



# Your Report

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# Your e-Factor<sup>®</sup> Integrated Assessment Report and Interpretation Notes

Example User (example@e-factor.com)

Congratulations on completing the three assessment tools. This completes your Emotional Intelligence assessment. Your profiles have been analysed and your e-Factor<sup>®</sup> score is **134**.

Your e-Factor Score is:

**134**

This score is from a maximum of 200 and is calculated from the **e-Factor<sup>®</sup>** assessments you have completed. The key message for those who are taking the test for the first time is that **it is not so much about your score, but what you do as a result of your score**. Lower scores highlight potential development areas. Higher scores reveal strengths and capabilities that you can lean on at work, at home, and in life generally. The notes that follow below are offered for guidance as to what each of the scoring bands and the abilities in the profiles mean.

As you completed each part of the tool, you will have received individual profiles and guidance notes as you went along. This final report integrates your Self-Report, 360-Report and KUSA Report for you with detailed interpretation notes to help you make sense of your scores. This will help you to explore each of the 12 abilities and help you understand your higher scores and identify any development gaps from any lower scores. It will also provide basic tips and guidance to get you started on your development journey. Please note that we also have a global network of **MCeFFs (Master Certified e-Factor Facilitators)** who you can contact if you would like to access support to produce a Personal Development Plan from your profiles, and maybe explore coaching and training options that might suit you or your organisation. The MCeFFs can be found [here](#).

So, let's start at the top with your overall e-Factor<sup>®</sup> score.

## The e-Factor<sup>®</sup> Score

Your overall e-Factor<sup>®</sup> score (see above) is a score that ranges between zero and 200. This is a similar approach to the IQ scoring system, but e-Factor<sup>®</sup> focuses purely on your **emotional intelligence** abilities (sometimes referred to as your Emotional Quotient or 'EQ'). Organisations and individuals are learning how EQ can matter more than IQ in predicting and identifying success in the workplace, at home and in life. See [here](#) as a reminder of the benefits.

The e-Factor<sup>®</sup> score is generated by an algorithm, factoring in all three tools with the following weightings:

- 70% of the e-Factor<sup>®</sup> score is taken from your main **KUSA** test (your **Knowledge, Understanding, and Skills**, plus your ability to **Apply** these in the videos and situational judgement tests within the e-Factor<sup>®</sup> test.
- 20% comes from your average **360** score and factors in your emotional intelligence **Performance**, as judged by those who know you well.
- 10% is based on your **Self**-assessment score – recognising how aware you are of your own abilities, as measured by the **KUSA** test.



The e-Factor<sup>®</sup> is scored out of 200 with the following band descriptors:

## e-Factor<sup>®</sup> Score

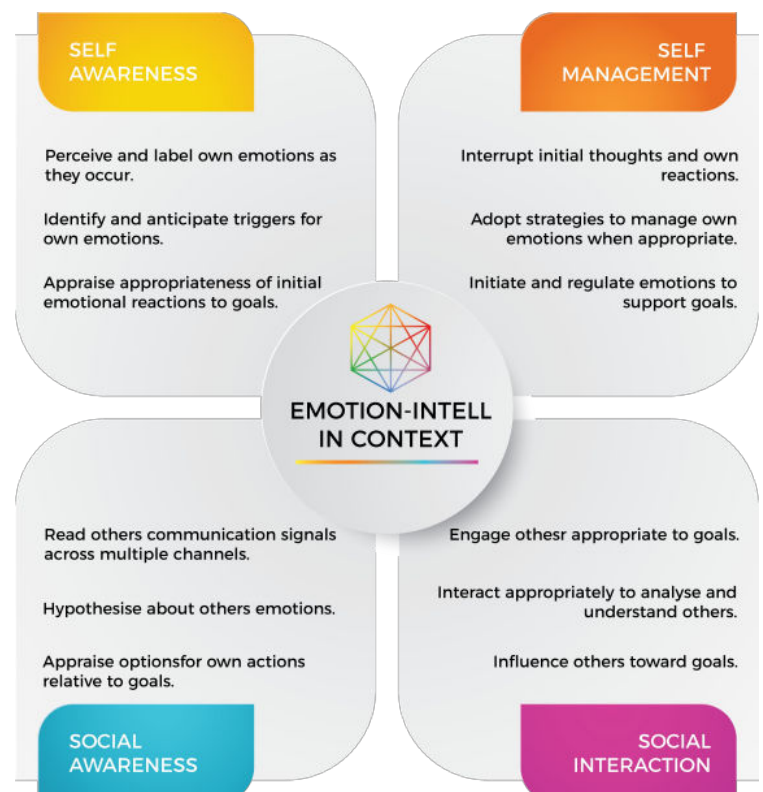
- 0-60** This score reveals plenty of scope for development and the good news is that your e-Factor<sup>®</sup> can be developed if you choose to. The interpretation notes attached to each profile will help you to prioritize your development. In addition, we have a global network of Certified e-Factor Facilitators(CeFFs) who can help you convert your profiles to development plans, Coach you, and signpost you to resources that can help you increase your e-Factor.
- 61-100** This score reveals some good strengths in your Emotional Intelligence that you can lean on. Congratulations! There is also scope for development. The interpretation notes attached to each profile will help you to prioritize your development. In addition, we have a global network of Certified e-Factor Facilitators(CeFFs) who can help you convert your profiles to development plans, Coach you, and signpost you to resources that can help you increase your e-Factor<sup>®</sup>.
- 101-140** This score reveals some very good strengths in your Emotional Intelligence that you can lean on. Congratulations! There is also scope for development. The interpretation notes attached to each profile will help you to prioritize your development. In addition, we have a global network of Certified e-Factor Facilitators(CeFFs) who can help you convert your profiles to development plans, Coach you, and signpost you to resources that can help you increase your e-Factor<sup>®</sup>.
- 141-180** This score reveals that you are in the EI 'genius' territory. Congratulations! You have many strengths in your Emotional Intelligence that you can lean on. There is still some scope for development if your personal goals, work role, and/or development priorities warrant it. The interpretation notes attached to each profile will help you to prioritize any development. In addition, we have a global network of Certified e-Factor Facilitators(CeFFs) who can help you convert your profiles to development plans, Coach you, and signpost you to resources that can help you increase your e-Factor<sup>®</sup>.
- 181-200** You have definitely got the 'e-Factor<sup>®</sup>'. This score reveals that you are in the EI upper quartile of the 'genius' territory. Congratulations! You have many strengths in your Emotional Intelligence that you can lean on. The key here is to explore if your potential is being utilized and whether you can help others with their EI development. You have demonstrated that you have the abilities and that you apply those abilities, and you are self-aware. The interpretation notes attached to each profile will help you to understand your very high score. In addition, we have a global network of Certified e-Factor Facilitators(CeFFs) who can help you, Coach you, and/or signpost you to where and how you might utilize your excellent e-Factor<sup>®</sup> score.

## The 4 Quadrants and the 12 Abilities

Your e-Factor<sup>®</sup> score is drawn from three assessment tools that each measure 12 abilities organised into these four quadrants. This model shows all 12 abilities clustered into 4 quadrants.

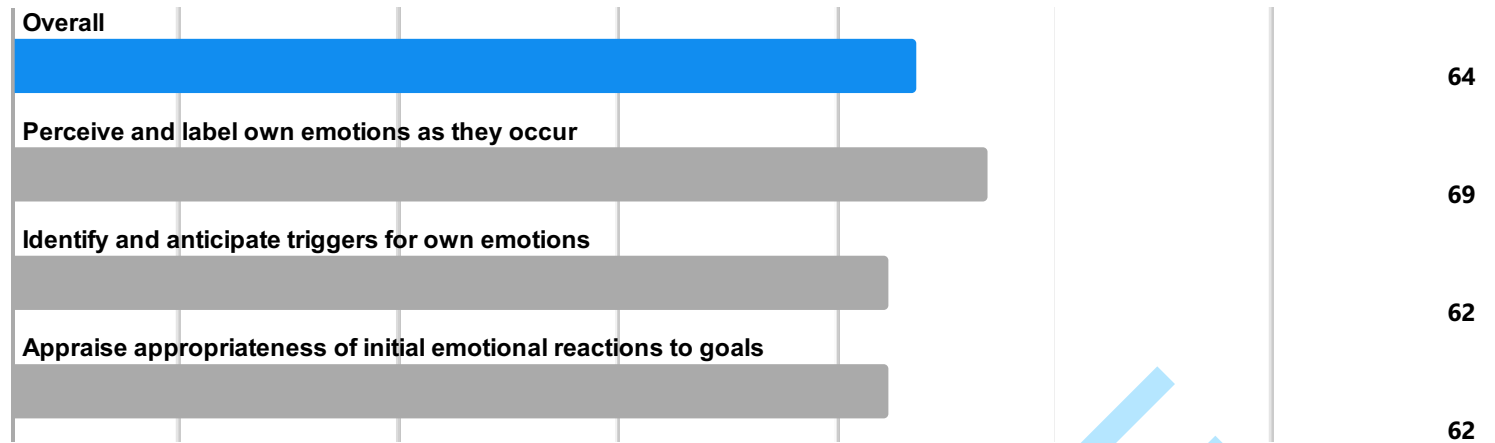
Your profiles provide scores in the form of bar graphs against each of these 12 abilities for you. They also give you averages for each of the quadrants and an overall average for all 12 abilities as a percentage.

