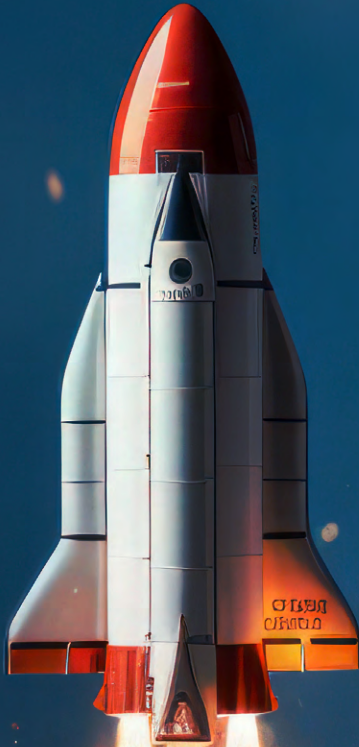


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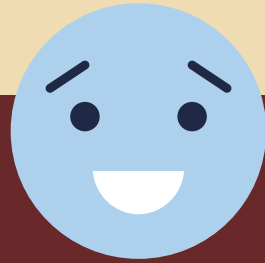
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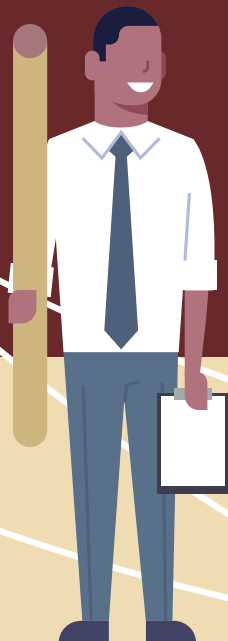
**LET EMOTIONAL
INTELLIGENCE
& HIRING GOALS
MAKE 2025
A YEAR OF
ROCKETING
SUCCESS**

REACH HIGHER EDITION



3 **The Growing Importance of Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace**

8 **Hire for Where You're Going – Not Where You Have Been**



The Growing Importance of Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

by David Cooper



don't believe truer words have ever been spoken as a principle for living the best life. In fact, this may be one of the most overlooked secrets in building stronger relationships, partnerships, and teamwork:

"People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." – Maya Angelou

Feelings are the core component of emotional intelligence (EI). They are the personal experiences that people with high emotional intelligence have the ability to recognize, identify, understand, and manage – within themselves and others. EI is the increasingly coveted leadership skill that enables people to respond in ways that promote positive outcomes.

Emotional intelligence, also called emotional quotient (EQ), is of growing importance in the workplace for many reasons. One big reason is that we operate in a digital world of artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), generative AI, robotics, and other IT innovations. Just look around and you'll see that most of the fastest-growing industries and jobs rely almost solely on emerging technologies.

And that's a beautiful thing, but

it's a double-edged sword because technology has no emotion. Emotional intelligence is 'the human edge' and it will be among [The 5 Most In-Demand Skills In 2025](#):

"As machines master routine tasks, the value of irreplicable human traits will skyrocket. Emotional intelligence will be the cornerstone of effective leadership and organizational success in 2025," says Bernard Marr, Forbes contributor, renowned futurist, and author of more than 20 best-selling books. "In an era of digital saturation, the ability to connect genuinely with others will become a prized skill. Leaders who can articulate vision, inspire teams, and navigate complex human dynamics will stand out in a world increasingly mediated by technology."

Tangible ways EI has become a topline priority

Resilient companies recognize that emotional intelligence is essential for effective leadership, team collaboration, and employee well-being. EI can be learned, and so companies are prioritizing it as part of their corporate culture, leadership development, and employee engagement strategies. They're investing in their businesses by establishing policies, programs,

initiatives that cultivate EI in leaders and middle management:

- 1. EI training and workshops** help leaders improve self-awareness, empathy, social skills, and self-regulation.
- 2. Coaching and mentorship programs** offer one-on-one interactions to help leaders develop EI through guided self-reflection and feedback.
- 3. Mindfulness and stress management programs** provide techniques that enhance leaders' emotional control and resilience.
- 4. Feedback systems** provide continuous mechanisms, such as 360-degree reviews, to help leaders gauge how their emotional responses impact others. This increases self-awareness and empathy.
- 5. Performance metrics and incentives** are incorporated into performance reviews, which encourages leaders to prioritize emotional awareness as a leadership skill.

