The Impact of Emotional Intelligence in the workplace

An evidence-based review

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> **...the question today is less about whether EI adds value, but more about where and how EI can add most value.**

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Introduction

The world of work is changing. It is becoming more virtual, diverse, and dispersed, with an ever-greater need for improved leadership capability.[1] The World Economic Forum predicts that 42% of current core skills will be outdated by 2022, and that, 'Emotional Intelligence, leadership, and social influence will see an outsized increase in demand.'[2]

According to a management survey by the Roffey Park Institute, there is a leadership gap at work, with organisations falling short in meeting their present and future leadership needs.[3] For example, less than one-fifth of managers (17%) report that their organisation has the leadership and people skills to take advantage of AI (Artificial Intelligence); nearly one in three managers (31%) do not believe that their leaders and managers are able to engage and facilitate collaboration across generations; and almost half (49%) do not believe that the management in their organisation has the skills needed to effectively manage virtual teams.

The good news is that many of these concerns can be addressed and alleviated by developing and applying Emotional Intelligence (EI). The purpose of this white paper is to review the current status and value of EI for the assessment and development of people within the workplace. It draws upon the latest evidence-base of scientific research from academic and practitioner sources, and summarises the key findings. Emphasis is placed on consistent findings across a large number of studies (i.e. meta-analyses[a] and systematic reviews), with some specific illustrations from the Emotional Intelligence Profile (EIP)[b].

Since its inception nearly 30 years ago, EI has followed the usual 'forming, storming, and norming' stages of any new concept. Initially evangelised by writers in the 1990s, condemned by critics in the 2000s, EI reached a more balanced and evidence-based position in the last decade. Rather than being a short-lived fad, EI has stood the test of time, weathering the storm and strife of adolescence to emerge with the wisdom and perspective of adulthood. No doubt EI will continue to evolve and become ever more established as a core attribute to meet the demands of a constantly changing workplace.

a A meta-analysis is an analytical technique which combines the results of a large number of independent research studies. It can be used to identify consistent patterns and trends that emerge across studies, providing more robust results than an individual study which is expected to have some degree of error.

b The EIP is sold and distributed by PSI. It is described in Section 2 of this white paper.

Executive summary

This white paper summarises the evidence that has been accumulated from over 30 years of research on Emotional Intelligence (EI) in the workplace.

It addresses the key questions asked by organisations when deciding whether and how best to utilise EI as part of their assessment and development solutions. First, what is EI and how does it relate to the current and future needs of the organisation? Second, does EI predict job performance and if so, does it add value beyond other forms of assessment? Third, how useful is EI in addressing specific concerns around leadership, engagement, and well-being? And finally, how developable is EI for individuals and organisations seeking to create a positive organisational climate? In summary, what is the impact, value and, benefit of EI, and will it help meet the needs of a rapidly changing, technology-driven workplace?

The evidence base indicates that the answer to all of these questions is affirmative. Research demonstrates that EI is developable, it predicts performance, and it can be measured. This is the holy grail for the assessment and development of talent.

The key themes and findings to emerge from this synthesis of the academic literature of EI in the workplace are summarised below:

- **Surveys consistently rank EI** as increasingly essential for the future of work.
- **Numerous studies** show that organisations failing to properly address the emotional and social aspects of work are less likely to succeed.
- **EI can help to increase** the prediction of job performance over and above traditional personality and cognitive ability assessments.
- **EI assessments** can provide a more granular focus on the emotional and social aspects of personality, compared to traditional personality questionnaires.
- **EI is particularly important** for job performance in roles with high emotional labour.
- **Individuals with high EI** tend to be more satisfied at work, committed to their organisation, and less likely to leave.
- **Developing EI** has been linked to improved resilience, reduced stress, and enhanced well-being.
- **The EI of leaders** has a significant influence on the job satisfaction of the people working for them.
- **The impact of EI training** is shown to be developable and sustainable over time.

Overall, on the basis of the extensive research summarised in this white paper, it is recommended that EI is included as a vital consideration in the assessment and development of individuals in the workplace.

> **"EI is the missing link that turns personality into effective performance."[4]**

1 The business need for EI

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has influenced society, politics, corporate, and educational life. The concept has been at the forefront of a fundamental shift in the western world, where psychological well-being, resilience, adaptability, neurodiversity, mental-health, mindfulness, and other EI-related concepts have become mainstream considerations in the workplace.

Over the last two decades, we have seen an exponential growth in EI, driven by an ever-increasing demand from organisations.

- **In a 2007 leadership survey,** when asked, 'What are the top issues you face at work?', leaders reported that 76% were people/relational issues and only 24% were financial/technical issues.[5]
- **By 2009,** it was estimated that over 150 consulting firms were offering EI-related products, and that 75% of fortune 500 companies had adopted EI services.[6]
- **In a 2012 leadership survey** on 775 senior managers, 89% reported that EI was 'highly important' or 'essential' to addressing their organisation's 'top challenges'.[7]
- **Our 2015 survey across 50 UK organisations** found that over 90% recognised EI as 'important' or 'crucial' to areas such as working relationships, stress management, and leadership.[8]
- **'The Future of Jobs Report'** ranked EI as one of the top ten skills that would grow in prominence between 2018 and 2022.[2]
- **This was echoed by a McKinsey report** that predicted 'social and emotional skills' would be increasingly essential requirements for major job transitions that lay ahead from now until 2030.[9]
- **Similarly, a 2019 survey** by Udemy on 400 L&D leaders ranked EI as one of the fastest growing soft skills in the workplace.[10]

However, according to a recent Harvard Business Review (HBR) research paper (2019)[11] there is an 'internal disconnect' between what companies espouse and what they do in practice: 'companies often talk about the importance of EI but do little to truly demonstrate an acknowledgement of its power.'

The HBR survey on 599 respondents across key industry sectors found that a convincing 98% saw 'Emotional Intelligence capability and sense of purpose as essential for employee success and job satisfaction', yet only 18% strongly agreed that 'EI is an engrained aspect of our organisational culture.' A key purpose of this white paper is to reduce the 'internal disconnect' by enabling organisational leaders to make more informed and evidence-based decisions in choosing when, where, and how to implement EI.

