

The Importance of **Emotional Intelligence** in the Age of AI

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Current State

The modern workforce is at a crossroads. Generational advances in technology are everywhere.

Before ChatGPT exploded onto the scene in November 2022, generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) was a hot topic reserved mostly for tech geeks. Now more than 80% of respondents to a recent Brandon Hall Group™ study have used ChatGPT or similar tools. GenAI has the potential to change our daily lives — at work and at home — even more than the advent of the internet.

Meanwhile, the data on the state of the human workforce is not encouraging:

-  **Only 26% of organizations** believe their employees are highly engaged, according to the latest employee value proposition study by Brandon Hall Group™.
-  Gallup finds that **60% of people** are emotionally detached at work and 19% of miserable.
-  **92% of organizations** say they are concerned that their top talent will leave in the next six to 12 months, according to Brandon Hall Group™'s latest talent retention study.



What the workforce needs now is greater **emotional intelligence**.

What is Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions as well as the emotions of others. It involves skills such as empathy, self-awareness, self-regulation, and effective communication.



86%

of organizations believe emotional intelligence is an essential or critical skill in the workplace

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ Study, How Do We Develop More Inclusive Leaders?

The Paradox of Emotional Intelligence in the Age of AI

The contemporary workplace displays a paradoxical dynamic. On one hand, we see increasing automation, driven by advancements in AI and machine learning. These technologies streamline processes, reduce human error, and boost overall productivity. However, they also generate legitimate concerns about job displacement and the devaluation of human skills.

As the digital world becomes more ubiquitous, the capacity for human emotional understanding, empathy and interpersonal interaction — elements encompassed by emotional intelligence — grows in importance across the workforce, including learning and development.

Few organizations have the time, resources, or capabilities to do all of this. Many employers need an external partner that understands learner needs and the importance of emotional intelligence and can apply human-centered design to create learning experiences that engage the diverse learning personas that exist in every organization.



People with high emotional intelligence can lead the way in adapting to, and leveraging, AI across the workforce.
Emotional Intelligence:

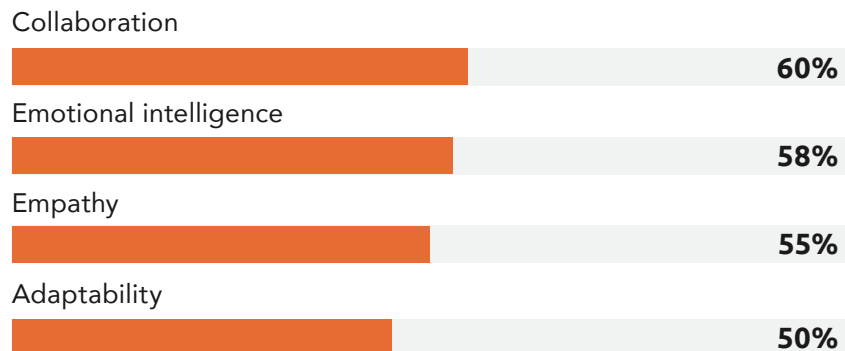


Enables collaboration and teamwork. While AI technology can enable automation and streamline processes, effective collaboration and teamwork still heavily rely on human interaction. Emotional intelligence facilitates better communication, conflict resolution and the ability to motivate and inspire colleagues, which are crucial for successful teamwork.



Drives effective leadership. As AI takes on more routine and repetitive tasks, leaders become increasingly focused on guiding and managing teams. Leaders with high emotional intelligence can create a positive work environment, foster employee engagement and adapt their leadership style to different individuals and situations.

Leadership Traits Most Often Addressed in Training



Source: Brandon Hall Group™ Study, How Do We Develop More Inclusive Leaders?





Increases adaptability and resilience. The rapid advancement of AI and automation can lead to significant changes in job roles and work processes. This requires employees to be adaptable and resilient in the face of uncertainty. Emotional intelligence helps people understand and empathize with the concerns and emotions of their colleagues, creating a supportive and resilient work culture.



Enhances personal growth and development. Self-awareness, a core component of emotional intelligence, allows individuals to identify their strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement. By continuously developing their emotional intelligence, people can enhance their interpersonal skills and achieve more career success.



Improves customer service and sales. Despite the rise of AI-powered chatbots and automated systems, emotional intelligence enables people to empathize with customers and provide personalized experiences that can lead to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty.

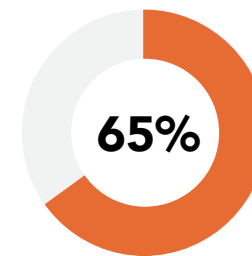


Addresses ethical challenges. Emotional intelligence helps individuals consider the ethical implications of AI implementation, such as biases in algorithms or the impact of automation on jobs. Emotional intelligence enables professionals to consider different perspectives and contribute to the responsible and ethical development and use of AI.

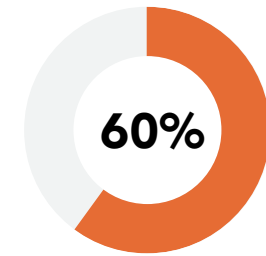
How AI Can Improve the Learning Experience

Brandon Hall Group™ research shows that AI is having — and will continue to have — a significant impact on how learning is designed and delivered, especially related to accelerating training content development and scaling learning activities.

