence our rationale. Emotionally intelligent people don't ignore their emotions when making decisions, but rather acknowledge the impact of emotions and reevaluate accordingly.

Ask yourself:  
To what extent do my emotions guide my actions? How do I respond to stimuli?

## 5. Stress management

Stress and leadership are seemingly two sides of the same coin, but effectively handling stress is what separates extraordinary leadership from the ordinary. A lack of stress management can often lead to irrational thoughts. This is often the difference between a reactive leader and a proactive leader.

Ask yourself:  
What is my capacity for stress? What happens when I reach my limits?

# The ROI of emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence, like most other non-technical talents, is a collection of soft skills that tends to be under-prioritized when compared to more traditionally valued traits, such as IQ and specialized skills. While the benefits of having emotionally intelligent leaders may not be as quantifiable as the technical skills needed to perform daily functions, the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report states that social skills, including emotional intelligence, will comprise more than a third of the desired core skill sets of most occupations.

Though a high EQ can help managers build positive and productive relationships with employees, there are benefits that extend to many other areas of the business. In contrast, managers who fail to incorporate emotional intelligence into their leadership styles risk becoming a liability to their organization's innovation, employee experience, employer brand, and—by extension—the bottom line. Below are just a few examples of how much can be gained by having emotionally intelligent leaders on deck:

## Financial success

In a study conducted by the Carnegie Institute of Technology, researchers found that only 15% of our financial success was due to our technical abilities. Our ability to communicate, negotiate, and lead accounted for the remaining 85%.<sup>2</sup> In fact, another study showed that professionals with a high degree of emotional intelligence earned roughly \$29,000 more each year than their less emotionally intelligent counterparts.<sup>3</sup>

## Innovation boost

At the core of organizational innovation lies one common denominator—collaboration. The ability to facilitate teamwork among your own team and across departments is an essential skill in keeping your organization at the cutting edge, and your success in doing so will rely heavily on your EQ. Leveraging your interpersonal skills to bring people and their ideas together can establish you as a successful leader.



## Talent retention

A major contributor to turnover is a lack of trust within some manager-employee relationships—but not for lack of trying. In fact, 75% of managers say they care deeply about the wellbeing of their direct reports, but 47% of employees don't think this is true.<sup>4</sup> Cultivating your emotional intelligence can help close this gap in perceptions.

## Effective communication

As a leader, a major part of your job is communication. Whether it's to your direct reports, your team, your boss, or even the C-suite, communication is a facet of leadership you can't escape. Leaders with a high EQ are able to successfully relay information and ideas across each of these various groups, tailoring their message to fit the audience at hand.

## *Where emotional intelligence and artificial intelligence intersect*

Although emotional intelligence is a critical people skill, it's not a science—there's always room for misinterpretation. Despite having a high EQ, your employees may have feelings or emotions toward the workplace that are hard to directly assess. Many organizations use employee surveys to get a pulse on what employees are really thinking, but there are still limitations to traditional survey tools. Multiple choice questionnaires don't get to the heart of a problem. And even when surveys allow for open-ended text responses, managers are often left to their own devices to interpret the underlying feelings employees are trying to convey—a difficult task to perform without bias.

Today, artificial intelligence (AI) can help leaders boost their emotional intelligence. Natural language processing (NLP) makes it possible to analyze the sentiment behind responses to open-ended survey questions—a technology called sentiment analysis. Surveys that use sentiment analysis allow you to gather deeper insights into the true meaning behind an employee's words, helping managers validate or disprove their assumptions and feel confident in the course of action they take.

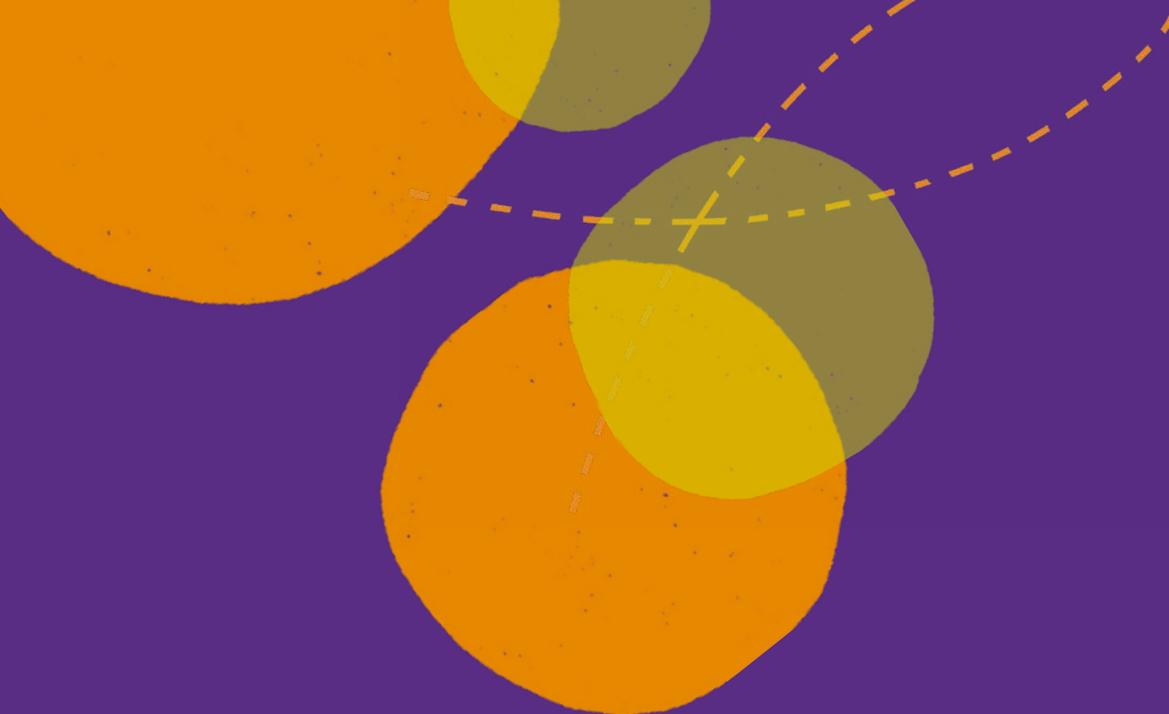
Even as managers get better at reading emotions, artificial intelligence can help ensure they're not overlooking anything important. Nobody can catch every emotion all the time, but gathering more information from AI can make managers even more attuned to their team members' feelings and needs, giving them the support they need to uphold the organization's unique employee experience.



#### References:

<sup>1</sup> <https://tap.mhs.com/EQI20TheScience.aspx> - <sup>2</sup> <https://hbr.org/2015/04/how-emotional-intelligence-became-a-key-leadership-skill>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_FOJ\\_Executive\\_Summary\\_Jobs.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_FOJ_Executive_Summary_Jobs.pdf) - <sup>4</sup> <https://www.fastcompany.com/3047455/why-emotionally-intelligent-people-are-more-successful>



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