

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AT WORK:

Evidence, Impact, And Implementation



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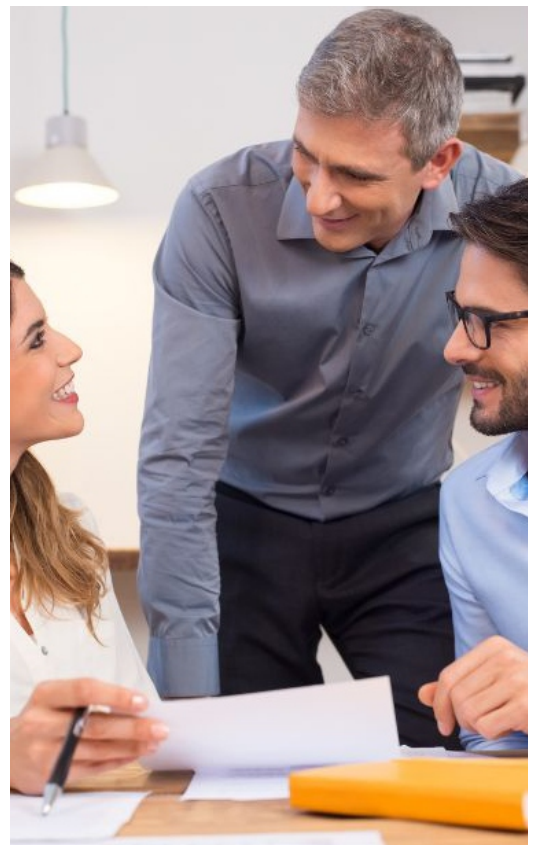
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Introduction

The workplace is experiencing a profound transformation driven by digitalization, artificial intelligence (AI), and the rapid evolution of work models. Hybrid teams, virtual collaboration, and relentless technological change have become the new normal, demanding a re-examination of the skills that underpin organizational success. Among these, Emotional Intelligence (EI) has emerged as a defining capability for individuals and organizations seeking to adapt, innovate, and thrive.

Recent global research highlights this shift. **The World Economic Forum's *Future of Jobs Report* projects that by 2025, 50% of all employees will need reskilling, with EI, leadership, and social influence among the top skills rising in importance.** Organizations worldwide are recognising that technical expertise alone is insufficient in a landscape marked by uncertainty and complexity. Instead, the ability to understand, manage, and leverage emotions—both one's own and those of others—has become a core driver of effective leadership, collaboration, and resilience.

Despite this recognition, there remains a significant gap between awareness and action. **A 2019 Harvard Business Review Analytic Services survey of nearly**



600 business leaders found that while 98% see EI as essential for employee success, only 18% believe it is truly embedded in their organizational culture. This disconnect is not unique to any one region; it is reflected in both mature and emerging markets, where rapid digital adoption and shifting workforce demographics are amplifying the demand for emotionally intelligent leadership and teams.

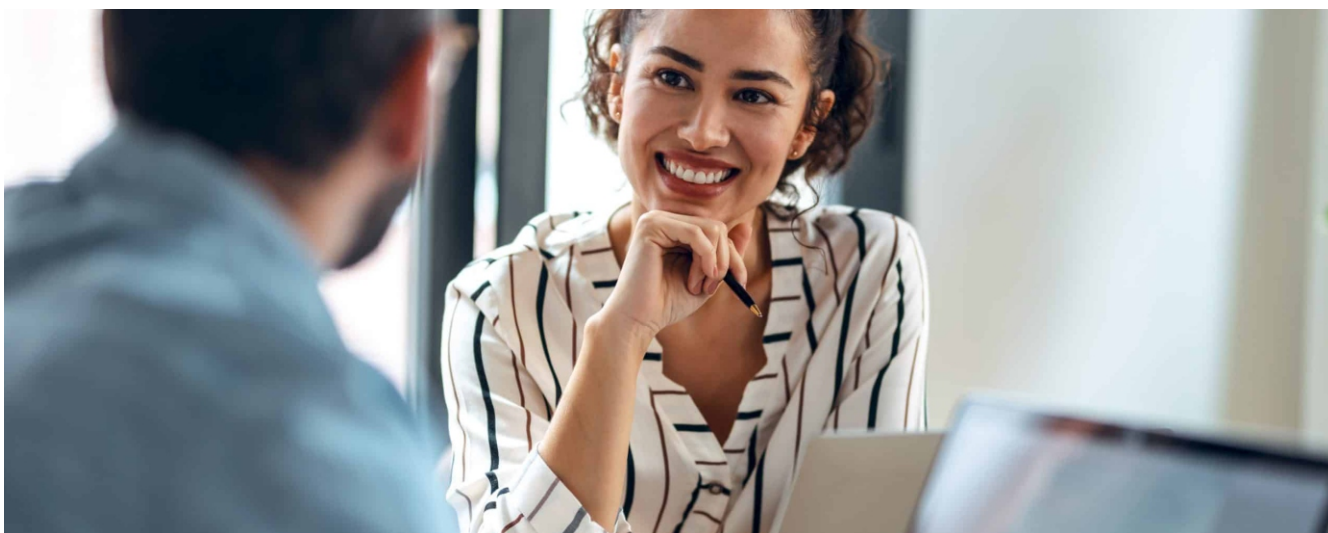
The consequences of neglecting EI are well documented. Meta-analyses and large-scale organisational studies consistently show that the majority of workplace challenges are relational rather than technical. Issues such as interpersonal conflict, lack of trust, and poor communication are frequently cited as barriers to productivity, engagement, and innovation. Conversely, organizations that invest in EI development report stronger leadership pipelines, more adaptive teams, higher engagement, and improved business outcomes.

Over the past three decades, Emotional Intelligence has evolved from a promising concept to a well-established, evidence-based field. Research demonstrates that EI is measurable, developable, and strongly linked to key outcomes such as job performance, engagement, well-being, and leadership effectiveness. In roles that require high emotional labour—such as management, customer service, and healthcare—the impact of EI is especially pronounced.

As organizations seek to build resilience and agility in a rapidly changing world, Emotional Intelligence stands out as a core attribute for success. The ability to understand and manage emotions is not only fundamental to individual well-being and effective leadership, but also to the collective performance and adaptability of teams and organizations. In this context, EI is no longer a “soft skill”—it is a strategic necessity for the future of work.

Executive Summary

This white paper synthesises over three decades of research, practical experience, and meta-analytic evidence to clarify the impact and value of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in the workplace. It addresses the core questions facing organizations today: What is EI, and why does it matter for performance, engagement, leadership, and well-being? How does EI add value beyond traditional assessments and skills? Can EI be reliably measured and developed? And what are the business outcomes for those who invest in EI at scale?



Key Findings

- **El is a Present and Future Priority:** Surveys and workforce forecasts consistently rank EI among the most critical skills for the future of work. The World Economic Forum and McKinsey both project that demand for social and emotional skills will rise sharply as automation and AI transform job roles. Yet, a persistent gap remains between awareness and action: **while 98% of business leaders globally see EI as essential, only 18% report it is truly embedded in their culture.**
- **Business Impact is Clear:** The majority of workplace challenges are relational, not technical. **Studies show that 76% of business issues arise from people and relationship dynamics, and organizations that neglect the emotional and social aspects of work are less likely to succeed.** Meta-analyses confirm that EI predicts job performance, engagement, and well-

being—especially in roles with high emotional labour.

- **EI Drives Measurable Outcomes:** EI assessments add unique, incremental value to traditional personality and cognitive measures, improving the prediction of job performance by up to 12%. Teams and leaders with high EI achieve stronger collaboration, higher engagement, and greater adaptability. **EI accounts for up to 31% of the variance in individual work engagement and is closely linked to job satisfaction and retention.**
- **Financial and Strategic Value:** Investment in EI delivers substantial ROI. **Organizations report returns of 500–700% from EI training, driven by productivity gains, reduced turnover, and improved customer loyalty.** Case studies from Motorola, Sanofi, L'Oréal, and TalentSmart demonstrate that EI initiatives can lead to double-digit improvements in sales, productivity, and talent retention. Organizations, facing rapid digital transformation and significant leadership gaps, are beginning to see similar results.
- **Leadership and Culture are Multipliers:** Emotionally intelligent leadership is a decisive factor in organizational climate, engagement, and resilience. Leaders with high EI create psychologically safe environments, foster trust, and drive innovation. The evidence shows that leaders' EI has a particularly strong influence on reducing negative aspects of workplace climate, such as conflict and disengagement.
- **EI is Measurable and Developable:** Modern tools—such as the Self Emotional Quotient Assessment & Profiler (SEQAP)—enable organizations to assess and develop EI in a culturally relevant, actionable way. SEQAP's multi-dimensional approach has demonstrated value across sectors, enabling targeted development at individual, team, and organizational levels.
- **The Human Advantage in the Age of AI:** As AI and automation reshape work, EI stands out as the critical human differentiator. While technology can process data and automate routine tasks, it cannot replicate empathy, ethical judgment, or the ability to build trust and resolve conflict. Organizations that blend technological innovation with emotionally intelligent leadership will be best positioned for future success.

EI is not a panacea, but it is a proven lever for building agile, high-performing, and humane organizations. The time to act is now: by making EI a strategic priority, organizations can unlock the full potential of their people and secure a lasting competitive edge in a rapidly changing world.

The Business Imperative: Why Organizations Need EI

The modern workplace is experiencing a fundamental shift that demands new approaches to leadership, collaboration, and performance management. As organizations navigate digital transformation, hybrid work models, and increasingly complex stakeholder relationships, Emotional Intelligence (EI) has emerged as a critical business capability rather than merely a "soft skill." The evidence for this transformation is compelling: organizations that systematically develop EI capabilities consistently outperform their competitors across multiple dimensions of business success^{1,2}.

The Scale of Relational Challenges in Business

Research consistently demonstrates that the majority of workplace problems stem from interpersonal rather than technical issues. **A comprehensive 2008 report found that 76% of workplace challenges reported by leaders were people and relational issues, with only 24% being financial or technical in nature³.** This finding has profound implications for organizational effectiveness, suggesting that traditional approaches focusing primarily on technical competencies may be missing the most significant drivers of workplace dysfunction.

The financial consequences of poor interpersonal dynamics are substantial. **Studies show that 50% of business time is wasted due to lack of trust between employees^{7,4}, while 70% of customer losses are attributed to EI-related factors such as poor service quality and communication breakdowns^{5,6}.**

These statistics highlight that emotional and social competencies directly impact organizational bottom lines through multiple pathways: internal efficiency, customer relationships, and employee retention.



The Growing Corporate Adoption of EI

The business world has responded to these challenges with unprecedented investment in EI development. By 2009, over 150 consulting firms were offering EI-related services, and **an estimated 75% of Fortune 500 companies had adopted some form of EI programming**⁵. This massive corporate adoption reflects a fundamental recognition that emotional and social competencies are no longer optional in competitive business environments.

Recent surveys reinforce this trend. **A 2012 study of 775 senior managers found that 89% considered EI either "highly important" or "essential" for addressing their organization's top challenges**⁷. The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report has consistently ranked EI among the top skills growing in importance, projecting that social and emotional capabilities will see an "outsized increase in demand" as automation handles routine tasks⁸.