These and other initiatives aim to build leaders who are empathetic, adaptable, and effective in managing relationships. In turn, these efforts promote like attributes

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and values that reflect a strong commitment to EI in the workplace. Here are some widely adopted

among all employees, resulting in a more positive and productive company culture.

Industry leaders are setting the pace

- Google prioritizes EI in leadership training and employee development programs. For example, their Search Inside Yourself program teaches employees mindfulness and emotional

This focus has reshaped the company's culture, resulting in increased employee engagement and collaboration.

- **Southwest Airlines**, known for its People First culture, prioritizes hiring people with high EI who can cultivate positive customer interactions.

active listening and relationship-building. LinkedIn's focus on EI has been integral in creating an inclusive culture where employees feel valued and motivated to contribute.

- **Zappos**, also known for its unique company culture, built its reputation on delivering excellent customer service with a highly engaged and emotionally intelligent workforce. Its rigorous hiring process focuses on cultural fit, including assessing candidates' empathy, communication skills, and adaptability. Zappos also promotes Delivering Happiness as a core value, encouraging employees to bring positive emotions to customer interactions.



intelligence skills to help manage stress, improve focus, and enhance interpersonal relationships. Google also emphasizes psychological safety, a key element of EI, to foster innovation and open communication.

- **Microsoft**, under chairman and CEO Satya Nadella's leadership, has shifted toward a 'growth mindset' culture that encourages empathy, openness, and curiosity. Nadella has spoken openly about the importance of empathy in driving innovation, particularly as Microsoft focuses on customer needs and collaborative solutions.

Employee training programs emphasize empathy and interpersonal skills to create an inclusive and supportive workplace, and the company's culture is built on values closely tied to EI, like teamwork, kindness, and customer satisfaction.

- **LinkedIn** actively promotes EI as part of its leadership approach and values. The company emphasizes empathy and Members First as guiding principles, encouraging leaders and employees to practice



- **Johnson & Johnson** is well-regarded for its commitment to well-being and emotional intelligence in the workplace. Its Energy for Performance program teaches employees self-awareness, stress management, and resilience. The company also emphasizes EI as part of its leadership development initiatives to foster a culture of empathy

and responsibility, especially in healthcare settings where emotional sensitivity is essential.

- **Adobe's** culture centers on creative problem solving, collaboration, and respect – key aspects of EI. Leadership training focuses on building empathy, active listening, and resilience, helping leaders develop high-EI management skills. With an environment that values openness and support, Adobe has cultivated a workplace where employees are encouraged to freely communicate and contribute.
- **Salesforce** champions EI as part of its inclusive and values-driven culture. CEO Marc Benioff emphasizes empathy and social responsibility, which permeates the company's approach to business and employee engagement. Salesforce provides well-being programs, encourages work-life balance, and focuses on cultivating a culture of collaboration and openness.

Through their policies, training, and cultural values, these companies have successfully created positive work environments that drive innovation, engagement, and loyalty. They exemplify how prioritizing EI can shape corporate culture, improve employee well-being, and enhance customer experiences.

How you can grow through emotional intelligence – by the numbers

In its 2025 Global Culture Report, O.C. Tanner, developer of strategic employee recognition and rewards solutions, found that organizations that practice emotional intelligence

are 107 times more likely to thrive. As summarized by HR Executive in October 2024, O.C. Tanner recommends that organizations focus on five components of emotional intelligence:

Through their policies, training, and cultural values, these companies have successfully created positive work environments that drive innovation, engagement, and loyalty.

1. In quantifying **Practical Empathy**, Alex Lovell, director of research and data science at O.C. Tanner, said, "Employees are 1,388% more likely to be engaged at work when leaders prioritize empathy in their actions." Such actions include focusing on the person, seeking understanding, listening to learn, embracing perspectives, taking supportive action, and respecting boundaries.
2. Leaders who practice **Self-Awareness** stand for their values while managing their emotions in the workplace, and they are open to accepting and implementing feedback. O.C. Tanner's research found that when leaders acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses, employees are six times more likely to thrive at work.
3. **Nimble Resilience** is a proactive approach through which organizations and leaders embrace change and lean into their cultures to address the origin of a problem and create resources to adapt. "Nimble resilient organizations reap many rewards," Lovell says, "including





advantages that positively impact customer relations.