What then has driven this demand for EI? It is widely recognised that today's employees and leaders are operating in a fast-paced, challenging and often unpredictable work environment.[3] Some of the contributing factors to this include:

- an unstable political and economic climate
- rapid advances in technology and AI
- information overload
- increased competition and globalisation
- the constant challenges of work-life balance

These conditions create greater stress and demand on individuals to be more adaptable, creative, and emotionally resilient; all features that reflect the attributes of EI. It is important therefore to recognise that many of the changes and demands facing organisations can be supported through the development and application of EI, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: **Business demands and how EI can help**

BUSINESS DEMAND	HOW EI CAN HELP (EIP SCALES)[a]
Rate of change	Flexibility
Job demands	Emotional Resilience
Competition	Personal Power
De-layering	Self Management
Teamworking	Relationship Management
Leadership	Authenticity
Labour mobility	Staff Engagement (Trust)
People focus	Connecting with Others
Role redundancy	Self-development (Reflective Learning)

a The Emotional Intelligence Profile (EIP) scale definitions are shown in Appendix 1.

The need for EI is backed-up by numerous studies that show that organisations failing to properly address the emotional and social aspects of work are less likely to succeed:

- **A global leadership research company** that followed 20,000 new hires over three years found that 23% failed because they were unable to understand and manage emotions – the second highest reason for failure in the role.[12]
- **Furthermore, of the 9,000 new employees** who were deemed to have failed, over 89% failed due to interpersonal, attitudinal, or behavioural reasons, rather than their technical skills.[11]
- **The Denning Centre for Quality Management** found that 50% of time in business is wasted due to a lack of trust between employees.[13]
- **The Forum Corporation on Manufacturing and Services** revealed that 70% of customers were lost because of EI-related reasons (e.g. poor customer service).[14]

Despite the challenges facing organisations, leaders, and their employees, the 2019 Workforce Review in Europe reveals, 'there is much to be positive about... with a workforce that is increasingly fluid, flexible, and open to diversity.' For instance, just over three-quarters (79%) of the workforce say they are optimistic about the next five years in their workplace,[15] and two-thirds of today's managers (66%) report being enrolled on a professional development programme.[16] As will be demonstrated in this white paper, continuing such improvements may be greatly enhanced through the application of EI.

> **"The Harvard Business Review survey across key industry sectors found that a convincing *98%* saw 'Emotional Intelligence capability and sense of purpose as essential for employee success and job satisfaction'."[11]**

The business need for EI:

Key points

1. Multiple surveys have reported that skills related to EI will be an increasingly important requirement for future job roles.
2. Organisations report that reasons for role failure and lost customers tend to be due more often to attitudinal and interpersonal factors than to technical competence.
3. Many of the challenges facing organisations can be supported through the application of EI.

2 Understanding and measuring EI

Organisational demand for assessing and developing EI has fuelled a plethora of differing instruments, models, and definitions to explain and measure EI. This has led to considerable controversy over which, if any of these, is the 'correct' version of EI.[17]

Over the last 25 years, research into EI has taken two distinct and contrary pathways (Figure 1). One examines EI as an *ability,*[18] measured as *maximum* performance; the other describes EI as a *mixed* array of emotion-related traits[19] or *competencies,*[20] measured as *typical* performance.

Typical performance concerns how we tend to behave most of the time and is usually measured using subjective self-report questionnaires. In contrast, *maximum* performance concerns how we perform when exerting maximum effort, usually measured using objective ability-focused questionnaires.[21] This fundamental difference in how EI is measured may explain why only a weak correlation exists between ability and mixed/trait measures of EI.[22,23]

On balance, practitioners often prefer the greater breadth of scales and predictive validity of the mixed models,[24,25] while academic researchers favour the greater precision of the ability EI model.[26] Given the dominant use of self-report based EI instruments in business, this paper focuses on evidence relating to the mixed, trait, and competency-based approaches to EI.

Typical performance models of EI may broadly be separated into three groups: competency-based measures[27] which include emotional and social competencies that contribute to effective performance at work; trait-based measures[28] that encompass the emotional aspects of established personality models; and mixed measures[29] which include a wider range of skills and attributes that may overlap with both the competency and trait-based models of EI.

A variation on the trait approach to EI is the **Emotional Intelligence Profile (EIP)** – an attitude-based measure of EI (see Figure 2).[30] The inclusion of attitudes into a model of EI offers several important benefits:

1. Attitudes give a clear theoretical structure and organising model for the different facets of EI.
2. Attitudes provide an ethical basis to EI.
3. Attitudes identify the antecedents to EI and how EI may be developed.
4. Attitudes explain how EI may be automated and formed into sustainable and enduring habits.

Figure 1: **Approaches to measuring EI**

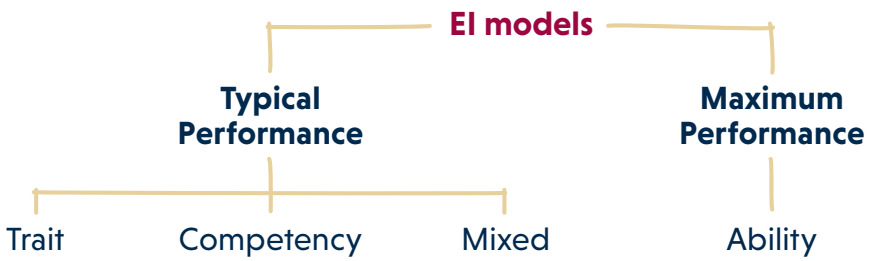

Figure 2: **The EIP framework**

	Personal Intelligence	Interpersonal Intelligence
Behaviour	Self Management	Relationship Management
Feeling	Self Awareness	Awareness of Others
Attitude	Self Regard	Regard for Others

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The three levels of the EIP framework also form a three-part definition of EI, as shown in Table 2.

The three levels of the EIP framework correspond with three areas in which EI can have the greatest impact: Performance (Behaviour), Engagement (Feeling), and Well-being (Attitude). These are discussed in the next three sections of this report.