However, there remains a significant implementation gap. **Harvard Business Review research reveals that while 98% of business leaders recognise EI as essential for employee success and job satisfaction, only 18% believe it is truly embedded in their organizational culture**⁹. This disconnect between recognition and implementation represents both a challenge and an opportunity for organizations seeking competitive advantage through human capital development.



Meta-Analytic Evidence for EI's Business Impact

The relationship between EI and job performance has been rigorously examined through multiple meta-analyses, providing robust evidence for its business value. Joseph and Newman's 2010 meta-analysis, incorporating data from 22 studies and 2,593 participants, found that EI demonstrates particularly strong predictive validity in roles requiring high emotional labour¹⁰. This finding is especially relevant for management positions, customer service roles, and collaborative team environments that characterize modern knowledge work.

O'Boyle and colleagues' 2011 comprehensive meta-analysis analysed 27 studies involving 3,961 participants, concluding that EI shows meaningful correlations with job performance across multiple measurement approaches. The study's three-stream analysis demonstrated that different approaches to measuring EI (ability-based, self-report, and mixed models) **all show significant relationships with workplace outcomes, with corrected correlations ranging from 0.24 to 0.30¹¹**.

Importantly, these meta-analyses demonstrate that EI provides incremental validity beyond traditional predictors such as cognitive ability and personality traits. This means that EI assessments can enhance prediction of job performance when combined with existing selection and development tools, rather than simply duplicating information already captured through other measures^{10,11}.

The Strategic Imperative

The convergence of global research and practical business experience demonstrates that EI is no longer an optional organizational capability but a strategic imperative. Organizations face mounting pressure from digital transformation, changing workforce expectations, and intensified competition—all of which demand higher levels of emotional and social competence from leaders and employees.

The evidence presented in this chapter establishes three critical points: first, that interpersonal challenges represent the majority of workplace problems and have substantial financial consequences; second, that EI capabilities can be measured, developed, and systematically integrated into organizational practices; and third, that organizations implementing EI development consistently achieve superior business outcomes across multiple performance dimensions. Companies that proactively build these capabilities will be better positioned to

navigate future challenges while capturing the economic benefits of more effective human capital utilization.

Figure 1: Business demands and how EI can help

Business Demand	How EI Can Help (SEQAP Scales) ^a
Role Demands	Self-Assessment
Managing Change	Adaptability
Competition	Problem Resolution
Resilience	Hopefulness
Teamworking	Group Preference
Leadership	Self-Articulation
Business Targets	Achievement Drive
Stakeholder Management	Interpersonal Relationships
People Focus	Empathy

See all 15 components of SEQAP in Appendix

Case Studies

Google's Project Aristotle: Psychological Safety as Performance Driver

Google's extensive Project Aristotle study, which analysed data from hundreds of teams, identified psychological safety as the most critical factor distinguishing high-performing teams from average ones. The research found that teams with high psychological safety—where members feel safe to take risks, make mistakes, and express vulnerability—consistently outperformed teams with superior individual talent but lower psychological safety²⁰.

This finding directly relates to EI capabilities, as psychological safety requires team members and leaders to demonstrate emotional awareness, empathy, and effective communication. Google's implementation of these insights through manager training and team development processes has contributed to improved innovation rates, reduced turnover, and enhanced collaborative effectiveness across the organization²⁰.

PepsiCo's Leadership Transformation Under Indra Nooyi

During her tenure as CEO from 2006 to 2018, Indra Nooyi led a comprehensive transformation of PepsiCo's culture and performance that exemplifies the business impact of emotionally intelligent leadership¹⁴. Under her leadership, PepsiCo's revenue grew by more than 80%, and the company added a new billion-dollar brand almost every other year¹⁸.

Nooyi's approach emphasised "Performance with Purpose," integrating business results with social responsibility and employee development. Her leadership style, characterised by authentic communication, empathy for diverse stakeholders, and long-term vision, contributed to significant improvements in executive retention and organizational culture¹⁴. The company's investment in R&D nearly tripled during her tenure, reflecting the innovation benefits of psychologically safe and emotionally intelligent leadership environments¹⁸.

Southwest Airlines: EI-Based Customer Service Excellence

Southwest Airlines has built its competitive advantage partly on EI-based hiring and development practices, particularly for customer-facing roles^{5,3}. The airline's emphasis on hiring for attitude and emotional competencies, combined with extensive training in emotional regulation and customer empathy, has contributed to industry-leading customer satisfaction scores and employee engagement rates^{5,3}.

The company's approach demonstrates how EI can be systematically integrated into organizational processes, from recruitment and selection through performance management and career development. Southwest's consistent profitability and cultural strength, even during industry downturns, illustrates the business resilience that can result from sustained investment in emotional and social capabilities^{5,3}.

Tata Steel's Steelennium Program: Engaging Millennial Talent

Tata Steel's Steelennium program represents a strategic approach to engaging millennial employees through EI-enhanced leadership development⁵⁶. The program focuses on creating emotionally intelligent management practices that resonate with younger employees' expectations for meaningful work, authentic leadership, and inclusive environments⁵⁶.

While specific quantitative outcomes from the Steelennium program are not publicly detailed, the initiative reflects broader recognition that traditional command-and-control management approaches must evolve to effectively engage millennial and Gen Z talent. The program's emphasis on emotional awareness, empathetic communication, and values-based leadership aligns with global research showing that EI capabilities are particularly important for managing diverse, multi-generational workforces⁵⁶.

Chapter 1 Keypoints

01

AI is essential for success in digitally driven, hybrid, and rapidly changing workplaces.

02

Most workplace challenges arise from interpersonal issues, not technical problems.

03

There is a global gap between recognising AI's value and embedding it into culture.



Defining and Assessing EI: The SEQAP Perspective

Understanding Emotional Intelligence: Theoretical Foundations

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has evolved from a psychological concept to a practical framework for understanding human capabilities beyond traditional cognitive intelligence. At its core, EI is the ability to recognise, understand, and manage emotions in oneself and others, using this awareness to guide thinking and behaviour in ways that enhance effectiveness¹⁹.

Three primary models shape EI theory: the ability model by Salovey and Mayer, which sees EI as a cognitive skill; the trait model by Petrides and Furnham, which focuses on emotion-related self-perceptions; and Goleman's mixed model, integrating both approaches and encompassing a broad range of competencies^{19,38}. Goleman's framework, widely adopted in organizations, identifies five key EI dimensions: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills¹⁹. These underpin workplace behaviour, with research showing that higher EI correlates with better performance in roles requiring emotional labour and leadership^{4,30}.

EI assessment methodologies include performance-based tests like the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT), self-report questionnaires such as the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), and multi-rater assessments like the Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI)^{12,9}. Each has unique advantages and limitations; cultural sensitivity is especially important where emotional expression and interpretation are shaped by social norms⁸.



The Evolution of EI Assessment Approaches

GrowthSapes' Self Emotional Quotient Assessment & Profiler (SEQAP) advances EI assessment for organizations by combining established EI frameworks with culturally relevant dimensions²¹. Grounded in Goleman's model, SEQAP evaluates five core dimensions adapted to modern workplace challenges. Rather than viewing EI as a static attribute, SEQAP conceptualises emotional intelligence as a developmental journey, providing individuals with insights into their current capabilities while offering clear pathways for growth and improvement. This aligns with research indicating that EI can be cultivated and enhanced throughout one's life³⁸.

The SEQAP assessment employs a methodology designed to provide nuanced insights into an individual's emotional intelligence profile. The assessment process is structured to capture the multidimensional nature of emotional intelligence, evaluating both intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects. It begins with a comprehensive evaluation of an individual's overall emotional quotient, followed by a more detailed analysis across the five key dimensions of emotional intelligence, offering insights into specific areas of strength and opportunity. What sets SEQAP apart is its granular approach to emotional intelligence assessment. The tool breaks down each dimension into specific components, resulting in a detailed profile across 15 distinct aspects of emotional intelligence²¹. These components include self-assessment, emotional consciousness, self-articulation, objectivity, self-dependence, stress management, impulse management, adaptability, problem resolution, hopefulness, contentedness, achievement drive, empathy, interpersonal relationships, and group preference. This level of detail enables individuals and organizations to identify precise areas for development and create targeted intervention strategies.

The assessment process is designed to be both rigorous and accessible, typically requiring approximately 40 minutes to complete. This balance between depth and efficiency makes SEQAP particularly valuable in organizational settings where time constraints are often a consideration. For each component, SEQAP provides detailed insights into current capabilities, potential development areas, and specific actions individuals can take to enhance their emotional intelligence. This actionable guidance transforms the assessment from a mere measurement tool into a developmental roadmap.

Applications and Impact Across Sectors and Organizations

GrowthSqapes has successfully deployed SEQAP across various sectors, including manufacturing, banking, financial services, insurance (BFSI), and information technology. In manufacturing, SEQAP has enhanced leadership capabilities among mid-level managers, improving team dynamics and operational efficiency. In BFSI, it has supported customer-facing professionals in managing complex client interactions, leading to improved satisfaction and relationship management. In IT, SEQAP has helped identify resilient individuals suited for leadership in digital transformation.

Across these applications, SEQAP has demonstrated its ability to provide culturally relevant, actionable insights into emotional intelligence. The assessment's comprehensive approach, combined with its developmental focus, makes it a valuable tool for organizations seeking to enhance emotional intelligence capabilities at individual and collective levels.

Feedback from organizations using SEQAP highlights its role in driving measurable improvements in team cohesion, adaptability, and leadership effectiveness. Managers report greater self-awareness and resilience, while HR leaders note more targeted development interventions and improved succession planning. This practical impact underscores SEQAP's value as both a diagnostic and developmental tool.



Comparison with Global EI Assessment Tools

While SEQAP shares foundational principles with globally recognised EI assessment tools, it offers distinct advantages for organizations operating in culturally sensitive contexts. Understanding these similarities and differences provides valuable context for appreciating SEQAP's unique contribution to emotional intelligence assessment.

The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) approaches EI as a cognitive ability, evaluating how individuals process emotional information through objective performance tasks. While this approach offers scientific rigor, it may not fully capture the practical application of emotional intelligence in workplace settings⁹. SEQAP, in contrast, balances scientific validity with practical relevance, providing insights that directly translate to workplace behaviours and interactions.

The Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI), developed based on Goleman's framework, employs a multi-rater methodology to assess emotional intelligence competencies. This approach offers valuable perspectives from multiple stakeholders but requires significant time and resource investment².

GrowthSqapes' SEQAP achieves a balance between comprehensive assessment and practical implementation, making it accessible for organizations with varying resource constraints.

The Strategic Role of SEQAP in Building EI Capabilities

As organizations increasingly value EI for leadership and team performance, tools like SEQAP play a crucial role in identifying and developing these capabilities. By providing a clear understanding of current emotional intelligence profiles and specific pathways for growth, SEQAP supports organizations in building emotionally intelligent leaders and teams suited to the demands of the modern workplace. The developmental focus of SEQAP aligns with contemporary organizational needs for continuous learning and adaptability. This makes SEQAP not only a measurement tool but a strategic enabler of organizational transformation through enhanced emotional intelligence.

