



Book

## Selling with Emotional Intelligence

5 Skills for Building Stronger Client Relationships

Mitch Anthony  
 Kaplan Publishing, 2003  
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"Know thyself" is good advice for everyone, including sales professionals. "Emotional intelligence" is smart business.

### Recommendation

Ever since Harvard's Daniel Goleman published *Emotional Intelligence* in the mid-1990s, experts in numerous fields have adopted his notion of E.Q. - emotional intelligence - as opposed to I.Q. - intellectual intelligence. Although E.Q. is most commonly applied in the fields of management and leadership, its strongest natural link may be to sales. Some sales professionals say buyers make decisions based as much on their emotional response to the salesperson as on their opinion of the product itself. Although he doesn't offer as much direct sales advice as the title might promise, author Mitch Anthony provides sales professionals with E.Q. tools they can use to compete more successfully. The content of the book is often fresh and original, although occasionally the author seems to be plowing fields of thought that he has tilled before. One of the book's strongest sections deals with applying the fundamentals of emotional intelligence to negotiations. *getAbstract.com* recommends this book to sales professionals who are seeking new perspectives that can lead to higher commissions.

### In this summary, you will learn

- How to define emotional intelligence
- How to increase your awareness of your own behavioral tendencies
- How to use emotional discipline in business and in life

### Take-Aways

- Emotionally intelligent people understand other peoples' characteristic emotions and responses - and their own.
- The five essential aspects of emotional intelligence are awareness, restraint, resilience, other-centeredness and rapport building.
- You can't change your instinctive reactions, but you can change your behavior.
- You can't always change your circumstances, but you can improve your responses.
- The emotional content of your sales presentation may be more important than the actual information you present.
- Top producers are goal-oriented and do the homework necessary to achieve.

- Take responsibility for your emotions. Don't put others in control by blaming them.
- Fight pessimism and excessive emotional highs and lows.
- To fight stress, maintain your sense of humor.
- Look for and develop sources of "sustaining motivation" in your life.

## Summary

### A Fish Story

When a man on a train sees a fellow passenger eat an entire herring except for the head, which the passenger pockets, he can't restrain himself from asking, "Why did you put the head of a fish in your pocket?"

The passenger explains that fish is good for you, and that the healthiest part of the fish is the brain. So, he saves fish heads for his children.

After thinking about this for a while, the first man offers to buy the fish head for a dollar. He eats it and then turns to the man who sold it to him. "Hey, wait a minute!" he says. "I could have bought a whole fish for less than that!"

"See," replies the other man. "You're smarter already."

Closing sales of all kinds (not only of fish heads) is as much a matter of emotion as of logical analysis. Cultivating emotional intelligence - how you respond to various situations based on your understanding of your emotional tendencies - is crucial to your success as a sales professional. Your ability to control your emotions will affect your sales results.

### Take the ARROW Test

Nowhere is the tie between emotions and business success as clear as it is in sales. Buyers often complain that sales professionals are "pushy" or "cold and indifferent." When a prospect slams the door in your face, chances are that your sales approach has not been emotionally intelligent. Develop your mastery of the sales professional's five key emotional intelligence skills (referred to by the initials ARROW), which are:

1. "Awareness" - Are you fully cognizant of the way you react to situations such as rejection? Are you sensitive to the responses of others?
2. "Restraint" - When you're tired or upset, do you say the first thing that comes into your mind? Or do you avoid obvious emotional responses and find productive alternatives?
3. "Resilience" - When you experience setbacks or difficulties, can you pick yourself up off the floor and give it another go? Or do you get discouraged?
4. "Others (empathy)" - Is your sales career all about you? In sales, it's important to move "from me to we." To succeed, you must demonstrate empathic caring for others. If you have conflicts with your clients, you probably have not cultivated the ability to see things from their point of view.
5. "Working with others (building rapport)" - Do you enjoy developing mutually productive relationships? Are you a wallflower, or can you strike up a conversation and make new friends?

