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# The power of EI.

How do ESCI competencies relate to leadership and employee effectiveness?

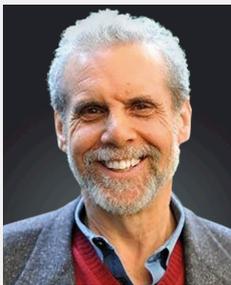




# Emotional Intelligence research series.



Korn Ferry Hay Group's partnership with Richard Boyatzis and Dan Goleman provides a validated measure of emotional and social intelligence competencies and an extensive source of behavioral data. The Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI) also benefits from ongoing studies that explore emotional intelligence (EI) and its relationship to performance at work and other key outcomes.



## What's inside?

This series of updates shares recent research and its implications for developing EI through training, coaching and education.

Nearly a quarter of a million people, in business organizations and education institutions around the world, have received ESCI and ECI feedback.

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This report shares our most recent findings on the relationships between the ESCI and other Korn Ferry Hay Group assessments. The statistical analysis was led by Paula Kerr of the Korn Ferry Institute, and this summary is based on excerpts from the ESCI Research Guide and Technical Manual (Korn Ferry Hay Group, 2017).

**Nearly a quarter of a million people, in business organizations and education institutions around the world, have received ESCI and ECI feedback.**



# How do ESCI competencies drive performance?

## We've always known that the emotional and social intelligence competencies are more than just 'nice to have'.

They underpin outstanding performance for individual contributors and leaders. In 2010, we explored the ESCI norm database alongside our Korn Ferry Hay Group Leadership Styles and Organizational Climate data to discover how emotional and social intelligence competencies inform leadership approach and impact. *EI at the heart of performance* (Havers, 2010) revealed important findings for practitioners working to develop effective leaders.

Our 2016 update of the ESCI has revisited these and other key behavioral relationships and reinforced the central role that EI competencies play in employee and leadership performance. Three key findings stand out:

### Emotional self-awareness remains the cornerstone of EI.

Confirmed as a solid foundation for a range of capabilities, individuals who demonstrate Emotional self-awareness consistently are also likely to:

- Demonstrate an average of 10 ESCI competencies consistently.
- Make frequent use of four long-term leadership styles that have the most positive impact on their team's working climate and performance.
- Create the most positive working climates for their team members.

## EI as a key predictor of leadership effectiveness.

A number of ESCI competencies are emerging as predictors of leadership effectiveness:

- Leaders with high scores in **Conflict management** are likely to make frequent use of four long-term leadership styles and restrain their use of the two short-term styles, consequently creating the most positive climates and having team members who intend to stay five years or longer.
- **Inspirational leadership** and **Empathy** follow close behind in their positive relationships with long-term leadership styles, team climate, and employee retention.

## EI as a key predictor of employee effectiveness, engagement, and innovation.

Higher ESCI competency scores relate to increased employee effectiveness scores across all drivers of employee engagement and enablement:

- Demonstrating **six or more ESCI competencies consistently** (ESCI strengths) can equip a leader to make frequent use of the long-term leadership styles, create a positive team climate, and encourage a majority of team members to stay five years or longer.
- Demonstrating **three or fewer ESCI strengths** relates to below average leadership strength and a majority of team members planning to leave within five years.
- Demonstrating **no ESCI strengths** typically results in bottom quartile leadership strength and over 10% of team members planning to leave within just one year.



# Are people becoming more emotionally and socially intelligent?

**Since 2010, our ESCI database has grown significantly. It now contains nearly 20 times more participants and over 8 times more client organizations. What does this data tell us? Is this increased engagement with EI translating into increased capability?**

