



## THE IMPORTANCE AND NECESSITY OF USING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI) IN A PR CAREER

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Emotional intelligence has come to the attention of researchers in the humanities as technology has conquered more and more areas of human activity. Even if many of the cognitive abilities have been successfully taken over by robots, as happens in companies producing goods and services, in artistic, creative or social relations activities, the affective capacity is important, which cannot yet be supplemented by digitalization.

The field of public relations is intended to establish inter-institutional links, between companies and partners (stakeholders) or between organizations and the media. Emotional intelligence is capitalized in the sense of increasing the ability to persuade. Therefore, in the entire activity carried out by public relations specialists and in which they use modern technology to transmit information (photo or video images), the abilities of emotional intelligence are concretized.

**Keywords:** emotional intelligence; amygdala; public relations specialist; communication; influence.

A relatively new concept, which appeared as a topic of interest with the work of American authors P. Salovey and J. Mayer (*Emotional intelligence*, 1990), but especially after the much-promoted book by Daniel Goleman (*Emotional intelligence. Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, 1995), emotional intelligence is a concern for research and study in many fields of activity.

Psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists from all over the world conducted various research and comparative analyses where they identified the emotions which contribute to the increase of professional performances. They were interested not only in the impact that emotional intelligence can have on the organization's well-being in general, but also in the role it has in obtaining job performances or its importance in leading the organization. Besides this, they emphasized the fact that emotional intelligence has a very important role in a person's social integration and creating interpersonal relations. Thus, articles and studies were published in specialized magazines or papers were presented in international scientific conferences highlighting the growing interest in the concept. The interest is all the greater as it could highlight the superior abilities of humans to robots

proposed to supplement human activity in various fields (in arts – painting, music or psychology, religion, philosophy, even in some specializations in medicine areas, where empathy is the basis of professional success).

### History

Introduced by the American psychologist Edward Lee Thorndike, the term *Emotional Intelligence* dates back from the 1920s. At that moment, it was related to social intelligence, meaning that human ability to identify own internal emotions, motivations and behaviour and the ability to interact with others in an optimal manner. In the following period, the psychologists opened the way towards the research of the emotional aspects related to interactions or to the professional activity in the following way<sup>1</sup>:

After 1990, especially in the American environment, there was an increased interest for the affective aspects of human personality and for their role in human interaction. Through powerful scientific arguments, researchers emphasized the importance of emotional intelligence in every aspect of human activity.

Thus, from a physiological aspect of the human brain, it is demonstrated that the activity belongs to the amygdala nucleus<sup>2</sup> located behind the limbic system, responsible for memory and environment adaptation. Researchers realized that the section called rational brain evolved from the visceral

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Year/Period	Author/Paper	Contribution
1940	David Wechsler	Suggests that the affective elements of the intelligence could be essential for being successful in life.
1950	Carl Rogers and other psychologists	Describe how people can harvest their emotional power.
1975	Howard Gardner, <i>The Shattered Mind</i>	Proposes the idea of multiple intelligences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intrapersonal intelligence, introspective own knowledge which allows conscious handling of own emotions;</li> <li>• Interpersonal intelligence, the ability to identify other people's emotions (even the hidden ones) and to understand them in order to better manage relationships</li> </ul>
1985	Wayne Payne, in his PhD thesis <i>A study of emotion: developing emotional intelligence; self-integration, relating to fear, pain and desire (theory, structure of reality, problem solving, contraction/expansion, tuning in/coming out/letting go</i>	Introduces the term <i>emotional intelligence</i>
1987	Keith Beasley, article from <i>Mensa Magazine</i>	Uses the phrase emotional quotient (emotional factor EQ is considered to be an EI measure).
1990	Peter Salovey and David R. Caruso in the paper <i>Emotional Intelligence</i>	They introduce and formalize the emotional intelligence concept in order to describe the capacity to understand and handle emotions, and to take into consideration one's ability to adapt to the environment.
1995	Daniel Goleman publishes <i>Emotional Intelligence. Why It Can Matter More Than IQ</i>	Promotes the concept emotional intelligence which became a field of studies in schools and universities.

