



**The power of  
empathy in  
the workplace.**



**Colleagues, customers  
& compassion.**

**Making iT happen.**



**Can you imagine a world** where everyone can communicate with their peers in a way that brings the best out of each other?

Having the ability to do this is a key part of emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness, resulting in positive outcomes in both the workplace and at home. This skill is known as empathy. Not only is it an extremely sophisticated emotional response, it also isn't particularly easy to define.

**So, let's begin by confirming what empathy is not.**



# Why empathy is all Greek to some

## em.pa.thy

[ɛmpəθi] noun

It's common for the term empathy to be confused with or substituted for sympathy in writing and conversation. Perhaps it's because they sound similar or, if those misusing them are classic scholars, maybe it's the concluding **"pathy"** derived from the Greek **"pathos"** that's throwing them off.

The key difference is the Greek **"Sym"** at the start of the word sympathy; literally translated as **"together"** or **"at the same time"**.

Whereas sympathy involves sharing the feelings of another (hence the **"together"** part), empathy is its more sophisticated cousin and is focused on understanding.

Unlike sympathy, empathy relates to someone understanding another's feelings even if they haven't felt them themselves.

Both empathy and sympathy can be beneficial in a work environment and sympathy certainly shouldn't be ignored but, for maximum impact and flexibility, empathy is the clear winner.

Yet even those who do understand the difference between empathy and sympathy struggle to define it, leading to several myths surrounding the term that get in the way of its true mastery.

**Here are a few of the example myths you might have heard:**

### **"You've either got it or you haven't"**

Being able to listen and connect does not come naturally to most people. While some people have the innate ability to be an agony-aunt or uncle, for others **it is** something that can be learnt from peers, our own experiences and education from professionals.

### **"Empathy is a one-way street"**

Being constantly empathetic to others without thinking of yourself will result in burnout. You must think about yourself and **have boundaries** which will allow you to thrive while still helping others around you. Be empathetic, but remember your wellbeing is important too.

### **"Nice people finish last in business, empathy belongs at home"**

Many people believe that empathy should be limited to your personal life. Typical examples being your friends crypto-currency stocks plummeting or your grandparent's favourite TV show being taken off air; both tragic occurrences and situations that require empathy. However, it is also attributable to the workplace with the benefits proven to be astounding. The 2019 State of Workplace Empathy also supported this notion by reporting that **93% of workers** are likely to remain in their place of work if they consider their employer to be empathetic.<sup>1</sup>

### **"It's all about good intentions"**

This is a myth across many realms in life, not just with empathy. But in this instance, other people cannot hear or feel your intentions. Actions of course speak louder than words, and words also speak louder than intentions.

# What is empathy and how can it be applied to the workplace?

Now that we have shown what empathy is not and dispelled some myths, let's establish what empathy is.



However, in our humble opinion, this definition doesn't go deep enough to unveil the **true power of empathy**. Using empathy goes beyond understanding the basic definition. Delivering it by understanding a person's personality and positively affecting that individual is the real talent.

When executed appropriately, this means people can establish authentic connections with each other that enhance performance. It is crucial in **enabling your employees to thrive**.

Empathy, when applied correctly, results in an increasingly engaged workforce and a flourishing business in terms of efficiency, creativity, innovation and company revenue.

Be empathetic by tapping into your graphic designer's artistic side, the sales team's commission motivations, or your customers pain points, which brings us nicely onto the different personality types that we need to relate to in order to be empathetic.

A survey of more than **1000** American workers found that many left their job because their boss lacked empathy...



at work  
**54%**



and in their  
personal lives  
**49%**



# Empathising with the **7 personality** types at work

To be empathetic, it is crucial to understand that everyone is different. As a rule, there are seven personality types, however, it's not that black and white. We all have a unique blend, and everyone's cocktail of traits is different.

**Here are some quick summations of the different personality types. Can you relate to any of these?**



## The N – Normal

The work colleague that is always dressed for a board meeting.

They never seem stressed or overworked, no matter what is sent their way. They are a stickler for rules and strive for social acceptance.



## The H – Hustler

The youngster that tries to make money doing chores around the neighbourhood.

They're trying to be an entrepreneur when they should be messing around and causing havoc in the neighbourhood. Always thinking of the next way to make a quick quid.



## The M – Mover

The university friend that constantly wants to party, normally organising them too.

They will talk to anyone, are impulsive, and typically aren't too fussed about tomorrow's 9am lecture.



## The D – Double-Checker

The office workmate that is always looking out for others, checking if you have had enough lunch or whether you slept well last night is a daily occurrence.