To improve your sales ability, assess your E.Q. Testing yourself on your ARROW skills - the five elements of emotional intelligence - can give you a realistic picture of your baseline E.Q.

*"Doors open and close in our lives because of emotional intelligence - or its absence."*

*"I am convinced that nowhere are the dramas of emotional intelligence played out more vividly than on the sales stage."*

*"One of the inexorable truths of competition is that when clients have a choice, they choose the option with the least amount of emotional exhaustion and annoyance."*

*“Emotional intelligence in selling begins with the recognition that one must meet emotional agendas beyond the buy-and-sell transaction for a buyer to be satisfied with the transaction.”*

*“Sandwiched between wanting the facts and the rationale for buying your product are the emotional agendas that must be met with every client.”*

*“Keep your eyes and ears open. Become an observer of yourself first.”*

*“Plenty of sales professionals are terrific at building rapport - until that rapport is threatened.”*

### **Your "Personality DNA"**

The way you react to others - and the way others instinctively react to you - is relatively fixed. Personality tendencies that you find annoying in others merely reflect the way they view and react to the world. Letting their tendencies frustrate you is unproductive. Instead, change the way you manifest your initial, instinctive reaction.

Perhaps you tend to be analytical. Perhaps you're impulsive and easily bored. Perhaps you're gregarious, or on the contrary, perhaps you are shy in new groups. Whatever your particular set of E.Q. attributes, when you develop awareness of your tendencies, you can modify your personality quirks and take advantage of your emotional strengths.

### **Top-Producer E.Q.**

Top producers tend to have four emotional characteristics:

1. "Competitive Drive" - One manifestation of the competitive urge is resourcefulness. Top producers will make the extra phone call to close the sale. If they can't reach their prospects during normal business hours, they'll try them early in the morning or late at night. They rejoice in winning, and they work well under pressure.
2. "Achievementality" - Top producers do their homework and prepare to be successful. They want to earn more income, often because they see it as a measure of their overall success. Not surprisingly, they tend to be goal-oriented. They set high standards, and they don't shirk responsibility or blame others for their setbacks.
3. "Teachability" - The most successful sales professionals have a continual desire to learn, to grow professionally and to reduce errors. They also enjoy teaching others how to do things better.
4. "Wit" - Successful people have agile minds that adjust on the fly to difficult situations or customers. They cultivate a sense of humor.

These attributes play a powerful role in the success of any salesperson. Even though you may not be able to change your external circumstances, you can probably improve in at least one of these four areas. Of course, before you can change your weaknesses, you must be willing to acknowledge them. Improving your emotional intelligence isn't always easy, but the reward is great. When you can bring all four of these elements to the table in sales situations, you will have the "critical mass" of emotional fortification you need to generate sales.

### **Avoid an "Amygdala Hijack"**

When you snap without letting your reasoning power kick in first, you've suffered an "amygdala hijack." The amygdala is the part of the brain where impulsiveness overrules reflective and analytical thought. Indulging the whims of your amygdala can be costly indeed. To control your gut reactions, practice being a good "one-minute emotional manager." Essentially, this means learning to put on the brakes when you sense that you could yield to impetuous urges.

Guard against that second wave of anger, as well. Often you can resist the first flush of irritation, but as you continue to experience frustration, you feel the urge to do something. In this state, because of built-up irritation, you may fly off the handle. Perhaps you've had a tough day at work and you come home hoping for a little peace. In this situation, tell your family you're already at your wit's end. Learn to avoid irritation when you're too tired, hungry or emotionally spent to deal with it rationally.