Figure 1 History of Emotional Intelligence research

brain, a neuron and neural network conglomerate called brainstem, located at the end of the spine towards the cranial box. The neocortex, which appeared later in human development, specialized for thinking, reasoning and decision making, is in interaction with the amygdala, which makes most of the emotions be controllable. In other words, human activity is coordinated by distinct parts of the brain, and "the affective and cognitive processes, although they are different by their nature, are inseparable within the activity of the individual, thus being in close interaction"<sup>3</sup>.

Even if, until recently, cognitive intelligence<sup>4</sup> (familiar IQ, measured using specific tests) was considered a classification criterion used to differentiate individuals when participating in certain competitions (insight or employment), life has shown that success was not conditioned by high scores at the IQ test, but rather by the ability to

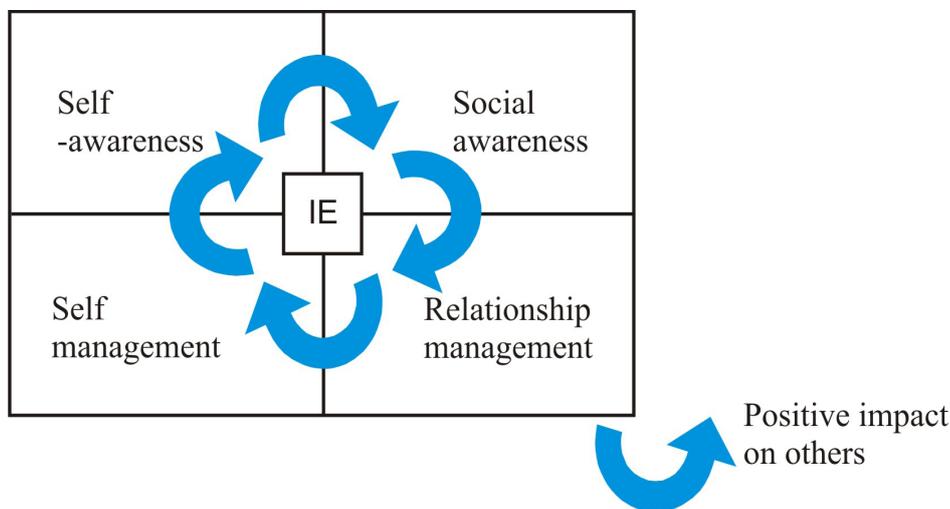
respond to social challenges, interact with others, and adapt to all environmental challenges.

Daniel Goleman<sup>5</sup>, one of the psychologists dedicated to the study of behavioral sciences, listed in his paper the skills that a person should cultivate to demonstrate that he is emotionally connected with those around him, because emotional intelligence (EI) falls into the category of interrelated skills<sup>6</sup>:

- to recognize their own emotions and analyze them (self-awareness);
- to have the ability to control their emotions, even in difficult situations (self-control);
- to have the ability to persevere, despite discouragement (motivation);
- to recognize the emotions of others and share them (empathy);
- to have the ability to interact with others, listening to them, understanding them and evaluating their emotions (social ability)<sup>7</sup>.

Peter Salovey and David R. Caruso mentioned that understanding emotional intelligence involves identifying, using, understanding, and controlling emotions<sup>8</sup>.

providing solutions to solve critical situations. Even if scientific theories mention that a concept is valid if it can be measured, for emotional intelligence there is, so far, no precise variant of measurement



**Figure 2** *Emotional intelligence: Goleman's model*

The paradigm of the emotional intelligence concept could be summarized in the models proposed by researchers which are structured on four generic fields, thus demonstrating the dynamics and evolution it has had in recent years<sup>9</sup>:

The need for research regarding emotional intelligence is determined by the particularity of the human being as a social being. In the interaction with the others, the emotions represent the link between the participants with a well-established role (whether it is a children's game, meeting with friends, activity at work, team sports, watching shows, group excursions, etc.). Joy, anger, fear, disgust, interest, surprise or acceptance appear for many reasons; they have a different intensity depending on the event<sup>10</sup> or the personality and cultural context of the individual. These feelings are also found in the organizational context, at work. A salary increase, a promotion or a restructuring of the activity in the organization are triggers of emotions, and the reaction that occurs is related to the emotional intelligence.

