



NEBRASKA EXTENSION

CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

EQ Builds Interpersonal and Relationship-Building Skills

University of Nebraska Extension brings the university's expertise and research in 8 key areas of impact directly to Nebraskans from all walks of life in each of the state's 93 counties. Nebraska Extension provides a variety of community-based programs designed to strengthen families, inspire communities, empower young people, conserve and protect natural resources, and advance Nebraskans' farms, ranches and businesses.

THE CHALLENGE

The work of Nebraska Extension is to serve the needs of Nebraska citizens, and they employ a large staff to conduct the outreach and provide these critical services. They are fundamentally a people-driven organization and focus on developing connections and relationships both within the organization and with the people they serve.

While they invest in significant training for their employees, the development team at Nebraska Extension identified emotional intelligence (EQ) as the missing component to a critical need around helping people improve their interpersonal and relationship-building skills. They specifically identified communication, conflict, and stress as areas where EQ could make a significant impact. They saw EQ as a way to help their employees manage their emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate more effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges, and defuse conflict.

"Because we are connected to a university, continued learning and growth of our people is highly supported and encouraged," said Lisa Kaslon, PhD, Professional Development Coordinator.

AT A GLANCE

Challenge

- Leverage emotional intelligence to improve interpersonal and relationship-building skills.
- Help employees manage emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate more effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges, and defuse conflict.

Solution

- 12-month EQ program
- Emotional Intelligence Appraisal – Self Edition
- Mastering EQ Level 1
- Emotional Intelligence Appraisal – Multi-Rater Edition
- Mastering EQ Level 2
- Monthly Check-Ins
- Impact Study and Retest

Results

Participants' emotional intelligence scores increased from 72 to 78 and led to measurable improvements in communication, resilience, and stress management.

“ People may be knowledgeable about their areas of discipline, but they also need people skills because everything we do is based on relationships and so much of it relies on their emotional intelligence. ”

— Lisa Kaslon, PhD,
Professional Development Coordinator

THE SOLUTION

The team at Nebraska Extension selected TalentSmartEQ based on the company's years of experience, research-backed solutions, powerful assessments, extensive trainer resources and support, and practical EQ strategies.

Lisa had done her PhD research on the transfer of training and knew first-hand that training doesn't stick if it is not reinforced and sustained over time. As a result, Lisa designed a year-long program to implement TalentSmartEQ's Assessments and Mastering EQ[®] program, Level 1 and Level 2, throughout the organization. This impactful program includes the following:

- Emotional Intelligence Appraisal[®] – Self Edition – The program starts with a self-assessment, which provides participants with personalized information about their current EQ level, including their natural strengths and opportunities for development.
- Mastering EQ Level 1 – Participants participate in an in-person Level 1 training, which provides an understanding of emotional intelligence and the 4 core skill areas – Self Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness and Relationship Management. Based on their assessment results, participants create individualized skill development plans to improve their EQ skills.
- Monthly Check-Ins – For the next six months, the cohort of participants convene every month either with a facilitator to revisit EQ strategies and tools, or with their accountability partner who provides help and support on their EQ journey.
- Emotional Intelligence Appraisal – Multi-Rater Edition – After 6 months, the participants have their colleagues complete the Multi-Rater assessment, which provides them with valuable feedback on how they are perceived by others and identifies gaps between their self-perception and the perceptions of their colleagues. These differences help them to recognize their blind spots and prioritize key areas to develop.
- Mastering EQ Level 2 – The participants then come together again for an in-person Level 2 training which provides advanced practice of the cornerstone strategies in each of the four core EQ skill areas.
- Monthly Check-Ins – Following the Level 2 training, they continue with monthly check-ins with the EQ facilitator or accountability partner for six months.
- Impact Study and Retest – At the end of the year-long program, 82% of participants completed a reflective survey to evaluate the impact of the program on key metrics, and 68% of participants completed a retest of the Emotional Intelligence Appraisal to assess the improvement in their EQ skills.
- Booster Sessions – The learning and development team will also be providing optional sessions, covering specific EQ strategies or how to address key challenges, to keep EQ top of mind and provide additional support.

The certified trainers at Nebraska Extension have implemented this year-long program over the past two years, training over a hundred employees to date.

"Managing your own emotions and those of others is an ongoing process, and the year-long program really gives our employees time to practice new EQ strategies. The cohort approach has also made a big difference. Working in a small group over the course of a year, they are able to share where things went well and where they didn't, and help each other with strategies to try next time," said Lisa.