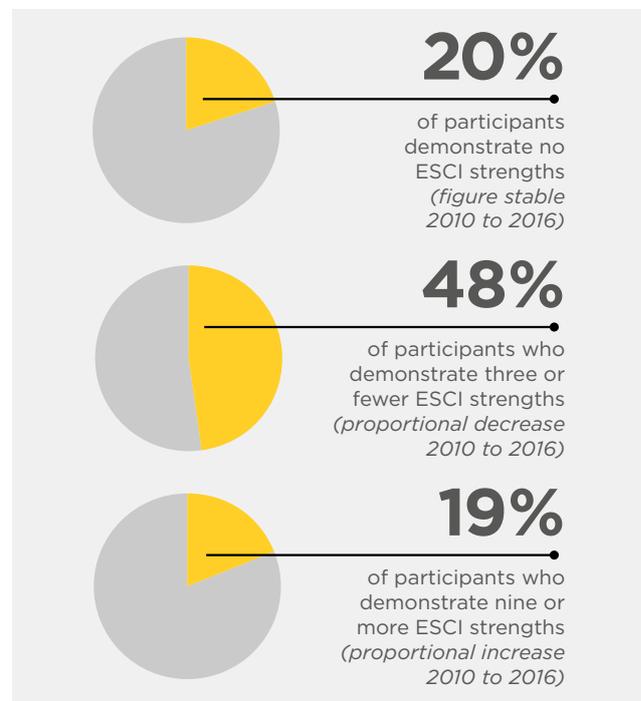
When individuals demonstrate an ESCI competency consistently (i.e., with an average total others score of 4.3 and above), they can feel confident that it is a strength for them. The comparison between our 2010 and 2016 data is encouraging:

- The proportion of participants who demonstrate no ESCI strengths has remained stable at around 20%.
- The proportion who demonstrate three or fewer ESCI strengths has fallen from 52% to 48%.
- The proportion who demonstrate nine or more ESCI strengths has increased from 16% to 19%.

The behavioral bell curve appears to be shifting to the right. A growing interest in emotional and social intelligence is showing signs of impacting individuals' capabilities as well as their organizations' aspirations.

Detailed investigation shows that participants continue to be strongest in the competencies that typically define baseline employability: Achievement orientation, Teamwork, and Organizational awareness.

Those that require most development are the more complex personal and interpersonal qualities: Emotional self-awareness, Influence, Empathy, and Inspirational leadership. These competencies reinforce the importance of coaching and support, and the data go on to reveal other findings that inform ESCI coaching practice.





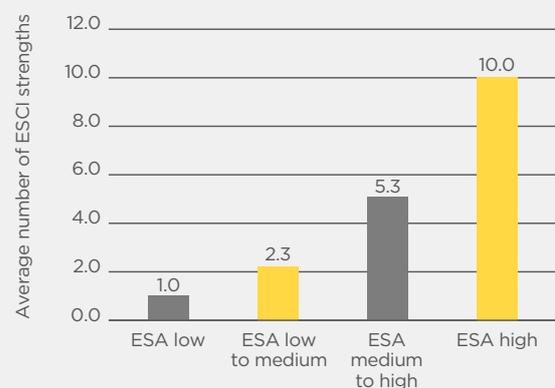
# Does Emotional self-awareness support overall EI capability?

**Practitioners and participants alike ask most questions about Emotional self-awareness. Deep-seated and difficult to observe, it can be challenging for raters to score. Its role in participants' overall demonstration of EI is something we continue to explore.**

As we discovered in 2010, Emotional self-awareness lies at the heart of emotional and social intelligence (Havers, 2010). Participants with high Emotional self-awareness display strength in more of all the other ESCI competencies. The 2016 database shows that:

- A participant who demonstrates Emotional self-awareness **never or rarely** is likely to show strength in **just one ESCI competency**.
- A participant who demonstrates Emotional self-awareness **often or consistently** is likely to show strength in **10 ESCI competencies**.

Average number of ESCI strengths based on total others Emotional self-awareness (ESA) score.





Impact of Emotional self-awareness (ESA) scores on other ESCI competencies		Percentage of participants requiring development:	
		in the high scoring ESA group	in the low scoring ESA group
Self-management	Achievement orientation	0%	10%
	Adaptability	0%	19%
	Emotional self-control	0%	18%
	Positive outlook	0%	17%
Social awareness	Empathy	0%	40%
	Organizational awareness	0%	13%
Relationship management	Coach and mentor	0%	31%
	Conflict management	1%	39%
	Influence	0%	36%
	Inspirational leadership	1%	48%
	Teamwork	0%	16%

Emotional self-awareness remains a pivotal competency for employees and leaders. Without it, an individual's chance of demonstrating strength in other EI behaviors is low. With it, they are likely to shine in all other competencies. The 2016 data give practitioners an insight into the specific competencies, all strongly related to leadership capability, which may need development if Emotional self-awareness is low.

