

CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

# EQ Creates a Culture of Care and Compassion

In 1969, five churches in San Antonio joined forces to create the San Antonio Urban Council, providing health care, education, homelessness support, senior citizen support, and childcare to low-income families in the city. 55 years later, the non-profit organization, now known as Endeavors, has grown to serve vulnerable people in crisis across the country.

Their mission is to provide a helping hand to restore dignity and improve the quality of life for every client, every time, in every community they serve. The organization's core programs include veteran support and wellness, emergency rapid response, housing, employment and case management for individuals experiencing homelessness, and support services for migrant families.

In addition to serving their communities, Endeavors is equally committed to the learning and development of its people. To support this commitment, they brought on Erica Contreras as Chief Learning Officer in 2020, ensuring that their leadership and employees receive the training and skills needed to foster a culture of compassion, care, and grace.

## THE CHALLENGE

Erica joined Endeavors two months before the pandemic and immediately recognized the team's strong passion for serving clients. She also saw a valuable opportunity to enhance team dynamics by infusing the same values of grace and compassion into their interactions with each other. While the transition to remote work due to COVID-19 presented challenges, it also highlighted areas for growth, such as increasing self-awareness, fostering open communication, and breaking down silos to create a more cohesive and collaborative environment.

## AT A GLANCE

### Challenge

- Build EQ skills to improve employee interactions and team dynamics
- Improve leadership effectiveness through increased self-awareness
- Increase employee retention by offering learning and development opportunities

### Solution

- Emotional Intelligence Appraisal – Self Edition
- Emotional Intelligence Appraisal – Multi-Rater Edition
- Mastering EQ Level 1

### Results

- Cultural transformation with employees treating each other with increased care and compassion
- Increased communication and collaboration across programs and teams
- 52% of participants said they saw a 60-100% increase in skill level after taking the EQ course
- 92% strongly agree or agree the training will improve their job performance
- Recognition as employer of choice in 2023 and 2024, and outstanding leadership development in 2024

Additionally, as the company began experiencing record growth, there were clear opportunities to clarify leadership roles and provide the necessary training to help leaders understand the impact of their emotions and behavior on their teams and the organization as a whole. Recognizing the importance of retaining talented team members, the company aimed to enhance employee retention by offering learning and development opportunities, ensuring that everyone felt supported and equipped for success.

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We aimed to cultivate an environment where the same values we extend to our clients—grace and service—are reflected in our interactions with one another. By enhancing self-awareness, we saw a tremendous opportunity to empower our leaders to be even more effective and to foster stronger communication and collaboration throughout the organization.

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— Erica Contreras, Chief Learning Officer

## THE SOLUTION

Erica had been trained on a previous emotional intelligence program but found it too intense and difficult to teach and put into practice. She found Emotional Intelligence 2.0, written by TalentSmartEQ's founders Dr. Travis Bradberry and Dr. Jean Greaves, and liked the simple, yet effective approach to improving EQ skills.

Working with the TalentSmartEQ team, Erica developed an EQ solution including the Emotional Intelligence Appraisal - Self Edition and Multi-Rater Edition, and the Mastering EQ Level 1 program, offering it as a professional development opportunity to all employees and making it a requirement in two of their leadership development programs.

Endeavors offers the Emotional Intelligence program as open enrollment course for all employees, for intact teams, and as part of two of their Leadership Development Programs. Employees complete the assessment, and then participate in two half-day sessions, delivered in-person or virtually. The Emotional Intelligence Appraisal - Self Edition provides participants with personalized information about their current EQ skill level, including their strengths and opportunities for development. During the half-day sessions, they cover Mastering EQ Level 1, in which participants learn about the 4 core EQ skills- Self Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness and Relationship Management - and develop personalized action plans to improve their individual EQ skills.

Following the initial training, participants are encouraged to read the book Emotional Intelligence 2.0 and join an internal EQ group chat where the L&D team posts articles, videos and resources to keep EQ top of mind and encourage ongoing practice. After six months, participants attend a refresher course and re-take the assessment to evaluate where they have improved and to adjust their development plans to address any new opportunities.

As part of Endeavors' leadership development programs, leaders go through the same EQ training program, but they utilize the Multi-Rater appraisal to understand how others perceive them and identify gaps between their self-perception and the ratings from their boss, peers, subordinates, and others. These differences help them to recognize their blind spots and prioritize key areas to develop. Additionally, during the Mastering EQ Level 1 sessions, they focus on how emotional intelligence impacts them as a leader, making them more aware of how their emotions and behavior affect others. They also emphasize how to bring the key EQ concepts back to share with their teams.

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As an L&D team, we set out to improve the learner experience for our employees and improve customer service for our clients. The results have been great with the program receiving a satisfaction score of 4.77, on a scale of 1 to 5.

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— Serina Stark, Senior Learning & Development Coordinator

## THE RESULTS

Endeavors has experienced a remarkable cultural transformation through the Emotional Intelligence program, with employees embracing grace and treating each other with increased care and compassion. This focus on EQ has also strengthened collaboration, enriched dialogue, and enhanced communication across the organization's various programs and teams. In the program's feedback survey, 90% said they strongly agree or agree that they would be able to immediately apply what they learned, 52% of participants said they saw a 60-100% increase in skill level after taking the EQ course, and 92% said that they strongly agree or agree the training will improve their job performance.

Additionally, since implementing EQ, Endeavors has been recognized as an employer of choice in both 2023 and 2024, and for their outstanding leadership development in 2024.

“ We have changed the expectations for the types of leaders we aspire to be at Endeavors. Our leaders are more self- and socially aware, and they have the skills they need to motivate and inspire their teams. It has created a huge shift in our culture, with more recognition and appreciation of each other, which impacts employee retention and ultimately, the level of service we provide to our clients. ”

— Erica Contreras, Chief Learning Officer