



Measuring Passionate Engagement in the Workplace

Since 2006, we have been collecting data based on a 125-question survey. Since 2012, our statisticians have been working to answer the following questions:

1. Do high meaning and a high sense of progress, as reported by individuals over six measures, create passionate engagement in the workplace, as defined by our earlier qualitative research and encapsulated in five other measures? And, do high meaning and high progress scores correlate to the three engagement outcome measures of retention, loyalty and advocacy?
2. Do some drivers of engagement matter more than others? In other words, which measures correlate the strongest to the six high meaning and high progress measures?
3. When meaning and/or progress score other than high, what are the corresponding underlying drivers? And do these underlying drivers define other (non-passion) states of being at work?

Over the course of the last four years we have answered these questions. Below you will find a description of our methodology and a summary of our findings.

Phase One

The initial research phase began in 2012 and involved defining precisely what we meant by meaning and progress. We tested a variety of questions using various groups, including a group of HR professionals in Europe and a group of 100 volunteers from our database. Both groups answered a series of questions which our statisticians then analyzed using various statistical testing methods.

We found that three things impact meaning at work. The meaning found in:

1. Current work
2. Career
3. Recent past (past year)

When scoring the question “My work matters a great deal to me, or to people I care about” high (five on a five-point scale) in these three contexts, people view their work overall as highly meaningful.

Similarly, we found the same three factors also determine the extent to which people experience overall progress at work, when answering the question “I am very satisfied with the pace, or speed at which things are moving forward.” (This question was adjusted by tense for the question regarding the past.)



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We also learned that how people anticipated future progress did not have a bearing on their current engagement at work so these questions were eliminated.

In the end, we were left with six measures to determine the extent to which people saw meaning and progress in their work.

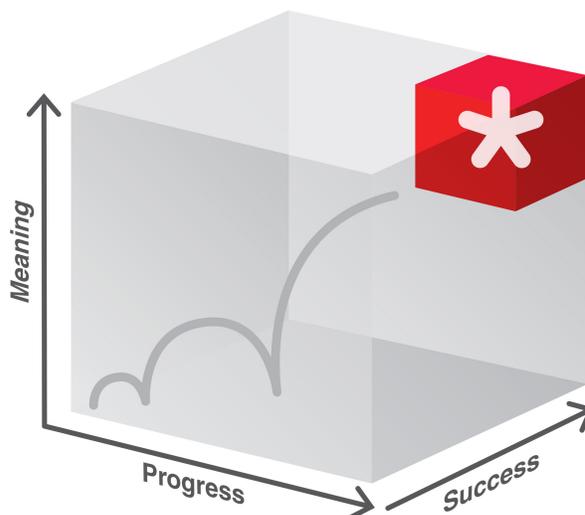
We also learned that, when these questions are scored high, there was a very strong correlation to the five measures of passion at work, as defined by our earlier qualitative research (2000-2002). As a result, we were then able to eliminate these latter measures as they became redundant once the meaning and progress definitions and measures had been validated.

Phase Two

We then analyzed how the six meaning and progress measures correlated to the three outcome measures of retention, loyalty and advocacy listed below:

1. I have no reason to look elsewhere for a job.
2. I would definitely recommend this organization as a place to work.
3. This organization provides a better place to work than our competitors in this industry.