For a comprehensive explanation of the EIP definition, model, and features, please refer to the user handbook 'Emotional Intelligence at work. How to make change stick'.[4]

> **"The EIP model is simple and at the same time very profound. The issue of attitudes is essential to achieve a real change in your behaviour."**
>
> Esteban Negroni, Center for Creative Leadership (CCL)

Table 2: **The EIP definition**

EIP LEVEL	EIP DEFINITION
Behaviour	Emotional Intelligence is the practice of managing one's personality to be both personally and interpersonally effective.
Feeling	This is achieved through the habitual practice of thinking about feeling, and feeling about thinking, to guide one's behaviour.
Attitude	The extent and effectiveness of an individual's EI is largely determined by their attitudes.

Understanding and measuring EI:
Key points

1. EI is broadly separated into typical performance (mixed, trait, and competency-based models) and maximum performance (the ability model).
2. The Emotional Intelligence Profile (EIP) is distinguished from other trait models of EI by the inclusion of underlying attitudes.
3. EI is defined by the EIP as 'the practice of managing our personality to be both personally and interpersonally effective'.

3 Does EI predict job performance?

One of the most common questions from organisations considering using EI is, 'Does EI predict performance, and if so, will it improve on our existing assessment tools and processes?' This question has been widely addressed over the years with published studies demonstrating the predictive value of EI to job performance within many international organisations, including Amazon, BMW, Google, HSBC, Microsoft, Qatar Airways, Shell, and Whitbread PLC, to name a few.[30]

The evidence base

More substantive evidence comes from multiple meta-analyses, which combine data from several published individual studies. These meta-analyses show that mixed/trait EI is predictive of job performance criteria, and adds incremental value after accounting for the effects of both personality traits and cognitive ability. What this means is that EI can help to increase our prediction of future job performance, when combined with measures of personality and cognitive ability.

Meta-analysis 1 (2004)[31]

Based on the combined results from 19 organisational samples and a total of 2,652 employees, the authors concluded that, 'EI should indeed be considered a valuable predictor of performance.' They described the correlations with performance as, 'large enough to generate significant savings and improvements for organizations that use measures of EI'.

Meta-analysis 2 (2010)[32]

This research focused specifically on supervisor ratings from employed samples, with nine samples totalling 1,110 participants. The researchers stated, 'Measures derived under mixed EI show robust empirical evidence of criterion validity' although they also raised concerns that mixed models of EI needed further theoretical development to explain why they relate to performance. Another notable finding was: 'When dealing with high emotional labour jobs (jobs that require positive emotional displays), all types of EI measures exhibit meaningful validity and incremental validity over cognitive ability and personality.' This is endorsed by another meta-analysis,[33] (discussed in Section 7) and the views of other researchers who state, 'Future research in the organisational domain could examine the role of trait EI in jobs that are heavy in emotional labour... We believe this task should be given priority over research on incremental validity, which has been yielding strong positive findings.'[34]

Meta-analysis 3 (2011)[35]

This research synthesised the results from 27 studies and a combined sample of 3,961 people, which examined the relationship between mixed EI and work outcomes. Mixed EI again emerged as a clear predictor of performance. The authors recommended, 'moving forward, rather than seeing cognitive intelligence, the FFM (the five-factor model of personality), and EI as competing measures, researchers should focus on developing integrative models that include all three'.

Meta-analysis 4 (2015)[36]

This study was an extension of the 2010 meta-analysis, with a total of 15 studies and 2,168 people. It verified results from the previous three meta-analyses by demonstrating a clear link between mixed EI and job performance. At the same time, it tried to provide more insight into what characteristics feed into mixed EI. It identified that 62% of mixed EI can be accounted for by seven individual characteristics. The authors reported that, 'the active ingredients in mixed EI – which make it one of the strongest known personality-based predictors of job performance – included Conscientiousness, self-efficacy, self-rated performance, and Extraversion, in addition to ability EI, Emotional Stability, and cognitive ability.'[a] These characteristics can therefore be considered major building blocks for emotionally intelligent behaviour. The authors concluded that practitioners may choose to use mixed EI as, 'a practical, shorthand alternative to a lengthy battery of several more traditional KSAOs' (knowledge, skills, ability, and other personality instruments).

The EIP evidence

In line with this meta-analytic research, we have also conducted extensive research into the extent to which the EIP measure of EI predicts job performance. In a study using the EIP across a wide range of organisations that involved over 300 employees,[37] we found that EI significantly predicted four key dimensions of work performance, as measured by managers' ratings (Adapting and Initiating,

> **"Moving forward, rather than seeing cognitive intelligence... personality and EI as competing measures, researchers should focus on developing integrative measures that include all three."[35]**

a It is interesting to observe that these ingredients of mixed EI map neatly onto the three levels of the EIP framework (Figure 2). Personality traits relate to the Behaviour level, perception and regulation of emotions link to the Feeling level, and aspects of self-belief relate to the Attitude level.

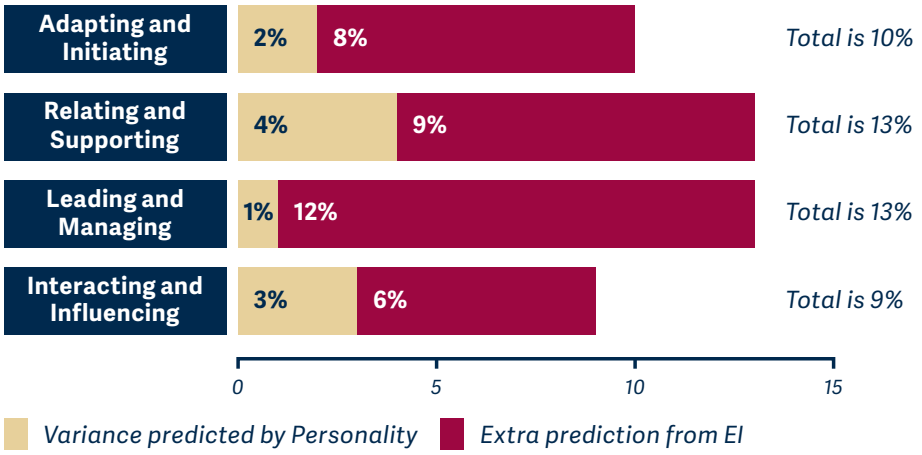
Relating and Supporting, Leading and Managing, and Interacting and Influencing). The results showed there was also a clear and cumulative benefit of combining EIP with a measure of the five major personality dimensions in assessing performance (see Figure 3).