We will start with your **KUSA** profile and review your **360** and **Self** profiles later.

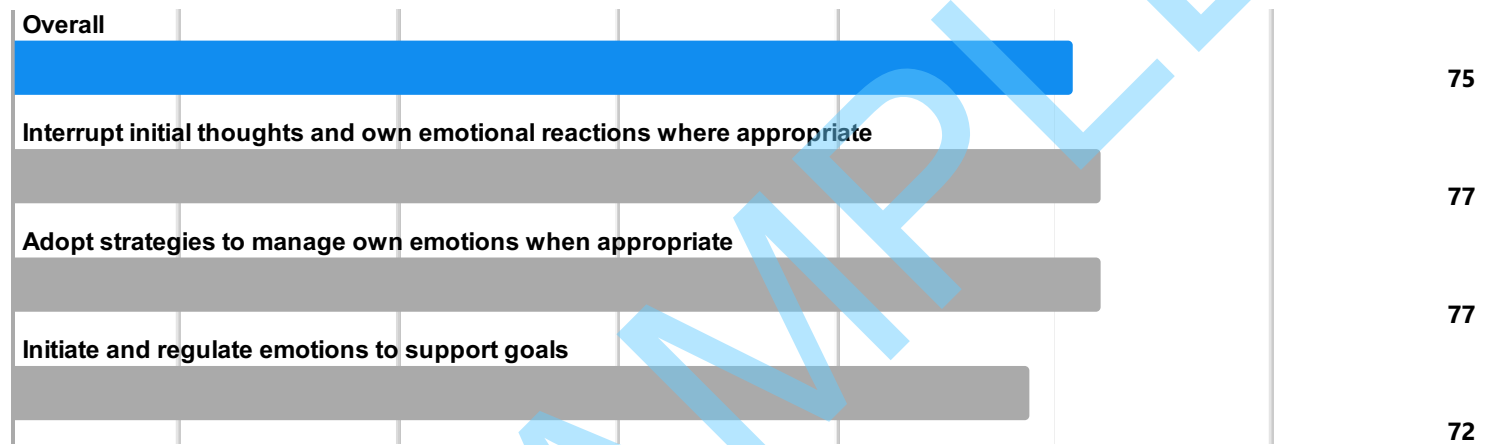


# e-Factor<sup>®</sup> KUSA Report

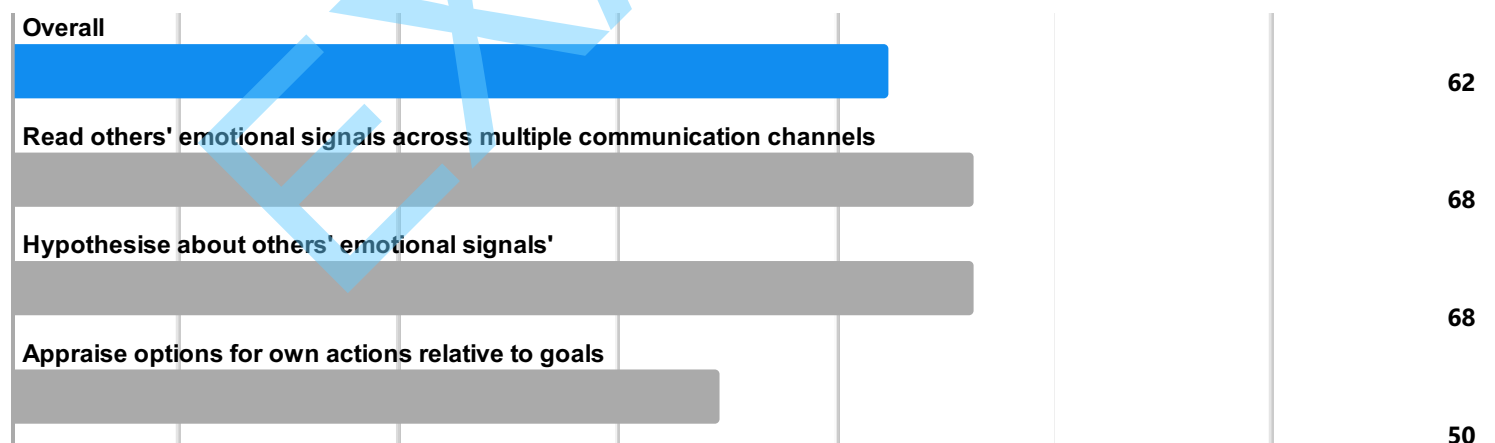
## Self Awareness



## Self Management



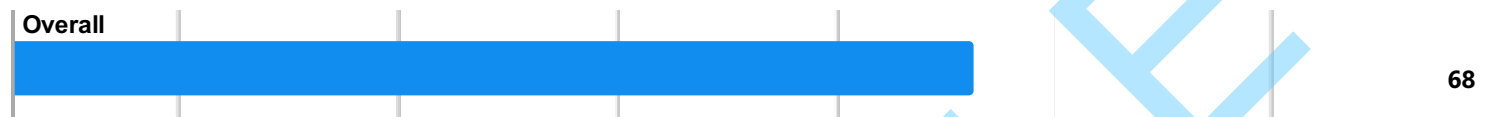
## Social Awareness



## Social Interaction



## Overall Average Score: 68%



Let's examine the 12 abilities in more depth clustered into the 4 quadrants in the e-Factor<sup>®</sup> model, which are:

1. Self-Awareness
2. Self-Management
3. Social-Awareness
4. Social-Interaction

You may have scored higher or lower in some quadrants than the others, so it will help you to dig deeper into each quadrant to see if there is a specific ability within the quadrant that has had more of an effect than others so you can pinpoint your development priorities or work out why you scored so well.

### 1. Self-Awareness

Self-Awareness is about having the ability to:

- a. **Perceive and label own emotions as they occur.**
- b. **Identify and anticipate triggers for own emotions.**
- c. **Appraise appropriateness of initial emotional reactions to goals.**

Let's break these first three abilities down for you.

#### a. Perceive and label own emotions as they occur.

This ability is about our knowledge, understanding and skills to recognise our own emotions from the sensations generated during an emotional episode. Recognising sensations in the body includes our ability to pick up changes in our heartbeat, breathing patterns, localised skin and body temperature, body tension, dry mouth, perspiration, facial muscle movements and so on. It is also about working out why those things are happening and identifying if we are in the early stages of an emotional episode. We must work out which emotion is at work and what the natural pathway of that emotion is likely to be if allowed to develop into a reaction. It's also about monitoring those we are interacting with as often we can sometimes see from their reaction that they are responding to our own emotional state.

Emotional impulses can occur within half a second of an emotional trigger and, with practice, the sensations in the body generated by those impulses can be tuned into within a second or two so we can make choices about our thinking and our actions. This means we can **respond** like a skilled human, rather than simply **react** like an ape, where this is appropriate. This calls for a high level of mindfulness or attentiveness towards our bodies and this can be improved with practice.

#### b. Identify and anticipate triggers for own emotions.

The next step in self-awareness is for us to get ahead of the game to identify and anticipate the triggers for our own emotions. If you scored well on this ability, you have demonstrated your ability to do this. 'Trigger' describes the moment that our subconscious, automatic appraisal system picks up a signal (a sound, a sight, a smell, a thought or other sensation) that matches some universal (evolved) or personal (learned) hardwired connection, or script, in our emotional alert database. Stimuli such as loss of gravity, and large objects moving toward us, are usually picked up automatically by most of us and take what neuroscientist, Joe LeDoux, describes as the 'quick and dirty low road' in the brain, from the hypothalamus to the amygdala. This results in physiological changes or impulses within our body in less than half a second. These specific triggers fit the universal theme of 'threat of harm' (for most people) which activates a fear response.

The triggers of each of the basic emotions have a universal theme, though the actual trigger may be idiosyncratic – different from person to person. For example, the theme around the trigger for fear just mentioned is a threat of harm. To one person that might be a snake near their feet. The experienced zookeeper, however, may instantly recognise the snake they see as harmless, and be one they have been seeking for a long while. This snake may therefore trigger happiness to the zookeeper. The zookeeper could, however, have a phobia of small spiders and they might trigger fear... yet spiders might not bother others.

Here are the universal themes for the triggers of seven emotions, according to basic emotion theory:

- **Fear** – threat of harm
- **Surprise** – sudden and unexpected
- **Anger** – interference with goals
- **Disgust** – something offensive
- **Contempt** – moral superiority
- **Sadness** – loss of someone/something of value
- **Happiness** – pleasure.