If the idea of cognitive intelligence has been formulated as a genetic fact (although it has been shown that without additional training effort – about 10,000 hours, success is not guaranteed), emotional intelligence is a capacity that can be amplified through counseling, questionnaire administration, interpretations, case studies and

(test, questionnaire, application, etc.) as it is for IQ. Apparently, the Internet offers, for a fee, a corpus of questions that are said to generate a result, but these questionnaires are not recognized by researchers in the field, so far.

It is certain, however, that efficiency at work, the pleasure felt when watching theater shows, movies and concerts or family happiness are conditioned by the emotions received, experienced and transmitted during interactions. Communication (verbal, non-verbal, paraverbal) is the way to materialize human interaction, the way to reach empathy (the ability to recognize and understand one's mood and emotions) and good collaboration. However, it is also necessary to actively listen to the participants in the act of communication, so that the message sent is correctly received<sup>11</sup>.

**Emotional intelligence, one of the qualities of the public relations specialist**

For a public relations specialist, whose object of activity is communication (in organizations, with collaborators, with media representatives or in the online environment), emotional intelligence is a condition of professional success. This is because in addition to the qualities he must have (tact, patience, kindness, sense of humor, flexibility, honesty, objectivity, sense of organization, ability to analyze and synthesize, etc.)<sup>12</sup>, emotional



intelligence helps him/her to achieve, together with the team management, a climate of trust and collaboration in the organization.

Empowered by professional training to build messages through words and symbols, the public relations specialist conducts internal communication with members of the organization, starting from explaining its mission in the social system, the purpose and objectives proposed for a limited period of time, but also the role that each of them has in this context. Dissemination of messages from the management team (vertical, top-down communication), along with taking on suggestions from employees and disseminate them to the management team (vertical, bottom-up communication) contributes to building and strengthening a trusting organizational climate, where collaboration and team spirit are real. For this type of communication, the public relations specialist must show empathy, understand the employees' feelings (upset, dissatisfaction, aspirations), select, analyze and evaluate the raised issues, so that he can offer solutions for solving them. In fact, Kenneth Goode stated that "the success of the relationship with people depends on understanding the other's point of view"<sup>13</sup>. The PR must use an assertive communication style, IE "know how to express their opinions in ways that are not critical or offensive to others"<sup>14</sup>.

For external communication (with partners, clients, legislators), the emotional intelligence of the PR specialist is proven by using influential communication strategies, so that, with minimal financial effort to obtain maximum benefits for the organization (support for certain projects, priority in solving causes, material advantages and other priorities).

Media communication is a way to capitalize the emotional intelligence of the PR specialist because the image of the organization is built on articles published in the media and online. The right choice of style in formulating the press release or press conference' titles in order to make them attractive for journalists, but especially for the public, are elements related to creativity, but especially emotional intelligence. Also, the contents of articles sent for publication in newspapers/magazines (printed or online), combining text with relevant images from the organization's activity, logos, internal publications are the result of the

efforts of the PR specialist, knowledgeable of discursive techniques and semiotics with effects on the public's mood.

The entire public relations activity, starting with research, continuing with planning, action and evaluation, is carried out by virtue of the six principles of emotional intelligence listed by P. Salovey and D.R. Caruso. The first of these refers to the fact that emotion is information, interferes with thinking and occurs as a result of adaptation to everyday life. Being in direct contact with the latest information, the PR specialist perceives the flow of changes that may occur, but also their effects on the organization's employees. In this way it can anticipate possible crises of the organization, it can build appropriate messages for employees or stakeholders, and it can identify the elements necessary to develop the image of the organization. An example in this sense is the internal communication and the corroborated actions carried out on the occasion of the takeover of Billa shares by the Carrefour Group in 2015<sup>15</sup>. In addition to newsletters, newsgroups and video messages, welcome packages were created for Billa employees consisting of the Carrefour brochure (information on the Carrefour Group, dictionary of terms and abbreviations, welcome letter, message card), greetings from Carrefour colleagues, personalized agenda, notebook and pen with the text "Welcome, BILLA... yours, Carrefour!" The images in the brochure are photos with *Carrefour* employees taken for future colleagues in *Billa*, which contributed to reducing the formal distance among employees and to humanize the re-organization action. In addition, welcoming videos created by Carrefour employees were posted in the online environment (Facebook, Youtube). Thus, the fears of the employees from both companies related to the possibility of losing their jobs disappeared.

