

Credocast

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Emotional Intelligence gives you an understanding of how people feel about certain circumstances. It tells you the appropriate communications approach to apply to support and reinforce them.

About Credo Advisory

Credo Advisory is a strategic communications firm that specializes in designing and implementing strategic, operational and tactical communications initiatives. We provide a full suite of communications support to our clients, which include public communications and advocacy, government relations, community engagement, media relations, crisis communications, digital communications and capacity building.

Our mission is to develop bespoke communications products, activities and campaigns based on knowledge, research and industry insights. With our ability to communicate effectively with diverse audiences and stakeholder groups, Credo's mission is to provide impactful strategic communications advisory from inception to implementation. At Credo, we are committed to improving the way societies communicate.

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Introduction

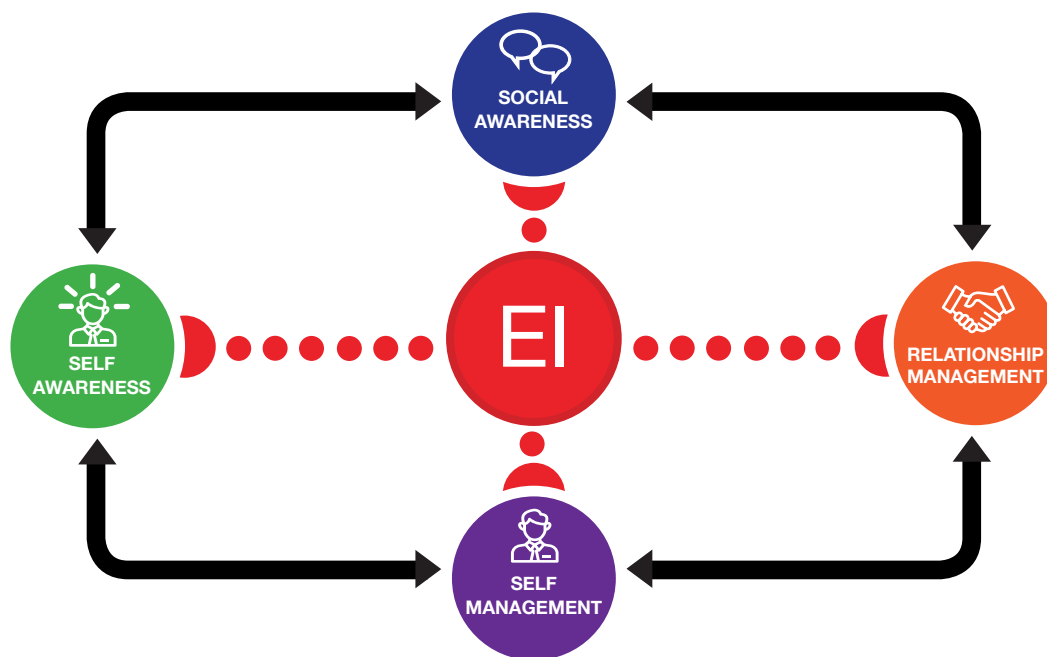
“ EI is a crucial component in understanding the dynamics of people relations – knowing how best to deliver a message to influence attitudes and maintain stronger conversational control to achieve the desired impact. ”

In 1990, renowned Professors of Psychology, Peter Salavoy and John Mayer, developed a concept that has become of global interest and a core requirement in corporate culture, governance, interpersonal and strategic communications. People are gradually realising that to communicate effectively, it is fundamental to pay attention to the sensibilities of your audience.

Emotional Intelligence often abbreviated as “EQ” or “EI” is the capability of individuals to recognize their own emotions and those of others, discern between different feelings and label them appropriately, use emotional information to guide thinking and behaviour, and manage and/or adjust emotions to adapt to environments or achieve one’s goal(s).¹ The concept was made popular by Dr. Daniel Goleman, a renowned psychologist in his book Emotional Intelligence published in 1996.²

An Emotional Intelligence network, Six Seconds, described the concept as “the capacities to create optimal results in your relationships with yourself and others.”³ From the strategic communications perspective, EI is a crucial component in understanding the dynamics of people relations – knowing how best to deliver a message to influence attitudes and maintain stronger conversational control to achieve the desired impact.

EI is generally defined by four attributes:⁴



- **Self-management:** Controlling impulsive feelings and behaviours; managing emotions in healthy ways, taking initiative, delivering on commitments and adapting to changes.
- **Self-awareness:** Understanding the influence of your emotions on your thoughts and behaviour. Having self-confidence and identifying your strengths and weaknesses.
- **Social awareness:** Being empathic. Understanding emotions, needs, and concerns of others. Catching emotional cues and recognizing the power dynamics in a group or organization.
- **Relationship management:** Establishing and sustaining good relationships; communicating precisely, motivating and influencing others. Importantly, managing conflict effectively.