Overall, these research studies provide sound evidence that EI predicts job performance across a variety of roles. Logically, EI appears to be most relevant to roles which incur high emotional labour (e.g. customer service, sales, and management).

Furthermore, adding an EI measure to an existing selection process involving cognitive ability tests and personality questionnaires can potentially increase the prediction of likely job performance.

Further evidence showing the added value of EI over personality and cognitive ability when predicting performance is described in Section 7.

Figure 3: **Increase in prediction of job performance when adding EIP to broad personality traits**



Does EI predict job performance?

Key points

1. Mixed or trait EI is a valuable predictor of job performance.
2. Mixed EI can help to increase the prediction of performance over and above traditional personality and cognitive ability assessments.
3. EI is most important for job performance in high emotional labour roles.
4. Seven individual characteristics appear to form the building blocks of EI, including personality traits, aspects of self-belief, emotional perception and regulation, and intellect.

4 Does EI support engagement at work?

Higher engagement means greater productivity.[38,39] Research by Gallup shows that across industries and countries, teams with highly engaged members are on average 17% more productive than those with lower engagement.[40] However, the 2017 'State of the Global Workplace' survey also reports that only 15% of employees worldwide are highly engaged in their job.[40] This leaves plenty of opportunity for improvement, with the potential for gains in engagement to translate into increased organisational productivity.

The evidence base

This section looks at whether EI supports engagement at work. A recent **meta-analysis (2017)**[41] that combined results from 119 studies found there to be a close association between EI and engaged attitudes at work. The authors' summary of the results is shown below:

1 Employees with higher EI report higher job satisfaction, higher organisational commitment, and lower turnover intentions.

2 Adding EI measures to personality and cognitive measures can improve the ability to assess employee job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and turnover intentions.

3 EI improves job satisfaction by helping employees to reduce negative feelings, increase positive feelings, and improve job performance.

The authors conclude, 'To produce productive and satisfied workers, organisations should incorporate EI in employee recruitment, training, and development programmes.'

As well as demonstrating greater staff engagement and job satisfaction,[42,43] employees with higher EI have been shown to have increased retention,[44] reduced attrition,[45] fewer work-related accidents and grievances,[46] and greater career advancement.[47]

These results concur with a meta-analysis on 7,939 business units in 36 companies.[38] This found that organisations ranking higher in employee satisfaction and engagement are also shown to have:

- higher customer satisfaction/loyalty scores
- lower employee turnover
- fewer work-days lost through safety incidents
- higher sales revenue or other productivity measures
- higher percentage profit from sales

The EIP evidence

We have investigated the specific links between work engagement and the EIP. Work engagement has been defined as, 'a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption'.[48] In our research, we found that an individual's EI accounts for 31% of the variance in their level of work engagement. The aspects of EI showing the strongest relationship with engagement are displayed in priority order in Table 3a.

Table 3a: **Key aspects of EI that relate to individual engagement**[37]

EIP SCALE	LINK TO ENGAGEMENT
Goal Directedness	Clear on personal needs and goals
Personal Power	Feels empowered and self-determined
Flexibility	Willing to move outside of own comfort zone
Balanced Outlook	Keeps problems and difficulties in perspective
Interdependence	Enjoys working with others without being reliant
Emotional Resilience	Able to bounce back from setbacks easily

"In our research, we found that an individual's EI accounts for *31%* of the variance in their level of work engagement."

These results suggest that individuals with higher EI will be more engaged and committed to their work and organisation. Interestingly, these EI attributes are quite different from those required by leaders to engage others.[49] With regard to leaders who create an engaging and motivational climate, our analysis shows that their key attributes are all interpersonal aspects of EI (see Table 3b).

This suggests that leaders who have high levels of interpersonal intelligence are more likely to create a positive emotional climate. From both sets of results, we may conclude that to create an engaged and productive workforce requires a specific combination of both personal and interpersonal aspects of EI.

Table 3b: **Key aspects of EI which drive leadership engagement**

EIP SCALE	LINK TO ENGAGEMENT
Awareness of Others	Pays attention to how others are feeling
Interdependence	Consults and involves others when necessary
Connecting with Others	Invests time and energy in building relationships
Regard for Others	Values individuals and respects their views and opinions
Trust	Has faith in people, while being realistic in expectations

Does EI support engagement at work?

Key points

1. Individuals with high EI tend to be more satisfied at work, committed to their organisation, and less likely to leave.
2. EI adds clear incremental value in predicting positive work attitudes over and above broad personality traits and cognitive ability.
3. People high in EI are better at regulating their emotions to increase positive feelings and reduce negative feelings, which in turn leads to greater job satisfaction.
4. EI (the EIP) accounts for just under one-third (31%) of an individual's level of work engagement.
5. High levels of employee engagement lead to positive organisational outcomes, such as improved sales, productivity, customer service, and safety.