### **Applying E.Q. to Selling**

By understanding your reactions, you can learn to sell with greater emotional intelligence. To keep your E.Q. at the high level you need for sales success, follow these guidelines:

*“While we cannot stop the angry thoughts from coming, we can keep them from taking up permanent residence.”*

*“The first step toward avoiding stressed-out reactions is predicting the environments that chronically trigger stress.”*

*“Make sure that your tone and your body language, as well as your words, communicate.”*

*“Resilience is the earmark of...sales professionals...Although*

- Monitor the signals your body is sending you, so you sense when your emotions are starting to call the shots.
- Take responsibility for your own emotions. Don't make others, or their behavior, responsible for how you feel or react.
- Let go of expectations that tend to result in disappointment or frustration.
- Understanding that "venting" and communicating a negative attitude or emotion - dashing off an angry e-mail, for example - often create situations that you no longer control. This is called the "viral spiral of emotion."
- Before you blow your stack, consider the cost (including to your reputation).
- Manage your stress and find healthy outlets for it.
- Watch for mood swings. Don't let your highs get too high or your lows too low.
- Maintain your sense of humor, no matter what.
- Eschew pessimism.
- Monitor yourself by checking your attitude several times daily. Don't let other peoples' negative attitudes and disappointing performance infect you.
- Look out for negative self-talk. If you catch yourself being overly critical, "take your name off your enemies list."
- Think of defeat as a learning opportunity. You'll do better next time.
- Look for sources of "sustaining motivation" in your life and your career.
- Think about the emotional impact you want to have on others.
- Decide in advance upon the emotional approach you will take when times get tough. Prepare yourself for adversity.
- When your client says no, don't crawl into a hole. Try to find out the reason.
- Be sensitive to body language and buying signals. Focus on your client's reactions as much as on your presentation.

### **What Are They Really Buying?**

The emotional impact of your sales presentation is at least as important as your rational selling proposition. The impact varies, depending on the personality of the individual to whom you're selling, so you must learn about each client's core personality tendencies. Address clients in the tone that appears to make them most receptive.

Of course, relationships alone won't sell your product - and using relationships in this way would be manipulative. Give your clients strong reasons to like you and to do business with you. At the same time, guard their true best interests. With each interaction, look for small ways to serve your clients, to demonstrate courtesy and to add value to the relationship. They will notice your extra effort.

### **Emotionally Intelligent Negotiating**

Everyone brings his or her own unique style into negotiations. As you learn to be more empathetic, you will instinctively understand the motives of those on the other side of the table. Many negotiators make the mistake of trying only to get the best deal for their side; they fail to consider what the deal's long-term impact might be on their business relationships. Skilled professional negotiators are able to work out solutions where others see only obstacles. Their secret is looking beyond their own wants and needs to the goals of their negotiating partners.

*you can knock them down, you cannot keep them down.”*

Your opponents may resort to emotionally exploitative tactics - but you can defuse them. If they claim that your offer has insulted them, remain calm. Ask them what sort of offer they expect. Listen carefully to the response. If they bluster and appear angry, ask them why they feel that way. Don't try to match them tactic for tactic; instead, keep your eyes on the ultimate goal of a mutually acceptable solution.

### **"Seven Habits of the Emotionally Competent"**

People who are emotionally capable distinguish themselves seven ways:

*"I am an optimist, if for no other reason than a hopeful attitude keeps the doors of opportunity swinging and makes every day feel like an adventure."*

1. They place a high level of importance on the emotional impact their words and deeds have on others.
2. They are careful about tone, both theirs and others'.
3. They anticipate - and even rehearse - their responses to emotionally charged situations.
4. They don't dismiss any incidents or interactions as too small to be worthy of notice. They pay close attention to emotional details.
5. They admit their fears, frustrations and attitudes, and don't try to make others responsible for them.
6. When negotiating, they never lose sight of how their tactics will affect the overall relationship.

They practice emotional self-discipline, rather than saying the first thing that comes into their minds.

## About the Author

As president of the training and communications consulting firm Advisor Insights, **Mitch Anthony** has made more than 2,500 presentations to companies in the financial services and insurance industries. He is the author of *Storyselling for Financial Advisors*.

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