### c. Appraise appropriateness of initial emotional reactions to goals.

An emotionally intelligent person who is interacting with others will usually be feeling and displaying emotions that are:

- **appropriate for the situation,**
- **of an appropriate intensity, and**
- **deployed to achieve the goal of the interaction.**

Sometimes we can start to display happiness at someone else's misfortune – labelled by some using the German term *schadenfreude*. That can be hurtful and counterproductive if you are seeking to build a relationship with others and you may choose to suppress it. Other times we can overreact. Like with fear, when there is no real danger - which could be due to a phobia (e.g., of tiny spiders or heights where we are safe). We can also behave inappropriately by under-reacting. For example... by choosing to suppress our anger emotion and do nothing... later wishing we had been more assertive and shared how we felt towards the action of the person who insulted us. Such passive behaviour can poison us and lead to personal stress and future over-reactions. Emotional intelligence is not about being unemotional.

The secret here is to quickly sense the emotion that is starting to grip us... appraise the way that emotion might naturally develop... and evaluate the appropriateness of that natural reaction to the situation and the context. And do this all within a second or two!

That decision can be made if we can create space between the spark and the flame (between the trigger and the reaction or response) so that we can engage our self-management strategies.

You may be wondering at this point around 'what is a good score?'. That depends on several factors, and we will cover that later for you.

## 2. Self-Management

Self-Management covers the next three abilities in your profile and is about having the ability to:

- Interrupt initial thoughts and own reactions.**
- Adopt strategies to manage own emotions when appropriate.**
- Initiate and regulate emotions to support goals.**

Let's narrow these down to help you interpret your scores.

### a. Interrupt initial thoughts and own reactions.

The first skill of interrupting the automatic emotional timeline is to get ahead of the curve. Those who score well on this will recognise and use some of the strategies that follow here.

Before you enter a potentially emotionally charged environment it can be useful to:

- Decide whether this is the right time and place for this interaction.
- Consider if it is really your role to be doing this.
- Take stock if you are in the right physiological state? Are you hungry, tired, or unwell?

You may simply find yourself in an irritable mood. Maybe you are in the aftermath of a previous emotional episode that doesn't help you with the one ahead. You might still be fuming from an argument with your boss as you arrive home and are about to greet your partner who has had an equally bad day.

Maybe do a dry run in your mind of what is likely to happen and what emotions are likely to emerge from others and yourself. Preparing the scenarios in advance allows you to prepare yourself so you don't become a victim to inappropriate emotional reactions. It can help to plan ahead and develop alternative hypotheses for those likely scenarios. We call this 'Story 2' – if there are 'positive' explanations that might explain their behaviour in a better light, rather than a 'negative' one that we might be telling ourselves right now. Maybe the boss didn't mean to be argumentative just to annoy us – they could have been under extreme pressure themselves due to a health, relationship, financial, or other issue. This may not be the case but it can help you to stay open to the possibility and stay curious, rather than judgemental.

Check if you are in tune with your body (psychologists call this interception) so that you can sense the onset of any emotions. Relaxing your body and tuning into it can help. Even though some emotions are designed to save your life, it is still important to engage with the onset of emotions as soon as possible so you can express, interrupt, or regulate them to ensure your response helps the goals of your interactions.

## b. Adopt strategies to manage own emotions when appropriate.

Remember that emotions are designed to serve us, to save our lives and help us build relationships. Self-management is not always about suppressing all emotions and becoming unemotional, as stated earlier. It is about expressing and using emotions that are:

- appropriate for the situation,
- of an appropriate intensity, and
- deployed to achieve the goal of the interaction.

Emotions happen to us – they are natural processes. If we start to interfere with emotions, we are doing something that nature didn't intend us to do. Self-management is more about controlling our **thoughts** and **actions** during and beyond the emotional episode if needed. Emotions will take their natural cycle unless we can engage our physiology or our thoughts to overpower and neutralise the emotion, or let it run its course, maybe with a little help from a mindset that reinforces or amplifies what you are feeling.

## c. Initiate and regulate emotions to support goals.

Once we have paused the reaction and chosen how we prefer to **respond** then the thoughts and actions that result may be less or more intense than they would have been without the modification. This is referred to as **emotion regulation**. Though note that managing a decrease or increase in emotions to support your action is not easy. Your score on this ability lets you know whether this is a strength or a development area.

## 3. Social-Awareness

Social-Awareness covers the abilities to:

- Read others communication signals across multiple channels.**
- Hypothesise about others emotions.**
- Appraise options for own actions relative to goals.**

Let's explore each of these abilities in more depth to help explain your score on this third quadrant.

### a. Read others communication signals across multiple channels.

When we are reading emotional signals from others it can be like trying to drink water from a fire-hose.

This is especially so if we are dealing with a group of people.

Reading and understanding others is demanding and it needs us to focus on data coming from **six communication channels**. You were tested on your ability to pick up **these signals** from videos of the face, from the voice, and from psychophysiology during the assessment.



### Six communication channels

People often display emotions they are feeling from several of these channels simultaneously. This is because an emotional impulse often sets off an array of coordinated psychophysiological changes, across the whole body, within less than a second of an emotion being triggered.

If you scored well on this ability, you have demonstrated your knowledge and skills to take information in from across these channels and interpret what the sender might be feeling.



## b. Hypothesise about others emotions.

You may also consider that there are various things that these signals could mean coming from verbal content – what people say. The statement "I hate you!" could be interpreted as an angry attack, or it could be an affectionate phrase from a loved one, whilst inside she/he/they might be thinking, "I really love this person".

The interpretation can also be contaminated by your own biases, vulnerabilities, past encounters, the context, and your mood. This is why self-awareness and self-management come first in this model. You have to stabilise your own platform (your thoughts, mood and emotions) to see others clearly... otherwise it's like trying to study the moon through a telescope while you are standing on a water-bed.

## c. Appraise options for own actions relative to goals.

When you are about to enter an interaction with others, and emotions may be aroused, there could be alternative approaches or options that you can appraise in advance if you are aware of yours and others' likely emotions. Those high in EI can use this information to plan on regulating their own emotions and actions with others, in advance, to best influence them towards the goal of the interaction engaged in. This needs quick thinking and emotion planning – both about your own state, and about the likely emotions the other person/persons might be experiencing - so that you can prepare for various scenarios.

## 4. Social-Interaction

The Social-Interaction quadrant covers your abilities to:

- a. **Engage others appropriate to goals.**
- b. **Interact appropriately to analyse and understand others.**
- c. **Influence others towards goals.**

This is where your EI impacts on others, so it is useful to check how your feedback from the 360 assessment (see later) compares with your own self-assessment. Before we explore comparisons across the tools, we need to break down this fourth quadrant as the three abilities are different skill sets.

### a. Engage others appropriate to goals.

This ability deals with the skills and abilities needed at the start of any interaction.

Whether this be a customer complaint, a coaching session, a sales/purchasing negotiation, a difficult conversation with a family member or friend, a counselling session or a performance management meeting with a non-performing staff member. The success of the encounter will rest largely on the quality of your preparation and planning for the initial engagement. It's about how you greet them, build rapport, and establish an environment that's conducive to the goal of the interaction. If your goal is about cooperation, then this groundwork can be critical to trust and success.

### b. Interact appropriately to analyse and understand others.

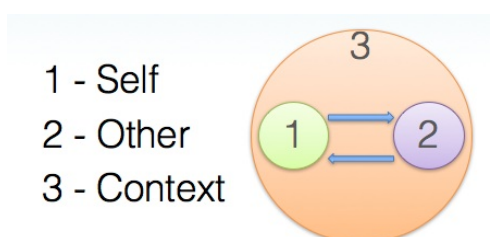
This covers the curiosity, empathy, and prompts that you might use to explore what you are seeing and hearing to enable a full understanding of others. A leadership guru named Stephen Covey advises that we should 'seek first to understand; and then be understood'. This is a useful mantra to help you focus the early stages of an important interaction on getting to understand the other person. The iceberg model that follows here reminds us of what often is hidden beneath the words people offer to us. Those of you who scored well on this ability will have a **curious mindset**, be good at **empathy**, and picking up on key issues and gently probing (where appropriate) to help the other person to share what is important to them.



You will be curious about:

- What are they saying to me?
- What is the meaning, thinking and feelings behind the words?
- Are there deeper principles emerging to do with his values and beliefs that I need to pay attention to?

If your scores highlight this as a development area then, throughout the interaction, you may find it useful to momentarily step out of the process and take a contextual snapshot, a 'helicopter view' (position 3) of what is going on with you (1), and with the other person (2).



### c. Influence others towards goals.

This final ability is about making sure that you deal with any tougher issues in an interaction, and succeed in achieving the purpose of that interaction. The style of influence would depend on the purpose, though there are some skills and processes that have wide applications.