5 Can EI enhance well-being?

The case for improving employee well-being is not just morally imperative but financially compelling. A recent review highlighted that poor mental health costs the UK economy £99 billion every year, and over one-fifth (22%) of UK organisations now report that mental ill-health is the *primary* cause of long-term absence.[50,51] A report by Gallup says that four out of five adults feel stressed throughout the day, with work being a major cause.[52] And a 2018 survey by Korn Ferry found stress at work to be increasing, with nearly two-thirds (65%) of respondents saying that compared to five years ago, their levels of stress at work are higher today.[53]

While supporting the well-being of employees may seem like an additional expense, the return on investment is high. In 2017, a study of almost 50,000 business units in 45 countries, discovered that workgroups who received strengths interventions saw sales increase by 10% (to 19%) and profits by 14% (to 29%), compared with control groups.[40] According to other research, a good resilience programme will show about a 12% improvement in overall resilience and often higher.[54]

> **All too often individuals who perform effectively under normal circumstances will dramatically derail and underperform when outside of their comfort zones or under stress. What differentiates those who adapt, recover, and learn from adversity from those that don't is the concept of resilience.**[61]

The evidence base

Developing EI has proven to be a valuable method for building resilience,[55] reducing stress,[56] and enhancing well-being.[57,58] Research indicates that greater EI facilitates more positive emotional states and fewer negative moods, thereby achieving a greater sense of well-being.[56]

The following three meta-analyses present clear evidence that EI relates to health and well-being:

Meta-analysis 1 (2007)[59]
A meta-analysis of 44 samples and 7,898 participants found that EI accounted for 5-9% of variance in health-related measures. The authors stated that their analysis, 'indicates that overall there are significant relationships between emotional intelligence and mental health, psychosomatic health, and physical health'.

Meta-analysis 2 (2010)[57]
A comprehensive meta-analysis of 80 research studies with over 19,000 participants found a strong relationship between high EI and mental health, psychosomatic health, and to a lesser extent physical health. The relationship was notably stronger for trait EI than for ability EI.

Meta-analysis 3 (2015)[58]
Another meta-analysis of 25 studies with a combined total of 8,520 participants found a significant relationship between high EI and subjective well-being. The authors note, 'In general, individuals who perceive, know, and manage his/her emotions might deal better with emotional issues, and therefore experience greater psychological well-being.'

The EIP evidence

Similar positive results have been found with the EIP on a sample of 1,005 participants who completed the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (a measure of subjective well-being and positive psychological functioning).[60] The results of this study showed a strong relationship between EI and mental well-being. The aspects of the EIP which had the strongest association with well-being are shown in Table 4.

It is perhaps unsurprising that facets of EI such as Self Regard and Balanced Outlook relate to well-being. It may be inferred from these results that developing these aspects of EI could have the greatest positive impact on emotional health and mental well-being. What matters is whether these facets of EI *can* be improved and developed. The answer to this question will be addressed in Section 8 of this white paper.

Table 4: **Aspects of the EIP with the strongest relationship to well-being**

EIP SCALE	LINK TO WELL-BEING
Self Regard	Having a strong sense of inner confidence
Balanced Outlook	Adopting an optimistic but realistic perspective
Goal Directedness	Having a clear sense of purpose
Emotional Expression and Control	Regulating emotions and not over-reacting
Personal Power	Taking personal responsibility for what happens to them

Can EI enhance well-being?

Key points

1. Increasing employee well-being can improve the bottom line.
2. High EI is associated with better psychological, psychosomatic, and physical health.
3. Developing EI has been linked to improved resilience, reduced stress, and enhanced well-being.

6 Is EI important for leadership?

As the demands on organisations change, so too do the expectations on leaders. Traditional leadership competencies such as judgement, resilience, and charisma have shifted to meet the requirements of a digital age. The rise in technology, automation, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been described as the 'fourth industrial revolution'[62] requiring 'bold leadership' and an 'agile mindset' to lead this transformation.[2] However, according to the 2018 management survey by Roffey Park Institute, less than one-fifth (17%) of managers believe their organisation has the leadership and people skills to take advantage of AI.[3]

Research by Cisco and partners identified four essential competencies for future leaders that they describe as the hallmark of 'Agile Leadership'.[63] It is notable that these definitions have close resemblance to facets of the EIP, as shown in Table 5a.

Getting the best from others is a vital part of leadership. A recent European survey (2019) that was completed by over 10,000 employees identified 'bad management' as the biggest barrier to productivity (a significant increase from previous years).[15] Research suggests that managers are responsible for at least 70% of the variance in their employees' engagement.[40] In a survey across 8,000 organisations and 600,000 employees, three of the top ten predictors of employee engagement stood out as being driven by leadership.[64] Once again, it is noticeable that these leadership attributes are clearly related to facets of EI, as highlighted in Table 5b.

Current thinking therefore suggests that EI has an important role to play in helping today's leaders adapt and respond to the needs of the future. With over half (56%) of the European workforce anticipating significant changes due to automation,[15] the demands on leaders will continue to grow. With leaders at the forefront of organisational change it is imperative to equip them with the best tools and resources to get the most out of themselves and those they lead.

Table 5a: **Aspects of EI in relation to 'Agile Leadership'**

EIP SCALE	AGILE LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES*
Regard for Others	**Humble:** They are able to accept feedback and acknowledge that others know more than they do.
Flexibility	**Adaptable:** They accept that change is constant and that changing their minds based on new information is a strength rather than a weakness.
Goal Directedness and Personal Power	**Visionary:** They have a clear sense of long-term direction, even in the face of short-term uncertainty.
Connecting with Others	**Engaged:** They have a willingness to listen, interact, and communicate with internal and external stakeholders, combined with a strong sense of interest and curiosity in emerging trends.

* Extracted from: Neubauer, R., Tarling, A. & Wade, M. (2017). Redefining Leadership for a Digital Age.

Table 5b: **Aspects of EI in relation to 'leadership engagement'**

EIP SCALE	TOP THREE LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS THAT BUILD EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT
Trust	Employees **trust** the senior leadership team to lead the company to future success.
Regard for Others	The leaders of the organisation **value people** as their most important resource.
Authenticity	The leaders of this organisation demonstrate **integrity.**

The evidence base

Leadership has been described as an 'emotionally laden process'[65] and leaders' emotions and their associated behaviours have been found to profoundly influence followers' emotional reactions.[66] There is an abundance of organisational literature proclaiming the importance of EI to leadership,[67] and a review of the academic research concludes, 'empirical evidence... clearly suggests that emotional intelligence is an important driver of effective job performance and successful leadership'.[68] Collective evidence for the specific relationship between EI and leadership is also presented through the following meta-analyses:

Meta-analysis 1 (2010)[69]