Of those low in Emotional self-awareness, around 40% are likely to require development to strengthen their Inspirational leadership, Empathy, and Conflict management. A third are likely to need help with Influence and Coach and mentor. The significance of the first three of these competencies is reinforced when ESCI data are compared with leaders' Korn Ferry Hay Group Leadership Styles and Organizational Climate 2.0 data.



# Does EI strengthen a leader's impact?

**The purpose of investing in emotional and social intelligence is to enable employees to be more effective, engaged, and satisfied, and to equip leaders to maintain this experience for their team members. Getting the working climate right is one of the key drivers of team performance, and leaders play the biggest part in making it happen.**

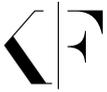
Korn Ferry Hay Group's recent update of the Leadership Styles and Organizational Climate 2.0 surveys (Hay Group 2015a, 2015b), so close to the ESCI norm update, offered a unique chance to compare these databases alongside each other. The availability of data from participants on our Making Great Leaders program enabled us to focus on 2,052 leaders who completed ESCI and Leadership Styles and Organizational Climate 2.0 surveys within a six-week period. This analysis answered new questions about how leaders use their emotional and social intelligence to be effective.

## How do we measure team climate?

The Korn Ferry Hay Group Organizational Climate survey measures the six dimensions of climate that have the biggest impact on team performance:

- **Clarity:** people know what is expected of them and how they contribute to organizational goals.
- **Standards:** challenging but attainable goals are set for the organization and its employees.
- **Flexibility:** there are no unnecessary rules and procedures, and new ideas are acted upon.
- **Responsibility:** people are empowered to get on with their job and held accountable for it.
- **Rewards:** good performance is recognized and rewarded, and people know what they do well and what they need to improve.
- **Team commitment:** people are proud to belong to the organization, and collaborate towards a common objective.

The survey asks team members to rate the climate they currently experience and their ideal climate—what they need to help them perform at their best. Effective leaders create high levels on each climate dimension and as close as possible to their team members' ideal levels. They do it by understanding what needs to change in their team's climate, by using their leadership styles to make it happen, and by drawing on their competencies to sustain their efforts. This process is captured in the Korn Ferry Hay Group leadership effectiveness model.



**The Korn Ferry Hay Group leadership effectiveness model.**



## Does Emotional self-awareness help leaders create positive team climates?

In exploring the relationships between ESCI competencies and leadership effectiveness, we started with Emotional self-awareness, the heart of EI. We compared leaders' Emotional self-awareness scores with their Climate Index, an overall measure of leadership impact. Based on an individual's current climate scores and the gaps between current and ideal across all six dimensions, Climate Index is benchmarked against other leaders and reported by quartiles.

We discovered that **only 5%** of leaders with **low Emotional self-awareness** created **top quartile** climates for their teams, compared with **62%** of leaders with **high Emotional self-awareness**. If an employee's manager has low Emotional self-awareness, the employee's chance of being in a team that does little to support their performance is high.

Proportion of leaders, by Climate Index, with:		
Climate Index	High Emotional self-awareness	Low Emotional self-awareness
<b>Top quartile</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>5%</b>
Above average	19%	12%
Below average	14%	24%
Bottom quartile	5%	59%



## Do other specific EI competencies support positive climates?

The ESCI model gives people 12 distinct competencies to work with. It allows them to compare their feedback with their leadership situation and make choices: to use their strengths more frequently, to work on underdeveloped or underused competencies, or both. But do any specific competencies stand out for leaders? Do the data reveal relationships between specific competencies and climate?

A deeper dive into the data revealed the following positive and significant correlations ( $p < 0.0001$ ):

- Leaders with high scores in **Conflict management** are likely to create the most positive climates overall ( $r = .58$ ).
- **Inspirational leadership** comes second in the strength of its relationship with climate ( $r = .56$ ).
- In close third place is **Empathy** ( $r = .54$ ).

These findings equip practitioners to give confident guidance to leaders who want to use their ESCI feedback to improve their impact. The findings give coaches permission to focus attention on the personal and interpersonal qualities that support the more obvious leadership skills, particularly on Emotional self-awareness, which is emerging as foundational to strength in all other competencies. They also provide insight for individuals who are not yet leaders, indicating those who are most likely to be successful in a leadership position.