By integrating SEQAP into talent management processes, organizations can foster a culture of emotional awareness, resilience, and effective interpersonal engagement. This, in turn, drives improved leadership effectiveness, employee engagement, and overall organizational

performance.

Figure 2: Approach to measuring EI

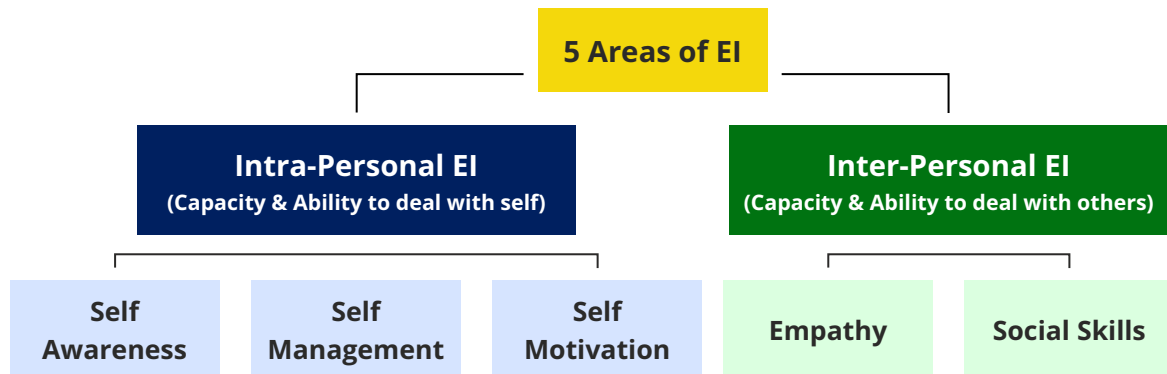


Figure 3: Defining EI

EI Model		Definitions
Behaviour	→	EI is the practice of managing one's own self to be both personally and interpersonally effective.
Feeling	→	This is achieved through the habitual practice of thinking about feeling and feeling about thinking, to guide one's behaviour.
Attitude & Beliefs	→	The extent and effectiveness of an individual's EI is largely determined by their attitude and beliefs.

Chapter 2 Keypoints

01

Complexity, disruption, and skills gaps make EI a non-negotiable for organizational performance and retention.

02

Neglecting EI leads to disengagement, high turnover, and missed innovation opportunities.

03

Both global and Indian organizations increasingly recognize EI as vital for sustained success.

EI at Work: Enabling Performance and Adaptability

Organizational success is not just a matter of technical skill or strategy—it is determined by how individuals and teams respond to challenges, sustain results under pressure, and adapt to new demands. Emotional Intelligence is a decisive factor in these outcomes, shaping the way people interpret situations, manage stress, and collaborate to solve problems.

EI and the Real Drivers of Workplace Effectiveness

A growing body of research demonstrates that the most persistent obstacles to performance are not technical, but relational. **In a landmark survey of leaders, 76% of workplace issues were identified as people or relational challenges, not financial or technical in nature³.** This finding is echoed in subsequent studies: the majority of new hires who fail do so because of interpersonal or attitudinal issues, not lack of technical skill. In practice, this means that organizations cannot achieve sustained performance gains through technical training alone; they must also address the emotional and social dynamics that underpin effective work.

Meta-analytic research provides clear evidence for EI's role in workplace effectiveness. Joseph and Newman's integrative meta-analysis, synthesising data from 191 independent samples, found that EI is significantly related to job performance, with the effect being especially pronounced in roles requiring frequent interpersonal interaction or emotional labour²⁸. O'Boyle et al. further confirmed that EI contributes incremental value to job performance, even after accounting for cognitive ability and personality traits²⁹. Notably, their analysis showed that EI's impact is not confined to any one industry or function, but is relevant across a wide range of organizational settings.

How EI Enables High Performance

Emotionally intelligent individuals excel in several critical workplace domains:

- **Conflict Resolution:** Employees with higher EI are more likely to approach disagreements with empathy and openness, leading to faster and more sustainable resolutions. O'Boyle et al. found that emotionally intelligent employees not only experience fewer interpersonal conflicts but also resolve existing conflicts more constructively, resulting in stronger working

relationships and improved team outcomes²⁹.

- **Resilience Under Pressure:** EI supports self-regulation and perspective-taking, helping individuals maintain focus and motivation even in high-pressure environments. This is particularly valuable in roles subject to constant change or ambiguity, where emotional self-management can make the difference between thriving and burnout.
- **Collaboration and Trust:** Teams with high collective EI demonstrate more effective communication, greater trust, and a higher willingness to share information—key drivers of innovation and adaptability. Druskat and Wolff found that emotionally intelligent teams develop norms for open dialogue, constructive feedback, and mutual support, which underpin sustained high performance⁹.

Adaptability: Thriving in Change

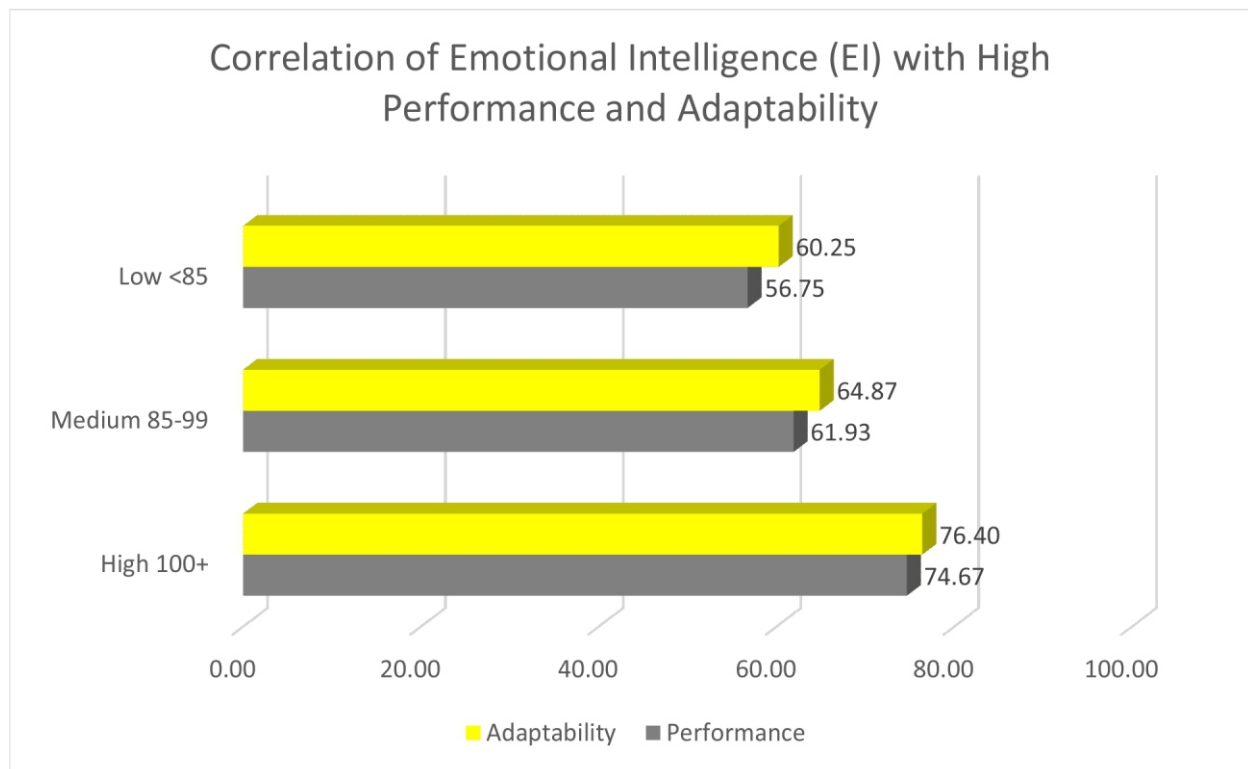
Adaptability is now recognised as a core competency for organizations facing rapid change. EI enhances adaptability by enabling individuals to:

- Recognise and process their own emotional reactions to change, reducing resistance and anxiety.
- Understand the perspectives and concerns of others, facilitating smoother transitions and buy-in.
- Maintain positive working relationships during periods of uncertainty, supporting team cohesion and morale.

A recent study examining organizational change found that employees with higher EI demonstrated greater adaptability during transitions, maintaining productivity and positive attitudes despite uncertainty¹⁴. These findings are consistent across sectors and geographies, highlighting the universal value of EI in dynamic environments.



Figure 4: Correlation of Emotional Intelligence (EI) with High Performance and Adaptability



Case Studies

Motorola: Productivity Gains Through EI Training

Motorola's comprehensive plant-wide emotional intelligence training stands as a benchmark for operational impact in a large-scale environment. The initiative included modules on stress management, emotional awareness, and interpersonal skills, reaching employees across all levels and departments. Following the training, 93% of employees reported increased productivity⁵⁹. Teams experienced smoother collaboration, more effective problem-solving, and a noticeable reduction in workplace conflicts. Supervisors found themselves better equipped to support their teams, proactively manage tensions, and foster a more positive, resilient work climate⁵⁹. Notably, these improvements endured over time, with follow-up assessments confirming that the gains in productivity and team dynamics became embedded in the organizational culture. Motorola's experience shows how EI development can drive sustainable improvements in day-to-day performance and adaptability, touching every aspect of operational effectiveness⁵⁹.

Sanofi: Sales Performance Boosted by EI

Sanofi, a global healthcare leader, demonstrated the power of EI development in a demanding, client-facing environment. The company introduced a rigorous EI training programme for its sales force, focusing on emotional awareness, empathy, and relationship management. Sales representatives who completed the programme achieved a 12% improvement in sales performance compared to their peers, with an average of \$55,200 more in sales over three months¹⁸. Beyond sales figures, the initiative led to stronger client relationships and higher account retention, as customers reported feeling better understood and supported. Sales professionals also reported greater resilience in handling rejection and stress, and an improved ability to build trust with sceptical healthcare professionals¹⁸. Sanofi's case illustrates how EI training equips employees to adapt, connect, and perform at a higher level in high-pressure, rapidly changing markets.

Adaptability and Engagement in the IT Sector

A notable example comes from a study of IT professionals in Chennai during the COVID-19 pandemic. As organizations shifted abruptly to remote work, employees with higher EI were found to be more engaged and adaptable. These individuals played a crucial role in supporting colleagues through transitions, maintaining productivity despite uncertainty, and sustaining team cohesion in the absence of face-to-face interaction. The research highlighted that EI was not just an individual asset but a collective resource that helped teams weather unprecedented disruption²⁵.

Chapter 3 Keypoints

01

EI enhances measurable workplace outcomes, including productivity gains, improved collaboration, and reduced conflict.

02

Employees with high EQ adapt better to change and pressure, sustaining client trust, motivation, and effective interpersonal relationships in demanding environments.

03

Integrating EI into everyday culture and processes builds resilient, high-performing teams capable of navigating complexity and continuous disruption.

