

# Act Their Emotional Age

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## Introduction/Background:

John C. Maxwell, in The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership, states, “You can’t move people to action unless you first move them with emotion. The heart comes before the head.” Emotional Intelligence (EI) could be the missing link to decreasing turnover and costs, raising morale, and strengthening the connection between leaders and their teams. The challenge is that from 2019 to 2023, EI scores have declined by 5.54%. (3)

Emotional Intelligence, as defined by Merriam-Webster, is the ability to recognize, understand, and deal skillfully with one's own emotions and the emotions of others.

The World Economic Forum has ranked EI as one of the top 10 skills needed for the 4th Industrial Revolution. The McKinsey Group has identified that by 2030, the need for social and emotional skills will grow at a much faster pace than the need for cognitive skills. (1)

The blood bank industry traditionally emphasizes standard operating procedures (SOPs) and compliance, which is justified because both are crucial for ensuring the safety, purity and potency of the blood supply. However, adding EI to this focus might be worth considering, especially as the industry faces staffing challenges. According to Gallup, nearly 69% of the workforce is disengaged. (2) According to America’s Blood Centers (ABC), the industry’s average turnover rate is 25.7%, resulting in high costs, as illustrated in the chart below.

| Average Cost of Turnover* - Various Positions in a Blood Center |                |                            |             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| Entry Level / Non-Skilled                                       | Average Salary | 30%-50% of Annual Salary   |             |
|                                                                 |                | 30%                        | 50%         |
| Donor Services (Phlebotomist)                                   | \$38,480       | \$11,544                   | \$19,240    |
| Hospital Services (Courier)                                     | \$36,400       | \$10,920                   | \$18,200    |
| Components Lab Tech                                             | \$40,560       | \$12,168                   | \$20,280    |
| Administrative Staff                                            | \$41,600       | \$12,480                   | \$20,800    |
| Mid-Level Professional                                          | Average Salary | 75%-150% of Annual Salary  |             |
|                                                                 |                | 75%                        | 150%        |
| Therapeutic Apheresis Nurse                                     | \$93,600       | \$70,200                   | \$140,400   |
| Regional Manager                                                | \$76,960       | \$57,720                   | \$115,440   |
| Technical of Highly Specialized                                 | Average Salary | 100%-250% of Annual Salary |             |
|                                                                 |                | 100%                       | 250%        |
| Specialist in Blood Banking                                     | \$114,400      | \$114,400                  | \$286,000   |
| Medical Technologist                                            | \$72,800       | \$72,800                   | \$182,000   |
| District Director                                               | \$108,160      | \$108,160                  | \$270,400   |
| Executive/C-Suite                                               | Average Salary | 200%-400% of Annual Salary |             |
|                                                                 |                | 200%                       | 400%        |
| Average Annual Salary - Team of 10                              | \$250,000      | \$500,000                  | \$1,000,000 |

Another factor complicating staffing issues and supporting the case for increased focus on EI is the presence of multiple generations within the workforce. This diversity makes it more difficult for leaders to connect individually with employees and to foster optimal outcomes and relationships.

## Methods:

Elevate EI to the same importance as SOPs and compliance by providing EI training and refreshers for all employees. Below are resources and estimated costs to help organizations get started:

| 30-Day Emotional Intelligence Challenge<br>(print and digital versions available) (4) |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | <b><u>Recommended Reading:</u></b><br><b>Foundational</b><br>Daniel Goleman – <i>Emotional Intelligence</i><br>Daniel Goleman – <i>Primal Leadership</i><br><b>Practical &amp; Workplace-Focused</b><br>Travis Bradberry & Jean Greaves – <i>Emotional Intelligence 2.0</i><br>Susan David – <i>Emotional Agility</i><br>Brené Brown – <i>Dare to Lead</i><br>Jeremie Kubicek and Steve Cockram – <i>The 5 Gears</i><br>Jeremie Kubicek and Steve Cockram – <i>The 5 Voices</i><br>Jeremie Kubicek and Steve Cockram – <i>The 100X Leader</i><br><b>Communication &amp; Empathy</b><br>Douglas Stone et al. – <i>Difficult Conversations</i><br>Kim Scott – <i>Radical Candor</i> |
|  | <b><u>Recommended Podcast:</u></b><br>Emotional Intelligence & Psychology<br>The Emotionally Intelligent Leader (Daniel Goleman)<br>Unlocking Us (Brené Brown)<br>The Psychology Podcast (Scott Barry Kaufman)<br>Leadership & Workplace<br>Coaching for Leaders<br>HBR IdeaCast<br>WorkLife with Adam Grant<br>Short-Form Learning<br>Ten Percent Happier<br>The Knowledge Project (select episodes on self-mastery)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

