



By Grazyna Maria Gasiorowska

Not long ago I was at a local nursery looking for some plants to spruce up my garden. As I walked down the main aisle, I noticed a man heading briskly in my direction. His t-shirt had a big smiley face in the middle, but as I looked closer, it had several splashes painted on it as well. I stopped and commented on the interesting design of his attire.

"Oh, yes!" he said, "Have you seen the back?" He turned around and showed me the other part of the story. It was a smiley face nearly completely covered by splashes of various colors, obviously indicating that someone had lost faith in the happy image.

"Interesting," I commented.

"Do you know what the saying 'have a nice day' means?" the man asked.

"What does it mean?" I inquired, now being progressively more curious.

"It means 'Let's finish the transaction and move on.' Nowadays businesses do not care about their customers. They just want the money, they want to close the transaction and move on," he said emphatically.

"Hmm," I contemplated, "How many unsatisfied customers are out there? Who is leading these organizations?" I pondered, as the man, seeing the quandary on my face, began walking away.

I also reflected on some articles I recently read that dealt with business executives who face many challenges with their companies and look for answers elsewhere in the universe while the solution is right at their fingertips. What, then, makes the difference between successful business leadership and the one that evokes a splattered smiley?

Many years of research in human psychology and intelligence have been inspired by cases

like this. A number of measures have been developed, such as IQ (intelligence quotient), which determines one's language and mathematical competency.

However, people are complex beings, and the ability to add and multiply is not always sufficient to get to the core of the matter, to make a customer happy, to prevent splashes on the smiley face, and to develop a career that brings satisfaction to all involved. This is because people have feelings, and thus emotions. These, in turn, impact a great number of decisions and aspects of every-day life in business and beyond.

Emotional Intelligence: What It Means

Let's consider two simple images, like a happy face and a sad face, and the reactions that each of them evoke. This principle applies to all business scenarios, such as the initial contact between two people. For instance, when a person goes for an interview, or a meeting with a prospective client, the most important thing is the "first impression."

From the very start, it is the perception and emotion that rule in the new encounter, or guide the way to the new agreement. People are drawn to what makes them feel good and comfortable. They are attracted to what is emotionally pleasant and appealing, and they often make decisions based on their emotions. This is not to minimize statistics or IQ results; however, if one has to choose between good data combined with good feeling and good data combined with bad emotions, the former undoubtedly wins. Thus, the choice becomes clear. The interviewer shapes his or her perceptions based on what is heard and seen. Then, they make a good guess based on this insight. On the other hand, the way a candidate may impact the results is through be-



ing well aware of his or her surroundings, and recognizing the best approach. This has to do with emotional intelligence. The more accurate the reading, the better the outcome for both parties involved.

However, the path to success does not end on the first meeting. The better the skills to maintain the positive image, the better the chance of continued triumph, achievement, and success. Many researchers say that it is one's emotional intelligence that counts a great deal when it comes to human relations. But most researchers agree it was never meant to replace other screening tests, just augment them.

Nevertheless, it is compelling and it has caught the attention of millions since the initial publishing in the mid-1990s of *Emotional Intelligence - Why it Can Matter More than IQ*, by Daniel Goleman, (2nd ed. 1997 Bantam, New York.) His message appealed to a worldwide audience. Here was something that really mattered and made a difference. It is that one thing that can cause the customers to come back with smiles on their faces, and it is the one thing that may differentiate one individual from another when being selected for a new job based on the first impression, which is nothing but a reflection of the interviewer's or client's perception. This concept of perception is a big part of emotional intelligence, along with such skills as self-awareness, assertiveness, flexibility, and reality testing.

To aid people in better understanding their emotions and those of others, researchers have developed appropriate tools. Two of them are described below:

1. MSCEIT Measure

After years of exploring a very complex area of human knowledge and behavior named emo-

tional intelligence, in 1990 Mayer, DiPaolo and Peter Salovey published their article on the subject. This led to more inquiry and provided the way to creation of a valuable hypothesis. Later, when Mayer and Salovey were joined by Caruso, a new instrument was developed. It was named MSCEIT (Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test), and it was designed to assess a person's emotional intelligence. It is an ability-based scale, and it measures how well people solve emotional problems. Once completed, the test offers scores in each of the four central areas of emotional intelligence, which includes the ability to (1) accurately perceive emotions; (2) use emotions to facilitate thinking, problem solving, and creativity; (3) understand emotions; and (4) manage emotions for personal growth. Over the last several years MSCEIT has become a very reliable instrument to test emotional intelligence abilities in many facets of life, such as corporate, educational, clinical, and research settings, correctional facilities, and preventive programs. The most important aspect of all this work is the fact that it has proved to deliver good results. For example, employers use MSCEIT in the hiring process as one of the screening tools, in conjunction with other surveys and inquiries, to identify potentially more successful employees.

2. BarOn EQ-i Measure

Another instrument to measure emotional intelligence was developed by R. BarOn who began his work on emotional and social intelligence in the 1980s. He has defined emotional intelligence as an array of noncognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures. He also explains that 'success,' as employed by his



definition, is the end-product of that which one strives to achieve and accomplish.

Based on these premises, the researcher constructed the BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory (BarOn EQ-i), comprised of five major components: intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability, and general mood. Over the years this tool has been widely used in corporate, educational, clinical, medical, and research settings, as well as many preventive programs. Quite frequently the business environment requires combining results from BarOn EQ-i testing with those from other surveys to determine one's fitness for the job or particular assignment. For instance, the level of a candidate's assertiveness, self-regard, problem solving, or stress tolerance may be a good indicator of the match with particular business requirements.