“ We believe that ‘you’re better for us, when you’re better for you.’ This program helps people to recognize their emotions and then decide how best to manage them for their own benefit first, and then for the benefit of our organization. Our employees are doing things differently and are happier, and they bring that to their work. ”

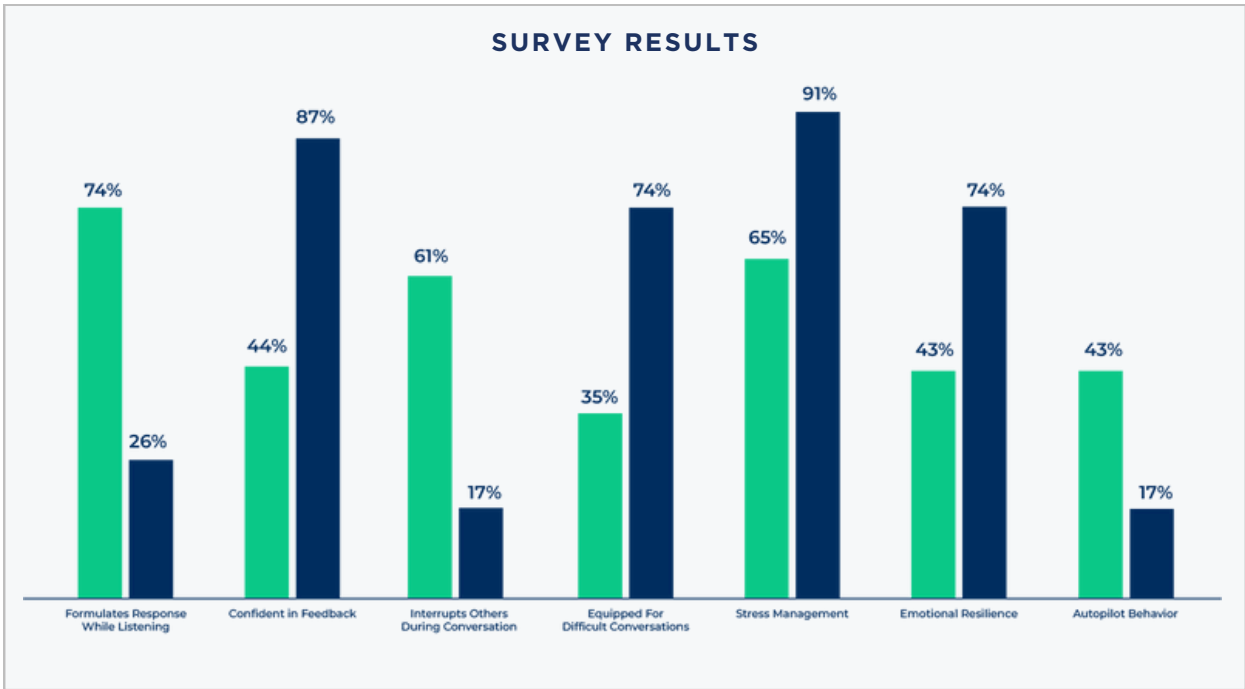
— Lisa Kaslon, PhD, Professional Development Coordinator

THE RESULTS

The EQ training program at Nebraska Extension led to substantial growth in core emotional intelligence skills. Participants' average EQ scores increased from 72 to 78, with the greatest gains in relationship management, which improved by 7 points. These improvements laid the foundation for stronger interpersonal communication, better self-management, and more effective leadership. Participants reported that the increased awareness of their own and others' emotions has been extremely valuable, contributing to a sense of gratitude, empowerment, and greater resilience in handling tough emotional situations.

As a result of these EQ gains, participants reported meaningful improvements in workplace behaviors:

- 65% decrease in response-focused listening, signaling stronger active listening habits
- Confidence in giving feedback nearly doubled after the training
- 72% decrease in interruptions during conversations
- 40% more employees reported improved stress management
- 72% increase in emotional resilience
- 60% decrease in automatic/unintentional behavior



Lisa summarizes the impact of their EQ program, “We believe that ‘you’re better for us, when you’re better for you.’ This program helps people to recognize their emotions and then decide how best to manage them for their own benefit first, and then for the benefit of our organization. Our employees are doing things differently and are happier, and they bring that to their work.”

*Formulates Response While Listening: % of participants who agreed or strongly agreed that they tend to think about their response while others are speaking (lower agreement indicates improvement in listening focus). Confident Giving Feedback: % of participants who agreed or strongly agreed they feel confident providing constructive feedback. Frequently Interrupts Others: % of participants who agreed or strongly agreed that they frequently interrupt others (lower agreement indicates improved self-regulation). Equipped for Difficult Conversations: % of participants who agreed or strongly agreed they feel equipped to handle difficult conversations. Stress Management: % of participants who agreed or strongly agreed they cope well with workplace stress. Emotional Resilience: % of participants who agreed or strongly agreed they recover quickly from emotionally challenging situations. Autopilot Behavior: % of participants who agreed or strongly agreed that much of what they do is automatic rather than intentional (lower agreement indicates improvement in mindfulness and intentionality).