## When climate is low, how accurately does the leader's boss observe what's happening?

ESCI feedback allows an individual to compare the average scores of different groups of raters: their manager, their team members, their peers, and others. Managers are typically the lowest scoring group: their perception of emotional and social intelligence often appears more discerning than that of other raters. The 2016 data allowed us to investigate how leaders' Climate Index scores varied with their EI scores, comparing the perceptions of their team members with those of their own managers.

We investigated leaders' Climate Index data against the three ESCI competencies with the biggest gaps between manager and team members' scores: Conflict management, Inspirational leadership, and Empathy. Higher scores in all three ESCI competencies were related to more positive team climates.

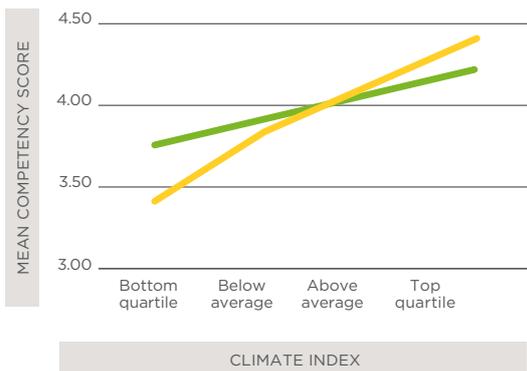
However, we also found that when team members experience a positive climate, they score their leader's ESCI competencies more positively than their leader's manager does. When team members experience a negative climate, they score their leader's ESCI competencies more negatively than their leader's manager does.

**When it comes to assessing a leader's behavior, their team members' bottom-up observations are likely to be more discerning than their manager's top-down perspective.**

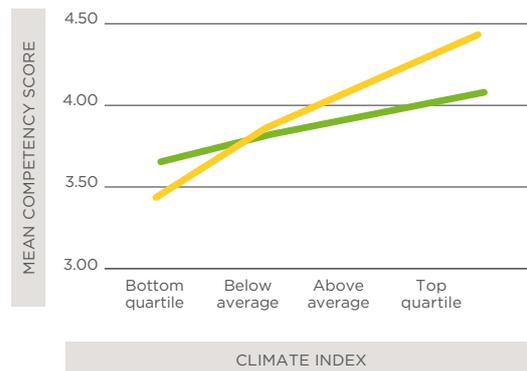


## Team members' experience of climate matters in their assessment of their leaders' EI.

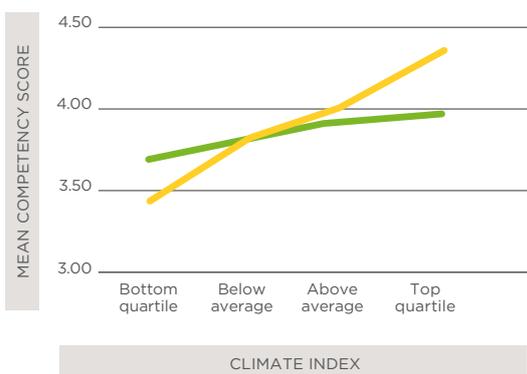
### Conflict management



### Inspirational leadership



### Empathy



This finding is of real value to leaders who receive ESCI and Leadership Styles and Organizational Climate 2.0 feedback. It offers an important reminder that team members' experiences matter most in understanding climate and its impact on their performance. It also reveals that when it comes to assessing a leader's behavior, their team members' bottom-up observations are likely to be more discerning than their manager's top-down perspective.

- Manager scores
- Team members' scores



# Does EI strengthen a leader's approach?

**The Korn Ferry Hay Group leadership effectiveness model demonstrates that effective leaders draw on their capabilities to sustain their use of a wide range of leadership styles, ready to respond to different situations, challenges, and team members.**

This enables them to create and maintain team climates that support performance. ESCI feedback helps them use and develop the competencies that are most effective, given their situation and their capabilities.

The data from 2,052 leaders who completed ESCI, Leadership Styles and Organizational Climate 2.0 surveys within a six-week period enabled us to explore how leaders use their emotional and social intelligence in their leadership.

**Effective leaders have multiple styles in their toolkit, equipping them to respond flexibly to changing demands.**

## How do we measure leadership styles?

The Korn Ferry Hay Group Leadership Styles survey measures the six leadership styles that have the biggest impact on climate:

- **Visionary:** Providing long-term direction and context.
- **Participative:** Building commitment and generating new ideas.
- **Coaching:** Supporting long-term development.
- **Affiliative:** Creating trust and harmony.
- **Pacesetting:** Accomplishing tasks to high standards.
- **Directive:** Gaining immediate compliance.