¹ Colman, Andrew (2008). A Dictionary of Psychology (3 ed.). Oxford University Press. ISBN 9780199534067

² Institute for Health and Human Potential (IHHP) (2018). What is Emotional Intelligence? Available at: https://www.ihhp.com/meaning-of-emotional-intelligence#accordion_567525721

³ J. Freedman (2017). Emotional WHAT? Definitions and History of EQ (2017 update) Available at: (<https://www.6seconds.org/2017/05/28/emotional-intelligence-definition-history/>)

⁴ Help Guide (2018). Available at: <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-health/emotional-intelligence-eq.htm?pdf=true>

Emotional Intelligence and Communications?

“ It requires connecting with the public on an emotional level to inspire, educate or motivate them. This is the fundamental difference between communicating to an audience to motivate versus merely just communicating “at” an audience which is highly ineffective. ”



The role of Emotional Intelligence in communications is self-evident.

It takes a clear understanding of your emotions and firm control over them to effectively express your thoughts and appreciate the emotions of your audience. Emotional Intelligence fosters effective communications which is vital in developing and sustaining strong relationships with stakeholders. Specifically, public sensitization and public awareness goes beyond issuing public statements and declarations; it requires connecting with the public on an emotional level to inspire, educate or motivate them. This is the fundamental difference between communicating to an audience to motivate versus merely just communicating “at” an audience which is highly ineffective.

Emotional Intelligence forms the basis of interaction between people. The value placed on communication with people is reflective of the level of Emotional Intelligence the communicator possesses.⁵ For instance, a person who values that interaction assesses the likely effects of any statements they make and is aware that certain approaches could be detrimental to their interaction. For example, an emotionally intelligent leader who values people does not engage them impulsively; they take time to evaluate messages before disseminating them.

Furthermore, a message could be regarded as “kind” or “hurtful” depending on how the audience perceives it. Specifically, the effectiveness of a message is based on what emotions it evokes.

⁵ Matthews, G, Zeinder, M, & Roberts, RD (2002). Emotional Intelligence: Science and Myth. Cambridge, MA: A Bradford book

Emotional Intelligence?

“ Why are we having all these people from shithole countries come here?

Why do we need more Haitians?

Take them out. ”

“Sh*thole countries”

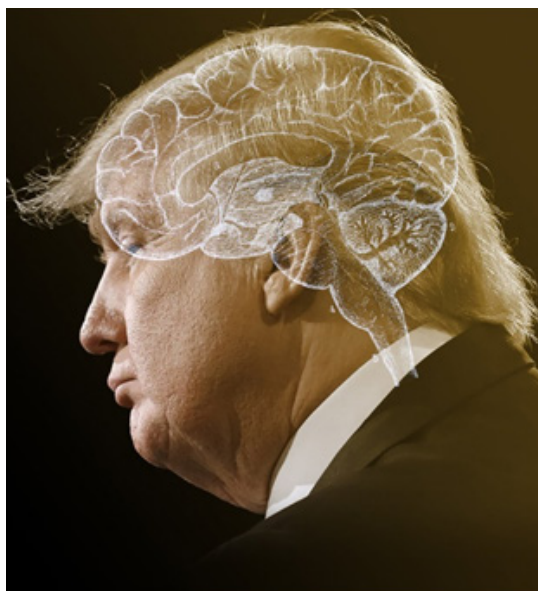


Photo credit: www.theatlantic.com

President Donald Trump made some highly derogatory and racially charged statements during a meeting at the White House on the protection of immigrants from Haiti, El Salvador and some African countries as part of a bipartisan immigration deal. According to news reports and some congress members present, the President made these statements:⁶

- “Why are we having all these people from shithole countries come here?”
- “Why do we need more Haitians?”
- “Take them out.”

The backlash to these assertions were swift and overwhelming. National, international and social media coverage captured public reactions ranging from outrage to hurt and disappointment. Reactions came in from all quarters calling for President Trump to retract his divisive statements. Evidently, President Trump neither felt the need to consider the emotions of his audience nor was he compelled to issue an apology after it was clear millions were offended.

The divisive approach and use of profanity in his statements were not very presidential and compounded the issues rather than resolve them. EI experts would further claim that Donald Trump lacks emotional intelligence based on the frequency and scope of his often offensive public statements.

Vote Ambode or perish in the lagoon

At a meeting in his palace, Oba Rilwan Akiolu of Lagos, reportedly threatened representatives of Igbo residents in Lagos, asking them to vote for the All Progressives Congress candidate at the 2015 gubernatorial elections or “perish in the lagoon in 7 days.”⁷ This statement was perceived by many as a direct threat to the Igbo community in Lagos, insensitive, highly derogatory and ethnically charged. Furthermore, it could have potentially incited violence from various sections of society especially during a highly intense election period.