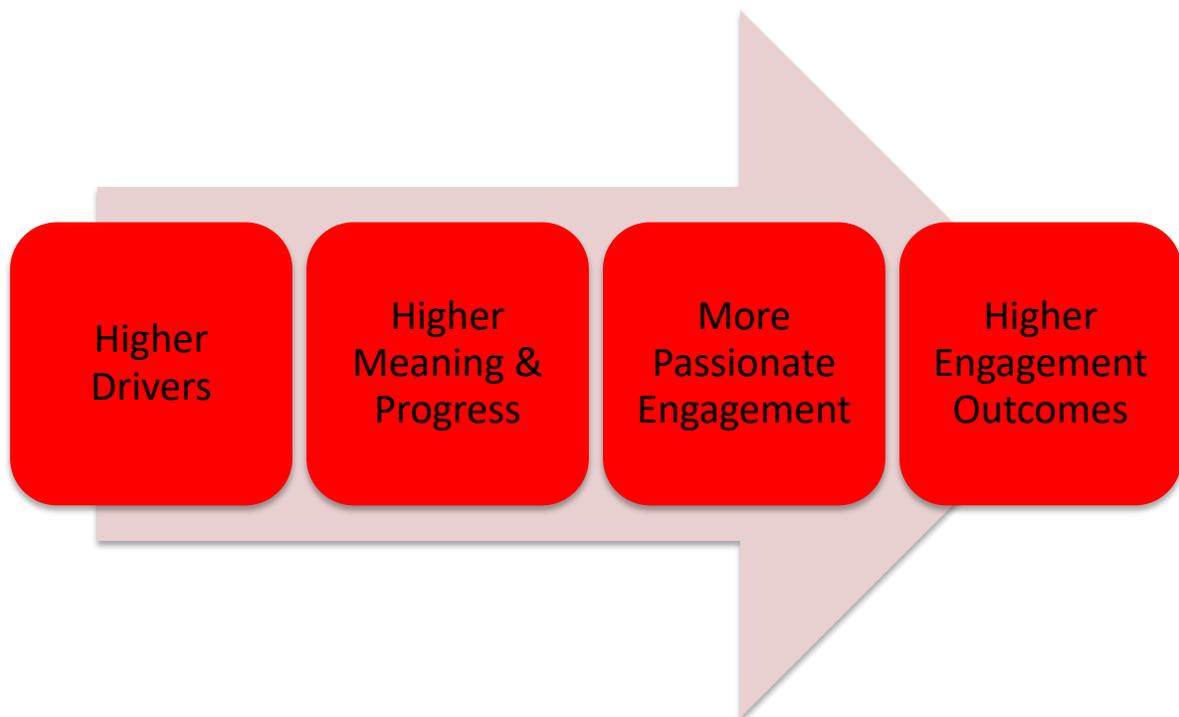
The analysis found a high correlation. So, when individuals view their work as highly meaningful and see high progress they are much more likely to remain with the organization, continue to be loyal and to advocate for it as an employer. We represent this relationship as follows:





Phase Three

Once we had established the relationships between meaning and progress as well as the engagement outcomes, we wanted to see how the remaining measures (114 in total) correlated to the meaning and progress scores. These remaining measures ask participants about the conditions of their workplace and their mindset. For example, the extent to which they receive meaningful feedback, the extent to which their input is solicited, the extent to which they feel ownership for their work, etc. We discovered the following: Not all 114 measures had a significant impact on meaning and progress. In fact, 21 measures stood out as having a very significant impact on the meaning and progress scores. ***In other words, when these 21 measures were scored high, so were the meaning and progress questions. And, furthermore, so were the engagement outcome questions.*** We represent this finding using the following representation:



This finding allowed us to dramatically reduce the number of measures used in our survey from 125 to 30! We were able to focus on the six meaning and progress measures, the three outcome measures and the 21 driver measures. We achieved this by using correlation and multiple regression analyses. We then used factor analysis to group the 21 engagement drivers. This produced four categories, which we name as follows: Purpose



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& Inspiration, Organizational Practices, Mastery and Autonomy. Please see the graphic below for the 21 measures (topics only) as well as the categories.

Purpose & Inspiration

- Belief in team values
- Belief in team vision
- Celebration
- Alignment of work and personal values

Organizational Practices

- Communication of key information
- Personnel-friendly policies
- Appropriate resources allocation
- Quality standards
- Input
- Performance feedback
- Teamwork
- Relevant job

Mastery

- Appropriate skills
- Appropriate knowledge
- Creative license
- Natural interest in type of work

Autonomy

- Growth mindset
- Clear, ranked goals
- Decision-making
- Ownership
- Opportunity orientation



Phase Four

The last piece of work, needed to meet our research objectives, examined which of the 114 measures correlated to other combinations of meaning and progress scoring. For example, were there any drivers that correlated to low meaning and low progress or medium progress and high meaning and so on?

We found that there were and that these groupings produced other descriptive profiles of the work experience when meaning is low, medium or high and when progress is low, medium or high. These states of being were drawn from the natural distributions of Meaning and Progress scores. High, medium or low Meaning combines with high, medium or low Progress to define a state of being. These states of being were named as informed by the underlying measures correlating to this scoring.

See graphic below.

Conclusions

As a result of these research projects, we now know that when the key drivers of engagement are scored high so are the meaning and progress scores. And, when meaning and progress is scored high, passionate engagement in the workplace is the result. In turn, this results in higher retention, loyalty and advocacy scores.

We also now know that when meaning and/or progress scores are other than high, other states of being emerge in the workplace (i.e. stagnated, disconnected, unfulfilled, frustrated, neutral, energized, engaged).

