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You can improve Emotional Intelligence

WOMEN AT WORK

Sally Ward

Across all industries and job titles, people who are high in emotional intelligence (EQ) perform better. "Emotional intelligence is more than twice as predictive of business performance than purely cognitive intelligence," asserts workplace leadership expert, Gerald Mount.

Simply defined, EQ is the ability to be aware of our emotions and the emotions and concerns of others, in the moment, and to use that information to manage ourselves and our relationships.

EQ is glaringly apparent when it is absent. A professional woman recounts her experience shopping for a car with her spouse. The salesperson directed all his energies and attention to the husband, plying him with questions about the features he wanted in a new vehicle. At last, he turned to the wife to ask, "What color do you like?" The couple left that car dealership, taking their business elsewhere.

According to the Forum Corporation on Manufacturing and Service Companies, seventy percent of the top reasons for losing customers are related to a lack of EQ skills. Developing those skills leads to improved sales, customer satisfaction, and profits. More companies and organizations are discovering the role of EQ in job satisfaction, retention, teamwork and productivity.

People who leave jobs are often really leaving their bosses. Low-EQ bosses who are harshly critical, insensitive and over-demanding create employees who are frustrated, disengaged, and demotivated. A *Business Wire* study in 2012 found that this situation "...is costing American companies \$360 billion a year in lost productivity."

EQ competencies can be improved; the first step is building awareness through assessment. An EQ assessment measures the individual's EQ competencies. It shows which ones are strong and which need improvement based on the requirements of the role or position.

Improvement starts by acting on the results of the assessment. Prioritize the opportunities and intentionally work toward developing the competencies that will enhance performance.

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