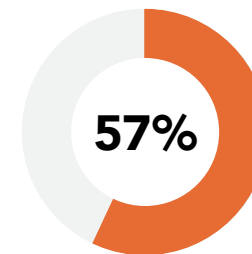
Most Popular Use Cases for Generative AI



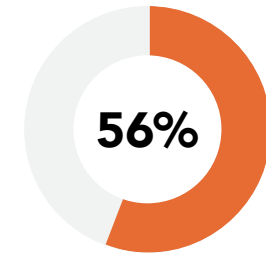
Scaling learning activities



Accelerating training content development



Improving employee experience



Supporting predictive analytics

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ Study, How Generative AI Will Revolutionize HR

**AI can do a lot — including helping employees do their jobs better and more efficiently.
Therefore, building learning using AI is pivotal.**

AI algorithms can analyze vast amounts of data on employee performance, learning preferences, and skill gaps to create personalized learning paths.



By examining patterns of learning behavior and performance metrics, AI can identify knowledge gaps, predict learner outcomes and provide recommendations for improving training programs.

It can generate written or multimedia content based on specific learning objectives.



AI can automate the assessment process and provide immediate feedback on learner performance.

AI-powered adaptive learning platforms can adjust the learning experience based on an individual's progress and performance.



It can enhance immersive learning experiences through AR and VR technologies.

Chatbots can provide instant responses to learner queries.



And AI can facilitate continuous learning by identifying skill gaps and recommending relevant training opportunities.

How AI Changes the Roles of Learning Professionals

The role of instructional designers and other learning professionals is likely to be transformed by AI, Brandon Hall Group™ shows. To remain relevant, they must possess a heightened level of expertise. Organizations must have the capabilities to determine learning personas and training needs to define desired learning outcomes. They then must build effective learning by leveraging generative AI to optimize design and development and enhance the overall learning experience.

Level of Acceptance of Chatbot Technology Among Employees

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ Study, How Will Generative AI Revolutionize HR?



29%
Don't know



20%
Poor



38%
Fair



14%
Very good



AI is great for increasing productivity, efficiency, and scale. But emotionally intelligent learning experience design drives performance gain and maximizes training return on investment and return on experience. For many organizations, that may require having an external advisor or consultant who has the capabilities to create personalized learning for various learning personas.

As AI evolves, L&D professionals can leave the more rote and “informational” aspects of learning design to bots, and spend more time on elements that require a human touch borne from emotional intelligence. Within the L&D team or by leveraging an external partner, learning professionals must have the capabilities to provide:



Contextual and practical learning. Learning experiences that require hands-on practice, physical demonstrations or real-world savvy.



Creativity and artistic expression. AI chatbots can generate content based on patterns and existing data, but they often struggle with genuine creativity and artistic expression.



Social and cultural sensitivity. People have the ability to understand social dynamics, cultural nuances, and context-specific communication. We can navigate sensitive topics, adapt to different cultural backgrounds, and adjust our communication style accordingly.



Personalized learning plans. Humans have the ability to tailor learning experiences, set achievable goals, provide encouragement, and adjust strategies to optimize the learning journey. Personalized guidance and motivation are crucial for effective learning and are areas where AI chatbots often struggle.



Complex emotional support. People excel in providing empathetic and nuanced emotional support. Coaches, mentors, and leaders are better equipped to navigate sensitive conversations and provide personalized guidance.



Moral and ethical dilemmas. These complex situations require judgment, critical thinking, and contextual understanding, which can be challenging for AI chatbots. Humans can provide ethical guidance, discuss implications, and help individuals develop their moral compass.

Leveraging AI without learning designed around the principles of emotional intelligence can have unintended consequences.

“One concern I have about generative AI is that people would mistake access to information as knowledge. We already see with Google that people sometimes mistake access to information for knowing about something,” said Tim Griffith, Senior Director of Training at Sequoia Equities, a multi-family housing owner/operator in the western U.S. **“That could increase many-fold here. Therefore, what I worry about is the impact on our ability to learn things. Will people take the time to learn the skills they need if generative AI provides them with information?”**



Key Takeaways



Prioritize Emotionally Intelligent Learning Design

Organizations must prioritize emotional intelligence training and emotionally intelligent learning design to develop their workforces.

This involves several steps that many organizations lack the resources to do at scale. EI uses models and frameworks that effectively address what learners want and what businesses seek. This includes:

- Taking steps to understand different learning preferences, or personas, and designing solutions to match those personas.
- Using Predictive Learnability guidelines to ensure that learning design strategy is effective.
- Reviewing the learner experience to measure and validate content, design, and usability.
- Verifying the retention and application of learning.
- Gathering data and analytics to assess the overall effectiveness of learning.



Work with Synergy

In the age of AI, emotional intelligence is no longer a “nice-to-have” — it is a necessity. While AI brings incredible opportunities for efficiency and growth, it lacks the human ability to empathize and connect on an emotional level. By fostering emotional intelligence in the workforce, organizations can bridge this gap and create an environment where humans and machines can work together with synergy.



Emotional Intelligence + AI = Innovation

Emotional intelligence, when combined with AI, can lead to unprecedented innovation. AI can process and analyze data at an unmatched speed, while emotionally intelligent employees can interpret these results, derive meaningful insights, and make strategic decisions based on these understandings. This harmonious blend of AI and emotional intelligence can foster innovation, drive growth and lead to a more sustainable business model.

Authors and Contributors



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About Brandon Hall Group™

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