When the infamous air-con war kicks off within the office, they are there like a peacemaker from the United Nations.

# Empathising with the **7 personality** types at work cont...



## The A – Artist

The creative and sensitive one, with a dress sense that can be best described as 'out there'. They are commonly introverted in nature and more than happy in their own company. Eye-contact is often minimal.



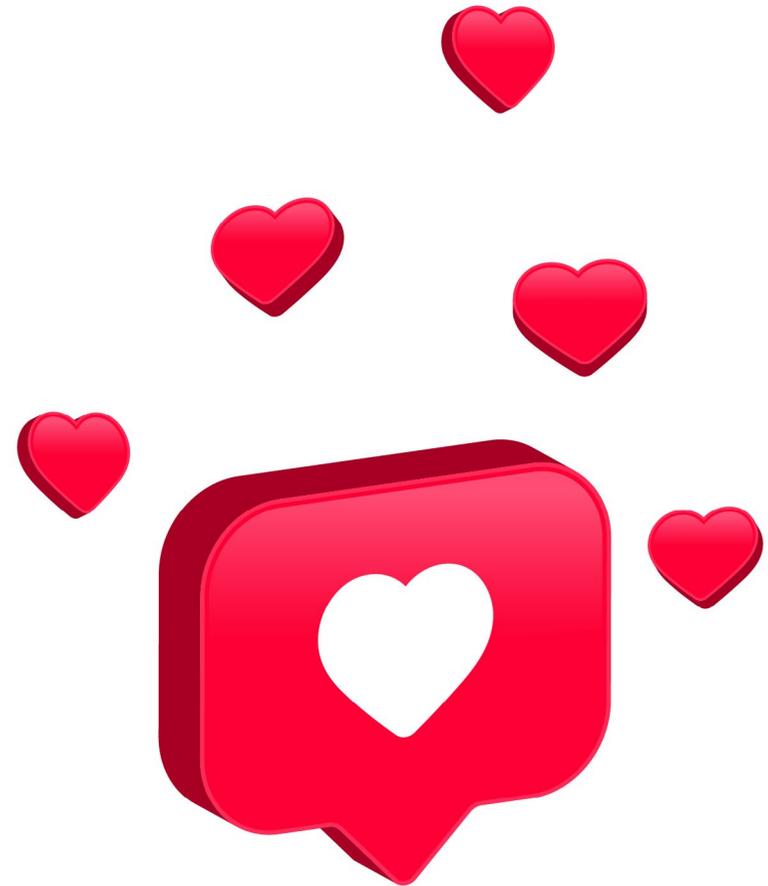
## The P-Politician

The driven classmate that is running for class president. Their work ethic for upcoming exams has left you feeling deeply concerned for your own academic future. Already aware of the importance of a strong handshake and looking a person in the eye.



## The E-Engineer

The spouse that makes an Excel spreadsheet for everything. Food shopping, summer holidays, the Christmas budget, it all gets inputted to help makes sense of things. It's all about the process, detail and method.



# The power of empathy

It would be understandable to surmise that the world of marketing is full of individuals that are far more empathetic than Jane Public or John Smith, and that they have a strong understanding of the seven personality types.