In examining the relationship between EI and transformational leadership on 62 independent samples, results produced a very strong relationship for same-source ratings (supervisor ratings for both EI and leadership performance), but a far weaker relationship (albeit still statistically significant) for different-source ratings (self EI ratings and supervisor performance ratings). This weaker result was consistent with other meta-analytic studies of personality and transformational leadership.[70]

Meta-analysis 2 (2016)[71]

A meta-analysis combining six empirical studies and 1,407 leaders found a positive relationship between leaders' level of mixed EI and subordinates' job satisfaction. It also found that EI adds significant value over and above leaders' cognitive ability and broad personality traits in predicting subordinate job satisfaction. The authors state, 'Our results reveal that emotionally intelligent leaders will have more emotionally intelligent, thus more satisfied, subordinates.' They maintain that 'emotionally savvy leaders are likely to foster an emotionally intelligent organisational culture where training and developing emotional intelligence is promoted'. And they conclude, 'The emotionally intelligent culture will result in employees who are better able to deal with negative feelings and who are able to facilitate effective interpersonal interactions.' They also recommend that 'organisations should consider including EI in leadership education, training, and development... [and] encourage managers to administer an EI test when they make personnel decisions'.

The EIP evidence

These findings are supported by our research on 108 leaders who completed the EIP and were rated on the Leadership Climate Indicator (a 360-degree feedback tool focused on how leaders' behaviours influence the working climate).[49] Results showed that leaders with high EI were more likely to create a climate that was:

More: *Visioning, Stretching, Encouraging, Collaborative, Trusting.*

Less: *Aggressive, Demanding, Over-competitive, Avoidant, Dependent, Rigid.*

This study also found that it was the interpersonal (rather than intrapersonal) aspects of EI that relate

> **"As more and more artificial intelligence is entering into the world, more and more emotional intelligence must enter into leadership."**
>
> Amit Ray, Mindfulness Meditation for Corporate Leadership and Management

most to the climate ratings of the leader. This suggests that the relationships that leaders have with their colleagues have a significant impact on the climate they create. Furthermore, we found that leaders' EI accounted for more variance in the negative than the positive aspects of leadership climate. This suggests that a lack of EI, such as not showing appreciation or being aggressive with colleagues, may easily eradicate the benefits of positive leadership behaviours.

The meta-analytic results, combined with our findings on the link between the EIP and leadership climate, provide robust evidence that leaders' EI impacts the way that people feel and engage when working for them. Leaders with higher EI are more likely to create a positive work environment, which brings out the best in the individuals and teams they lead. This is encouraging news for the future, with EI being closely associated with the skills and competencies required of agile leaders to embrace the demands of a digital age. On this basis, EI should be incorporated as an essential component of leadership development programmes and initiatives to meet the expectations of a 'fourth industrial revolution'.[62]

Is EI important for leadership?

Key points

1. EI links strongly to the requirements of 'Agile Leadership'.
2. The key leadership behaviours that build employee engagement are closely related to EI.
3. The EI of leaders has a significant influence on the job satisfaction of the people working for them.
4. The climate or emotional tone that leaders set for others is correlated to their levels of EI.

7 What is the added value of EI?

Back in 1996, Daniel Goleman in his seminal book, 'Emotional Intelligence: why it can matter more than IQ', argued that IQ contributes to about 20% of life success. He noted that the remaining 80% must therefore be down to other factors, with EI playing a key part.[72] The evidence for EI he presented was mostly anecdotal, yet his arguments caught the interest of executives the world over. Perhaps this represented a tide of opinion from business leaders who were intuitively aware that the key differentiator of high performers is as much emotional and relational as it is cognitive and cerebral.

The early literature on EI in the workplace was criticised for making exaggerated and unsupported claims,[73,74] that have since been replaced with more balanced views from both sides of the debate.[75] After several decades of research, we are now in a far better position to determine the true added value of EI.

The evidence base

A starting point to understand the added value of EI is to compare it with existing psychological models to see if EI measures and predicts any additional variance in performance, also known as *incremental validity*. Some researchers have criticised EI as being conceptually redundant for having significant overlap with other domains, such as personality and cognitive ability, and providing only weak utility as a predictor of job performance.[76,77,78] However, a growing number of meta-analytic studies demonstrate EI to be a significant incremental predictor of job performance (as described in Section 3) as well as other criteria.

Meta-analysis (2016)[33]

This systematic review and meta-analysis of trait EI demonstrated its consistent incremental variance over personality dimensions in explaining a wide range of different areas of emotional and social functioning. Some of these areas included happiness, emotional labour, perceived stress, life satisfaction, anxiety, leadership roles, and well-being. In total, this analysis combined the results from 114 different studies, with 80% yielding statistically significant results. The authors emphasised this incremental variance as being 'practically significant' and concluded that: 'trait EI reliably accounts for substantial variation in a wide range of criteria that is not accounted for by other constructs... putting to rest the assertion that it is redundant with basic personality dimensions'.[33]

As well as demonstrating incremental validity over personality inventories, the authors of this meta-analysis assert that trait EI provides a more detailed and comprehensive assessment of the emotion-related aspects of personality.[79]

The EIP evidence

In our research using the EIP we have found that EI demonstrates incremental validity in relation to both job performance and work engagement. In a sample of over 300 employees from across a variety of organisations, we found that the EIP added between 6% and 12% incremental variance on top of broad personality traits, in predicting four key dimensions of performance (for more detail, please refer to Section 3).[37] In a further study with over 200 working adults, we found that the EIP added 19% extra variance in predicting engagement over and above broad personality traits.[37]

These findings have been further endorsed by comparing the EIP with several well-established personality inventories.[80] This was done by mapping all of these instruments onto a single organising framework of personality traits called the Periodic Table of Personality (akin to the periodic table of chemical elements).[81] Based on statistical mapping, the EIP scales were found to have about 50% scale overlap and 50% scale difference from the ten personality instruments. The results from some of the most popular personality inventories are shown in Table 6.

These results further endorse the position that the EIP adds incremental value in measuring aspects of personality not addressed by established personality inventories (i.e. areas of difference). Further analysis revealed that many of these areas were the emotional and social facets of behaviour. In practice this means that the EIP can be used in combination with personality inventories to measure the emotional and social aspects of personality in greater breadth and depth.