The monarch clearly did not evaluate the implications of his words nor the effect it would have on his audience. His statement could have proved costly to their electoral ambitions and is the reason many have labelled him as “anti-Igbo.” EI experts

would recommend more constructive ways to solicit Igbo votes in Lagos State without statements that are sure to elicit anger and division.



Photo credit: Pulse Nigeria

⁶ Dawsey, J. (2018). Trump derides protections for immigrants from ‘shithole’ countries. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-attacks-protections-for-immigrants-from-shithole-countries-in-oval-office-meeting/2018/01/11/bfc0725c-f711-11e7-91af-31ac729add94_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.9b7fc88dbafb
⁷ Sahara Reporters (2015). AUDIO: Oba Of Lagos Threatening Igbos Over Lagos Governorship Election. Available at: <http://saharareporters.com/2015/04/06/audio-oba-lagos-threatening-igbos-over-lagos-governorship-election>

“ Whether theatrical, exaggerated or not, it was her attempt to commiserate with the women of community. She understood her audience’s emotional state and tried to connect to them as a mother, as a commoner, as a believer in God’s divinity and ultimately as a human being. ”



Photo credit: Newsweek

Princess Diana often referred to as the “People’s Princess” was widely recognized for her empathic approach even as a princess of the British royal family.

She would visit hospital patients with terminal illnesses and establish physical contact with them, taking their hand or hugging them. She famously helped de-stigmatize AIDS by publicly embracing AIDS patients; she was the first public figure to do so at the time.

Princess Diana’s command of emotional intelligence was evident in her ability to uplift the spirits of the downcast, motivate the hopeless and give a renewed sense of purpose. This made the world connect with her personally, growing her popularity and influence.

“There is God”

On May 21, 2015, Google announced that a video clip of Patience Jonathan had become Nigeria’s most viewed non-music video content on YouTube.⁸ It was a (now infamous) video of former first lady, Dame Patience Jonathan expressing grief over the abduction of the 276 Chibok schoolgirls by Boko Haram insurgents.



Photo credit: NigerianEye

It occurred at a meeting with a group of women from the community including the principal of the school concerned in attendance. It was also the first time the first lady was reacting publicly to the issue. At the meeting, she spoke in vernacular English, made religious inferences, empathized as a mother and openly wept. The video drew attention far and wide at a time when Nigeria’s insecurity had gained prominence in the international media. Millions criticized her “performance” as overly dramatic, insincere and outright embarrassing. It wasn’t long before she became fodder for news and humour. Even her phrase “there is God” is now a popular meme.

Surprisingly, EI experts would state that she exhibited emotional intelligence in the video. Whether theatrical, exaggerated or not, it was her attempt to commiserate with the women of community. She understood her audience’s emotional state and tried to connect to them as a mother, as a commoner, as a believer in God’s divinity and ultimately as a human being. It was her attempt to make a connection to rural women anguished by the abduction of their daughters – women who are neither political nor from a sophisticated background.

⁸ Mohammed A. (2015). Patience Jonathan’s “There Is God” video Nigeria’s Most Viewed YouTube Clip Ever – Google. Sahara Reporters. Available at: <http://saharareporters.com/2015/05/22/patience-jonathan%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%9Cthere-god%E2%80%9D-video-nigeria%E2%80%99s-most-viewed-youtube-clip-ever-%E2%80%93-google>

“ For decades, there has been an unending debate whether Emotional Intelligence is learned or intuitive. Development experts suggest every skill can be learned which leads to the question: how can you improve your Emotional Intelligence? ”