Effective leaders have multiple styles in their toolkit, equipping them to respond flexibly to changing demands. However, the styles are different in nature. The Visionary, Participative, and Coaching styles are best for working toward long-term goals: they create the conditions for the employee engagement, involvement, and development required to deliver over time. The Directive and Pacesetting styles are best reserved for short-term fixes: addressing the situation when there is a drop in standards or the job is not being done. Overuse of these styles typically has a negative impact on team climate.

The Leadership Styles survey asks team members to rate the styles that they observe their leader using. Leaders can compare this with their own view of their leadership styles – their intended approach.



## Do specific EI competencies support the leadership styles?

ESCI feedback enables leaders to play to their strengths as well as develop their weaker competencies. But do any specific competencies stand out for leaders? Does the data reveal relationships between specific competencies and specific leadership styles?

We explored the intuitive relationships, hypothesized by Korn Ferry Hay Group expert practitioners, and confirmed the following positive and significant correlations ( $p < 0.0001$ ):

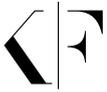
- **Inspirational leadership** with the **Visionary** leadership style ( $r = .60$ ).
- **Teamwork** with the **Participative** style ( $r = .50$ ).
- **Coach and mentor** with the **Coaching** style ( $r = .48$ ).
- **Empathy** with the **Affiliative** style ( $r = .52$ ).
- For leaders with high **Achievement orientation**, use of the **Pacesetting** style is higher for those with lower **Positive outlook** scores (Cohen's  $d = 0.24$ ). Those who maintain their **Positive outlook** are less likely to take work back from their team members and, consequently, will be better at delegating effectively.

These findings equip practitioners to give confident guidance to leaders who are using ESCI feedback to improve their approach. Other more detailed relationships also emerged that reveal the importance of developing specific competencies.

Given the strong correlation between climate and leadership styles, it is no surprise to observe again the importance of a few key competencies:

- Leaders with high scores in **Conflict management** are likely to be strong in their use of the long-term leadership styles: Coaching ( $r = .63$ ), Visionary ( $r = .59$ ), Affiliative ( $r = .53$ ), and Participative ( $r = .52$ ). It also helps them hold back on their use of the Pacesetting style ( $r = -.44$ ). **Conflict management** stands out from the data as one of the most significant competencies, potentially an emerging key indicator for effective leadership, and one that strengthens with age and experience.
- **Inspirational leadership** comes second in support of Coaching ( $r = .59$ ), Participative ( $r = .53$ ), and Affiliative ( $r = .50$ ), as well as Visionary ( $r = .60$ ) and restraining Pacesetting ( $r = -.40$ ).
- In close third place is **Empathy** in support of Visionary ( $r = .53$ ), Coaching ( $r = .52$ ), and Participative ( $r = .52$ ), as well as Affiliative ( $r = .52$ ) and restraining Pacesetting ( $r = -.37$ ).
- Use of the Directive style is typically restrained by leaders who are strong in **Empathy** ( $r = -.29$ ), **Teamwork** ( $r = -.30$ ) and, most significantly, **Emotional self-control** ( $r = -.37$ ).
- The significance of **Emotional self-awareness** emerged again. Leaders with high scores are likely to be strong in the long-term styles: Visionary ( $r = .50$ ), Coaching ( $r = .47$ ), Participative ( $r = .46$ ), and Affiliative ( $r = .49$ ).

**Conflict management stands out from the data as one of the most significant competencies, potentially an emerging key indicator for effective leadership.**



## Does EI broaden a leader's range of leadership styles?

Developing a range of leadership styles takes practice. It requires leaders to make clear and accurate links between the demands of a situation and their choice of behaviors. So, how significant are EI competencies in equipping leaders to develop strength and flexibility in their leadership styles?