These are to do with:

- **Assertiveness** (rather than being passive or aggressive), and
- **Influence** (your ability to guide an interaction towards the goal). Whilst many interactions are win-win and the goals are those shared by both parties, there is a darker side to EI and influence where one person is seeking to influence towards their own goals at the cost of the other. This can venture into manipulation, and you will need to deal with your own ethics and conscious on this one – unless you are playing poker or in competitive sports where the goals might be to use emotional intelligence abilities to beat the opposition.

## Interpreting the three e-Factor<sup>®</sup> Profiles against each other

So, you now have data and notes from the KUSA ability test and an overall e-Factor<sup>®</sup> score.

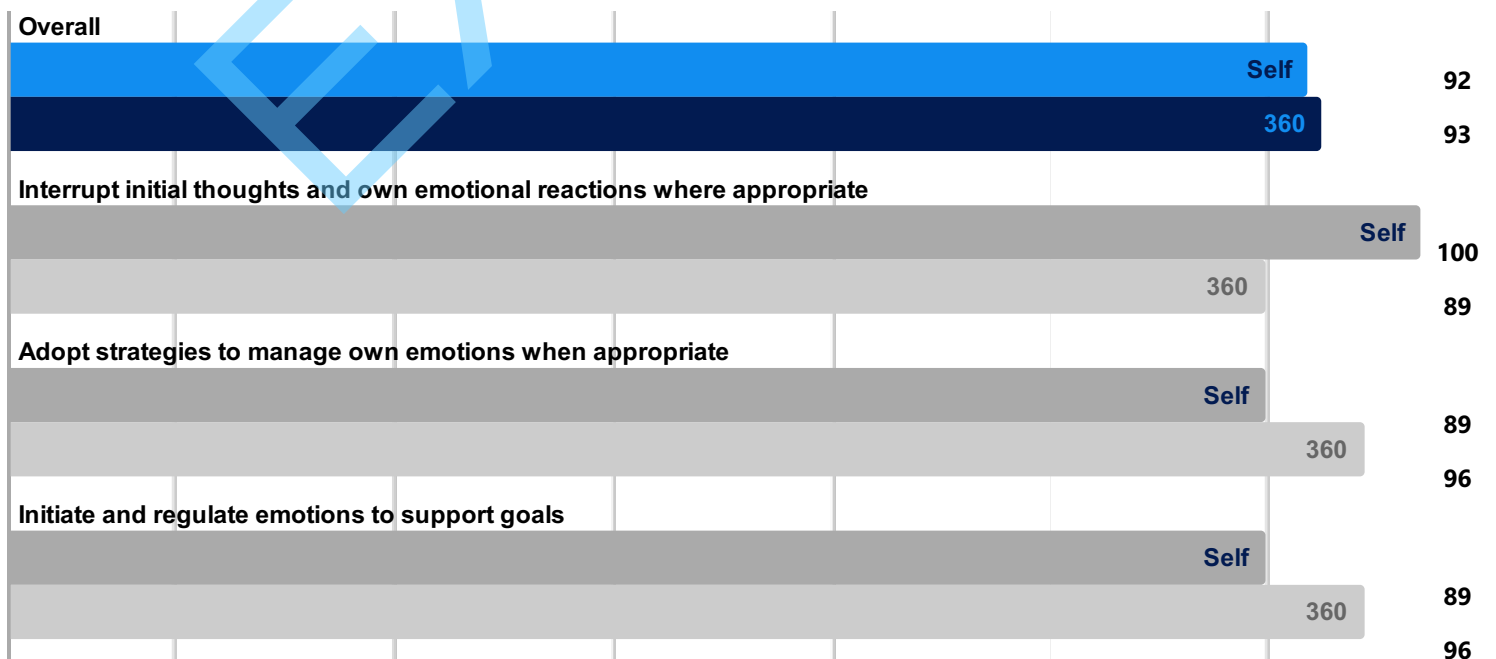
Here are your other two reports, Self and 360, combined for comparison purposes for you.

