

Business Trends

Understanding Emotional Intelligence

by Dr. Lori LaCivita

(NAPSA)—In today's workplace, organizations consist of employees spanning four generations. The U.S. has about 75 million millennials—people ages 18 to 34—and this year they are projected to surpass baby boomers and become the single largest segment of the American workforce, according to the Pew Research Center.

As savvy employers know, each generation prefers different leadership styles and has distinct attitudes, behaviors, habits and motivations that drive them.

The Problem

These differences can trigger issues in the workplace, which can include miscommunication, conflict, lack of ability to build strong, cohesive, effective teams, and loss of work productivity. This can result in lack of job satisfaction, burnout and high employee turnover.

An Answer

Fortunately, organizational leaders and managers are realizing the importance that emotional intelligence (EI) plays in many workplace situations as a predictor of success.

EI is a measure of someone's ability to understand his or her own emotions and their effects, as well as those of other people. It also helps people read the current in the environment and it provides tools to help the generations more effectively address and engage with each other.

Companies Seek EI

Employees who have social skills, are self-aware, can self-regulate, motivate and empathize can work well with others and be effec-



A high EI—emotional intelligence—can help baby boomers and millennials get along and get ahead in business.

tive in leading change and resolving conflict. That could be why more than one-third of hiring managers surveyed say they are placing greater emphasis on EI when hiring and promoting employees.

To help employees—regardless of their age—reach their full potential by assessing and building on their EI, more and more, leaders, managers and human resource executives hire or contract with industrial and organizational (I-O) psychologists. Essentially at the intersection of business and psychology, I-O psychologists apply research that is improving the well-being and productivity of people. A critical element of an I-O psychologist's work is enhancing and developing EI, which, unlike IQ, can be cultivated and expanded.

• *Dr. LaCivita is an I-O psychologist, Walden University faculty member and an expert on assessing emotional intelligence. I-O psychology is the science behind human behavior and motivation in the workforce. Learn more at www.WaldenU.edu/EI.*