

## HOW TO DEVELOP EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE WORKPLACE: EQ WORKSHOPS

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**How can we encourage the development of emotional intelligence in the workplace? Is simply spreading the word enough? What elements does an emotional intelligence programme need to make it effective? This article describes a key tool that any emotional intelligence development programme should take into account: emotional intelligence workshops.**

By this stage you will certainly be familiar with the theory behind emotional intelligence, and you will know all about the advantages that accrue to its development, on both a personal and professional level:

- **Communication** improves;
- the worker feels fulfilled and happier, and enjoys a better quality of life;
- **motivation** improves;
- interpersonal relationships improve;
- people are more involved with their work, and they are more responsible and autonomous;
- the climate in the workplace improves;
- our power of attraction (especially our charisma) and our leadership skills are enhanced;
- the effectiveness and efficiency of both people and teams increase;
- the processes of change and of constant improvement are speeded up;
- the relations between the company, its clients, and the general public, improve ...
- as well as improving the cost-effectiveness of the company, no end of small subtle changes for the best occur.

You've probably tried to put into practice some of the ideas described in books on the topic – how did it go?

Like many things, although it's probably relatively simple to understand and sympathise with the theory, putting it into practice is much more difficult, and we often feel lost before we even start, or we don't see the results we expect from our efforts.

The key to success in developing emotional intelligence in the workplace lies in one's own personal development, in the effort of each individual involved in becoming aware of the need for constant change and improvement. This is done at his/her own pace, through introspection.

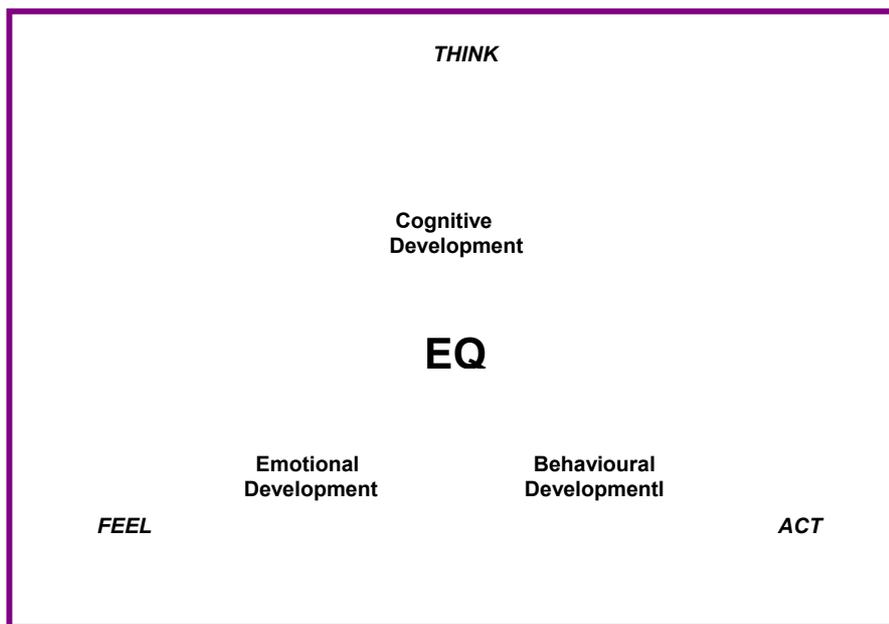
To enable the development of emotional intelligence in the workplace, everyone (especially those in management positions) needs to develop his/her own emotional intelligence.

Thus, if we want to guide the development of emotional intelligence, we need to foster a climate of trust and openness, raise the awareness and self-knowledge of every employee, and increase his/her motivation.

An effective tool for achieving this is through emotional intelligence workshops, where, through experiential and participative methods, a space for self-reflection is created in which each participant becomes aware of the areas on which he/she needs to work to be able to achieve objectives defined by the needs of the company.

**However, for emotional intelligence workshops to be effective, certain guidelines need to be taken into account:**

- Objectives need to be well defined and to fall within the ambit of emotional intelligence.
- The workshops need to be led by professionals trained in emotional intelligence.
- A climate of trust, openness and sincerity must be fostered.
- An experiential methodology needs to be followed, which uses methods such as indoor / out-door training, or games and experiences which facilitate the connection between the individual's reality and that of the company.
- Workshops need to foster introspection, self-reflection and awareness raising.
- Workshops need to connect with the emotions and motivation of each participant.



It is a good idea that these workshops are residential, because this breaks with traditional ways of thinking; it helps concentration and group cohesion, which in turn fosters a greater climate of trust and openness. What is more, these workshops are very well received by the participants: they are their own reward and normally (although at first sight this may seem contradictory) they are cost effective.

It is also a good idea that these workshops are included within a wider programme, which includes coaching sessions and individual tutorials, either externally or internally mediated.

In any event, these workshops need to be tailored to the organisation in such a way that the shared values, roles and culture specific to the organisation are worked with; however, at no point should the interests of each of the participants be forgotten – these need to be taken into account in an individual and personalised way.

In this way long-term changes in conduct and habits can be induced, and both the organisation and the individual will feel satisfied with a project of such long-lasting change.

The thing is, as we see from the essence of emotional intelligence, that emotions are the driving force behind all action. Unless we use methods that make direct contact with the interior, and with the “heart” of an individual, it will be difficult to foster change in either them or ourselves. For this reason, any well-structured programme that tries to influence attitudes and to find the energy for change and improvement must include workshops on emotional intelligence.

“He who overcomes others is strong;  
he who overcomes himself is powerful”.

Lao-Tse