### e-Factor<sup>®</sup> Self/360 Report

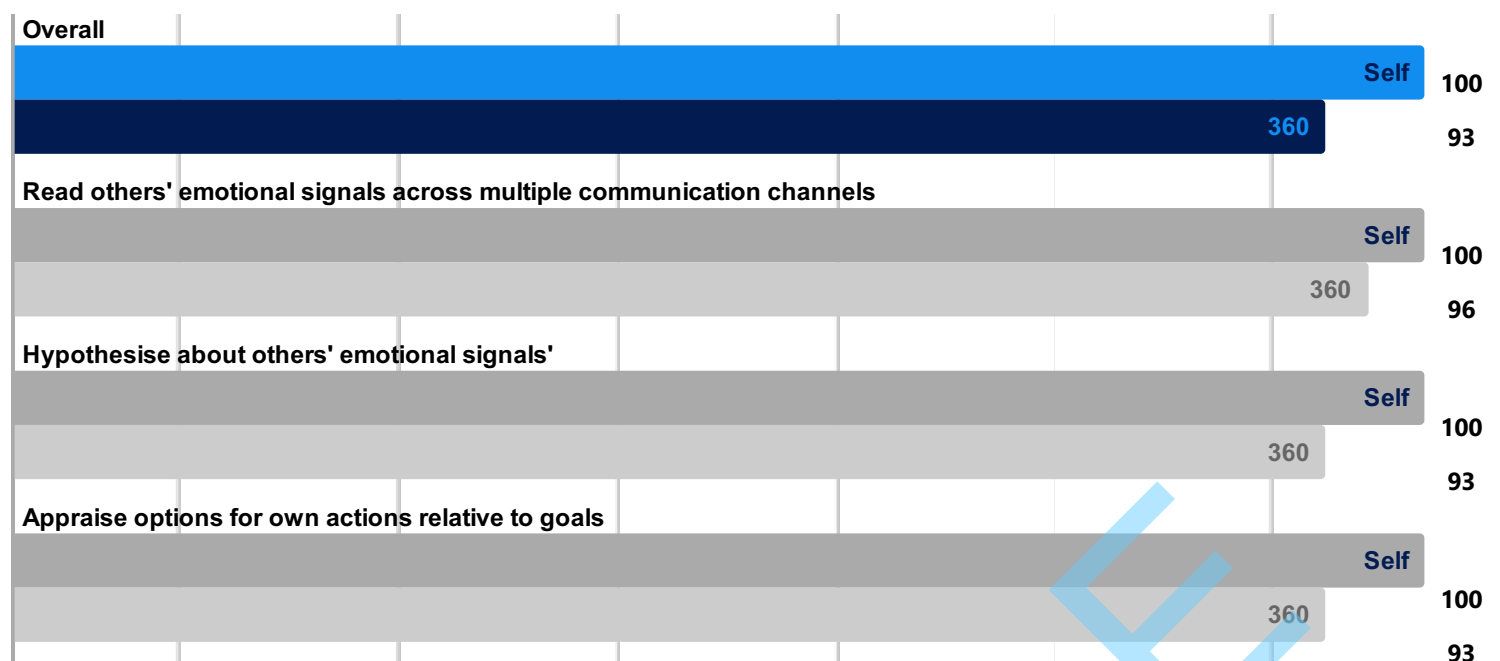
#### Self Awareness



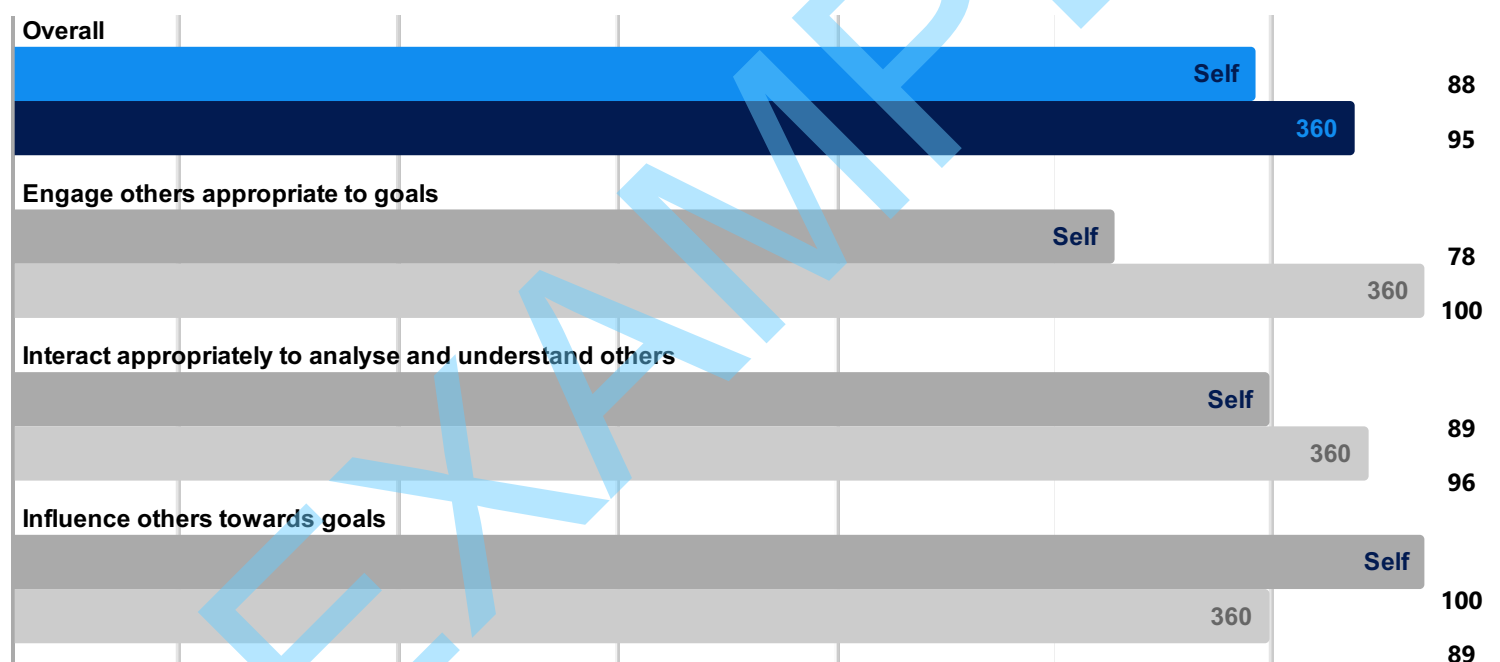
#### Self Management



## Social Awareness



## Social Interaction



## Overall:



You might be wondering how these profiles inter-relate. Let's summarise the three tools again here:

**Self-report:** is about your awareness and judgement of your own EI abilities. Only you know what is going on with your own emotions, this needs factoring into the e-Factor<sup>®</sup>. You can of course choose to 'fake' a false score here that is higher or lower than your actual real judgement. This can invalidate the power of the tool. We have known some people to lower the self-assessment due to modesty or increase it to generate an illusion of their ability – especially if they know the results are being used for job selection or career purposes. That's why this carries very little weight in the overall e-Factor<sup>®</sup> score, but marks are gained if your Self-Assessment matches, or is close to, your KUSA ability score, so accurate Self-Assessment is key.

**360-report:** this is an **average** of the perceptions of your EI ability from three to five people who know you well – these are the beneficiaries (or victims!) of your performance outside the test, so we wanted to bring that data in for you. Again, we leave it to you to decide who you choose for these ratings, but we make the feedback anonymous by averaging the 3-5 people you select, and by providing you only with an average. Individual ratings are confidential and we advise that you resist hunting the raters to find out how each of them rated you, or you may lose their support the next time you ask them for feedback. You don't get a separate average profile from your 360 rating by the way, instead we align their average bar graph against yours in your Self-Report once they have all completed it as shown above. This makes it easier for you to compare their ratings with yours.

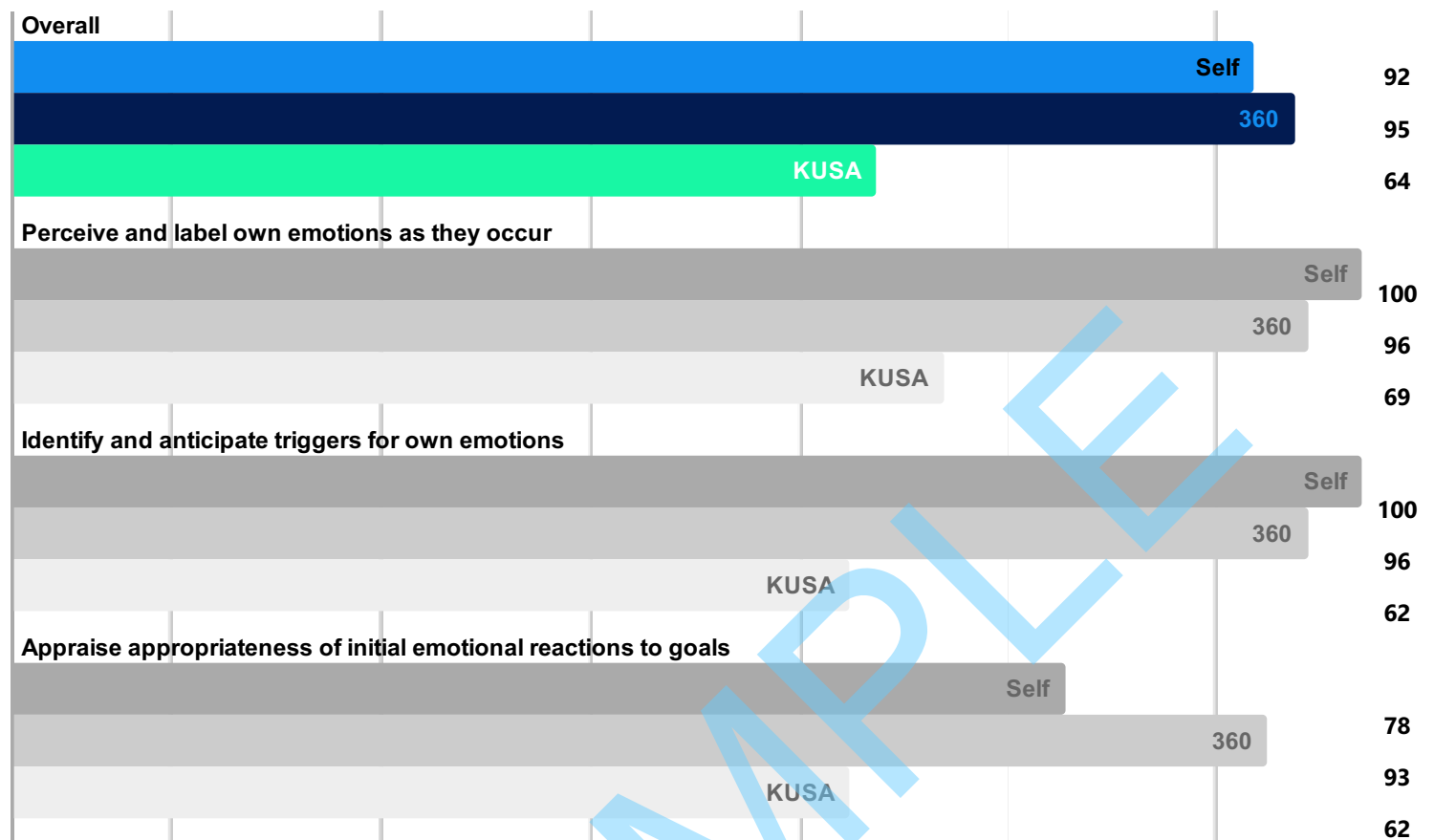
**KUSA assessment:** this is the result of the time-bounded, situational judgement test (SJT) to simulate real world application (as near as we could) with probes/questions to determine your actual knowledge, skills, and capabilities across the EI spectrum.

EXAMPLE

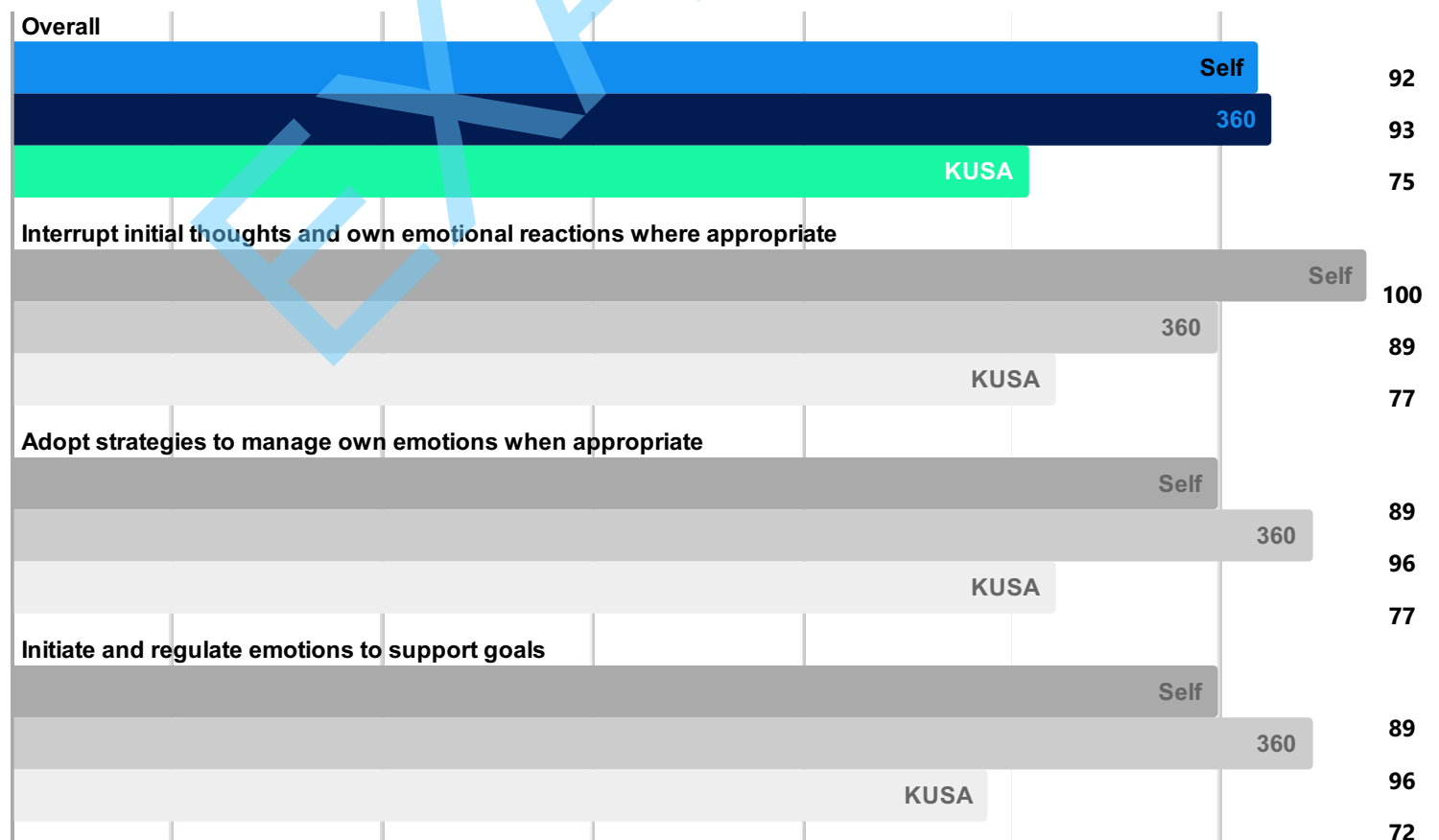
# Self v 360 v KUSA – the Power of Triangulation

