

## The necessity of team emotional intelligence



Emotional intelligence was ranked sixth in the World Economic Forum's list of the top 10 skills that employees will need to possess to thrive in the workplace of the future.

A study conducted, in 2006 by Hillary Elfenbein, an assistant professor at Berkley, that linked emotional intelligence with team performance at work, found that “teams with greater average emotional intelligence have higher team functioning than groups with lower emotional intelligence.” Moreover, in a team, “the ability to understand one another’s emotional expressions explained 40% of the variance in team performance.”

Below are 5 reasons why teams need to have training in emotional intelligence to maximize it and utilise it for top performance:

1. More work is being done in teams: A study conducted in 2016, found that the phenomenon of collaboration overload is occurring. Teamwork has increased roughly 50% and takes up 80% or more of peoples’ time.
2. Emotions are stirred up in social interactions: It is very common and normal to feel certain

emotions during teamwork (frustration, anger, uncertainty), however the important aspect is how to manage those feelings, so they do not become destructive.

3. Too much focus on the task: Neuroscience shows that problem solving, and empathy use different brain channels. In today's world of work, emphasis is placed on the task and therefore, emotions are left behind. It is when emotions are ignored, EQ is lost, and negative consequences can occur.
4. Lack of listening: One thing that does not often occur in teams is listening. Team EQ places a huge emphasis on open communication and listening. When only "telling" occurs, people are less and less likely to provide input and inquire, which leads to a group of people with one directive leader.
5. Tough conversations are avoided: If team EQ is properly in place with established norms, then issues should be flagged as soon as they occur. This eliminates the need for tough conversations. Processes will already be in place when dealing with difficult behaviour or conflict.

### References

Curtin, M. (2018). *The 10 top skills that will land you high-paying jobs by 2020, according to the World Economic Forum*. Retrieved from <https://www.inc.com/melanie-curtin/the-10-top-skills-that-will-land-you-high-paying-jobs-by-2020-according-to-world-economic-forum.html>.

Elfenbein, H.A. (2006). *Team emotional intelligence*. In Druskat, V.U., Sala, F. and Mount, G . Linking emotional intelligence and performance at work. Mahway, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Nadler, R.S. (2017). *10 Reasons why teams need emotional intelligence*. Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/leading-emotional-intelligence/201707/10-reasons-why-teams-need-emotional-intelligence>.