Two Examples

Here is one example. Paul, 31, who worked as a research analyst, was dissatisfied with his job and decided to seek help. The emotional intelligence test (MSCEIT) indicated that Paul's skills could be best put to use in a broader, more creative role. Even though Paul was skilled at reading people, understanding others, and managing emotions, he was brilliant at using emotions to think creatively. This ability was not being used in his job as an analyst. A position in the marketing area appeared to be one of the best options suitable for Paul. It took Paul awhile to evaluate his situation, and explore alternatives. However, after a few months he decided to accept an offer to become director of marketing with a start-up firm. Shortly after, he reported that he was thrilled with his new job, and for the first time in his career he felt he was being challenged and truly enjoyed his work.

Another example is that of a 32-year old junior executive who was hired by a large company and promoted to a district manager within a short period of time. His results from the BarOn EQ-i test may explain why he succeeded so quickly in his new job.

His highest scores were in the interpersonal and adaptability areas, which meant that he was very good in relating to others and solving problems, which further translated into his very positive self-regard, assertiveness, and ability to empathize with others. He felt good about himself and made a good impression on others.

He was able to realistically "size-up" situations, and deal efficiently and effectively with stress. Lastly, people felt good in his presence, because he was optimistic, happy, and generated a lot of positive energy. Combined, this helped the young executive make a good impression on the company, and paved the way to promotion, as well as more achievements.

Some Supporting Research

To further support the importance of the emotional intelligence concept, consider the following:

- A study of many executives indicated that how well people handled their emotions determined how much people around them preferred to deal with them.
- U.S. Air Force recruiters were tested on meeting their recruitment quotas. The results showed significant differences between "successful" recruiters and "unsuccessful" ones. In general, recruiters who were "successful" in meeting their quotas had higher emotional intelligence scores than those who could not meet their quotas.
- According to research, nurses who score



high in emotional intelligence ability enjoy a much more fulfilling professional and personal life than the ones who score low.

- An article in Project Management magazine encourages project managers to enhance their technical knowledge with emotional intelligence acumen and predicts that the top performers of the 21st century will be those with high emotional intelligence.

Be Prepared

Nowadays, more and more companies all over the world use the surveys mentioned above, and incorporate emotional intelligence into their culture, strategic approach, and the way they handle daily matters. However, none of these instruments is used on its own to assess human acumen and professionalism. These tests are always applied in conjunction with other tools, and employed as supplements to other sources of information in the candidate screening process, coaching engagement, or 360-degree feedback assessment. Nevertheless, the value of emotional intelligence testing should not be ignored, due to its overwhelming accuracy in outcome prediction. Anyone serious about their preparation for success in business and overall happiness in life ought to consider examining their soundness of emotional and social intelligence.

Zig Ziglar once said, "I am so busy that I cannot afford not to have the time to exercise, because it is so vital to my health." The same idea applies here. A person, who aims at self-fulfillment and progress in life cannot afford to disregard their state of emotional intelligence. It is not a sign of weakness, but a sign of strength to find out about one's emotional aptitude, and to get to know the self. This special encounter with the self may be the most important in a lifetime. It may be a mo-

ment of great "aha!" and great discovery. No matter what the outcome turns out to be, it is one area of life that should not go unnoticed. After all, who can afford to take chances when it comes to one's career path, or a significant business under taking? What executive would like to see their customers wear t-shirts with a splattered happy face as a reflection of their management style?

The best part of all is that emotional intelligence, as we know it now, can be learned with appropriate guidance. It is one thing that, when incorporated and well integrated, can make the difference in achieving ultimate success and in gaining a competitive advantage in all facets of life.

What's Next?

It is essential to keep in mind that each person has unique requirements, as they face their own individual and distinct circumstances both in professional and personal life. The type of help everyone needs varies from one individual to another. For instance, it may not be fair to expect a person working on the trading floor at the U.S. Stock Exchange to be very contemplative in their occupation, or a Yoga trainer to be as vivid and lively as a trader on Wall Street. However, anyone who is seeking genuine self-improvement and better results from interpersonal relations ought to consider taking scientifically validated tests, such as the ones mentioned above (MSCEIT and BarOn EQ-i) in combination with other expert surveys overseen by a qualified professional.

The results from such questionnaires may turn out to be priceless in helping people uncover some hidden skills and talents. Countless aspects of our emotional world make it impossible to simplify the issues. Nonetheless, one of the most essential things to keep



in mind is that when we manage our emotions – which mean blending emotion and thought – we increase the chances that our decisions are more effective, and our lives more adaptive. So, the key to emotional management is to neither suppress feelings nor to vent them inappropriately, but to reflect on them, integrate them with our thinking, and use them as a source of information and an inspiration for intelligent decision-making.

Consequently, the next time you are in a new place, situation, or talk to someone you have just met, seize the moment to grasp your feelings and observe what is going on around you. Then, decide on the optimal way to act in order to bring out the best in your self and in others. Once you have accomplished this, you are on your way to a much happier life.

Resources

Bar-On, R. (2004). BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory, A Measure of Emotional Intelligence, Technical Manual. Unpublished manuscript.

Caruso, D. R., Mayer, J. D., & Salovey, P. (2002). Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) User's Manual. Unpublished manuscript, New York.

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