

White Paper

Increasing Emotional Intelligence

INCREASING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract: Popular literature frequently asserts that emotional intelligence can be increased¹. In contrast to fixed aspects of personality, the premise is that EQ skills can be learned. If this is true it represents tremendous opportunity for improving work, school, and life outcomes because emotional intelligence is an important predictor of key success factors². This study of information technology (IT) professionals found that with only two days of training, emotional intelligence scores (measured by Six Seconds Emotional Intelligence Assessment) increased by 7%.

Background

Svimservice S.p.A., founded in 1974 with headquarters in Bari (South Italy), offers services in information technology, engineering and management consultancy areas. During its thirty years history, Svimservice has gained a leading position in offering IT services for Public Administration, especially in the healthcare sector, becoming one of the 100 ICT top companies in Italy in revenue (est €19 million in 2006) and in staff (300 people).

In 2006 a team of 60 employees (programmers, software developers, web designers and other information systems professionals) from Svimservice started with an emotional intelligence assessment. The group then participated in a training course intended to teach emotional intelligence skills for managers. After 90 days the assessment was administered again and the first and second sets of scores were analyzed to assess changes and the significance of the changes. Overall scores emotional intelligence scores increased by 7%, further analysis showed the change to be statistically significant.

Assessment

Emotional intelligence was measured with the Six Seconds Emotional Intelligence Assessment (SEI)³. The SEI is based on the Six Seconds Model of Emotional Intelligence consisting of eight core competencies divided into three macro areas: Self Awareness, Self Management, and Self Direction.



- Self Awareness, called “Know Yourself,” includes two competencies: Enhance Emotional Literacy and Recognize Patterns.
- Self Management, called “Choose Yourself,” includes four competencies: Apply Consequential Thinking, Navigate Emotions, Engage Intrinsic Motivation, Exercise Optimism.
- The Self Direction area, called “Give Yourself,” includes Increase Empathy and Pursue Noble Goals.

The assessment provides an overall EQ score plus scores for each of the three macro areas and each of the eight competencies for a total of 12 normative values. To compare the 12 scales between the first SEI administration and the second one group means were calculated for each scale.

Intervention

Group members received 16 hours (2 days) of in-person training about emotional intelligence and management skills utilizing the Six Seconds training methodology.

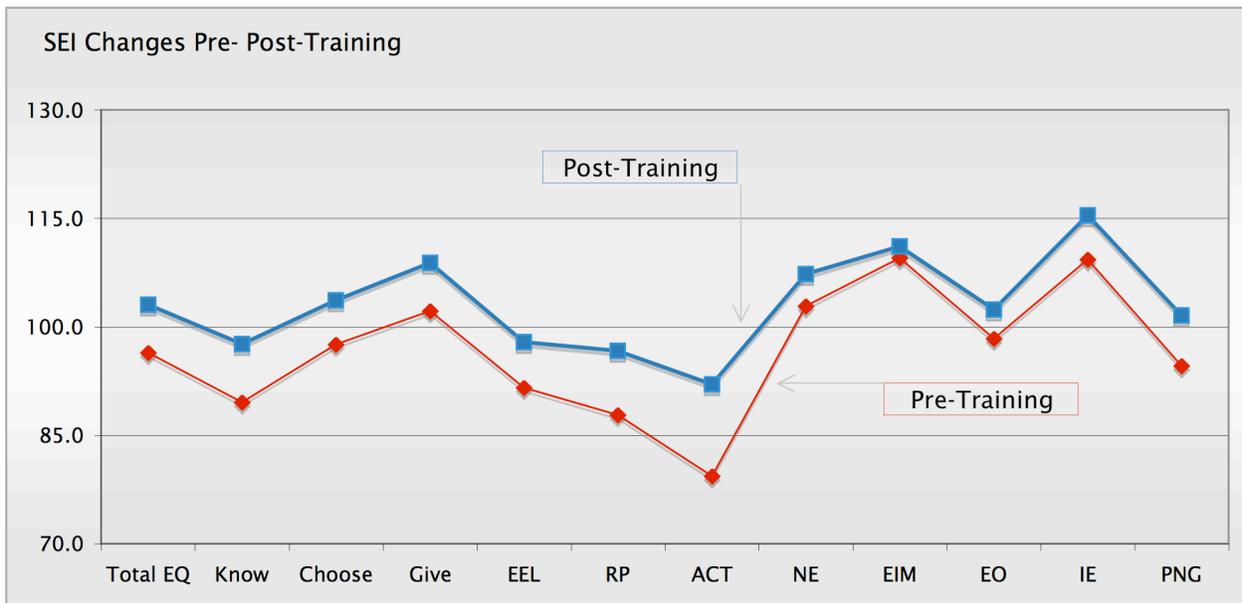
The focus of the course was the development of the relational and personal abilities as well as a sense of self efficacy with an emotional intelligence approach (being aware of and using feelings as an asset for decision-making and interpersonal communication). The training provided technical knowledge and theoretical models reinforced through experiential learning and examples of practical applications (“tools”) to understand key interpersonal dynamics and to improve the awareness about the correlation between personal emotional awareness and performance.