Engagement and Retention: The EI Connection

Employee engagement and retention are recognised as critical drivers of organizational performance and long-term sustainability. Yet, despite significant investments in talent management, many organizations continue to struggle with disengagement and high turnover. Recent research has increasingly pointed to Emotional Intelligence (EI) as a key factor influencing both engagement and retention.

The Link Between EI and Engagement

Engagement is more than job satisfaction—it is the emotional commitment an employee has toward their organization and its goals. Engaged employees are more productive, innovative, and resilient, while disengaged employees are more likely to underperform, be absent, or leave the organization. **Gallup's global research has consistently shown that teams with high engagement are, on average, 17% more productive and experience 21% higher profitability compared to less engaged teams.** However, only 15% of employees worldwide report being highly engaged at work, highlighting a significant opportunity for improvement.

A growing body of evidence demonstrates that EI is a strong predictor of engagement. Miao, Humphrey, and Qian's (2017) meta-analysis, synthesising results from 119 studies, found a close association between EI and engaged attitudes at work. Employees with higher EI report greater job satisfaction, higher organizational commitment, and lower intentions to leave their jobs. The analysis also showed that EI adds incremental value in predicting engagement and satisfaction, beyond what can be explained by personality traits and cognitive ability alone.

The mechanisms underlying this relationship are clear. Individuals with high EI are better able to regulate their emotions, foster positive feelings, and mitigate negative ones—skills that are essential for maintaining motivation and focus, especially in challenging environments. They are also more adept at building positive relationships, navigating workplace dynamics, and contributing to a supportive climate that encourages discretionary effort and loyalty.

EI and Retention: Reducing Turnover Through Emotional Skills

Turnover is costly—not only in terms of recruitment and training expenses but also due to lost knowledge, disrupted teams, and diminished morale. Studies indicate that the majority of new hires who fail do so for attitudinal or interpersonal reasons, not technical incompetence. For instance, a global leadership research company tracking 20,000 new hires found that **23% failed because they were unable to understand and manage emotions, while over 89% failed due to interpersonal or behavioural issues.**

EI plays a direct role in reducing turnover. Employees with higher EI are more likely to feel valued, supported, and connected to their teams and leaders. They are better equipped to manage workplace stress, adapt to change, and resolve conflicts constructively—all factors that reduce the likelihood of voluntary exit. The relationship between EI and turnover intentions is negative, meaning that as EI increases, the likelihood of an employee considering leaving decreases. This effect remains significant even after accounting for other predictors such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Organizations that foster EI at all levels—through assessment, training, and leadership modelling—see tangible reductions in attrition. They create environments where employees feel psychologically safe, are encouraged to voice concerns, and are supported through transitions. These conditions not only improve retention but also enhance the overall employee experience, which in turn strengthens the employer brand.



The Role of Leaders' EI in Engagement and Retention

Leadership is a decisive factor in shaping engagement and retention. **Research suggests that managers account for at least 70% of the variance in employee engagement scores.**

Leaders with high EI are more effective at creating a positive emotional climate, setting clear expectations, and providing meaningful feedback. They are also better at recognising and responding to the emotional needs of their teams, which fosters trust and loyalty.

A study examining commercial banks in South Sudan found that EI has a positive effect on both leadership effectiveness and employee engagement. Leaders with high EI were found to manage emotions effectively, communicate better, and build stronger relationships, which enhanced their leadership effectiveness. This effectiveness, in turn, significantly improved employee engagement, characterised by increased enthusiasm and commitment.

The research emphasised that emotionally intelligent leaders create supportive environments that boost employee involvement and satisfaction. For organizations seeking to improve performance and employee morale, adopting EI-focused leadership strategies can be transformative.

EI-Driven Strategies for Engagement and Retention

Given the strong evidence linking EI to engagement and retention, organizations are increasingly investing in EI development as a strategic priority. Effective approaches include:

- **Assessment and Feedback:** Using validated EI assessments to identify strengths and development areas at both individual and team levels.
- **Targeted Training:** Offering workshops and coaching focused on core EI skills such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and relationship management.
- **Leadership Development:** Integrating EI into leadership programs to ensure that managers model emotionally intelligent behaviours and foster supportive team climates.
- **Embedding EI in Culture:** Reinforcing EI competencies through performance management, recognition systems, and organizational values.
-

Organizations that implement these strategies report not only higher engagement and lower turnover but also improvements in collaboration, innovation, and customer satisfaction. The impact is both immediate and sustainable, as emotionally intelligent cultures are better equipped to adapt to change and retain top talent.

Figure 5: Key aspects of EI that relate to individual engagement

SEQAP Scale	Link To Engagement
Self Assessment	Clear on personal strengths & weaknesses, needs and goals.
Achievement Drive	Feels self-determined and empowered.
Adaptability	Flexible to changing situations & moving out of comfort zone.
Problem Resolution	Keeps problems & difficulties in perspective.
Self Dependence	Enjoys working without being dependent on others.
Group Preference	Enjoys working with others collaboratively.
Hopefulness	Able to bounce back from setbacks easily.

Figure 6: Key aspects of EI which drive leadership engagement

SEQAP Scale	Link To Engagement
Objectivity	Keeps things in the right perspective.
Self Emotional Consciousness	Keeps emotions in control in difficult situations.
Self Articulation	Communicates the vision.
Hopefulness	Communicates optimism in tough times.
Interpersonal Relationships	Invests time and energy in building relationship with stakeholders.
Empathy	Listens to others and values other's views and opinions.

Case Studies

TCS: Comprehensive EI and Well-being Programs

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has implemented comprehensive programs focused on emotional intelligence and employee well-being. The company established the "Maitree" network in 2005 to counsel its 30,000 employees, organizing family get-togethers, activities such as ball dancing, yoga classes, and theatre workshops to help employees maintain healthy work-life balance⁵⁵.

A recent study at TCS Nagpur examined the effects of EI and Quality of Work Life on work performance. The research found that employees with higher emotional intelligence demonstrated better coping strategies, effective communication, and enhanced problem-solving skills, which contributed to improved work performance. The study revealed a synergistic effect where both EI and quality of work life contribute to better work environments, fostering higher job performance⁵⁵.

Wipro's MITR Program: Peer-to-Peer Emotional Support

Wipro Technologies launched the "MITR" program in 2003, an innovative in-house counselling service that trains employees in counselling to help colleagues in distress⁶⁰. The program selects empathetic, mature professionals with high emotional intelligence who have been part of Wipro for some time and are experienced in handling teams⁶⁰.

MITR counsellors undergo rigorous training—5 days delivered by Wipro's EAP partner and internal and external experts. The program maintains strict confidentiality, with approximately 40% of cases handled by MITR counsellors and the rest by professional EAP partners⁶⁰. In 2016, about 500 employees across all Wipro sites utilised the MITR program. The initiative has been successful in providing immediate, on-campus support while building internal emotional intelligence capabilities⁶¹.

Infosys: Digital Engagement and Manager Enablement

Infosys has developed sophisticated digital platforms to enhance employee engagement and retention. The company's iEngage platform helps drive vertical engagement between employees and business leaders, allowing managers to schedule events, track actions, and gather employee feedback. This platform focuses on talent aspiration management and provides communication forums²³.

The company also implemented QuickStart, an immersive onboarding experience for lateral joiners that builds safe and agile workplace environments²³. Additionally, Infosys launched a comprehensive engagement playbook for managers, focusing on various mechanisms to promote team building and drive purposeful collaborations virtually. Through these initiatives, employee well-being rates reached 91% among employees across locations, with connectedness standing at 88%²⁴.

JSW Steel: Leadership EI Development

JSW Steel Manufacturing has implemented targeted emotional intelligence workshops for leaders. The program was designed to equip participants with essential skills to understand, manage, and leverage their emotions at the workplace²⁹. Key learning outcomes included recognising the power of emotions, evaluating quality of life with emotional guidance, understanding EI importance, and developing mindful practices that break negative emotional states²⁹.

The workshop created a safe, non-judgmental sharing space that allowed participants to explore their emotions authentically. This vulnerability fostered deep, authentic learning as participants shared personal experiences, challenges, and feelings, which helped deepen emotional understanding, empathy, and self-awareness²⁹.

Chapter 4 Keypoints

01

Emotional Intelligence is a core driver of job performance, enabling employees to effectively navigate conflict, sustain motivation, and collaborate under pressure.

02

Higher EI improves adaptability by helping individuals manage their own and others' emotions during change, fostering smoother transitions and resilience.

03

Organizations investing in EI development consistently see measurable gains in productivity, collaboration, and team problem-solving, supported by global and Indian case evidence.

Well-being and Growth: Building Resilient Workforces

Employee well-being and resilience have become fundamental pillars of organizational success, particularly as workplaces navigate unprecedented challenges and rapid change. The mounting evidence linking Emotional Intelligence (EI) to psychological health, stress reduction, and workplace resilience has positioned EI development as a strategic imperative for organizations seeking to build thriving, adaptive workforces. This chapter examines how EI serves as a cornerstone for employee well-being and organizational growth, drawing on robust meta-analytic evidence and real-world applications.

Impact of EI on Health and Well-being

The relationship between emotional intelligence and well-being is supported by extensive meta-analytic research spanning multiple decades and populations. Schutte et al.'s comprehensive meta-analysis of 44 studies involving 7,898 participants established that higher emotional intelligence is significantly associated with better health outcomes across multiple domains⁵². **The study found weighted average correlations of $r = .29$ with mental health, $r = .31$ with psychosomatic health, and $r = .22$ with physical health, demonstrating EI's broad protective effects⁵².**

Building on this foundation, Martins, Ramalho, and Morin's meta-analysis of 80 studies with over 19,000 participants confirmed a strong relationship between high EI and mental health, psychosomatic health,



and physical health³⁷. The research revealed that trait EI showed particularly strong associations with mental health outcomes, suggesting that individuals' perceptions of their emotional competencies play a crucial role in psychological well-being³⁷.

More recent research continues to support these findings. A 2024 systematic review of healthcare workers found that all 17 longitudinal studies examining EI training interventions demonstrated increases in emotional intelligence following the intervention, with corresponding improvements in stress management and overall well-being⁴⁶. The healthcare context is particularly relevant given the high-stress nature of these roles and the emotional labour involved.

How EI Builds Resilience

Emotional intelligence enhances well-being and resilience through several interconnected mechanisms that operate at both individual and organizational levels. At the individual level, EI supports emotional regulation, enabling people to maintain cognitive clarity during stressful situations and avoid emotional hijacking that can impair decision-making and performance. Research demonstrates that individuals with higher EI are better equipped to recognise emotional signals early, process their reactions to change effectively, and maintain motivation even in challenging circumstances.

The stress-buffering effects of EI are particularly significant in today's high-pressure work environments. A survey found that nearly two-thirds of professionals report higher stress levels at work compared to five years earlier, with 76% saying stress has negatively impacted their personal relationships³¹. Organizations investing in EI development report marked improvements in employees' ability to cope with work demands and maintain psychological well-being under pressure.