The second principle is the one that highlights the ubiquity of emotions, their existence in everything that involves human activity and interaction. In the case of the public relations specialist, his role is to identify and enhance the emotional aspects for the benefit of the organization he represents and for its members. The ability to interpret verbal and non-verbal messages, as well as the emotions that accompany them, are essential in the activities carried out by the PR specialist.



The messages he builds lead to the formation of opinions and decision-making, a two-way result of reasoning and emotions alike. Particularizing in the military environment, establishing links with reservist soldiers or organizing events dedicated to them involves using emotional intelligence skills in creating speeches, attracting participants, identifying sponsors who could support activities for veterans or even their daily life. An initiative with a special emotional impact is the Naval Forces Man Gala show, realized since 2017 with the support of the national television, where representatives with outstanding results of military and civilian personnel receive diplomas and applause from colleagues in the hall. The initiative of the Information and Public Relations Bureau of the Navy HQ has a stimulating effect in the training of military sailors.

The following principle stated by P. Salovey and D. Caruso refers to the fact that emotions cannot be repressed. The grief felt in the family (where the child hit himself while playing) is also transferred to the activity at work where it can turn into anger (due to the fact that a submitted project was rejected by the management team). The public relations specialist fulfills, here, the role of counselor through explanatory communication (presents the reasons for returning the project) and by offering creative solutions so as to determine the relaxation of the situation. A special example is that of the PR specialists from the army who informs the family members of a soldier wounded in the theater of operations or, worse, killed during the actions carried out there. In addition to sensitivity, compassion and patience, the skills of emotional intelligence help the PR specialist in choosing the most appropriate means of communication.

Decisions made in the activities carried out through interaction, in order to be effective, must also involve emotions or, as A.R. Damasio mentioned, "rational thinking is impossible without emotions"<sup>16</sup>. The communication strategy that underlies all PR activities in public institutions or the private sector, aims to raise the interest of various public categories or business partners for products or services offered by the organization. This can be achieved through new, attractive titles / slogans, which require public involvement in the organization's activity. Thus, through linguistic constructions such as: Energy Library, Vegetable

School, Biosecured, Stop barbarism, Save the stork, Veterun (war veterans' cross), it is intended to appeal to the amygdala nucleus of individuals in the target public category responsible for affectivity.

Another principle of emotional intelligence is that it draws attention to the fact that emotions follow logical patterns, from those with low intensity to those that remain strong for a longer period in the memory of the individual. In the case of PR activities, especially those related to repetitive events, the specialist must always think of novelty elements that can add value.

The last principle formulated by American authors (P. Salovey and D. Caruso) is the one regarding the classification of emotions according to universal, but also specific criteria. These refer to cultural differences that introduce rules for the manifestation of emotions, to gender or age differences. The public relations specialist must know and take into account all the cultural peculiarities in the organization of events, in the formulation and transmission of correspondence, in the creation of representation or promotional materials. There are currently a multitude of international collaborations, and the Internet has generated the disappearance of physical borders, and people communicate freely indefinitely. Knowledge of the cultural specificity is also necessary for those who work in military institutions and to ensure the safety of citizens. The activities in the theatres of operations (Afghanistan, Kosovo, Syria, Iraq, etc.) are a challenge for PR members who must constantly pursue a good connection with the local media, but also information to adapt the military base to the specifics of the area.

### **Conclusion**

The analysis undertaken in this article aims to highlight the importance of emotional intelligence in public relations activity, in everything that means establishing links between a public or private institution, on the one hand, and a partner or media, on the other. Emotional intelligence includes self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy and social skills, aspects worth remembering for the management and human resources teams which decide to assign a certain person for this position. The job interview could further highlight whether a person meets the qualities needed for the profession.