The training consisted of small and large group discussion, interactive exercises, simulations, and self-reflection processes. Participants were encouraged to discuss their reactions to and feelings about scenes from movies and about the exercises conducted in the training. Participants were encouraged to read their individualized report about the assessment and to choose one of the eight competencies on which to focus their attention.



Analysis

Ninety days after the initial assessment 34 participants repeated the SEI online. The results are shown on the graph below; the red line indicates the first administration, the blue line the second. The Y axis (vertical) shows the mean scores (SEI scores are normed to range from 50 to 150 with a mean of 100). The X axis (horizontal) shows the total score, the three macro areas, and each of the eight competencies.

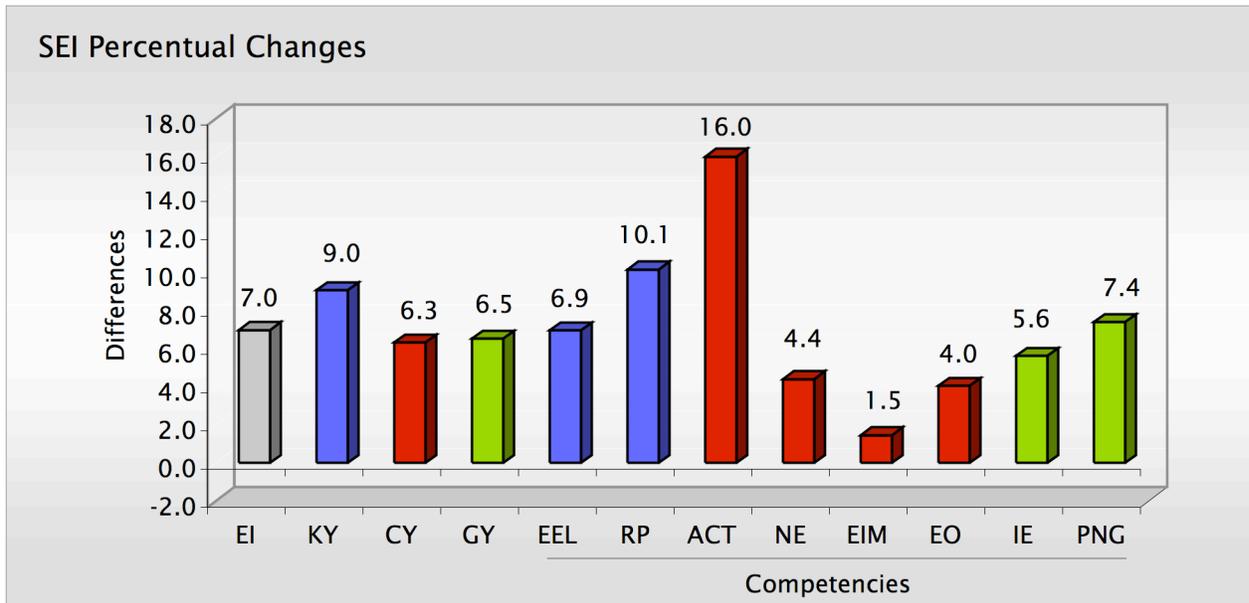


EQ = total emotional intelligence; KY = Know Yourself (Self Awareness); CY = Choose Yourself (Self Management); GY = Give Yourself (Self Direction).

EL = Emotional Literacy; RP = Recognize Patterns; CT = Consequential Thinking; NE = Navigate Emotions; IM = Intrinsic Motivation; EO = Exercise Optimism; EM = Empathy; NG = Noble Goals.