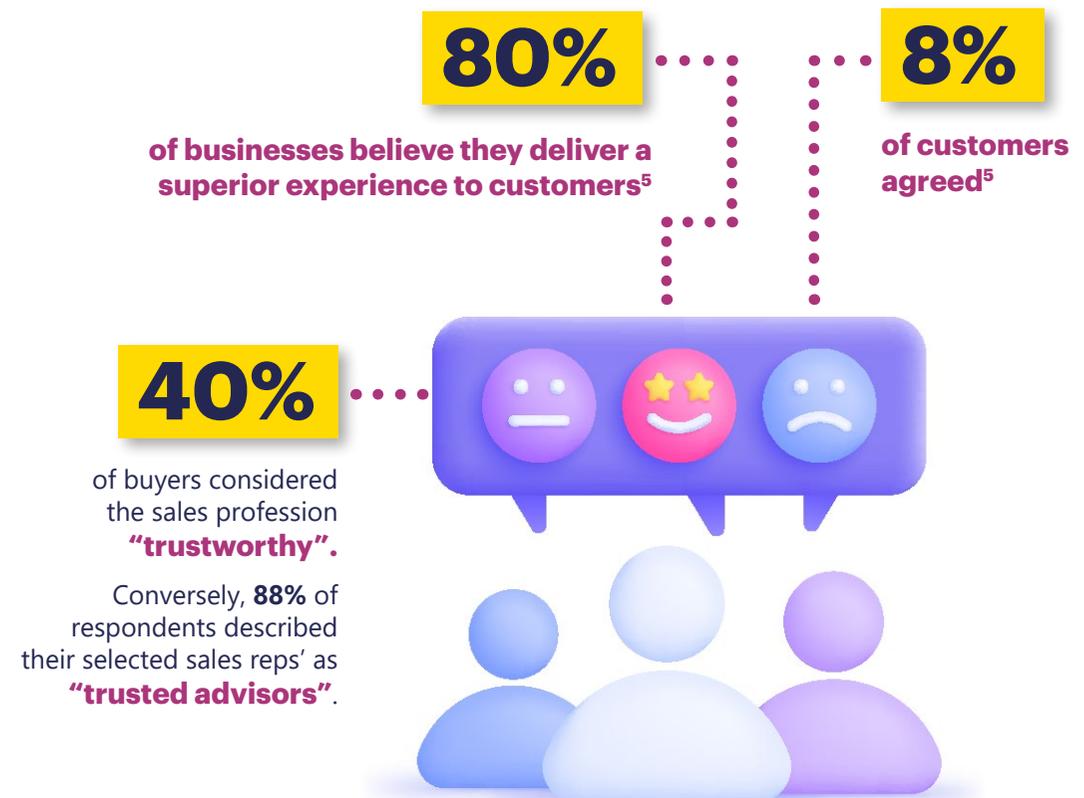
After all, the job of a marketer is to establish consumer closeness and understanding. However, it seems like there is an empathy delusion within the marketing world. It has been established that there is **no difference between marketers and the general population when completing an empathy psychometric test.**<sup>3</sup>

This is surprising, as in order to sell effectively to your customers, it is important to understand their personality type. You need to immerse yourself in that person and realise the daily challenges that they face.

Trying to appreciate their daily stressors and pain points is crucial in looking to grow customer satisfaction, loyalty, and referrals.

Being able to see things from the other side of the table is also beneficial when it comes to sales negotiations, and research has proven that **a sales-persons empathy levels directly correlate with negotiation ability.**<sup>4</sup>

It does not seem like businesses are behaving as empathetically as they believe. The **80:8 rule** indicated a significant empathy deficit across **400 companies**



# The power of empathy cont...

## So, what does this mean?

It means that if you respect and understand a customer, you are more likely to build a trusting, healthy relationship that results in that all-important result – returning custom.

One organisation that has recognised the importance of empathy is the airline, Ryanair.



Once listed second bottom on the empathy index of major global organisations, they took it upon themselves to overhaul their outlook.

They listened to what customers were frustrated by and devised an empathetic business plan.

## The result

**Net profit increases from €867 million to €1.24 billion**

“If I’d only known being nice to customers was going to work so well, I’d have started many years ago.”

**Michael O’Leary, CEO, Ryanair**

But it’s not just about being nice, you need to be understanding. Particularly when it comes to innovation, we need a large dose of empathy to tap into the customer’s emotions. Many innovations focus on a knowledge development approach, and while this is a viable method, we also need to take a human-centred approach.

Empathetic innovators can innovate quicker, satisfy more customers, increase sales and generate more revenue.

## In fact, the study of US employees found

**61%**

**of people with highly empathic senior leaders report often or always being innovative at work compared to...**

**13%**

**of people with less empathic senior leaders.<sup>7</sup>**



The top companies have realised this. Not least Microsoft **CEO Satya Nadella** who was quoted as saying, “Empathy makes you a better innovator.” He added that the most successful Microsoft products have been those that acknowledge the unmet needs of customers.<sup>8</sup>

Your employees can also benefit from an empathetic approach and a survey of employees in America confirmed this, reporting that having a boss that displayed such skills resulted in a **44% improvement in work engagement.**<sup>9</sup>

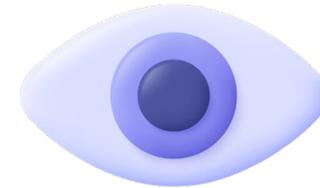
# Some **random facts** about empathy



**Grown-up chimps are less likely to help distressed friends.**



**Empathetic budgies yawn when they see their peers do the same.**



**Humans show empathy by mimicking pupil size.**

# The three different empathy types

Having a deep understanding of empathy is key to being an empathetic person. So, let's identify the three types of empathy that exist:



## Cognitive empathy

This involves having a high level of understanding about a person's mind, in particular, how they feel. For instance, a friend fails to receive a promotion they expected. You acknowledge and understand their disappointment.

### What it involves:

**Understanding**

### Benefits:

Cognitive empathy can be highly motivating to others. Can be helpful during negotiations and is useful when trying to be empathetic from a distance, such as virtual meetings.