EI also enhances social support networks, which serve as critical buffers against stress and burnout. Research examining university



students found that emotional intelligence is significantly and positively linked with psychological well-being, with environmentally and psychologically supportive factors playing key roles in mental health outcomes⁵⁰. In workplace contexts, emotionally intelligent employees are more likely to build supportive relationships with colleagues and supervisors, creating networks that enhance resilience during difficult periods.

Developing Organizational Well-being Through EI

Organizations seeking to leverage EI for enhanced well-being should adopt comprehensive approaches that address both individual and systemic factors. Research indicates that successful programs combine multiple elements: comprehensive assessment and feedback using validated EI tools, targeted training focused on core emotional competencies, leadership development that models emotionally intelligent behaviours, and cultural integration that reinforces EI principles throughout organizational systems^{52,37}.

The evidence suggests that well-being interventions are most effective when they support employees across the entire spectrum of mental health, from promotion and prevention to intervention and recovery⁴⁶. Organizations achieving the greatest returns on their well-being investments typically implement leadership training, stress management programs, and return-to-work support that incorporates EI principles.

Corporates' evolution toward holistic employee well-being reflects a broader recognition that emotional and psychological competencies are essential for workforce resilience. Companies are implementing karma-driven initiatives and community engagement programs that enhance employees' sense of purpose while building emotional connections to organizational values.

Research indicates that 74% of employees seek more meaning in their work, and participating in such initiatives enhances their sense of purpose and engagement³³.

Figure 1: Aspects of SEQAP with the strongest relationship to well-being.

SEQAP Scale	Link To Well-Being
Self Articulation	Having a strong sense of inner confidence.
Objectivity/ Hopefulness	Adopting an optimistic but realistic perspective.
Achievement Drive	Having a clear sense of direction and purpose.
Self Emotional Consciousness	Regulating emotions and not over-reacting.
Self Dependence	Taking personal responsibility for what happens to them.

Case Studies

Wipro's Technology-Enhanced Well-being Approach

Wipro has pioneered innovative approaches to employee well-being by combining technology with emotional intelligence principles. The company implemented AI-powered tools to monitor employee stress levels, enabling timely, proactive, and personalised mental health interventions^{60,61}. This approach has proven effective in reducing burnout while increasing employee satisfaction, demonstrating how technology can enhance rather than replace human emotional competencies.

The success of Wipro's program lies in its recognition that while technology can identify patterns and flag potential issues, emotionally intelligent managers and HR professionals are essential for providing meaningful support and fostering psychological safety. The program's outcomes align with research showing that emotional intelligence serves as a critical factor in mitigating loneliness and building supportive workplace relationships^{60,61}.

Infosys's Holistic Wellness Framework

Infosys has developed a comprehensive wellness program encompassing fitness centres, health screenings, and stress management workshops. The IT giant's approach has resulted in a 5% reduction in employee healthcare costs and a 10% increase in productivity, demonstrating the tangible business benefits of investing in employee well-being¹⁹. The program's success stems from its integration of emotional intelligence principles throughout wellness initiatives, recognising that physical health and emotional well-being are interconnected¹⁹.

The company's focus on stress management workshops particularly highlights the role of EI in building resilience. These sessions help employees develop emotional regulation skills, enhance self-awareness, and build coping strategies for managing workplace pressures¹⁹. Research supports this approach, showing that individuals with higher emotional intelligence experience better psychological well-being and are more capable of managing stress effectively.

Fostering Resilience at Supreme Industries

Supreme Industries Ltd., a leading Indian manufacturing company, provides a practical illustration of EI's impact on resilience and well-being. The company's HR department implemented a structured EI development program for its professionals, focusing on self-regulation, empathy, and stress management²⁵. Post-program evaluation revealed:

- Increased self-reported resilience scores among HR professionals.
- Lower incidence of burnout and absenteeism.
- Enhanced capacity to support employees through organizational changes.

Participants reported feeling better equipped to handle high-pressure situations and more confident in their ability to foster a positive workplace climate²⁵. The initiative also contributed to improved team cohesion and communication, highlighting the broader organizational benefits of EI development²⁵.

Chapter 5 Keypoints

01

Emotional Intelligence directly supports better mental health and well-being by enhancing individuals' ability to manage stress and emotional challenges at work.

02

Employees with higher EI demonstrate more effective coping strategies, improved communication, and problem-solving skills that contribute to sustained work performance and resilience.

03

Investment in EI development correlates with reductions in burnout, absenteeism, and turnover intentions, underpinning healthier, more engaged, and productive workplaces.

Leading with EI: Developing Tomorrow's Managers

Leadership effectiveness in the modern workplace extends far beyond technical expertise and positional authority. As organizations navigate increasingly complex challenges—from hybrid work models to multi-generational teams to rapid technological change—the qualities that distinguish outstanding leaders have fundamentally shifted. Emotional Intelligence (EI) now sits at the centre of effective leadership, with extensive research demonstrating its critical role in creating high-performing teams, driving innovation, and building organizational resilience.

The Foundation of Emotionally Intelligent Leadership

Decades of research have established that leaders with higher EI consistently outperform their peers across multiple dimensions of effectiveness. Meta-analytic studies show that EI is strongly associated with transformational leadership behaviours—those that inspire, motivate, and develop others^{28,3}. Leaders who demonstrate high EI are better at managing their own emotions under pressure, accurately reading team dynamics, and responding appropriately to the emotional needs of their colleagues¹².

The impact of leadership EI extends beyond individual effectiveness to influence entire organizational climates. Research consistently shows that leaders' emotional intelligence significantly affects team job satisfaction, engagement levels, and overall workplace atmosphere⁶. Teams led by emotionally intelligent managers report higher levels of psychological safety, more effective communication, and greater willingness to take creative risks—all critical factors for innovation and adaptability^{20,7}.

Conversely, leaders who lack EI can have disproportionately negative effects on their teams. Studies indicate that EI deficits in leadership roles often manifest as rigid thinking, avoidant behaviours, or aggressive communication styles that erode trust and undermine performance^{15,8}. The research suggests that leaders' EI accounts for more variance in negative workplace climate factors than positive ones, highlighting the risks associated with promoting technically competent but emotionally unintelligent individuals to management positions⁸.

The Evolving Leadership Landscape

The demands on contemporary leaders have intensified significantly in recent years.

Surveys reveal that fewer than one in five managers believe their organization possesses the people skills necessary to lead effectively in an AI-driven world. Nearly half doubt their management's ability to handle virtual teams effectively, while a significant proportion lack confidence in their leaders' capacity to engage across generational divides⁹.

These challenges require a new leadership paradigm that prioritises emotional and social competencies alongside technical skills. The World Economic Forum and McKinsey both project that social and emotional capabilities will see outsized increases in demand as automation handles routine tasks^{8,17}. Leaders must now demonstrate empathy, adaptability, and authentic communication while navigating unprecedented levels of uncertainty and change¹⁶.

Emotionally intelligent leaders are uniquely equipped to meet these demands. They excel at reading subtle social cues, anticipating team needs, and fostering inclusive environments where diverse perspectives are valued. They model emotional regulation under pressure, inspire commitment during uncertainty, and build the trust necessary for effective virtual collaboration. These capabilities are not innate—research consistently demonstrates that EI can be measured, developed, and strengthened through targeted interventions¹⁸.

Evidence from Practice: Leadership EI in Action

The practical value of EI in leadership is reflected in how organizations select and develop their managers. Research has established that while cognitive ability and technical expertise remain important, EI is the most reliable differentiator between outstanding and average leaders. The most effective leaders consistently demonstrate self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy,



and strong relationship management skills—core components of emotional intelligence^{4,6,28}.

Global organizations have increasingly embedded EI into their leadership development processes, with measurable results. Companies that integrate EI assessment into management selection report stronger leadership pipelines and improved team performance. Those that invest in EI-focused development programmes see enhanced manager effectiveness ratings, improved employee engagement scores, and reduced leadership turnover⁶.

The relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness is particularly pronounced in roles requiring high emotional labour—management positions, customer-facing roles, and collaborative team environments that characterise modern knowledge work⁸. Leaders in these contexts must constantly navigate interpersonal dynamics, resolve conflicts, and maintain team morale while delivering results under pressure⁸.

Building EI-Driven Leadership Capabilities

Successful leadership development programmes increasingly incorporate EI as a core component rather than an optional add-on. Effective approaches combine rigorous assessment using validated tools, targeted skill development, experiential learning opportunities, and ongoing coaching support^{7,12}. The most impactful programmes integrate EI development with real-world leadership challenges, allowing participants to practice emotional competencies in authentic workplace contexts^{7,12}.

Research indicates that EI development is most effective when it addresses both intrapersonal and interpersonal capabilities. Leaders must first develop self-awareness and emotional regulation before they can effectively support and influence others. This developmental sequence aligns with evidence showing that sustainable EI improvement requires consistent practice and reinforcement over time¹².

Organizations that successfully develop emotionally intelligent leaders also focus on creating supportive cultural conditions. Senior leaders must model EI behaviours, reward emotional competencies alongside technical achievements, and create psychological safety for learning and growth. These systemic approaches ensure that EI development becomes embedded in organizational DNA rather than remaining isolated to training programmes^{6,7}.

Case Studies

Johnson & Johnson: Executive EI Assessment and Development

Johnson & Johnson implemented comprehensive EI assessment and development as part of their executive pipeline, using the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) to evaluate and enhance leadership capabilities. The programme combined 360-degree assessments with targeted workshops and individual coaching sessions²⁷.

Results demonstrated significant improvements in leadership effectiveness, with participating executives showing an 18% increase in EI scores and a 25% improvement in direct report engagement ratings²⁷. Teams led by programme participants experienced 15% lower turnover rates compared to control groups²⁷. The initiative's success led to EI becoming a standard component of J&J's global leadership development framework.

L'Oréal: Integrating EI into Leadership Competency Models

L'Oréal redesigned their global leadership competency framework around six core EI capabilities, integrating emotional intelligence into succession planning and talent development processes³². The cosmetics giant's approach emphasised practical application of EI skills in complex, multicultural business environments.

The programme resulted in a 12% increase in leadership bench strength and 22% improvement in succession planning effectiveness³². Leaders who scored higher on EI assessments received superior performance ratings and were more likely to be promoted to senior roles³². L'Oréal's experience demonstrates how EI can be systematically integrated into talent management processes for sustainable organizational impact.

American Express: Financial Services Leadership Excellence

American Express implemented EI training for middle and senior managers, focusing specifically on emotional self-awareness and social skills development. The programme addressed the unique challenges of leading in high-pressure financial services environments, where relationship management and stress tolerance are critical success factors¹.

Outcomes included 20% improvement in team productivity scores, 15% increase in customer satisfaction ratings, and 31% reduction in manager turnover¹. The programme's success was attributed to its practical focus on real-world application and ongoing support for skill development. American Express subsequently expanded the initiative globally, making EI development a requirement for management roles.

Chapter 6 Keypoints

01

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is essential for effective leadership, enabling managers to foster psychological safety, inspire teams, and drive change with empathy and vision.

02

Leaders with high EI create positive organizational climates by reducing negative behaviours such as aggression and rigidity, while promoting trust, collaboration, and adaptability.