> **"We found that the EIP added *19%* extra variance in predicting engagement over and above broad personality traits.[37]"**

Table 6: **The percentage overlap and difference between the EIP and personality inventories**

PERSONALITY INVENTORY	PERCENTAGE OVERLAP WITH EIP	PERCENTAGE DIFFERENCE FROM EIP
Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI)	67%	33%
Occupational Personality Questionnaire (OPQ)	55%	45%
Sixteen Personality Factor questionnaire (16PF)	27%	73%
Personality and Preference Inventory (PAPI)	33%	67%
NEO PI-R	67%	33%
California Psychological Inventory (CPI)	50%	50%

What is the added value of EI?

Key points

1. Initial claims about the additional value of EI lacked strong research foundations. The large research base that is now available demonstrates EI adds clear incremental value.
2. EI adds incremental value over personality and cognitive ability in the prediction of a range of work-related criteria, including performance, well-being, and engagement.
3. EI assessments can provide a more granular focus on the emotional and social aspects of personality compared to traditional personality questionnaires.

8 Can EI be developed?

EI is widely applied in business for leadership and talent development. A current web search for 'Emotional Intelligence training' produces around 75 million hits, and over 200 organisations providing various forms of coaching and training, many as part of MBA training through prestigious universities such as Yale.[82]

Arguably, a key reason for the popularity of EI is that it is more developable than other psychological attributes such as cognitive intelligence[a] and personality traits.[b] For example, the EIP framework provides a clear roadmap for personal development by:

- emphasising individual choice and control in adopting more mindful attitudes
- building a more granular awareness of emotions
- embedding positive behavioural habits through repeated practice
- providing blended approaches to EI development such as experiential activities, group work, and mobile app technology

The evidence base

Evidence for the developable nature of EI is supported by the latest research in a diverse range of fields, such as personality theory, neuroscience, and mindfulness.

1 A recent **meta-analytic study (2018)**[83] found EI had a statistically significant association with mindfulness, which increased with age. Researchers suggest that mindfulness practice encourages the development of key abilities and competencies associated with EI.

2 A systematic review of an eight-week mindfulness-based stress reduction programme (MBSR) found that MBSR led to changes in the brain's amygdala consistent with improved emotional regulation.[84]

3 A newly emerging field of research has identified a specific network of brain regions that are involved in social and emotional cognition, called the Default Mode Network (DMN) or 'social brain', that is instrumental to empathic reasoning.[85] A number of studies have identified regions in the DMN as being highly predictive of future behaviour change.[86]

4 New research is also challenging the long-held assumption that personality traits are not developable,[b] showing that personality traits are far more malleable than previously thought.[87,88] Researchers now suggest that 'personality trait change might result from training and development interventions at work'.[89] This apparent shift in position is entirely aligned with the evidence that EI is a developable and improvable construct.

Two recent meta-analytic studies endorse the view that EI may be improved through training:

Meta-analysis 1 (2017)[92]

This analysis combined the results from 24 pre and post EI training intervention studies, involving 1,986 people in total. The training methods were varied, but the vast majority of studies included both experiential and theory-based components. Overall, the analysis found moderate positive improvements in EI after training. In addition, results from a subset of seven studies, which included a further follow-up (on average around four months after training) suggested these improvements in EI remain consistent over time. The authors stated, 'The obtained results show that specific interventions improve EI.' Additionally, they noted that 'the most effective interventions were those that focused on enhancing specific emotional abilities', all of which 'used a workshop approach with group discussion and interactive participation'.

Meta-analysis 2 (2019)[93]

A second meta-analysis combined 58 studies, and included training interventions delivered for managers, nurses, police officers, sales representatives, teachers, and retail staff. This analysis found post EI training results to be over half a standard deviation higher than pre EI training results. In practice, the results indicated that a person who had completed EI training would on average score higher than 73% of people who had not been trained. Similar to the previous meta-analysis, the data also suggested that the impact was greater when the training included participative discussion rather than lectures, although it was only possible to draw tentative conclusions on this due to limited studies including this information. The authors concluded, 'The moderate and positive effect of training on EI supports the malleability of this construct, allowing us to infer that EI is trainable.' They go on to suggest that 'implementing workplace EI training programs is indeed a good investment'.

The EIP evidence

These findings are consistent with research we have conducted on pre and post training impact using the EIP. One such study examined over 300 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths) sector employees, who completed the EIP prior to, and three months after, attending an EI development programme.[94]

a The popularisation of Daniel Goleman's book 'Emotional Intelligence – Why it can matter more than IQ' (1996)[72] is often seen as a backlash to the Herrnstein and Murray book, 'The Bell Curve' (1994)[90] that argued the importance of IQ for understanding social class in society.

b According to trait theory (also called dispositional theory), 'traits are aspects of personality that are relatively stable over time'.[91]

The EI programme included a two-and-a-half day workshop, one-to-one coaching, and several individual activities, such as a three-week habit change exercise. The results showed significant improvements in EIP scores, as shown in Figure 4. These promising findings suggest that EI is not just developable, but unlike some short-lived motivational workshops, EI improvements are sustainable over time. Furthermore, it is encouraging that such improvements are achieved in neuro-diverse job sectors (i.e. STEM) that are traditionally less people-oriented.[95]

As suggested by the meta-analytic studies, the development of EI may be somewhat influenced by the method applied.

One area of growing popularity is the use of mobile app technology. A recent small-scale study examined data on 212 habit change attempts/completions using the EIP mobile app. Results found a very strong correlation between the number of days an EI habit was practised and the self-perceived improvement in the specific behaviour committed to.[96] Clearly, there are several factors that may determine the success of EI development, but a key element is the amount of practice and perseverance by the individual. One way to encourage this is by making best use of available technologies such as mobile apps.