Let's now combine all three tools for you into one profile for comparison purposes.

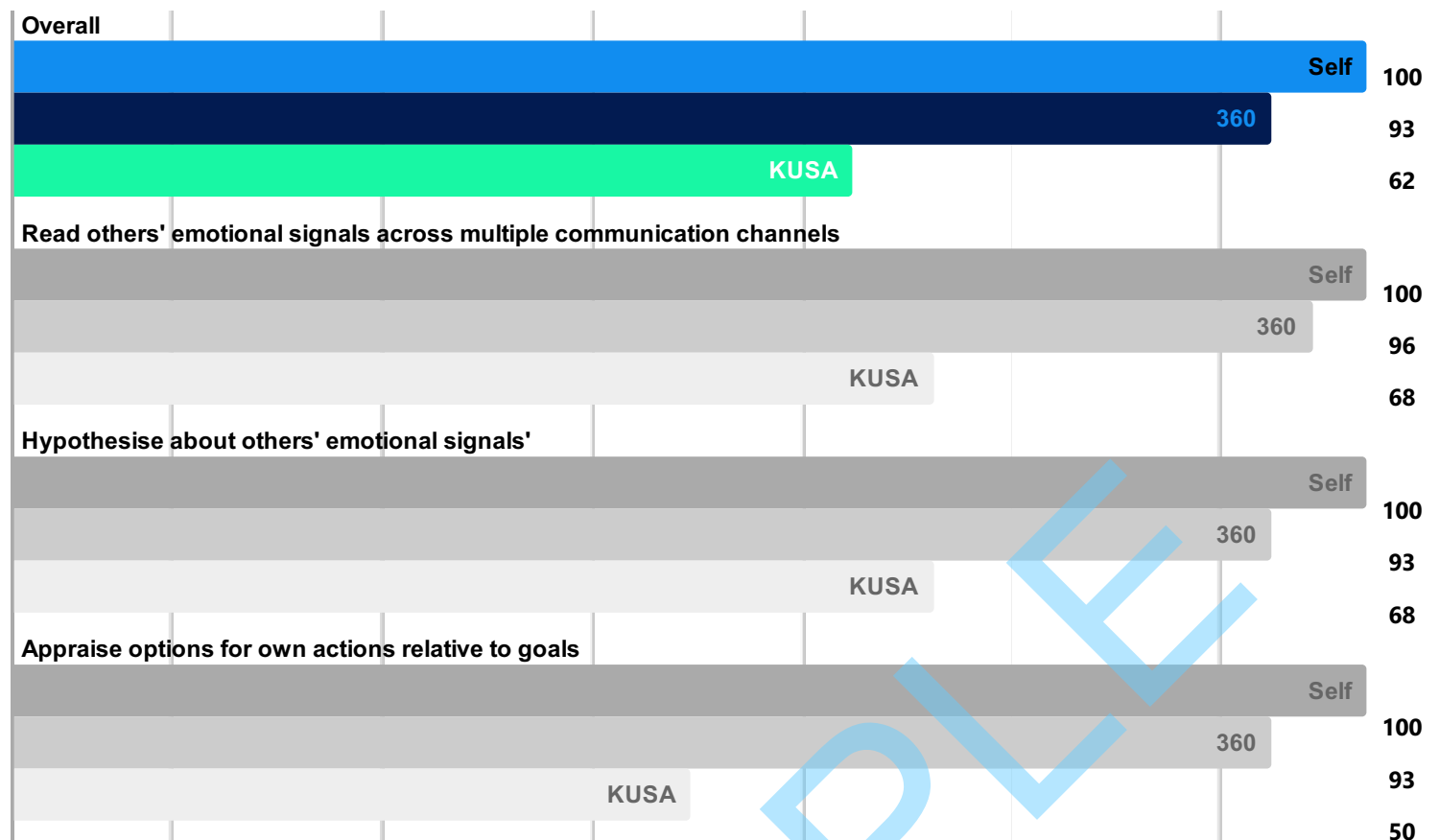
## Self Awareness



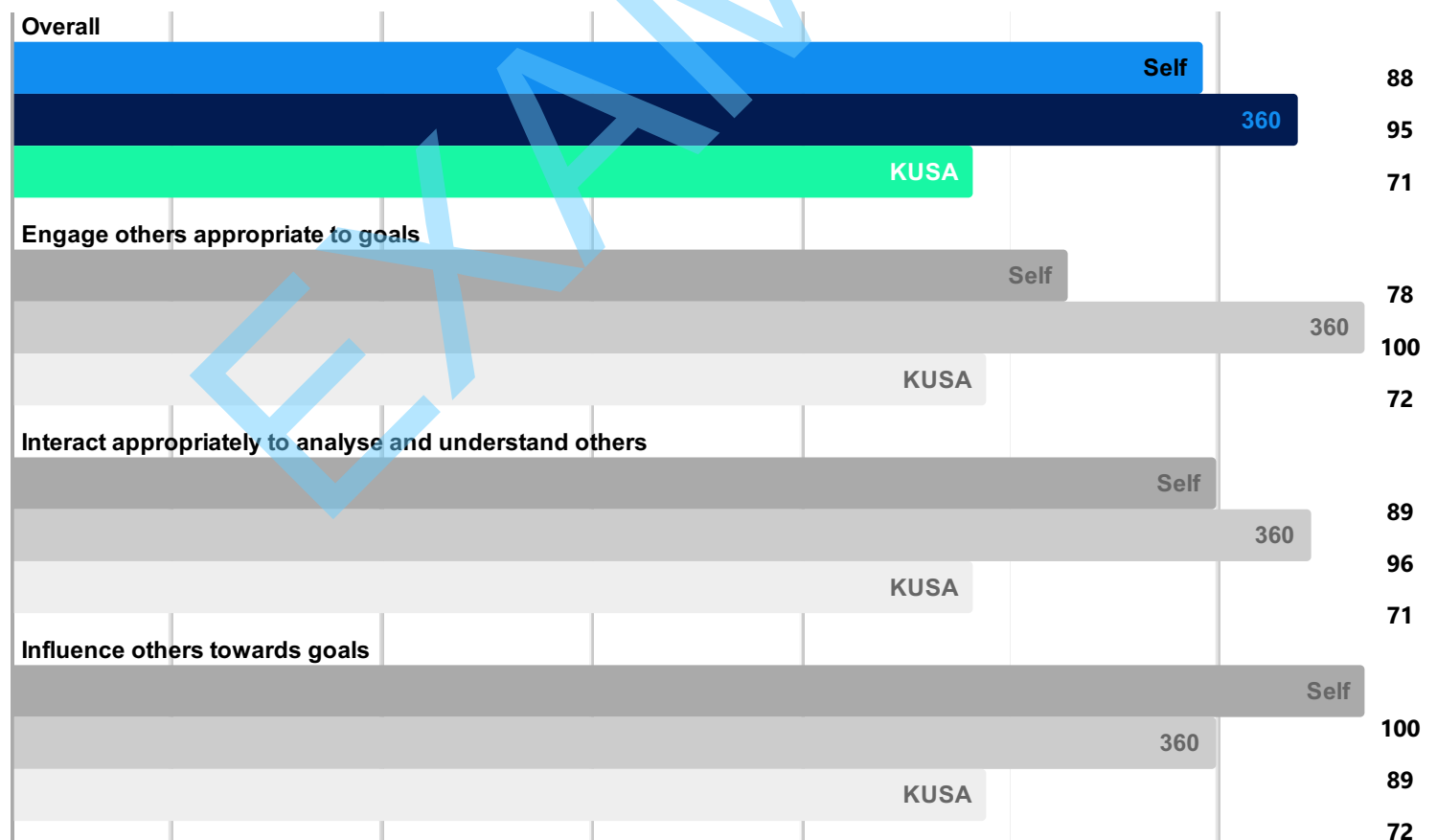
## Self Management



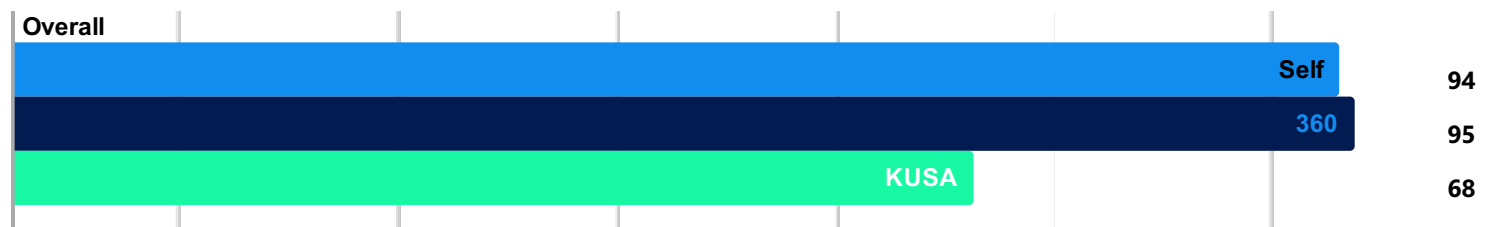
## Social Awareness



## Social Interaction



## Overall:



You may notice differences between the ratings for each of the 12 abilities, for the 4 quadrants and overall. Here are a few example scenarios to help you explore the frequently asked questions we receive, with potential explanations for what may appear to be anomalies. Here are three popular ones, but you know your context and your raters better than we do, so trust your own analysis. Don't forget that you can access your local MCEFFs for expert help [here](#) if needed. Simply use our 'guesses' from experience as a prompt.

My **SELF** and **KUSA** scores are medium but my **360** is very high. Why is that?

- Your raters might be scared of you.
- Your raters were bribed by you to score you highly. ;)
- Your raters like you and are just being nice.
- They are low on EI and see your strengths so they rate you higher (norm referenced against themselves).

My **SELF** and **KUSA** scores are high but my **360** is medium. Why is that?

- Your raters don't like you and its 'payback' time.
- You are working in a stressful context (overworked, staff shortages, manager pressure) and so you know what to do but don't have the time to apply what you know and your raters suffer/witness that. An EI chat with your manager may be needed, or even a career change!
- You are lazy or are 'working to rule' – doing just enough to keep your job. You may be disheartened or unmotivated, so you cut corners on your EI performance because you don't care anymore. Have a good chat with yourself and a trusted mentor about how to sort this. It's not good for you, your organisation, or your colleagues/customers.
- They are high on EI and see your weaknesses, so they rate you lower (norm referenced against themselves).

My **SELF** is high but my **KUSA** and **360** are low. Why is that?

- You may be a little deluded, and/or unaware of your weaknesses in EI – maybe from praise from some other construct or strength. Some people tell us they are hitting targets and goals, and everyone likes them, but this may be because they are 'nice' and/or technically skilled. Nothing wrong with these qualities of course, though performance can be enhanced by adding emotional intelligence master on top of these. Those low on EI can often struggle with self-awareness judgements (as its one of the key abilities) and this is not unusual for those who might be exploring EI formally, for the first time.
- You may be trying to create an impression above your actual capabilities
- Your raters may have an EI higher than you and want to support your development by providing honest feedback to you (as they align with your KUSA score).
- You may have been using your judgement about your 'niceness' or your ability to deliver organisational results in your grading (e.g. high sales, successful projects, KPI (Key Performance Indicator) achievement, etc., and therefore you may be assuming you must be high in EI too.

