



# BEHAVIORAL EQ® Explorations

## Flexibility

TRACOM's Behavioral EQ Model™ is based on the latest research in both brain function and performance. It focuses on the most important elements of Emotional Intelligence and those that can be successfully developed. The Model consists of four dimensions which house the fifteen various core competencies. The Behavioral EQ Explorations series takes a closer look each of these core competencies. This whitepaper focuses on Flexibility.

The Flexibility component of TRACOM's Behavioral EQ Model measures the ability to adapt to new circumstances which indicates the capacity to manage multiple demands and changing priorities. Flexibility determines how a person views events and their ability to change their thoughts and behavior as circumstances change. Those who demonstrate flexibility anticipate and prepare for changing situations and are mentally flexible in their ability to think through issues.

“There can be no life without change, and to be afraid of what is different or unfamiliar is to be afraid of life.”  
— Theodore Roosevelt



## Flexibility: Good for the Body and the Brain

We exercise to increase our physical health, stamina and flexibility. Even if we don't exercise as much as we should, we all know that it's good for us and that we would benefit from more of it. The brain is no different. While physical exercise strengthens the brain, our minds can also benefit from purely mental stimulation and exercise. Although humans achieve our peak mental flexibility by the time we're in our mid-twenties,<sup>i</sup> neuroscientists now know that our brains are remarkably flexible and can even form new neural pathways. Through exercise and brain training we can enhance mental flexibility.<sup>ii</sup> Why is this important? Mental flexibility helps us solve problems more effectively, and this helps us to be more effective at work.

So, what does being flexible look like? Flexible people are highly adaptable to new and changing situations and are mentally flexible in how they think through issues. But they're more than simply responsive; they proactively anticipate and prepare for change. This flexibility helps them confront life's challenges and move forward instead of being stuck.



## How to Become More Flexible

With ever-changing demands and priorities, it's not always easy to be flexible. Try these techniques to enhance your abilities in this area.

- **Break your habits**

Humans are creatures of habit, spending up to 40% of each day on activities that are entirely habitual and that require no decision-making or active thinking.<sup>iii</sup> Think of that the next time you're driving home! In order to be more flexible, we sometimes have to actively change our accustomed ways of doing things. Simple changes in routine, such as making your lunch in the opposite order as usual or driving a different route to work, can enhance mental flexibility. The point is to resist the easy path of common habits and stimulate your mind. Start out by doing this once a day with a common habit. Over time you will notice yourself doing it more frequently (flexibility will become a new habit) and you might even feel and act smarter.

- **Act on what is under your control**

When change occurs, especially when we perceive it as particularly difficult or unwelcome, we sometimes feel overwhelmed and powerless. However, there are usually some aspects of even unwanted change that we have some control over, or at least a voice in. Determine which aspects of the situation you have some control over. Even if these seem minor, it can help you to have authority in certain areas. The key is to then act on those areas where you have control. For example, if your company is undergoing restructuring, think of ways that you can affect the situation or have some influence on decisions, then take action.

- **Plan for change**

One way to increase your flexibility is to plan for change or disruptions to the status quo. As the saying goes, "live for today, but plan for tomorrow." Take time to think through the possible implications of current events or initiatives within your organization, as well as the most likely next steps or consequences. Prepare for different scenarios by developing your action plan. This way you will be well prepared for any disruptions. Even if they do not occur, you will have greater peace of mind knowing that you are prepared.



**About TRACOM Group's Behavioral EQ Model™:**

TRACOM Group's Behavioral EQ Model is the third generation of Emotional Intelligence, focusing on skills that are most related to performance and that can be practiced and developed. This model encompasses emotional intelligence (this refers to how well we perceive and understand our own emotions and the emotions of others) and behavioral intelligence (this refers to how well we manage personal behavior and relationships). Behavioral elements of our Behavioral EQ model are the most important because these skills are visible to others and most strongly predictive of job performance and career success.

Learn more about TRACOM's Behavioral EQ Model and the other elements that comprise the model [here](#).

**Author:**

Casey Mulqueen, Ph.D. — Director of Research & Product Development

**TRACOM® GROUP**

THE SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE COMPANY®

6675 South Kenton Street, Suite 118

Centennial, CO 80111

303-470-4900

www.tracomcorp.com

**References:**

- <sup>i</sup> Morton, J. B., Bosma, R., & Ansari, D. (2009). *Age-related changes in brain activation associated with dimensional shifts of attention: An fMRI study*. *Neuroimage* 46(1), 249–256.
- <sup>ii</sup> Masley, S., Roetzheim, R., Gualtieri, T. (2009). *Aerobic exercise enhances cognitive flexibility*. *Journal of Clinical Psychology in Medical Settings* 16, 186–193.
- <sup>iii</sup> Verplanken, B. & Wood, W. (2006). *Interventions to break and create consumer habits*. *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing* (25)1, 90-103.

© Behavioral EQ, Putting Emotional Intelligence to Work, The Social Intelligence Company, SOCIAL STYLE and TRACOM are registered trademarks of the TRACOM Corporation. Developing Behavioral EQ, BEQ, Behavioral EQ Model and SOCIAL STYLE Model are trademarks of The TRACOM Corporation.