Figure 4: **Percentage EIP score improvements pre and post development**

	Personal Intelligence	Interpersonal Intelligence
Behaviour	Self Management 11%	Relationship Management 12%
Feeling	Self Awareness 13%	Awareness of Others 13%
Attitude	Self Regard 21%	Regard for Others 10%

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The EIP framework is described in Section 2

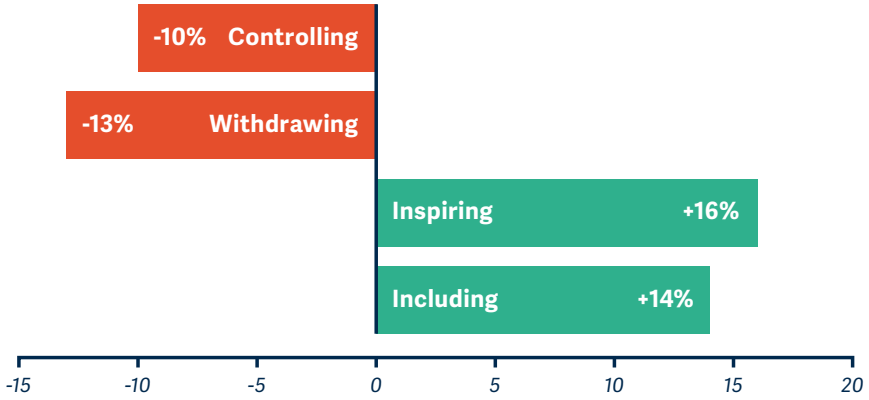
> **I cannot recommend PSI and their EI programme highly enough. Having had the absolute pleasure of being on the EI journey through both team and personal coaching, this once sceptic is an absolute advocate of EI.**

Richard Gray, Head of Architecture – Systems, Kier Group

Developing EI not only impacts on the individual but also on the organisation. In a small study, we found that developing EI in individual leaders can significantly improve the emotional climate of the organisation.[97] A group of 35 leaders within a large construction organisation participated in an EI-based development programme that incorporated three team workshops and individual coaching over a 10-month period. A sample of 244 employees working for this leadership group completed a climate survey, before and after their leaders went through the programme. Overall, the results showed an increase in positive leadership climate dimensions and a decrease in negative leadership climate dimensions, summarised in Figure 5.

These findings demonstrate an important part of the EI puzzle – that EI can be developed and done so sustainably. Given the other findings in this paper, that EI relates to job performance, engagement, well-being, and leadership, it may be inferred that these too can be improved through the development of EI. Furthermore, this report has identified specific aspects of EI (as defined by the EIP scales) that have a strong relationship to each of these work-related areas. This will enable individuals to be more selective in deciding which aspects of EI they choose to develop.

Figure 5: **Percentage change in leadership climate ratings following leaders' EI development**



Can EI be developed?

Key points

1. EI is typically considered to be more developable than other individual attributes such as personality temperament and cognitive ability.
2. Research has demonstrated that EI training and development can lead to moderate and positive improvements in levels of EI.
3. There is early evidence that EI training which involves more discussion, participation, and mindfulness practice is particularly effective.
4. The impact of EI training appears to be sustainable over time, with some studies reporting that improvements were maintained several months after training.

EI – a present and future priority

Despite the widespread popularity of EI within the corporate world, it has not gone unchallenged, with one academic observing, 'there is perhaps no construct in the social sciences that has produced more controversy in recent years.'[98] However, the accumulated evidence over three decades of research is now compelling:

- EI is measurable
- EI relates to performance, engagement, well-being, and aspects of leadership
- EI can be developed

HR professionals and consultants applying EI assessments and development programmes should have confidence that there is a solid evidence-base supporting the value of EI for individuals and organisations.

In our view, the question today is less about ***whether*** EI adds value, but more about ***where*** and ***how*** EI can add most value. EI has been shown to be more predictive in jobs with higher emotional labour such as nursing, sales, and leadership roles.[25] It is also proving helpful in areas such as Artificial Intelligence, which paradoxically places a high premium on human attributes such as empathy and collaboration.[3] Further research will help us to understand how we can best apply EI and maximise benefits for individuals and organisations.

EI is not a panacea, but as described in this white paper, it has demonstrated clear added value in many areas of employee engagement, well-being, and job performance. In its relatively short history, EI has made a significant contribution in supporting employees, leaders, and organisations to respond to the changing demands of the workplace. According to current forecasts and predictions, EI will continue to be a priority for organisations over many years to come.[2,9,10]

"Further research will help us to understand how we can best apply Emotional Intelligence and maximise benefits for individuals and organisations."

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Appendix 1
EIP scale definitions

Attitude Scales

Self Regard is the degree to which you accept and value yourself.

Regard for Others is the degree to which you accept and value others as people.

Awareness scales

Self Awareness is the degree to which you are in touch with your body, feelings, and intuition.

Awareness of Others is the degree to which you are in touch with the feelings of others.

Reflective Learning is the extent to which you reflect on what you and others feel, think and do and alter your behaviour accordingly.

Behaviour: Self Management scales

Emotional Resilience is the degree to which you are able to pick yourself up and bounce back when things go badly for you.

Personal Power is the degree to which you believe that you are in charge of and take responsibility for your outcomes.

Goal Directedness is the degree to which your behaviour is related to your own long-term goals.

Flexibility is the degree to which you feel free to adapt your thinking and your behaviour to match changing situations.

Authenticity is the degree to which you invite the trust of others by being principled, reliable, consistent and known.

Balanced Outlook is how well you manage to balance optimism and realism. *(Pessimistic, Realistically Optimistic, Over Optimistic.)*

Behaviour: Relationship Management scales

Connecting with Others is the extent and ease with which you are able to make significant connections with other people.

Trust is your tendency to place the right amount of trust in others. *(Mistrusting, Carefully Trusting, Over Trusting.)*

Emotional Expression and Control is how well you balance emotional expression with emotional control. *(Under Controlled, Free and in Charge, Over Controlled.)*

Conflict Handling is how well you handle conflict or how assertive you are. *(Passive, Assertive, Aggressive.)*

Interdependence is how well you manage to balance taking yourself and taking others into account. *(Dependent, Independent, Over Independent.)*

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