03

Embedding EI development within leadership programs yields measurable improvements in employee engagement, productivity, and retention.

EI: The Human Advantage in the Age of AI

As artificial intelligence (AI) and automation reshape the workplace, organizations are re-examining what truly sets high-performing teams and leaders apart. While AI excels at processing data, automating tasks, and flagging trends, it cannot replicate the nuanced empathy, ethical judgment, and relationship-building skills that define effective human leadership. Emotional Intelligence stands out as a critical differentiator—enabling individuals and organizations to thrive in an increasingly digital world.

EI: The Differentiator in a Digital Era

Current research and global surveys consistently highlight that EI is becoming more—not less—essential as AI transforms the nature of work. A report ranks EI, leadership, and social influence among the top skills that will see an outsized increase in demand as automation accelerates⁶². McKinsey's research further predicts that social and emotional skills will be required for the majority of job transitions between now and 2030⁴⁰. Yet, a significant leadership gap persists: less than one-fifth of managers believe their organization has the people skills to capitalise on AI, and nearly half lack confidence in their management's ability to lead virtual teams²².

AI can process vast quantities of information, identify patterns, and even provide recommendations. However, it is emotionally intelligent managers and teams who interpret context, build trust, and resolve conflict—functions that remain fundamentally human. As PSI's white paper notes, “EI is proving helpful in areas such as Artificial Intelligence, which paradoxically places a high premium on human attributes such as empathy and collaboration”⁴⁷.



The Limits of AI: Why Human Skills Matter

While AI-powered tools can flag engagement issues, detect sentiment, and automate repetitive tasks, they cannot replace the human ability to understand unspoken concerns, mediate sensitive conversations, or inspire teams through uncertainty. For example, AI-driven analytics can highlight when a team's engagement scores are dropping, but it takes an emotionally intelligent leader to uncover the root causes and rebuild psychological safety²⁰.

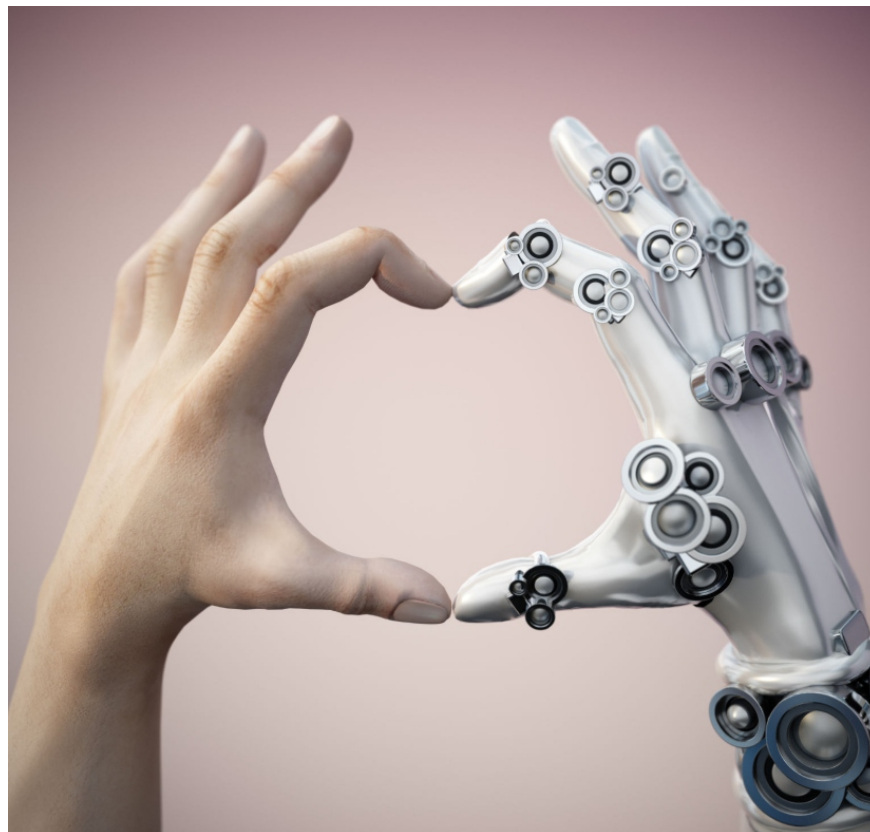
Ethical judgment is another domain where EI is irreplaceable. AI can surface decision-making patterns and highlight anomalies, but it cannot weigh competing values, navigate ambiguity, or make principled choices in complex, high-stakes situations⁴⁷. Empathy, authenticity, and trust—core facets of EI—are integral to ethical leadership and cannot be programmed or automated²².

The Human-AI Partnership: Best of Both Worlds

The most forward-thinking organizations are not choosing between AI and EI—they are integrating both. AI augments human decision-making by providing data-driven insights, while emotionally intelligent leaders and teams provide the context, empathy, and judgment needed to act on those insights effectively^{22,47}.

This partnership enables organizations to respond to change with agility, foster innovation, and maintain a strong ethical compass²².

For example, in talent management, AI can help screen candidates and predict fit, but final hiring decisions rely on leaders' ability to assess cultural alignment, motivation, and interpersonal skills²². In customer service, chatbots can handle routine queries, but complex or sensitive issues are escalated to human agents who use EI to resolve concerns and build trust^{22,47}.



Case Studies

Edgenda: Augmenting Engagement with AI and EI

Edgenda, a global HR consultancy, uses AI-powered engagement analytics to monitor employee sentiment and flag emerging issues in real time¹⁰. However, their research and client experience show that the most successful interventions occur when emotionally intelligent managers interpret these insights and act with empathy. For instance, AI might detect a spike in negative sentiment following an organizational change, but it is the manager's ability to listen, acknowledge concerns, and foster open dialogue that restores trust and engagement¹⁰.

Google: AI Supporting—Not Replacing—Team Dynamics

Google leverages AI to support team effectiveness, using advanced analytics to identify patterns in communication, collaboration, and performance. Tools like Google's "People Analytics" can pinpoint teams at risk of disengagement or conflict²⁰. Yet, the company's own research (including Project Aristotle) shows that psychological safety—driven by empathy, active listening, and trust—is the most important factor in high-performing teams. AI can flag issues, but it is emotionally intelligent leaders who create the conditions for teams to thrive²⁰.

HDFC Securities: Integrating AI and EI for Sales Success (India)

In India, HDFC Securities has combined AI-powered analytics with EI training for its sales teams¹¹. AI tools help identify customer preferences and predict churn, but it is the emotionally intelligent relationship managers who translate these insights into meaningful conversations and long-term loyalty. The company reports improved customer satisfaction and higher retention rates when AI insights are paired with EI-driven relationship management¹¹.

Chapter 7 Keypoints

01

El differentiates humans in an AI-driven workplace by enhancing uniquely human skills such as empathy, judgment, and relationship management.

02

Combining El with AI technologies strengthens organizational adaptability, innovation, and resilience during technological disruption.

03

Investing in El alongside digital capabilities creates a competitive edge by empowering leaders and teams to navigate complexity and change effectively.



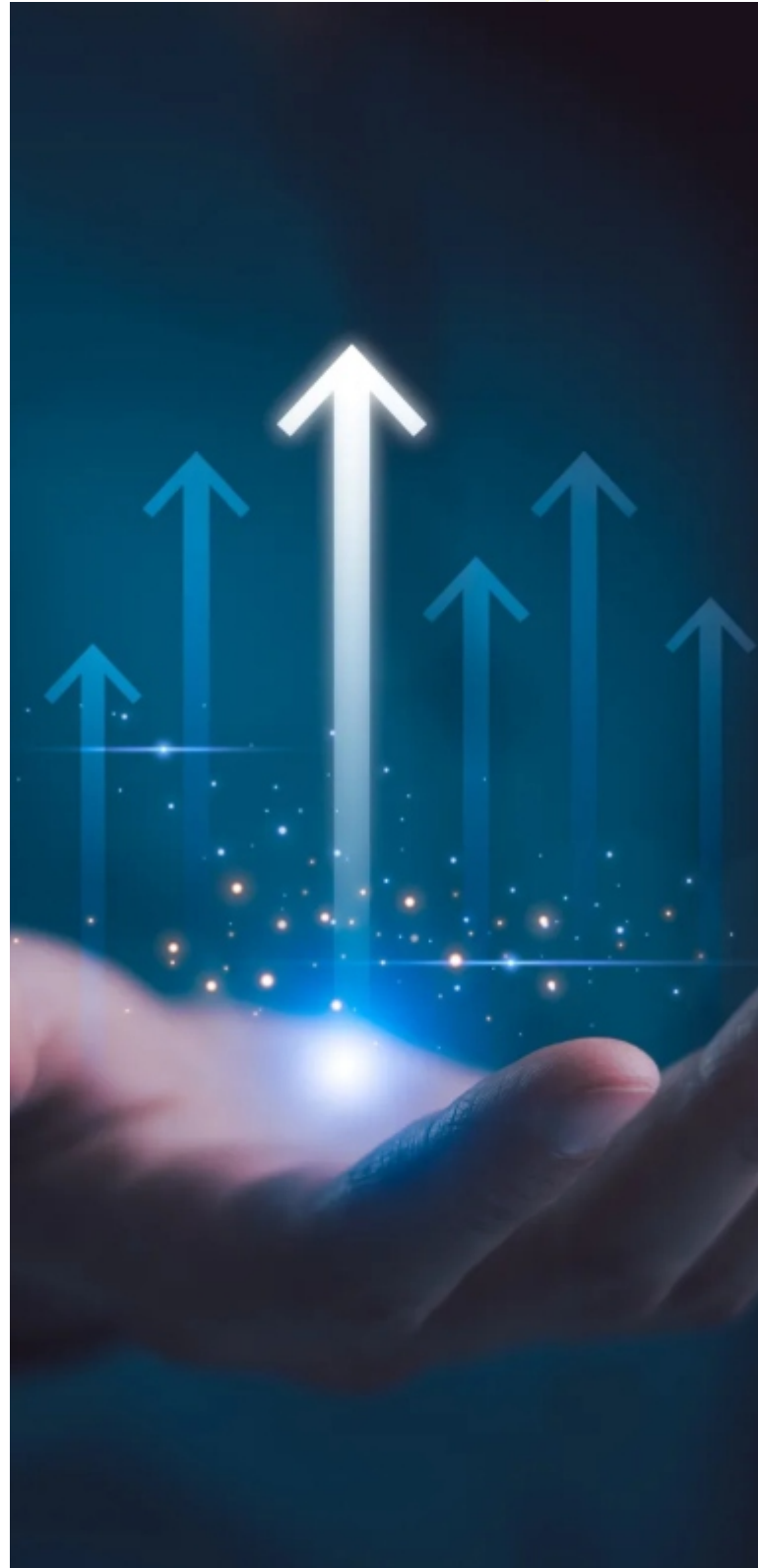
The Value of EI: ROI and Competitive Edge

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is no longer a peripheral “soft skill”—it is a proven driver of business value and a strategic asset for organizations aiming to thrive in a complex, fast-changing world. A robust body of global research and well-documented case studies demonstrates that investing in EI delivers measurable returns: higher productivity, stronger engagement, lower turnover, and improved profitability.