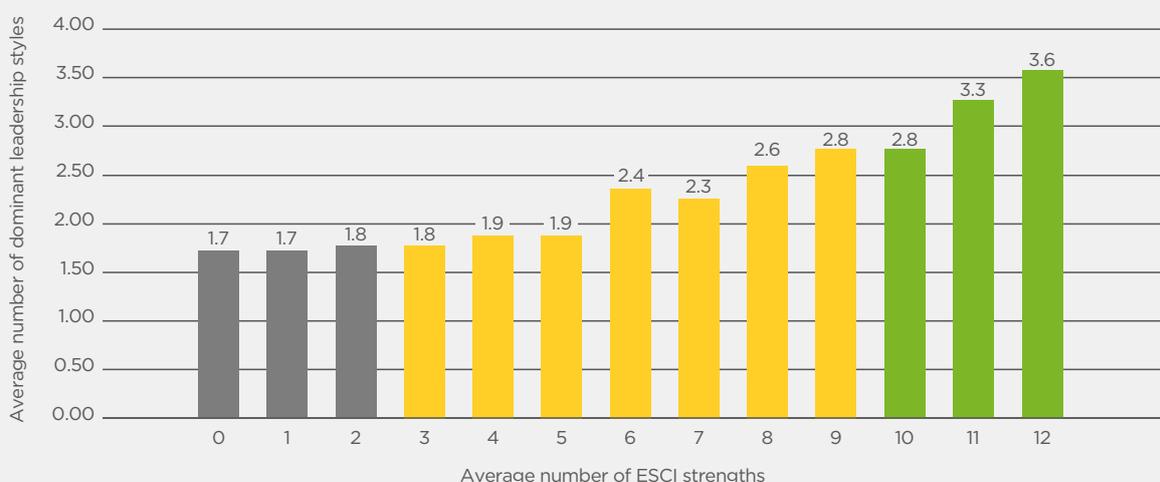
Our overall measure of leadership strength is the Leadership Styles Index. Based on an individual's six leadership styles scores, weighted to reflect their impact on climate, the index is benchmarked against other leaders and reported by quartiles. The relationships between ESCI strengths and Leadership Styles Index scores show that demonstrating just some ESCI competencies consistently can make all the difference:

- Leaders demonstrating six ESCI competencies consistently are typically top quartile for leadership strength.
- Those demonstrating four competencies are typically above average for leadership strength.
- Those demonstrating two competencies are typically below average for leadership strength.
- Those demonstrating only one ESCI competency consistently are typically bottom quartile for leadership strength.

Dominant leadership styles, those that a leader demonstrates most frequently, make a difference to a team's climate. The more dominant long-term styles in a leader's toolkit, the greater their capacity to support their team's performance. The relationships between ESCI strengths and dominant leadership styles show how the number and type of styles accessible to a leader typically changes with ESCI strength:

- With two or fewer ESCI strengths, leaders are typically able to draw upon only one or two leadership styles. A deeper dive into the data reveal that these are most likely to be the short-term styles that typically result in negative climates: Directive and Pacesetting.
- With three to nine ESCI strengths, leaders tend to show signs of holding back on the short-term styles and using the long-term Visionary, Participative, Coaching, and Affiliative styles more often.
- With ten or more ESCI strengths, leaders typically use the long-term styles frequently and the short-term styles only when required.

Changes in the number of leadership styles with ESCI strength.





# Does a leader's EI increase employee effectiveness?

**Korn Ferry Hay Group's Leadership Styles and Organizational Climate 2.0 surveys provide feedback that helps individual leaders understand and improve their effectiveness.**

Our Employee Effectiveness Survey measures employee engagement and enablement across an organization, identifying specific factors that prevent employees from performing at their best.

Our 2016 data contained 558 employees who had completed the ESCI for their managers and the Employee Effectiveness Survey. It should be noted that when an employee completes the ESCI, their focus is on their manager's behavior; when they complete the Employee Effectiveness Survey, their focus is on their organization. This analysis, therefore, compared data on two different "targets," collected

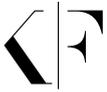
at slightly different times. This removes the likelihood of an employee providing an overall response, regardless of the survey. It provides a fascinating perspective of the impact that a leader has on their team members compared with how their team members feel about working for the organization.

## **How do we measure employee effectiveness?**

The Employee Effectiveness Survey goes beyond a typical employee satisfaction survey. As well as measuring how motivated and engaged employees feel, it also identifies the factors that help or hinder them in their work. By reporting both engagement and enablement drivers, the Employee Effectiveness Survey helps organizations understand and address their particular barriers to employee and organizational performance.



The Employee Effectiveness Survey goes beyond a typical employee satisfaction survey. As well as measuring how motivated and engaged employees feel, it also identifies the factors that help or hinder them in their work.