The changes in each area were also calculated as a percentage increase in the following chart:





Mean scores and percent increases are shown here:

AREA	First Administration	Second Administration	Change (percentage)
EQ: Emotional Intelligence	96.4	103.1	+ 7.0 %
KY: Know Yourself	89.6	97.6	+ 9.0 %
EL: Emotional Literacy	91.6	97.9	+ 6.9 %
RP: Recognize Patterns	87.8	96.7	+ 10.1 %
CY: Choose Yourself	97.5	103.7	+ 6.3 %
CT: Consequential Thinking	79.4	92.1	+ 16.0 %
NE: Navigate Emotions	102.8	107.3	+ 4.4 %
IM: Intrinsic Motivation	109.5	111.1	+ 1.5 %
EO: Exercise Optimism	98.4	102.4	+ 4.0 %
GY: Give Yourself	102.2	108.8	+ 6.5 %
EM: Empathy	109.3	115.4	+ 5.6 %
NG: Noble Goals	94.6	101.6	+ 7.4 %



A paired sample, or *t*-test, was conducted to assess the significance of these changes. This test compares each pre- and post- score to identify if changes are simply random variation or if there is a reliable, meaningful change between the two sets of measures.

Paired Samples Test, Total EQ

		Paired Differences			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Pair 1	EM.INT - EM.INT2	-6.7059	19.16362	3.28653	-2.040	33	.049

The analysis shows a significant difference ($t = -2.040$ with $p < 0.05$) between the first SEI administration and second SEI administration. This affirms that the training positively influenced emotional intelligence in this group.

The competence had the most important and significant increase was “Apply Consequential Thinking” as shown using the same test:

Paired Samples Test, Apply Consequential Thinking

		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	CT CT2	12.7059	23.19552	3.97800	20.7992	-4.6126	-3.194	33	.003



This shows the area of greatest learning was in the competence of Apply Consequential Thinking, the 16% increase was highly significant.

Conclusion

The Svimservice project demonstrates that even a short training program for professionals working in a highly competitive and technical environment offers significant benefits in the development of emotional intelligence competence. In addition to the measurable changes, anecdotally participants reported important performance changes.

Angela Paparella (Wellness Manager) says: *“When the Director proposed the Wellness Manager role to me, the objectives were clear but not the way to reach them: obviously he didn’t reveal the secret!! Now for months and months after assessment and emotional intelligence training I can see the richness of these tools for understanding interpersonal dynamics.”*

Giancarlo Di Paola (Director) says: *“I caught the idea of the emotional intelligence training for Svim Service with much excitement because I know that technological innovation is really weak without personal development. Our company works to pay attention to people and we monitor personal development paths: this EQ work helped the organization to learn and develop.”*

Others comments illustrate the benefits of the program that occurred with the development of emotional intelligence:

Antonella Favia (Programmer): *“It was a strengthening experience that let me to enrich all my personal resources, to develop and improve my self and my communications with the others.”*

Giuseppe Coppola (Analyst Designer for Web Applications): *“The emotional intelligence training helped me to understand the dynamics of human interaction in my new work place. This helped me to become more productive and better able to apply my competencies toward the team’s and organization’s goals.”*

Francesca Ferramosca (Business Developer): *“I continue to practice the emotional intelligence skills daily. I am trying to become more aware of myself and of my*



behaviors: there is a long and hard way before we know ourselves, and while I am not always successful I keep practicing the skills I learned. Sometimes I discover that I've made a new step ahead and that is wonderful!"

Future research needs to confirm these findings with a larger sample group. A controlled study is also warranted to more specifically measure the effects of the emotional intelligence training. Additionally it will be valuable to assess the combination of training with ongoing consulting / coaching which is central to the Six Seconds development process.

In the meantime, however, this finding adds evidence that emotional intelligence is a learnable competence. The implication is that emotional intelligence training should be part of organizational development and human capital strategy to maximize workforce efficacy.

References

¹ Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, 1995

² Joshua Freedman, Massimiliano Ghini and Carina Fiedeldey-Van Dijk, "Emotional Intelligence and Performance" <http://www.6seconds.org/sei> , 2006.

³ The only tool based on Six Seconds' model, the SEI is focused on developing key capacities for living and leading with emotional intelligence (<http://www.6seconds.org>).