## Emotional empathy

Not only do you understand how a person feels, but you also experience the emotions and distress of that individual and feel compassion towards them. For instance, your colleague has spent months on a project which has now been deemed to not be required. Not only do you understand their disappointment, but you also feel the emotions yourself.

### What it involves:

**Feelings**

### Benefits:

Proven to have a hugely positive impact when the relationship is close in nature. Evidence that it works in careers including coaching, marketing, management and HR.



## Compassionate empathy

This involves action. Not only do you understand the individual's emotions and feel the experience with them, but you also display an act of compassion that may assist the person. For instance, a team leader from another department did not achieve the target set for them. While you appreciate and feel their pain, you also sit down with them and spend time helping them plan out how this can be avoided next time.

### What it involves:

**Action**

### Benefits:

The whole person is considered.



# Empathy in **action** — a checklist

We are now aware that there are three types of empathy that can be actioned, so here are some basic principles we can implement to try and enhance our working relationships, regardless of personality type.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Actively listening (eye contact etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Listen without judgement
<input type="checkbox"/>	No distractions (phone, tv)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take a break if you need to re-calibrate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask questions of relevance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Offer helpful advice if possible
<input type="checkbox"/>	Repeat words for affirmation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Be positive/encouraging
<input type="checkbox"/>	Acknowledge emotions		

.....

**Here is an example of a response which ticks a number of the boxes on the checklist:**

**Acknowledge emotions** — "You have understandably been upset recently but the way you are dealing with things is

**Be positive/encouraging** — exceptional. I just need you to know that the company appreciate the way you have handled this and that we are here for you if you need any additional support.

**Ask questions of relevance** — Do you have friends and family that you can also speak with?

**Offer helpful advice** — Speaking about things can often help."



# Empathy in **action** — a checklist cont...

There are also four main principals that are good to remember when implementing any of the empathy types.

## Perspective



Put yourself in the other person's shoes. Try and think of a time when you went through a similar experience.

This can be a painful process as you are making yourself vulnerable and are potentially casting your mind back to a memory you have previously attempted to ignore.

## Avoid judgement



This can be extremely difficult, but it is pivotal in achieving a level of empathy. Do not be dismissive, do not play the situation down. Removing your judgement from the situation unlocks the potential to be empathetic.

## Recognise emotion



This aims to give you clarity and comforts the person in question. Analyse what emotions you are seeing and check with the person that these emotions are correct.

Once you agree, the person will feel understood and less alone.

## Communicate



Once a connection has been established, you can enhance your empathetic link. Emphasise your understanding of the person's feelings and ask them if they would like to elaborate on the situation.

# Discover more about the **most important** leadership skill in business

Across the team at ResourceIT, we have witnessed first-hand the power of empathy with countless clients, which is why we consider ourselves well positioned to advise.

We recognise that empathy within marketing is critical in enabling you to communicate effectively based on a stakeholder's specific role, needs and personality type. We use this skill and the power of empathy every single day to get the most out of every communication, meeting, project and campaign.

As an example, we regularly deal with stakeholders that have high levels of seniority and heightened levels of pressure. Typically, such clients are extremely focused on the hard and fast, assertive side of marketing – namely ROI.

These pressures to report on investment spend mean we often create a visual ROI metrics tracker so that we can provide a dynamic view of those all-important results.

This in turn gives clients a sense of control from afar that their needs are our primary focus and that they are being accounted for.

**If you don't fully understand the position of stakeholders and what they are facing every day from a personal and work perspective, then how are you able to communicate a story that's going to resonate with them?**



As a marketing organisation, we excel because we appreciate the requirements of both our clients and their customers. We get under the skin of an organisation to allow us to understand, to build trust and to create action that is garnered from an empathetic understanding.

We recognise the need for businesses to be flexible and adaptive in their approach to the continuously changing needs and goals of employees and customers.

We also acknowledge that empathy is one of the most crucial skill sets required to achieve this and we understand why it is considered the most important leadership skill in business.<sup>10</sup>

Our empathy training course deep dives into cognitive, emotional and compassionate empathy, all of which help improve your listening skills. We teach you how you can modify your behaviour and emotional intelligence as you discover your own and other people's communication styles.

**Our training will help you understand your target audience and allow you engage with customers and colleagues based on their needs and personality types.**





# Learn how to **increase** your empathy today

Empathy delivers that human touch, which is crucial to being successful in the increasingly remote and digital world that we live in. If you want to tap into this important skill — ResourceIT can help unleash the power of your business.

[Unlock my business empathy](#)



Ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>



Ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>



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