For employees in client-facing roles, an EI-charged company culture enhances their ability to understand and meet customer needs, better manage client relationships, amicably resolve conflicts, create positive customer experiences, and increase loyalty and advocacy. In essence, the business becomes increasingly customer centric and revenue grows in response.

EI should permeate your sales, marketing, and advertising efforts, too. Whether you're using or flirting with generative AI in producing marketing and customer messaging or your creative team still writes your marketing copy, your messaging must resonate on a human level. Empathy is a primal emotion in response to others' needs. Let EI unleash it to your customers. I wrote this article in 2020 and it's every bit as salient today. Check it out: [Want More Effective Messaging? Get Your Empathy On.](#)

Make EI a priority in 2025

Companies are recognizing EI as essential for success, investing in training for leaders and employees, and incorporating EI assessments into hiring and promotion processes. Evidence linking EI to productivity, retention, and organizational health is growing, and it's clear that it will be a central focus (and line item) in business in 2025 and beyond.

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being 158% more likely than others to increase revenue and 914% more likely to have a thriving culture."

- 4. Equitable Flexibility** can look like hybrid or remote work or flexible schedules. "When employees are satisfied with their work flexibility – whatever that looks like for their role – they are 894% more likely to report a positive employee experience," Lovell says.
- 5. Communications Skills** are valued by leaders who prioritize emotional intelligence. "A demonstration of open and honest communication in the

workplace is key to building trust among teams," Lovell says. "Leaders should openly address mistakes, take accountability for their actions, and encourage others to do the same."

EI delivers ROI from the inside out

While there are numerous internal payoffs in practicing and promoting emotional intelligence – from improved leadership to enhanced collaboration and team dynamics, increased employee satisfaction and retention, and a strong, healthy company culture – these internal shifts also create competitive

by David Cooper

Hire for Where You're Going – Not Where You Have Been

When hiring for the future, whether immediate or long-term, companies often make mistakes that inhibit their growth and result in wasted resources. We all know how costly the wrong hires can be.

During more than 25 years in advising business owners and marketing executives, I've seen plenty of evidence that executives need to have a macro view of their operations and goals – before onboarding new people – rather than quickly moving to fill an isolated talent need. I'll explain why.

Here are 10 big pitfalls and the consequences that prompt executives to seek advice from consultants.

1. Failure to align hiring goals with long-term business strategy: Hiring for short-term needs without first aligning talent needs with the long-term business strategy often results in roles or skill sets that become obsolete or unnecessary as the

company evolves. The solution is to map out skills and positions that align with strategic goals for growth, entering new markets, and ensuring the success of future products.

2. Over-hiring or under-hiring: Bringing on too many or not enough employees strains budgets and risks layoffs during downturns. Under-hiring can also lead to burnout, project delays, or missed opportunities for growth. Instead, strategic workforce planning should



illuminate a balance that considers both full-time and contingent roles for ongoing flexibility.

- 3. **Hiring only for currently needed skills:** Focusing solely on current skills that are needed without considering growth, advancement, and adaptability leaves companies with a workforce that lacks future-oriented skills. This



makes it difficult to pivot and adapt when necessary. Focus instead on finding candidates with a demonstrated ability to learn and adapt, especially for roles that are likely to evolve with trends and emerging technologies.

- 4. **Neglecting cultural fit and alignment with company values:** Prioritizing technical skills over cultural fit and alignment with company core values increases the odds of experiencing high turnover, reduced employee morale, and team conflicts. Assess job candidates for both technical skill sets and cultural fit by including values-based questions in job interviews

and ensuring the company's mission and vision resonate with job candidates.

- 5. **Not leveraging data and predictive analytics:** Relying on intuition and historical hiring patterns alone leads to insufficient skill sets and higher turnover. Wise executives and hiring managers use data-driven insights to anticipate the evolving needs of a role. Data analytics combined with historical hiring metrics inform hiring projections and identify real talent gaps.

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- 6. **Underestimating onboarding and integration needs:** Not planning for adequate onboarding and training to support new hires makes new employees struggle to integrate themselves into the organization. This kneecaps productivity and job satisfaction and increases the risk of turnover. Onboarding and training need to factor into hiring plans and budgets to set up new hires for success.

- 7. **Relying on generic or out-of-date job descriptions:** Broad, generic job descriptions, and worse, outdated ones, don't clearly define required skills, responsibilities, and most of all, expectations. This results in attracting candidates who may lack specific skills or experience, leading to unfulfilled expectations. It's essential to prioritize the development of job descriptions that succinctly reflect specific skills, desired outcomes, and the future potential of the role.