## Does a leader's EI increase employee effectiveness?

Comparing team members' Employee Effectiveness Survey responses with their scores for their managers' EI confirmed that emotionally and socially intelligent leaders engage and enable their team members:

- Overall, ESCI competency scores relate positively and significantly with employee effectiveness (mean  $r$  of .31,  $p < .001$  for all correlations).
- Every ESCI competency relates positively and significantly with every engagement and enablement driver.

The establishment of engagement and enablement drivers may emerge from top-down strategy and policy, but leaders who demonstrate ESCI competencies sustain employee effectiveness across their organizations.

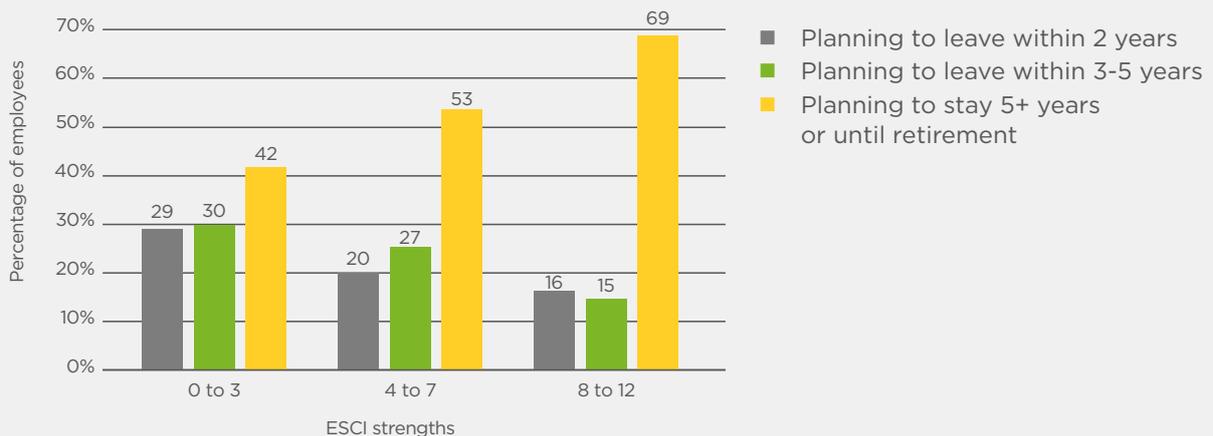
## Does ESCI strength increase employee retention?

One of the key indicators of employee effectiveness that leaders have most influence over is retention. The 2016 data allowed us to compare leaders' ESCI scores with the employees' tenure plans: the length of time that they intend to remain in their organization.

Across this sample of 867 employees, 21.6% reported the intention to leave within two years. However, their plans varied considerably according to their perception of their leaders' ESCI strengths:

- For leaders demonstrating **three or fewer ESCI competencies consistently (ESCI strengths)**, **42%** of team members planned to remain for at least five years.
- Those with **four to seven ESCI strengths** were likely to retain **53%** of their team members for at least five years.
- Those with **eight or more ESCI strengths** could hope to retain **69%** of their team members for at least five years.

Leaders' ESCI strengths compared with employees' tenure plans.





For team members intending to leave within one year, even low levels of emotional and social intelligence in their leaders can make a difference:

- **6%** who observe their leader demonstrating at **least one ESCI strength** intend to leave imminently.
- This nearly doubles to **11%** for those who observe their leader demonstrating **no ESCI strengths**.

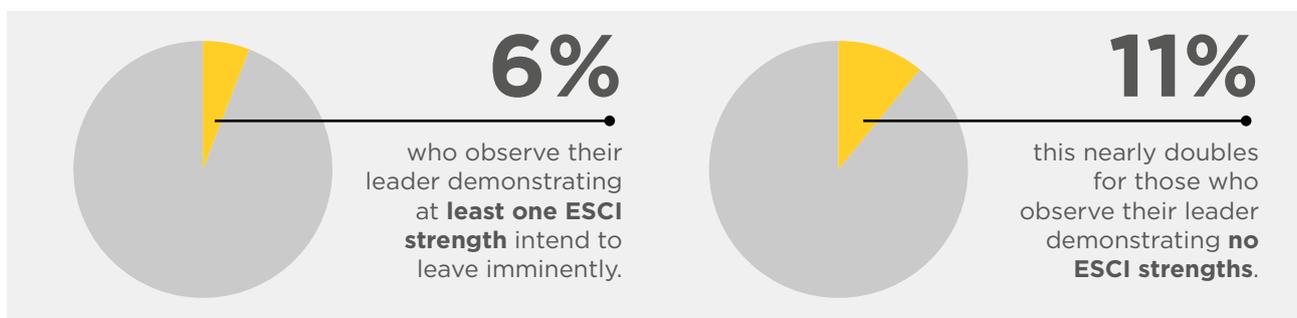
These findings give reassurance that even very focused and targeted EI development can pay off. Demonstrating strength in just one competency leads to more motivated and engaged employees, lower turnover, and reduced cost of hire. Broader EI development can positively impact longer-term employee retention.