It can be helpful to seek support to help you review your profiles objectively and get support to help you to produce a meaningful **Personal Development Plan** (PDP). Some organisations enable this. Remember that you can also employ one of our global **Master Certified e-Factor® Facilitators (MCEFFs)** to do this. It's good value for money and it can take as little as an hour (face to face or via Zoom) to help you to convert your profiles to priorities and plans. See [here](#) to find MCEFFs in your time zone.

# A Place for Styles, Traits and Personality?

We recognise that we had to stay focused on **abilities** for the core factors of the e-Factor® assessment, so we have objective data and perception from you and others, as a base, but we also recognise the value of other constructs that can support your performance – these are, specifically, an awareness of your own **communication styles** when you interact with, or respond to, others.

To give you additional insight into your style, we have built responses into the 160-item test that expose your default Communication Styles. You will have received a 'bonus' profile with your KUSA report that highlights whether you default to **Empathic, Critical, Searching** and/or **Advising** communication responses when faced with generic situations, like we presented to you in e-Factor®.

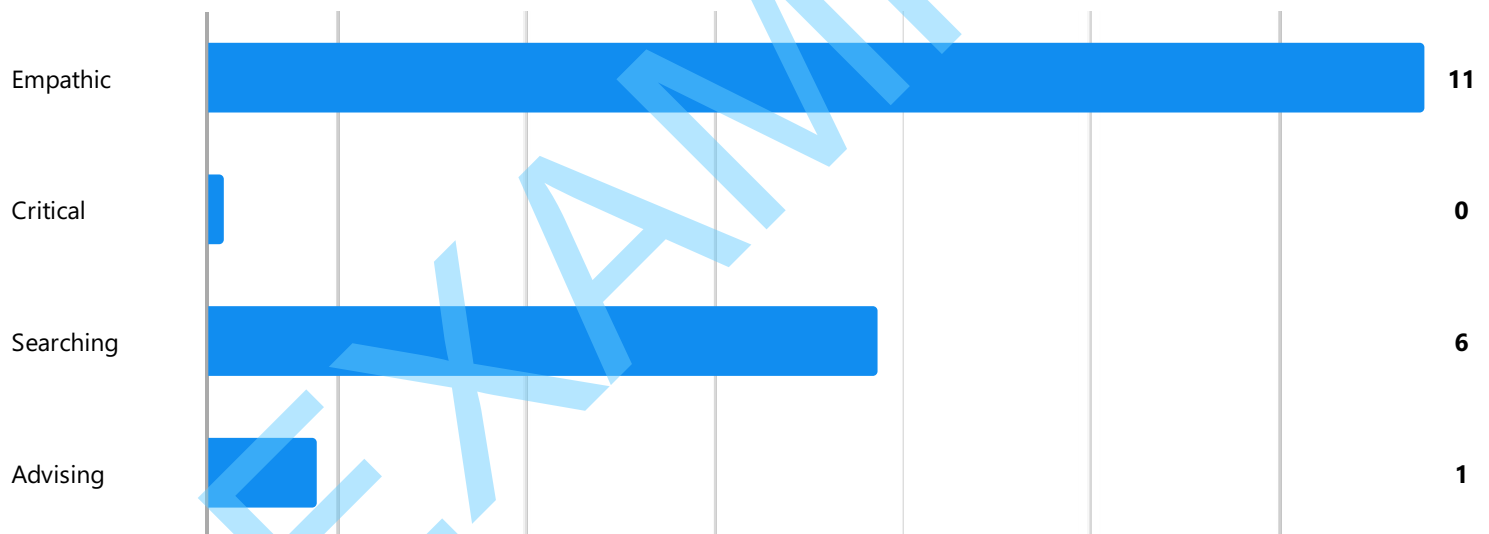
## Communication Styles

The **Communication Response Style** profile helps you to see how you are likely to respond to others at work and in life. Your four scores reveal the way in which you typically might communicate with others – your default style.

The **Communication Style** responses you chose applied to our generic situations, and they were spread across the KUSA test so should not have been too contaminated by what you do at work or home. It highlights your preferences or 'leanings' towards one or more of the Communication Styles. These *preferences* or *leanings* are likely to be habits, part of your approach to different people and situations, so knowing your profile can help you review the **appropriateness** of your interactions with others. You will learn how you can use this personal insight to work out the challenges you may have with those different from you and the impact of your style profile on others. This empowers you to choose to flex your style to the style(s) of others in your communications, presentations, leadership, negotiations, and relationships.

### EIA Communication Style Profile – Interpretation

The information that follows contains descriptions of the four communication response styles. All four may be present in your assessment across the 160 items and your four scores reflect your preference for each style. Your profile, and the descriptions below, are followed by notes to help you analyse your scores and make decisions about your future interactions with others. The scores are raw scores and they range in each of the styles from zero to a maximum of 13 (they are not percentages).