EI as a Strategic Asset

Organizations that prioritise EI development consistently outperform their peers across key business outcomes. Decades of research show that EI is a strong predictor of job performance, particularly in roles with high emotional labour such as management, sales, and customer service. Meta-analyses confirm that EI adds unique, incremental value to traditional assessments of personality and cognitive ability, enhancing the accuracy of predicting job performance and identifying high-potential talent^{28,44}.

EI's impact extends beyond individual performance. Teams and organizations with higher EI report more effective collaboration, greater adaptability, and higher engagement—qualities that are essential for



navigating uncertainty and maintaining a competitive edge. **For example, research summarised in the PSI white paper finds that EI accounts for up to 31% of the variance in individual work engagement, a key driver of productivity and retention^{47,8}.**

Financial Returns from EI Initiatives

Investing in EI delivers tangible financial benefits. Global studies consistently report strong returns on EI training and development. A widely cited analysis of EI programmes across industries found that **organizations reported returns ranging from 500% to 700% on investment, driven by improvements in productivity, engagement, and reduced turnover⁶.** These results are reinforced by meta-analytic evidence and large-scale organizational case studies.

The impact of EI on retention is particularly significant. Data from a global leadership research firm tracking 20,000 new hires found that 23% failed because they were unable to understand and manage emotions, while over 89% failed due to interpersonal or behavioural issues—not technical skills. Addressing these gaps through EI development leads to substantial cost savings from reduced turnover and improved team performance^{7,11}.



Case Studies

TalentSmart: Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance

TalentSmart's extensive research, spanning over one million professionals across a wide range of industries, demonstrates that Emotional Intelligence is a decisive factor in workplace success. Their findings reveal that EI accounts for 58% of performance in all job types, a proportion far exceeding that attributable to technical skill or IQ alone⁵⁴. Notably, 90% of top performers in their global sample scored high in EI, compared to just 20% of bottom performers⁵⁴. This trend holds true across organizational levels, from entry-level roles to executive leadership, highlighting EI's universal relevance.

The financial impact is equally significant. Employees with high EI earn, on average, \$29,000 more per year than their low-EI counterparts, regardless of industry or role⁵⁴. This earnings differential is linked to high-EI individuals' superior ability to manage stress, build relationships, and navigate organizational dynamics—skills that drive productivity, effective

CIBC: EI Development and Sales Performance

The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) offers a compelling example of the business impact of EI development in the financial sector. CIBC implemented a comprehensive EI programme for its financial advisors, focusing on self-awareness, empathy, and relationship management through assessment, targeted training, and ongoing coaching. Advisors who participated in the programme increased their sales by 18% compared to a control group, with managers reporting that these high-EI advisors were more adept at understanding client needs, managing difficult conversations, and fostering long-term trust³.

Beyond sales performance, the programme also delivered improvements in customer satisfaction and advisor retention. Advisors who completed EI training were less likely to leave the bank, a result attributed to enhanced resilience and job satisfaction. Follow-up assessments at six and twelve months confirmed that

collaboration, and career progression. TalentSmart's research also shows that emotionally intelligent employees are more likely to receive positive performance reviews, earn promotions, and remain with their organizations over time, underscoring EI's role in building resilient, high-performing workforces⁵⁴.

gains in both EI scores and business outcomes were sustained, reinforcing the value of EI as a long-term driver of individual and organizational performance³.

Chapter 8 Keypoints

01

EI is a strategic asset, proven to drive business through higher productivity, stronger engagement, lower turnover, and improved profitability.

02

EI is a strong predictor of job performance, especially in roles involving high emotional labour, adding unique value beyond traditional personality and cognitive assessments and enabling better identification of high-potential talent.

03

Investing in EI development delivers substantial financial returns, largely due to enhanced productivity, engagement, and significant reductions in turnover costs.

EI as a Performance Predictor

The ability to predict job performance accurately remains one of the most critical challenges in talent management. As established in Chapter 1, 76% of workplace challenges stem from people and relational issues rather than technical problems, highlighting the importance of assessing emotional and social competencies alongside traditional measures. Emotional Intelligence has emerged as a powerful predictor of workplace success, offering incremental insights that enhance selection and development processes^{3,7}.

The Performance Prediction Challenge

Organizations continuously seek tools to optimize hiring and performance management decisions. While traditional predictors such as cognitive ability and personality assessments provide valuable insights, they often miss crucial emotional and social competencies that determine workplace effectiveness. Research tracking new hires reveals that 23% fail because they cannot understand and manage emotions, while over 89% fail due to interpersonal or behavioural issues rather than technical incompetence^{3,7}.

The business case for enhanced prediction accuracy is compelling. As noted in Chapter 8, employees with high EI earn an average of \$29,000 more per year than their low-EI counterparts, regardless of industry or role. This substantial earnings differential reflects the superior ability of emotionally intelligent individuals to manage stress, build relationships, and navigate organizational dynamics—all critical drivers of workplace success^{54,7}.



Meta-Analytic Evidence for EI's Predictive Validity

Multiple meta-analysis provides robust evidence for EI's role as a performance predictor. A comprehensive review of **19 organizational samples involving 2,652 employees concluded that "EI should indeed be considered a valuable predictor of performance,"** with correlations "large enough to generate significant savings and improvements for organizations that use measures of EI."²⁸

Further meta-analytic research synthesizing 27 studies and 3,961 participants demonstrated that mixed EI emerges as a clear predictor of performance. The authors recommended moving beyond viewing cognitive intelligence, personality, and EI as competing measures, instead focusing on developing integrative models that include all three for optimal prediction accuracy⁴⁴.

The Incremental Value of EI

One of the most compelling aspects of EI assessment is its incremental validity—the ability to improve performance prediction beyond traditional measures. As detailed in Chapter 8, **EI assessments add 6-12% incremental variance in predicting job performance over personality measures alone, and up to 19% in predicting engagement.** This represents substantial practical value for organizations seeking to enhance their talent identification capabilities^{44,54}.

Research examining the active ingredients of mixed EI found that 62% can be accounted for by seven individual characteristics, including conscientiousness, self-efficacy, self-rated performance, and extraversion, in addition to ability EI, emotional stability, and cognitive ability. These characteristics form the building blocks of emotionally intelligent behaviour and explain why EI adds unique predictive value to selection processes⁴⁴.

High Emotional Labour Roles

The predictive power of EI is particularly pronounced in roles requiring high emotional labour. Meta-analytic evidence confirms that "when dealing with high emotional labour jobs (jobs that require positive emotional displays), all types of EI measures exhibit meaningful validity and incremental validity over cognitive ability and personality."⁵ This finding has direct implications for management positions, customer service roles, and collaborative team environments that characterize modern knowledge work.

As demonstrated in Chapter 6, leaders with high EI are more likely to create climates that are visioning, stretching, encouraging, collaborative, and trusting, while being less aggressive, demanding, over-competitive, avoidant, dependent, and rigid. These leadership climate effects translate into tangible performance outcomes for both leaders and their teams⁶.

The Role of EI in Engagement and Performance

The relationship between EI and performance extends beyond direct job outcomes to encompass engagement—a critical predictor of productivity. Research cited in Chapter 4 shows that **EI**

accounts for 31% of the variance in individual work engagement, with teams having high engagement being 17% more productive and experiencing 21% higher profitability than those with lower engagement¹².

The mechanisms underlying this relationship are clear: individuals with higher EI demonstrate better emotional regulation, positive relationship building, and enhanced adaptability—all factors that directly influence performance outcomes. As noted in Chapter 5, employees with higher EI show enhanced coping strategies, effective communication, and improved problem-solving skills, contributing to superior work performance⁵⁰.



SEQAP's Contribution to Performance Prediction

GrowthSapes' Self Emotional Quotient Assessment & Profiler (SEQAP) builds upon these validated principles while providing culturally relevant insights for organizational contexts. SEQAP's 15-component framework enables precise identification of emotional competencies that predict performance, supporting targeted development interventions aligned with specific role requirements¹³.

The comprehensive nature of SEQAP's assessment—covering self-regard, emotional awareness, resilience, authenticity, and interpersonal skills—provides organizations with granular insights into the emotional capabilities that drive performance¹³. This detailed profiling supports both selection decisions and development planning, ensuring that EI assessment contributes meaningfully to talent management processes.

Implementation Considerations

Organizations seeking to leverage EI as a performance predictor should integrate assessment into existing selection frameworks rather than treating it as a standalone tool. The evidence suggests that EI provides maximum value when combined with cognitive ability tests and personality questionnaires, creating a comprehensive picture of candidate potential¹⁴.

The focus should be on roles with high emotional labour requirements, where EI's predictive validity is most pronounced. As demonstrated throughout this white paper, management positions, customer-facing roles, and collaborative team environments represent optimal contexts for EI-based selection and development interventions.



Relationship of EI Leadership style and Employee Performance

H0 (null hypothesis): There exists no significant relationship between EI leadership style and employee performance.

H1 (alternate hypothesis): There exists a significant relationship between EI leadership style and employee performance.

Independent variable	EI leadership style
Dependent variable	Employee performance
F value	0.690
P value	0.672
R square	0.053
Adjusted R square	0.004

***Note: Alpha = 0.05**

Relationship of EI Leadership Style and Organizational Performance

H0 (null hypothesis): There exists no significant relationship between EI leadership style and organizational performance.

H1: (alternate hypothesis): There exists a significant relationship between EI Leadership style and organizational performance.

Independent variable	EI leadership style
Dependent variable	Organizational performance
F value	1.379
P value	0.258
R square	0.137
Adjusted R square	0.039

***Note: Alpha = 0.05**

Chapter 9 Keypoints

01

Meta-analytic evidence confirms EI's incremental validity, with studies showing it can add up to 12% improvement in performance prediction accuracy, leading to better hiring, retention, and development decisions.

02

Integrating EI assessment tools into talent management enables organizations to identify high-potential employees and tailor development, driving sustained business outcomes.

03

Individuals with high EI excel in conflict management, adaptability, and decision-making under pressure, driving stronger team outcomes and organizational resilience.

Building EI Capabilities in Everyday Practice

Emotional Intelligence is not a vague or immeasurable trait; it is a set of capabilities that can be rigorously assessed, benchmarked, and developed at scale. The most successful companies move beyond one-off workshops or generic training, instead building EI through a sustained, multi-layered approach that combines robust assessment, experiential learning, and ongoing reinforcement.

EI Development: What the Evidence Shows

Recent research provides clear, actionable evidence that Emotional Intelligence (EI) can be significantly enhanced through well-designed training programmes, and that these gains are both meaningful and sustainable.

A comprehensive meta-analysis by Mattingly and Kraiger reviewed 58 EI interventions across a wide range of sectors³⁸—including managers, sales professionals, police officers, teachers, and frontline service staff and found:

- an average post-training EI score increase of **0.55 standard deviations**—participants outperformed **73%** of untrained peers³⁸.
- improvements in EI were maintained at follow-up assessments several months later³⁸.
- that the most effective programmes included **experiential discussion, peer feedback, and hands-on skills practice**³⁸.
- that multi-session interventions led to more durable change than single-day workshops³⁸.