To be emotionally intelligent, there must be a connection between emotions and thinking, thus, reaching the creative thinking which the PR specialist needs for creating texts, audio-video material, organizing events or even conducting internal communication (with employees). In fact, an essential component of emotional intelligence is the ability to harmonize the mood with the situation. "The right mood is the key to creative thinking, vision and empathy"<sup>17</sup>. Relationships cannot be established without empathy, and in order to establish contact with others, whether they are employees, superiors or customers, it is necessary to understand their feelings<sup>18</sup>. On the other hand, the inability to have emotions indisputably denotes a rigid way of thinking<sup>19</sup>, which would not be recommended for public relations. Having the ability to understand others, to communicate in all forms and on all possible channels, the PR specialist increases his/her professional value, implicitly the respect of employees and collaborators.

#### NOTES:

1 Christine Wilding, *Change your life with the help of emotional intelligence*, Litera Publishing House, Bucharest, 2018, pp. 29-30.

2 N. Gibbs, "What's Your EQ", *Time*, Oct. 1995, pp.60-68; P. Salovey, D.R. Caruso, *Emotional intelligence. How to develop and use the essential principles of leadership with the help of emotional intelligence*, BusinessTech International Publishing House, Bucharest, 2012, p. 47: "Emotions are processed by a part of the brain, called the limbic system, especially by an element of this system, called the amygdala, which generates pleasure, disgust, fear and anger. Millions of years ago, the neocortex emerged that gave us human beings the opportunity to plan, to learn, and to remember".

3 M. Zlate, *Fundamentele psihologiei*, Hyperion XXI Publishing House, Bucharest, 1991, pp. 68-69 apud Mihaela Roco, *Creativity and emotional intelligence*, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2001, p. 136.

4 The reason or ability of the individual to operate with various verbal concepts, to analyze and understand complex situations, to abstract or make decisions.

5 Following the publication of the bestseller *Emotional Intelligence and Concerns for the Promotion of Behavioral Sciences*, he was named an honorary member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

6 Christine Wilding, *Change your life with the help of emotional intelligence*, Litera Publishing House, Bucharest, 2018, pp. 22-23.

7 *Ibidem*, p. 32.

8 *Ibidem*, p. 24. *It is necessary to accurately identify the feelings, both in ourselves and in others, in order to express ourselves and communicate effectively.*

9 Daniel Goleman, *The brain and emotional intelligence*, Curtea veche Publishing House, Bucharest, 2014, p. 8.

10 Paul Eckman, *Emotions given to the face*, Trei Publishing House, Bucharest, 2019, pp. 384-392 apud P. Salovey, D.R. Caruso, *op.cit.*, pp. 37: "Normally, the events that generate emotions are interpersonal actions".

11 Christine Wilding, *op.cit.*, p. 192: "Communicating well and listening actively are essential components of IE".

12 Gary F. Frates apud S. M. Cutlip, 2010, p. 66. The public relations specialist must be "... honest, trustworthy, discreet, with solid analytical skills and an excellent insight and understanding of the main activity and important audiences. She/he will have the ability to listen, the ability to advise and the ability to help the CEO manage the priorities that require his or her attention. However, the most important qualities are interaction, trust and respect".

13 Kenneth Goode, *How to Turn People into Gold*, Harper & brothers, New York, 1929 apud Christine Wilding, *op.cit.*, p. 193.

14 Christine Wilding, *op.cit.*, p. 202.

15 Dana Oancea (coord.), *The Golden Book of Romanian Public Relations. 15 years of practice and the landmarks of an industry*, Monitorul Oficial RA, Publishing House, 2017, pp.186-187.

16 A.R. Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*, New York, Avon 1994, apud P. Salovey, D. Caruso, *op.cit.*, p. 46.

17 P. Salovey, D. Caruso, *op.cit.*, p. 161.

18 *Ibidem*, p. 90.

19 *Ibidem*, p. 83.

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