

Step-by-Step: Eight Ways to Train for Emotional Intelligence

According to research conducted by Gallup, emotionally intelligent employees and leaders are much more engaged and are less likely to leave an organization. They also have higher customer ratings, prompt more profitability for an organization, have higher rates of productivity, report fewer theft and safety incidents, and have lower rates of absenteeism.

In addition, employers in every industry are starting to value employees' rates of emotional intelligence (E.I.) over their IQ scores because of its high-impact potential for their organizations. So, if you want your organization to remain a competitive force, you'll have to begin training your employees to be more emotionally intelligent moving forward whether you like it or not. Here's how to train your employees to be more emotionally intelligent, step by step.

1. Uncover All the Benefits of Emotionally Intelligent Employees

Before developing a course that trains your employees how to be more emotionally intelligent, you'll want to truly understand why E.I. training is important for both your employees and your organization. And you'll want to uncover the benefits of such training behind the hype of other passing trends. Otherwise, your E.I. training might end up falling flat or you might end up losing motivation to fully promote and implement it once it's developed.

Here are just a few of the many benefits of more emotionally intelligent employees that you'll want to keep in mind.

- They foster better communications across an organization.
- They help mitigate and alleviate workplace stress and disagreements.
- They stimulate better collaboration inside and outside an organization.
- They nurture happier customers and grow your organization's profits.

2. Understand the Science Behind E.I.

It's important to understand that there is real science and data out there to support the effectiveness and mechanisms of E.I. and that it's not just a passing trend. Extensive neurological and psychological research has identified the various components of E.I. and has indicated that although it's possible to learn E.I., it's certainly not easy. And other scientific research has indicated that high levels of E.I. can contribute to a person's mental and physical well-being because it helps to restructure the brain.

Overall, understanding the science behind E.I. is important when developing E.I. training because you'll need to know that it will not prompt instantaneous change or yield immediate results. And you'll want to know that you'll be undergoing efforts to change individuals' neuro pathways and deep-seated behaviors.

3. Use the 4 Basic Components of E.I. When Creating Learning Materials

E.I. consists of four basic components:

- Self-awareness
- Self-regulation
- Social awareness
- Relationship management

As you're creating your learning materials and activities for your E.I. training, make sure that they focus on one or more of the components listed above. Otherwise, they might lose their effectiveness.

Essentially, it's important to remember that E.I. isn't about being emotional but about learning how to positively reflect on and manage one's behavior, navigate multifaceted social situations, and bring about positive personal decisions and achievements.

4. Train Leaders First as Servant Leaders

If you want your Emotional Intelligence (E.I.) training to be effective and long-lasting, you must train your leaders first. Emotionally intelligent leaders will inspire their employees to be more emotionally intelligent, too, and will help set the tone for their entire organizations and promote a positive company culture. Leaders with high E.I. can also be considered "servant leaders" because they exhibit great listening skills, are highly aware of themselves and others, have high levels of empathy, and have other similar attributes.

5. Implement Interactive Workshops

It's imperative that your E.I. training modules include real-time and interactive workshops, even via virtual simulations or gamified modules. Employees can't just read about E.I. if they want to fully understand it and embrace it—they must practice it in real life. Include workshops that include role-playing exercises where employees must practice active listening, empathy, and self-regulation. And have employees write in journals when they self-reflect on their own range of emotions and circumstances. And offer interactive exercises that promote social awareness and effective relationship building among employees.

6. Develop Coaching and Mentorship Programs

Keeping in mind that learning to be more emotionally intelligent doesn't happen overnight and can prove to be challenging at times, it's important to consider developing programs that help support your E.I. training program long term, too. Peer coaching, where employees talk to one another about their E.I. journeys, struggles, and wins, could prove to be helpful. And coaches who help employees navigate more complex situations and emotions could also prove to significantly benefit and support an E.I. training program long term.

7. Encourage and Promote Organizational Social Responsibility

Because social awareness is critical to promoting E.I. and is, in fact, a key component of it, consider implementing programs and initiatives across your organization that further promote social responsibility among employees. For instance, you could start a food drive for the homeless or team up with a local nonprofit that needs volunteers, and so on.

8. Create an Environment with Safe Spaces

To truly have an effective E.I. training program, it's critical that your employees have safe spaces where they can learn about themselves and how to regulate their emotions, learn about others around them, and learn how to effectively manage their relationships and social situations. Employees must feel safe and secure when undergoing E.I. training and must be assured that they won't be ostracized or ridiculed when it's time for them to learn and grow.

As you're developing your E.I. training program, consider the steps above to ensure its effectiveness and longevity. them to be effective.

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