Further supporting this, Casali and colleagues⁵ conducted a systematic review of 17 longitudinal EI programmes delivered in corporate environments over periods of six to twelve months.

- Reported an **average ROI of 250%**, driven by:
 - **11% reduction in absenteeism**
 - **9% increase in supervisor-rated productivity**⁵.
- Participants retained significant EI improvements one year after completing the programme⁵.
- Best results came from **hybrid designs** combining digital micro-learning (bite-sized, app-based practice) with live coaching and group reflection⁵.
- Programmes integrated into performance management cycles showed higher transfer to daily

work⁵.

EI Capability Building: Next Steps

1. Start with Robust Assessment

Effective EI development begins with a clear understanding of current strengths and growth areas. Tools like the Self Emotional Quotient Assessment & Profiler (SEQAP) provide a nuanced, culturally relevant profile of emotional capabilities at the individual, team, and organizational levels. This data-driven starting point allows for:

- Personalised development journeys,
- Targeted interventions for teams and leaders,
- Measurement of progress over time^{21,1}.

2. Embrace Experiential and Gamified Learning

Research shows that EI is best developed through active, immersive experiences—not lectures or theory alone³⁸. GrowthSqapes' approach leverages gamification and experiential learning to accelerate real-world skill building:

- Gamified modules simulate workplace challenges, making learning engaging and memorable.
- Experiential workshops use role-plays, group activities, and peer feedback to foster self-awareness, empathy, and relationship management²¹.
- Habit-building routines and digital nudges encourage daily EI practice, helping new behaviours stick.

This methodology not only increases engagement, but also ensures that EI skills are transferred from the classroom to the workplace²¹.

3. Integrate EI into Talent and Leadership Processes

To make EI a living part of your culture:

- Embed EI in leadership development: Use 360-degree feedback, coaching, and real-world projects to help leaders model emotionally intelligent behaviours²⁷.
- Incorporate EI into performance management: Recognise and reward EI competencies—such as collaboration, adaptability, and conflict resolution—alongside technical achievements⁶⁰.
- Foster team-based EI: Use assessment insights to build psychological safety and trust within teams, supporting open communication and innovation⁶.

4. Sustain Growth with Reinforcement and Community

Lasting change requires ongoing support:

- Micro-learning and digital tools provide regular reminders, tips, and progress tracking⁵.
- Peer learning circles create safe spaces for employees to share challenges, successes, and strategies for applying EI in real situations⁶¹.
- Visible leadership commitment ensures that EI is championed from the top, setting the tone for the entire organization⁶⁰.

Moving Forward: EI as a Daily Practice

Looking ahead, the imperative is clear: move beyond rhetoric and make EI a core part of how your organization hires, develops, and leads. This is not about a single intervention or programme, but about building a culture where emotional intelligence is woven into the fabric of everyday work—where leaders model it, teams practice it, and systems reinforce it. In a world where uncertainty is the only constant, EI is the capability that will enable organizations not just to survive, but to thrive. The future belongs to those who recognise that human potential—unlocked through emotional intelligence—is the most valuable asset of all.

Chapter 10 Keypoints

01

EI is a set of concrete, measurable skills that can be developed through sustained, multi-layered programs combining rigorous assessment, experiential learning, and ongoing reinforcement.

02

Embedding EI into talent and leadership processes, including personalized assessment, integration in performance management, and visible leadership support, institutionalizes EI as a core organizational capability.

03

Immersive methods such as gamified simulations, role-plays, peer feedback, and digital nudges effectively embed EI skills into daily work, enhancing real-world application.

Conclusion: The Future is Emotionally Intelligent

This white paper presents compelling evidence that Emotional Intelligence (EI) has evolved from a conceptual framework to a measurable, strategic business capability. Drawing on three decades of global research and practical applications, the findings demonstrate that EI is not merely a "soft skill" but a critical driver of organizational performance, leadership effectiveness, and competitive advantage.



Major Learnings and Strategic Insights

1. The Business Case is Unequivocal

- 76% of workplace challenges are relational, not technical - highlighting that traditional approaches focusing solely on technical competencies miss the primary drivers of organizational dysfunction.
- Meta-analyses consistently show EI predicts job performance beyond cognitive ability and personality traits, with particularly strong effects in roles requiring emotional labour.
- Financial returns are substantial: organizations report 500-700% ROI from EI initiatives, driven by productivity gains, reduced turnover, and improved customer loyalty.

2. EI Drives Measurable Business Outcomes

- Performance Enhancement: EI accounts for 58% of performance across all job types, with 90% of top performers scoring high in EI compared to only 20% of bottom performers.

- Engagement and Retention: High-EI employees earn an average of \$29,000 more annually and are significantly less likely to leave their organizations.
- Leadership Effectiveness: Leaders' EI accounts for up to 70% of variance in employee engagement scores and has disproportionate impact on reducing negative workplace climate factors.

3. EI is Developable and Scalable

- Training effectiveness proven: Meta-analyses show participants in EI programmes outperform 73% of untrained peers, with gains sustained months after intervention.
- Optimal development approaches identified: Interactive, experiential programmes with ongoing reinforcement produce the strongest and most durable improvements.
- Cultural integration essential: Organizations embedding EI into talent management, performance systems, and leadership development see the greatest returns.

4. The Human Advantage in Digital Transformation

- AI amplifies rather than replaces EI needs: While AI handles data processing and automation, human emotional intelligence becomes the critical differentiator for context, empathy, and ethical judgment.
- Future skills demand: The World Economic Forum projects social and emotional skills will see "outsized increases in demand" as automation advances.
- Leadership gap exists: Only 17% of managers believe their organization has the people skills needed for AI-driven environments.

Strategic Recommendations for Implementation

Immediate Actions

1. Assess Current State: Implement validated EI assessments like SEQAP to establish baseline capabilities and identify development priorities.
2. Integrate into Leadership Development: Make EI a core component of management selection, promotion, and development processes.



3. Design Experiential Training: Move beyond traditional workshops to gamified, interactive programmes that embed learning in real workplace contexts.

Long-term Integration

1. Embed in Organizational Systems: Integrate EI competencies into performance management, succession planning, and cultural initiatives.
2. Create Reinforcement Mechanisms: Establish peer learning networks, digital nudges, and ongoing coaching to sustain development.
3. Model from the Top: Ensure senior leadership visibly demonstrates and champions EI behaviours throughout the organization.

The Path Forward

The evidence presented in this white paper eliminates any doubt about EI's strategic value. Organizations face a clear choice: proactively develop emotional intelligence capabilities or risk falling behind competitors who recognise EI as a core business asset.

The convergence of global research, technological advancement, and changing workforce expectations has created an unprecedented opportunity. While artificial intelligence automates routine tasks, human emotional intelligence provides the context, empathy, and ethical judgment necessary for sustainable success.

The Time is Now

The transformation to an emotionally intelligent organization begins with leadership commitment and systematic implementation. The tools, methodologies, and evidence base now exist to make this vision reality. The question is not whether to invest in EI, but how quickly and comprehensively to act.

The future belongs to organizations that understand this balance: technical excellence combined with emotional intelligence. In a world where change is constant and uncertainty is the norm, EI provides the stability, adaptability, and resilience necessary for long-term success. The evidence is clear, the opportunity is unprecedented, and the time to act is now.

This whitepaper has been written by GrowthSqapes Consulting Pvt. Ltd. along with Aadya Aggarwal, an alumna of Ashoka University, India.

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Appendix

SEQAP EQ Component Descriptions

1. **Self-Assessment** - Self-Assessment is one's capability to be aware of one self and consequently, understand, accept and respect oneself. It means knowing one's internal capacities, one's own strengths and weaknesses.
2. **Self-Emotional Consciousness** - Self Emotional Consciousness is one's capability to recognize and understand one's emotions and the way they impact oneself and others. It refers to the ability to label the emotions, differentiate between one's emotions and know what one is feeling, why they are feeling and what is the root of those feelings.
3. **Self-Articulation** - Self-Articulation is one's capability to express one's emotions, beliefs and thoughts in a non-destructive manner and to defend one's rights in an assertive manner. Self-articulation is a necessary condition for effective communication and is an important factor in being decisive.
4. **Objectivity** - Objectivity is one's capability to assess the linkage between what is subjectively experienced and what objectively exists. This involves quick attunement to the situation at hand, keeping things in the correct perspective without excessive indulgence into fantasy.
5. **Self-Dependence** - Self-dependence is one's capability to be independent in one's thinking and behaviour and to be free of emotional dependency. It means seeing multiple possibilities and not being afraid to take risks and failures associated with trying to find a better way than looking at only one or two simple ways of doing things.
6. **Stress Management** - Stress Management is one's capability to effectively deal with mental and physical stress. The ability to manage stress is a critical factor in dealing with the rapid and constant changes in today's VUCA world.
7. **Impulse Management** - Impulse management is one's capability to control one's emotions and to resist or delay an impulse, drive or temptation to act. It is reflective of one's ability to control one's anger and avoid abusive, hostile and aggressive behaviour.
8. **Adaptability** - Adaptability is one's capability to adjust one's emotions, thoughts and behaviour to changing situations and conditions. It involves being open to change, new ideas, challenges and approaches.
9. **Problem Resolution** - Problem Resolution is one's capability to identify and solve recurring problems. It includes weighing the pros and cons of potential solutions and foreseeing the

possible outcome of one solution over another.

- 10. Hopefulness** - Hopefulness is one's capability to look at the glass as "half full, than half empty" and to be positive attitudinally, even in the face of adversity. Hopefulness implies optimism, which plays an important role in overall self-motivation.
- 11. Contentedness** - Contentedness is one's capability to enjoy life in general, one-self and others as these three are. This feeling of being satisfied with life contributes to the emotional energy required to get routine things done.
- 12. Achievement Drive** - Achievement Drive is one's capability to make goals in life and achieve those, to have a sense of direction in life and to be driven in realizing one's true potential in any field in life. This component is associated with persistently trying to do one's best and striving to improve oneself in general, which leads to feelings of self-satisfaction.
- 13. Empathy** - Empathy is one's capability to identify, understand and appreciate the feelings of others. Being sensitive to what, how and why people feel the way they do.
- 14. Interpersonal Relationships** - Interpersonal Relationships refers to one's capability to build and maintain mutually satisfying relationships on one-to-one basis which is marked by emotional closeness, intimacy and by the capacity to give and receive affection.
- 15. Group Preference** - Group Preference is one's capability to feel a sense of belonging to one's social group or team and being a cooperative and contributing member. This aspect of social skills has to do with collaboration, support, accountability, integrity, and trustworthiness.



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Capability Building For Business Impact

ABOUT US

Growthsqapes is a total Learning & Development and Organization Development consulting organization based in Delhi NCR, India, offering customized solutions. Our mojo is, visible change of individuals as well as organizations. We derive our approaches deeply and firmly from our principle of **Action-Diagnosis: determined by diagnosis, actioned for impact.**



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