The chart below shows EI tools that generally work more effectively with specific generations. (5)

| STRATEGIES | GENERATION                            |                               |                                           |                                   |                                                    |
|------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
|            | Matures                               | Boomers                       | Generation X                              | Millennials                       | Generation Z                                       |
|            | Prioritize Social Engagement          | Engage in Structured Learning | Offer Self-Paced Development              | Foster Inclusive Discussions      | Prioritize Mental Well-Being                       |
|            | Practice Active Listening and Empathy | Practice Vulnerability        | Leverage Adaptability and Problem Solving | Seek and Provide Regular Feedback | Provide Clear Expectations and Continuous Learning |
|            | Develop Openness to New Experiences   | Focus on Active Listening     | Provide Direct Constructive Feedback      | Promote Work-Life Balance         | Bridge the Digital & In-Person Gap                 |

| Cross Generational Strategies           | Cost of Investment in EI Toolkit and Training                                    |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Encourage Mentorship/Reverse Mentorship | #Cost of the Emotional Intelligence Toolkit = \$200 for the 10 recommended books |
| Practice Active Listening               |                                                                                  |
| Cultivate Curiosity Over Judgement      | #Cost of 6 Months for an Executive Coach (Two 1.5 hr sessions per mon) = \$7,500 |
| Establish Psychological Safety          |                                                                                  |

## Results:

There are several benefits of EI in an intergenerational workplace: increased collaboration, enhanced engagement, improved decision-making, and enriched customer relationships. Thus, it is believed that a strong correlation exists between the EI of leaders and a positive organizational culture. EI interventions can reduce turnover by as much as 63% (6), saving the organization significant money, as shown in the chart below, boosting morale and increasing productivity. Leaders who leverage EI to foster engagement deliver notable bottom-line results.

| For mid-level staff and technical or highly specialized staff:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| If the cost of turnover for mid-level professional staff and technical or highly specialized staff approximates \$125,000: a significant return on investment is accomplished, representing \$117,300 in net savings if ended in retention, or the resulting ROI is a 1500% return.<br><br>(Effectively, for every dollar invested in EI training, the company saves \$15.) |
| For entry level/non skilled staff:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| If the cost of turnover for entry level/non skilled staff approximates \$12,000: A significant return on investment is accomplished (if invested in the EI Toolkit only), representing \$11,800 in net savings if ended in retention, or the resulting ROI is a 5900% return.<br><br>(Effectively, for every dollar invested in EI training, the company saves \$59.)       |

## Conclusion:

We highly recommend that blood centers invest in EI for their employees. EI is not about controlling emotions—it’s about using them wisely. Small daily practices create meaningful, lasting change. (4) “The most effective leaders are alike in one crucial way: they all have a high degree of emotional intelligence.” - Daniel Goleman, Ph.D., Harvard Business Review.

\*Cost of turnover includes separation, recruitment, onboarding/training, lost productivity, knowledge loss, morale and cultural impact.

### References:

1 “Why Emotional Intelligence Is a Critical Skill for the Future Workforce” - Bill Benjamin, Institute for Health and Human Potential” 02/28/20  
2 <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/654911/employee-engagement-sinks-year-low.aspx>  
3 State of the Heart 2024 <https://www.6seconds.org/emotional-intelligence/research/>  
4 Content developed by EI Educator: Shayna Davis Humphrey, M.Ed. (LinkedIn), Goleman, D. Emotional Intelligence, Lieberman et al. (2007), Psychological Science, Gross, J. (2015), Emotion Regulation, Edmondson, A. Psychological Safety  
5 <https://situational.com/blog/emotional-intelligence-can-improve-communication-between-generations-in-the-workplace/>  
6 <https://www.6seconds.org/2023/06/09/cost-of-low-emotional-intelligence/>

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