### Empathic Response

The *Empathic* response is a non-judgmental reply that captures the essential theme and/or feeling expressed. This communication response reflects a positive attitude and goes a long way in making communication a two-way exchange. A person using this style will listen between the lines for underlying meanings, will keep an open mind by staying out of a judgment framework, and will focus on what will be useful, rather than on what is wrong. A person with a high Empathic score concentrates on fostering respect, rapport, trust and understanding. **'High', by the way, is anything above 8 in our opinion.** By holding back on our advice, criticism or opinions, we can keep a more objective point of view. The empathic response stimulates the other person to explore their own thinking, emotions and solutions, and helps us to remain attentive, alert and interested in their needs. Such responses encourage the other person to elaborate on their ideas and feelings. They will be willing to open up if we can remain non-judgmental and non-critical. The empathic listener is like a mirror, reflecting what the other person is feeling.

A major element of this communication style is that the empathic responder avoids the temptation to give advice. When people are given the opportunity to talk about and think through their problems, they have a better understanding of the implications of their problem and will be able to work out their own action plan. They do not have your skills, knowledge, personality or goals and so your solutions may not work for them, and they will have no ownership of your solutions.

Although empathic responders avoid suggesting a solution, they can remain a resource person who can share information when appropriate. It is important to remember that you don't have to agree with what a person is saying to be an empathic listener. Your

empathy extends to their feelings and what they might be experiencing; it need not extend to their actions.

## Critical Response

The Critical response expresses judgement or evaluation that the other person can often perceive as a put-down. The response often results from a natural tendency to judge others, either approvingly or disapprovingly. This response style often challenges what people say and why they feel the way they do. Even though people may tell you they want feedback and evaluation, most people do not take kindly to criticism, regardless of the spirit in which it was given. Indeed, as Mark Twain once wrote, "there is no such thing as constructive criticism".

Because a critical response is often perceived as a threat, it increases the emotional level of the other person, who may feel turned off, labelled, and categorised, so they may choose not to respond. When we become critical, we are likely to 'get hooked' into negative feelings that will cloud our objectivity and cause us to jump to false or premature conclusions. Many factors can lead us to make critical responses. One is the pressure of time and conflicting priorities (i.e., we have other things to do than listen to another person's problems). Another is that the values and ideas of the other person may differ from our own, thus biasing us. Yet another is that we have our own experiences and needs, and in our desire to share these with others, we inadvertently adopt ways that are easily construed as being critical or judgmental. **We would argue an ideal score on critical from the scenarios we presented to you is zero.**

This is because there are three unfortunate outcomes of the critical response. The other person (1) may feel rejected or put down (2) they may not have a chance to release the feelings and emotions that may be begging for expression, and (3) will often retreat or "clam up." We may all give way to critical responses from time to time. What is important is that we know when it's happening and work to overcome the problems that our critical responses create.

## Searching Response

The Searching response asks for additional information. Sometimes we need more facts and feelings in order to understand the other person. Sometimes the additional information will help us get to the root of a problem. Sometimes we want to help the other person to "ventilate" and thereby express their emotions.

These are all good reasons for us using a searching response and it was appropriate in only a few of the situations we explored in the test. But there are times when a searching response is inappropriate. Too many questions can be felt as interrogation, a feeling of being 'grilled' or given 'being given the third degree'. We sometimes also ask questions to fulfil our own needs (to get information so we can give advice and show our expertise, or to feel valued) and not because we are concerned with the other person – it can come from a good place. This may disrupt their train of thought. At times we can be so busy thinking up our next question that we fail to listen to the person's response to our last question.

The timing of a searching response is very important. For example, consider the person who is speaking emotionally and in fragmented sentences, describing a current experience, for example something dear to them that was just stolen. Even though we have a lot of questions to ask, we might want to use a few empathic ones **first** ("Sounds like you're really at a loss" or "You must feel awful, having lost a family heirloom") to get their emotional level down to the point where they can think objectively and talk coherently. Then, when you feel they can be logical and analytical, you and they might be ready for you to use the searching response. An ideal score on the e-Factor® is in the low single figures (less than 3) as many of the situations we faced you with, didn't need it.

## Advising Response

The Advising response is a recommendation that tells the other person what to do or not to do. When we are busy thinking of solutions while the other person is speaking we cannot listen fully to what they are saying. So try to keep the advice monster in its cage!

There is a common myth that many people perpetuate: the notion that when someone comes to us with a problem, it's our job to solve or fix it, or at least to tell them what to do. Even when people report on something they have done (successfully or unsuccessfully), we may feel obligated to tell them what to do next. When we give another person advice, we deprive them of the chance to process or talk through the problem or opportunity. This kind of communication mode tends to build dependent relationships and can be more about us building our own sense of self-worth or status. The best help we can give others is to enable them to work out their own solutions. People feel more self-confident and behave more maturely (independently) when they can plan and organise their own solutions rather than have others tell them what to do.

Sometimes we give advice out of a genuine desire to help. Sometimes our recommendations are prompted by our own ego needs, for status, prestige, etc.. But whatever our motivation, advice is usually given at the expense of the other person's personal and professional development. It's ok to supply information, ideas and facts, but we hinder others when we give advice on stuff they need to work out for themselves. **An ideal score is zero for the contexts presented in e-Factor®.**

## Analysing Your Communication Styles in more depth

This Communication Styles element of e-Factor® has been completed by thousands of people (10,000+) across the globe from 17 countries, multiple cultures and backgrounds. The scores of the four response styles showed that the Advising response was used most often. The Searching response was used second, the Empathic response was third, and the Critical response was last. People from a variety of roles and occupations make up the population that has gone through this instrument, many evidently see their role as giving advice. However, the Advising response, like the Critical response, can get in the way of effective listening by short-circuiting the flow of the information from the other person. In most interactions, these are not desirable responses to make. Exceptions to this might be if you are engaged as a professional consultant for technical knowledge the other person doesn't have. Or it could be a response to a simple request such as "Please can you tell me the time?"



The challenge with the Searching response is that it can sometimes interrupt the person's flow of thought or introduce your own personal biases (since the other person will answer questions with information that meets your 'need to know' but may or may not meet their needs).

This leaves the Empathic response often being the most useful means of drawing people out and collecting information without distorting it. Yet this response is the least natural to most people. It must be applied with a genuine and curious mindset too so it is natural; with the goal to understand the other person fully. Otherwise, it may come across as a manipulative tactic that will be sensed by the other person, potentially leading to distrust. Those who scored high on the Empathic response on this instrument often read books or attend workshops on emotional intelligence, behaviour analysis, coaching or non-directive interviewing. In short, it takes conscious effort and good intent on your part to use the Empathic response effectively.

Remember many of the situations presented in the e-Factor<sup>®</sup> assessment prompted you for your **first** response to the scenarios – not those you might use later as a conversation develops.

If the higher scores are **Searching** and **Advising**, then this often suggests a 'fixer' at work! The questions may be a method to acquire information in order to provide advice, rather than to help the other person to process their own thoughts and feelings. So, it is about the motive behind your questions that matters. If, however, the highest scores are **Empathic** and some **Searching** then this suggests the motive is to understand the other person, helping them to express themselves clearly, and/or help them to process their issues themselves.

Two of our four responses, **Critical** and **Advising** are 'Parent State' responses (drawing on 'Transactional Analysis' where individuals can tend to adopt a Parent-to-Child stance - even with other adults by criticising or over-nurturing them) rather than an Adult-to-Adult stance with mutual respect and balanced interactions.

Some adults can also adopt a Child to Parent stance to draw support from (or manipulate) others or release themselves from responsibility. As such, criticism and advice are rarely appropriate in adult-to-adult communications. Better results can usually be obtained by using the other response styles to allow others to vent their feelings, open up, and/or work out their own solutions. **They** are not **you**, and the solutions that may work for you may not work for their context, skill sets, goals, experiences, personality, and/or cognitive/emotional disposition.

The other responses, **Empathic** and **Searching** are "Adult State" responses that treat the other person as an adult. These are (often) desirable responses. As noted earlier, the Empathic response is appropriate whenever you want to help the other person to ventilate their emotions and express their feelings. The Searching response is appropriate whenever you feel they are still formulating their thoughts and you can help them do this without interrupting the flow or biasing their reply.

## Personal Styles

There is an optional psychometric tool available from EIA called the **Personal Style** Assessment. The Personal Styles tool examines four behaviour patterns (functional types) that are present in different degrees as part of your personality: Thinker, Intuitor, Feeler, Sensor. They were established by Carl Jung many years ago. Full interpretation guidelines are provided in that tool so we will not replicate them here. If you take that optional test (see [EIA Groups website](#)), you can look at the attributes behind each as you read the interpretation notes beneath your profile and see how that may impact your EI performance.

Otherwise we wish you well with your emotional intelligence development journey.

From all at the Emotional Intelligence Academy

[www.eiagroup.com](http://www.eiagroup.com)