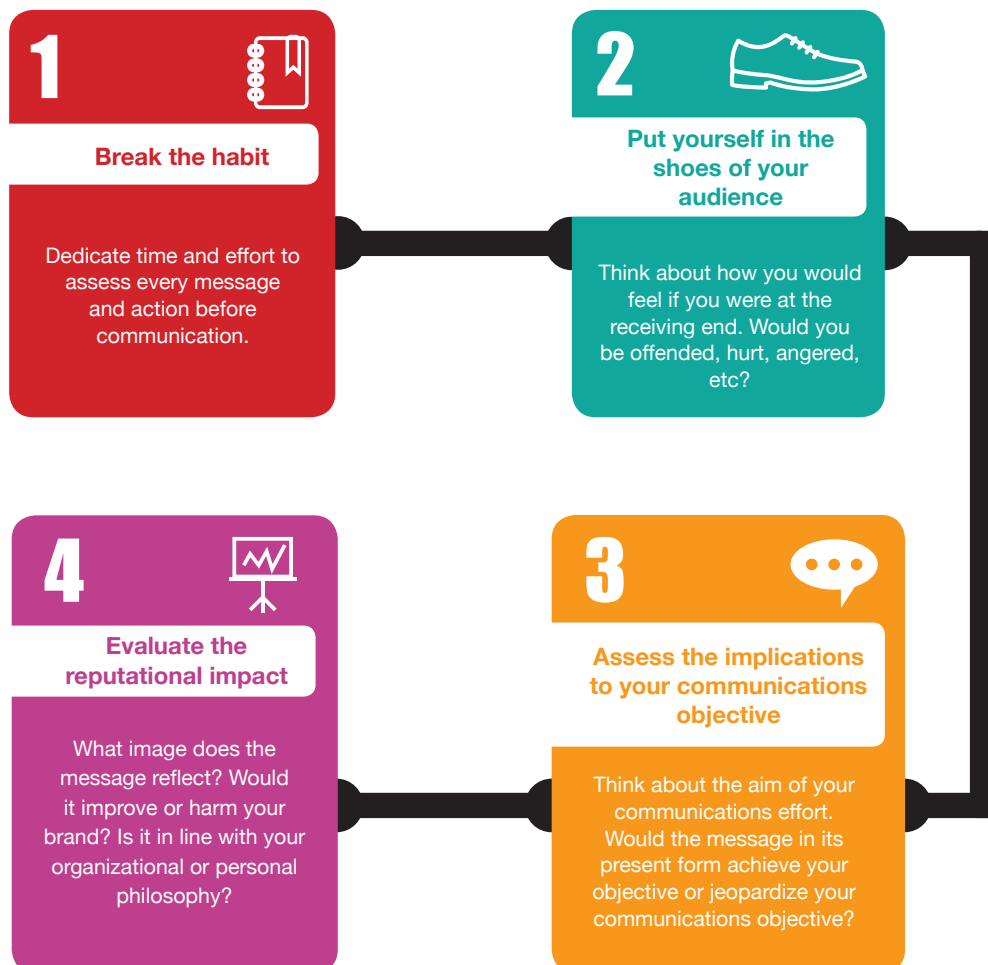


Improving your Emotional Intelligence

For decades, there has been an unending debate whether Emotional Intelligence is learned or intuitive. Development experts suggest every skill can be learned which leads to the question: how can you improve your Emotional Intelligence?

While empirical data strongly indicates that there is a genetic element to emotional intelligence, psychological and developmental studies show that nurture plays just as much a role. There are clear indications from research and practice that emotional intelligence can be learned.⁹

Here are some guidelines:



⁹Harvard Business Review, Goleman D (2001). "What makes a Leader," Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation, Boston, Massachusetts

Leveraging EI

“ With Emotional Intelligence, you communicate to foster and welcome feedback. You view two-way communication as a vital opportunity to learn and understand. ”



Empathy plays a critical role in communications. Being emotionally aware can make your communications efforts more effective and impactful. Emotional intelligence can improve communications in the following ways:¹⁰

- **You are more aware of your emotions:** Knowing the likely reactions you may have to certain statements pre-empts you to consider those emotions. This allows you to communicate cautiously rather than impulsively.
- **You are more aware of how others feel:** Emotional intelligence gives you an understanding of how people feel about certain issues. It tells you the appropriate communications approach to apply for impactful and effective results.
- **You can set appropriate boundaries:** When you are emotionally aware, you consider your boundaries and can tailor your message accordingly.
- **You are more open to feedback and ideas:** With Emotional Intelligence, you communicate to foster and welcome feedback. You view two-way communication as a vital opportunity to learn and understand.
- **You build trust:** Strong emotional intelligence enables you build trust in the minds of your audience. When your audience trusts you, your ability to sensitize their minds and influence their behaviour is higher.

Summary

In today’s seemingly complex communications environment, the concept of Emotional Intelligence and its application to any communications process remains increasingly relevant. The global village is highly diverse along cultural, economic, religious and political lines. To effectively interact with such a heterogenous audience, there must be a conscious effort to tailor communications along audience groups.

Stakeholder engagement must include an assessment of their emotional status to determine the ideal approach to leverage for the desired impact. Without an understanding of how audiences process information and how best to design messages that are aligned to their emotions, the communications effort is destined for failure. Many communications initiatives have transitioned from an innocent attempt to engage with an audience to becoming an international crisis simply because a message was not subjected to proper EI scrutiny.

¹⁰ Espy L. (2018). 5 Ways emotional intelligence builds trust through communication. Available at: <https://www.pmworl360.com/blog/2018/04/20/5-ways-emotional-intelligence-builds-trust-through-communication/#go-to-content>