- 8. **Ignoring the external talent landscape:** Failure to monitor current talent market conditions, including skill competencies (or lack thereof), hiring competition, and geographic availability can lead to protracted hiring timelines, difficulty in filling key roles, and settling for less-than-ideal job candidates. Keep a pulse on the market to anticipate challenges and adjust hiring timelines or requirements accordingly. Also, use this intelligence to monitor competitive pay for specific roles to increase the odds of attracting the best talent.

- 9. **Neglecting retention as part of the hiring strategy:** Focusing solely on recruiting new talent while ignoring the retention of existing employees is another challenge that leads to high turnover. It's critical to invest in employee retention strategies, such as upskilling programs, professional development opportunities, and employee engagement initiatives to retain valuable employees already aligned with future goals and who possess future-ready skills.

- 10. Failing to plan for technological changes:** Hiring for roles that may soon become automated or require significant adaptation to advanced technologies leads to underutilized staff, roles becoming obsolete, and layoffs. Anticipate technological advancements in your industry and consider the potential for automation when projecting future hiring needs.



Avoiding these common mistakes allows companies to build a future-ready workforce that is adaptable, skilled, and aligned with the company's growth trajectory.

■ **How to effectively project your hiring needs**

Projecting hiring needs is essential to ensuring you have the right talent on board to achieve your goals. Here are some strategies to effectively do that.

■ **Start by analyzing your business goals and strategy**

To refine your hiring strategy for the future, first identify your growth objectives. For example, if you're planning to expand, enter new markets, introduce new products, or pursue digital transformation, these will likely require additional staff. Also, consider any large-scale initiatives that will necessitate additional staffing. Work closely with your project managers to anticipate current and future demands and keep a close eye on workforce productivity metrics. These actions will help you determine which employees may have capacity to absorb new tasks, and help you clearly identify where extra capacity, new skills, or specialized talent are needed to achieve your goals.

■ **Collaborate with your department leaders**

Your division and department heads can provide insights into upcoming needs and changes in their teams as they relate to new projects and shifts in team dynamics. Align hiring plans with each department's goals to ensure they have the resources they need to meet their objectives in support of your company's overall business goals.

■ **Create a skills gap analysis to gain insights into factors affecting your hiring needs**

It is strongly advised to conduct periodic assessments of the skills you need to conduct business today and in the future. By conducting a skills gap analysis, you can identify any current skill shortages and the skills you are likely to need in the future. This is especially important as technology

Projecting hiring needs is essential to ensuring you have the right talent on board to achieve your goals.



and market demands evolve. Work with your HR team or department heads to forecast new roles or specialized talent your company may need to stay competitive, ensure business continuity, and be successful in achieving your long-term business goals.

Consider the benefits of using predictive analytics tools in this process. HR analytics tools, which

ways to get flexible. For example, consider working with contractors or freelancers in areas of uncertain growth, or consider hiring contingency workers to fill short-term needs without committing to permanent hiring.

The talent market is overflowing with experienced, highly skilled professionals who struck out on their own during the pandemic. They are ideal for stepping in and seamlessly filling talent gaps on a temporary or as-needed basis.

■ Regularly review and adjust your hiring plans

Your company's leadership and employee ranks are likely to remain solidly aligned with your workforce requirements and business goals if your leaders commit to a quarterly or biannual review of your talent acquisition needs. This is being proactive instead of reactive. It

It's always wise to plan for contingencies. If you build flexibility into your hiring plan, you can adjust it based on unexpected events, such as economic downturns, project cancellations, and taking quick advantage of sudden opportunities.

combine artificial intelligence and machine learning with internal data, use predictive modeling to anticipate employee turnover, project talent needs based on business plans and growth, and even forecast the amount of time required to fill key roles.

■ Maintain a flexible hiring plan

It's always wise to plan for contingencies. If you build flexibility into your hiring plan, you can adjust it based on unexpected events, such as economic downturns, project cancellations, and taking quick advantage of sudden opportunities. There are great

gives you the grace of time to make smart adjustments that are based on changing business conditions and evolving company plans. As the saying goes, the only thing that's constant in business is change!

With a strategic and data-informed approach, your organization can not only project hiring needs with utmost confidence, but also remain agile, adapt to changing conditions, and compete and grow without overextending your resources.



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