## Which ESCI competencies have the biggest relationship with employee retention?

To investigate the impact of specific ESCI competencies, we compared the scores of two groups of team members: those intending to stay at least five years and those planning to leave within two years. Their scores differed significantly across all competencies; all effect sizes (as measured with Cohen's *d*) were medium.

Their perceptions of their leaders' emotional and social intelligence differed the most for **Coach and mentor** (Cohen's *d* = 0.58), **Conflict management** (0.53), and **Inspirational leadership** and **Organizational awareness** (both 0.46). These were followed by **Achievement orientation** (0.45), **Teamwork** (0.44) and **Empathy** (0.43).

These findings equip practitioners to give confident guidance to leaders who are working with their ESCI feedback to improve their team members' effectiveness.





# Using ESCI feedback to boost performance.

## Growing interest in EI and increased use of the ESCI over the last 10 years has given us a wealth of behavioral data.

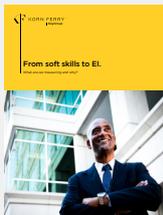
The 2016 database has allowed us to compare participants' ESCI scores with their leadership styles, their impact on their teams' climates and the drivers of their team members' engagement and enablement. What we've learned is of real value to leaders wanting to use their feedback to become more effective, and to the practitioners who provide support and development:

- **Emotional self-awareness** remains the cornerstone of emotional and social intelligence.
- **Conflict management** is emerging as an important indicator of leadership effectiveness.
- **Empathy** ranks with **Inspirational leadership** in its importance to leaders.
- **Positive outlook** helps high achieving leaders to delegate effectively by moderating their use of the Pacesetting style.
- Higher ESCI competency scores relate to increased employee effectiveness across all drivers of engagement and enablement.
- Demonstrating 6 or more ESCI competencies consistently can equip a leader to make frequent use of the long-term leadership styles, create a positive team climate and encourage a majority of team members to stay 5 years or longer.

360-degree assessment of emotional and social intelligence competencies offers a sound indicator of employees' performance and leadership potential. It provides confident insight into leaders' capabilities and impact. And investing in development based on ESCI feedback pays by increasing employees' and leaders' effectiveness in multiple ways.

**Demonstrating 6 or more ESCI competencies consistently can equip a leader to make frequent use of the long-term leadership styles, create a positive team climate and encourage a majority of team members to stay 5 years or longer.**

## Others in this series.



### Part 1: 'From soft skills to EI'

maps different definitions of EI against a model of personality, helping practitioners choose the right EI instrument for the job.



### Part 2: 'The secret ingredient'

summarizes recent research studies that explore the impact of EI on job performance, job satisfaction, career and life satisfaction, employee engagement and career success.



### Part 3: '10 more years boosting performance'

summarizes recent validity studies carried out by researchers from a number of different countries which reveal how EI impacts workplace outcomes in different contexts and roles.



### Part 4: 'Shifting the balance of power'

discusses recent findings from neuroscience and psychology that challenge assumptions about task focused and people focused leadership.

The ESCI research guide and technical manual presents the latest review of the ESCI's psychometric-based properties.

**The 360-degree Emotional and Social Competency Inventory is available through Korn Ferry Hay Group.**

**If you would like to find out more about the tool and its applications, please visit [www.kornferry.com/haygroup](http://www.kornferry.com/haygroup)**

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- Havers, G. (2010). EI at the heart of performance: *The implications of our 2010 ESCI research* (Research Report). Boston, MA: Hay Group.
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## ABOUT KORN FERRY

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