

EQ CONNECTIONS

An Emotional Intelligence Newsletter by E.I. Assessments



**“ IF YOU’RE SINCERE, PRAISE IS EFFECTIVE.
IF YOU’RE INSINCERE, IT’S MANIPULATIVE.”**

– Zig Ziglar

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP:

Depth of a Salesperson

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Have you ever had a very pleasant experience with a salesperson but felt that he or she was not really listening to your needs? If you are a sales manager, do you have some salespeople who are terrific at socializing but not very good at selling? Do you find that your best salespeople are women? If you answered YES to these questions, then you are sensitive to the difference between people with high *Interpersonal Relationship* abilities who easily relate to others and those who may have lower *Empathy* and listening skills.

Since most people have made large purchases in their lives, it is natural to gravitate towards people who make us feel comfortable during moments that can be stressful. The best

salespeople sense these feelings and can connect with the client. These important relationship skills are developed by experiencing various business situations, including sales, during your career.

WHAT ARE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP SKILLS?

Interpersonal Relationship skills reflect your ability to establish business connections that are both authentic and mutually beneficial.

WHAT DO INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP SKILLS LOOK LIKE?

People who score high in *Interpersonal Relationship* on the EQ-i 2.0:

- Can be very effective at applying their active listening skills to quickly establish and build trust
- Are open, approachable and natural at facilitating conversations with others
- Often have large personal and professional networks which they connect with for support and career opportunities

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP AND EMPATHY

Perhaps you never thought about it before, but have you ever noticed a difference in your satisfaction level between salesmen and saleswomen? According to the EQ-i reports, while men have a stronger ability to initiate and build interpersonal connections, women tend to be better listeners. As a result, I believe women can identify the needs and solve their client's problems more effectively than men.

When I reviewed the data of **1,356** professionals who completed the EQ-I, I initially looked for a balance between *Interpersonal Relationship* and *Empathy*. The balance of these skills reflects individuals who are both good listeners and understand that compromise is needed to build relationships. I found that **42%** of this group (**45%** women and **38%** men) were most likely very effective at establishing business relationships. These people have a sincere and natural interest in others.



Returning to the EQ-i data, **26%** of these professionals (**29%** women and **24%** men) had *Empathy* scores that were higher than their *Interpersonal Relationship* skill levels. These individuals tend to be outstanding listeners who can learn quickly but may lack a degree of personal self-confidence or social skills. Clients whom I have coached that operate in highly technical business environments fall into this group. In these very technical jobs, the success of their work is based on the results they can deliver and not on the strengths of their relationships.

The remaining individuals, **32%**, scored much higher in their *Interpersonal Relationship* skills than they did in *Empathy*. This group of professionals, which is **38%** men and **26%** women, understand the practical dynamics of business relationships and know the importance of relating to others. However, since their lower *Empathy* scores indicate they may not be skilled listeners, their tendency may be to either discount or ignore important emotional information or cues that would contribute towards building better relationships.

THE CONSULTATIVE SALE

At one point in my corporate career, I became certified in Forum Corporation's Consultative Selling program, which I delivered to advertising teams at the *New York Times*. The key difference between traditional versus consultative selling was the focus on the client's relationship instead of pursuing immediate sales results. Rather than charging in and delivering a presentation on the first or second sales call, consultative selling was about following a distinct process focused on the client.

While there are variations on the consultative sales process, the basic steps include connecting with the client, making inquiries, asking "high gain" questions, gathering data, validating information and then, finally, delivering a sales presentation. For an impatient sales person, the consultative selling process may encourage him or her to slow down and become a better listener.

DEVELOPING INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

It is interesting that when clients score low in *Interpersonal Relationship* skills, it is often an indicator that they regularly eat lunch at their desks. While lunch was once viewed as an aspect of social time at work, in many business cultures I visit people often work during their lunchtime. Even if more work is getting done, the interpersonal opportunities to build better relationships are lost.



For some people, going to lunch with others is not necessarily a comfortable experience. If you really want to increase your *Interpersonal Relationship* skills, then you need a strategy. I would highly recommend Dale Carnegie's world-famous book, *How to Win Friends & Influence People*. The best example of Carnegie's timeless advice is the *Six Ways to Make People Like You*. They include:

- Become genuinely interested in other people.
- Smile.
- Remember that a person's name is, to that person, the sweetest and most important sound in any language.
- Be a good listener. Encourage others to talk about themselves.
- Talk in terms of the other person's interests.
- Make the other person feel important – and do it sincerely.

By following his advice and practicing his suggestions, an individual can become a better salesperson and leader.

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