

Emotional Intelligence & Culture Change—The Brass Tacks

By Travis Bradberry, Ph.D.

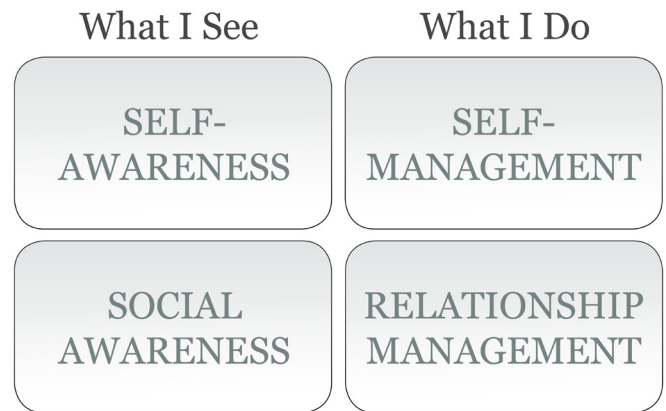
When Rhonda Brown, Organizational Trainer for Covenant HealthCare, earned a certification to facilitate TalentSmart’s Discovering Emotional Intelligence training program at her 4,000 employee organization, she brought about major changes in the professional development of the organization’s leadership. This initiative transformed an informal EQ effort into a successful organization-wide process.

Before working at Covenant HealthCare—a Michigan-based medical facility that offers a complete range of medical services—Rhonda served seven years as an Army soldier. The army gave her a “work hard, play hard” training style tailored to optimize effectiveness in the workplace, but meeting Covenant HealthCare’s diverse needs put her organizational and leadership training skills to the test.

Rhonda built her name at Covenant HealthCare by building up small, one-on-one coaching successes and allowing word of these accomplishments to spread to her leadership team. Throughout her career, Rhonda accessed emotional intelligence as the base for her personal and organizational development endeavors. By using emotional intelligence as a foundation for her coaching sessions, Rhonda found her circle of influence expanding, and demand for her talents began to reach a larger audience. These small successes coupled with average system-wide employee satisfaction scores led Covenant to turn to Rhonda to improve the emotional intelligence of the organization’s leadership.

Rhonda decided it was time to invest in an emotional intelligence (EQ) certification program that would grow her self-developed competence in spreading EQ.

After researching EQ training programs, Rhonda chose TalentSmart’s Emotional Intelligence™ program for the four skills from Daniel Goleman’s model that the program teaches, the program’s engaging approach to bringing EQ to life for participants, and the integration of the Emotional Intelligence Appraisal® assessment into the learning process. She came back from the rigorous two-day certification ready to move forward—she was armed with a dynamic and practical curriculum. Upper management at Covenant charged Rhonda with utilizing the insights and tools she learned in the program to conduct formal in-house EQ sessions for Covenant’s 210-member leadership group.



The four emotional intelligence skills from the #1 bench mark model of EQ

Rhonda also paired one-on-one coaching with the Emotional Intelligence Appraisal to help Covenant managers build the necessary skills to begin developing their own employees. Managers are now reaping the benefits of this effort through increased employee satisfaction, improved retention, and a proven employee development plan.


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It hasn't taken long for Rhonda and Covenant's leadership to see proof that their managers are making behavioral changes that matter by transferring these EQ skills into their daily work habits. Many of these behavioral changes are seen in the stories managers share with Rhonda and others after experiencing the power of EQ.

One manager talked about her experiences with a challenging employee whom we'll call Cheryl. Cheryl, a Registered Nurse, didn't express herself well when she was upset, and she had a poor demeanor regarding changes on the unit. Her negativity affected everyone around her, and productivity within her work group suffered. Through one-on-one EQ coaching with Rhonda, Cheryl began practicing how she expressed herself when upset (self-management) and watching her nonverbal reactions (self-awareness) when faced with changes in the work unit. Cheryl's manager was impressed with Cheryl's quick turn-around in her attitudes and actions, and reported a tremendous improvement in the team's cohesiveness and morale.

Another manager, Lisa, shared a different result from her EQ training. Lisa noticed that her employees regularly stopped by her office to ask quick questions, but rarely spent more than a couple of minutes. She placed a chair by her desk in hopes that her employees would feel more comfortable to come in and engage in longer conversations, but still they hovered in her doorway reluctant to enter. Lisa brought this up in the EQ development program and, after some discussion, realized (social awareness) that her chair always had stacks of papers and books on it and her overrun desk screamed "too busy!" Lisa decided to keep the chair empty and her desk reasonably clean. Through a small change in a seemingly unrelated area, she immediately saw changes in her staff's behavior

and productivity. They came in, sat down, and talked to her enough about their projects to get her insights and support.

We tend to think that creating changes in the professional development, satisfaction, and retention of staff needs to be a huge, systemized, in-depth process. But sometimes, change that really matters can be as simple as an open chair. What are you doing to bring EQ to life in your organization?  March 2009



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Dr. Travis Bradberry is the award-winning co-author of *Emotional Intelligence 2.0* and the cofounder of TalentSmart, the world's leading provider of emotional intelligence tests and training serving more than 75% of Fortune 500 companies. His bestselling books have been translated into 25 languages and are available in more than 150 countries. Dr. Bradberry has written for, or been covered by, *Newsweek*, *BusinessWeek*, *Fortune*, *Forbes*, *Fast Company*, *Inc.*, *USA Today*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Harvard Business Review*.