



Solutions

Performance Strategies for Managers and Supervisors from the Center for Management and Professional Development

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CONTENTS

FEATURE:

You Can Pay People to Perform. You Can't Pay them to Excel

Page 3

Faces of Innovation: Part 3

Page 4

Where Does Creativity Peak?

Page 5

Finding Lessons in Crisis

Page 6

The Missouri Constitution: A Frame of Reference

Page 7

Quick Tips and Time Savers

Page 8

Is Engagement Just A Fad?

Page 9

Why Are My Employees Working?

Page 12

Resilience

Six Great Work Paradoxes

Break Habits that hold you back, by applying the 15-minute rule.

Model the improved behavior – or avoid the bad one – for just 15 minutes at a time. In that way, you slowly build willpower that lets you change old patterns.

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Influencing

You can pay people to perform. You can't pay them to excel

By Dr. Alan Zimmerman

Ever since the beginning of time, people have been looking for the secrets of leadership. They've been looking for those things that will bring out the very best in others. Well there aren't any secrets. You can read all the books on leadership, and you will find most authors say about the same thing. They just use different words.

There are certain traits that great leaders exhibit. To the extent you can master and exhibit the same traits, you'll be more effective in getting others to excel.

Let's see if you can guess the first trait. Let me ask you, "How many great, really great teachers did you have in all your years of schooling?" Most people tell me "one, two, three, or four."

Then let me ask you, "How many teachers did you have over the years?" Most people tell me "dozens." Now that's strange. It's also sad. You had dozens of teachers, yet so few of them were really great. When I probe a bit deeper, when I ask people what made those teachers great, I usually get the same answer. Can you guess? They usually say, "Those teachers cared."

That's it. **CARING. It's the first trait exhibited by almost every great leader.** It may sound like a very soft touchy-feely thing, but it works. As Max Lucado says in his book, *And the Angels Were Silent*, "The people who make a difference are not the ones with the credentials but the ones with the concern."

Barry Alvarez knew that. In fact, he was named National Coach of the Year in 1993, the year his University of Wisconsin football team won the Rose Bowl. Prior to that, however, he had to turn this losing, dispirited team around. He had to turn the players' attitudes and actions around.

He started doing that the very first day the freshmen players came in. He gave them each a pencil and paper and told them to write their parents. They were to tell their parents they loved them.

Alvarez knew that if he could strengthen the emotional expression the players gave their parents, it would be easier for the players to say they cared about each other.

After the players were there a while, he would bring them together for some "team building." He would ask each of them to talk about the teammate they most respected. Often times, the comments would come as a surprise, but they always built the team.

One player, for example, picked out a kid who wasn't even there on a scholarship. He said, "I respect him the most because he's been here for years and busted his tail all this time and never complained." Alvarez says CARING leads to teamwork, and teamwork leads to winning.

Perhaps no one is more recognized for leadership than Abraham Lincoln. And when you examine all the books written about him, you will find a lot more emphasis given to his CARING than his strategic planning, brilliant programs, and media savvy.

As an example, President Lincoln often visited hospitals to talk to wounded soldiers during the Civil War. One time a doctor pointed out a soldier near death, and Lincoln went to his bedside. He asked, "Is there anything I can do for you?" The soldier didn't recognize Lincoln, and with some effort he whispered, "Would you please write a letter to my mother?"

A pen and paper were provided, and the President carefully wrote down what the young man said. "My dearest mother, I was badly hurt while doing my duty. I'm afraid I'm not going to recover. Don't grieve too much for me, please. Kiss Mary and John for me. May God bless you and father." The soldier was too weak to continue so Lincoln signed the letter for him. He added, "Written for your son by Abraham Lincoln."

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You can pay people to perform. You can't pay them to excel

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The young man asked to see the note and was astonished when he discovered who had written it. "Are you really the President?" he asked. "Yes, I am," Lincoln replied quietly. Then he asked if there was anything else he could do.

"Would you please hold my hand? It will help to see me through to the end," said the soldier. And so, in that hushed room, the tall gaunt President took the boy's hand in his and spoke words of encouragement until the boy passed away.

The second trait of great leaders, or those who get others to excel, is INTEGRITY. In other words, they can be trusted to tell the truth. They tell the truth in good times and bad, and they tell the truth whether or not it makes them look good or bad.

In a sense, truth telling is a way of showing honor. It says people deserve to know what is happening, why it's happening, and what the next steps will be.

And telling the truth, right up front, is a way of expressing deep respect. Great leaders know that their silence, double talk, or delayed truth telling would create unnecessary anxiety in people, and they respect people too much to put them through that kind of stress.

It's no wonder that INTEGRITY works. People feel honored and respected when their leader continually tells them the truth. So they'll keep on supporting their leader, even if they don't always like what he has to say.

President Dwight Eisenhower put it this way: "The supreme quality for a leader is unquestionable integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter whether it is on a football field, in an army, or in an office. If a man's associates find him guilty of phoniness, if they find he lacks forthright integrity, he will fail."

And finally, great leaders who get others to excel have HIGH EXPECTATIONS. They don't let people get by with mediocrity.

Think about it. Think back to high school. Think about the teacher who let you goof off or slide by. You might have enjoyed the easy ride while you were getting it, but you also lost respect for yourself and that teacher. No one can really feel good about herself when she just "gets by."

By contrast, think of the teacher who made you work, work, work. She kept saying "You can do it, and you're going to do it." You may have disliked that teacher for a while, but that was the teacher you respected the most, and that was the one who brought the best out of you.

Great leaders believe in people, and so they expect a lot from people. The author Studs Terkel gives one example. He was the youngest of ten children, and his father died when he was in the seventh grade. So his mother raised all the kids by herself. She worked as an assembly line worker and as a cleaning lady, and she set the example of hard work and HIGH EXPECTATIONS.

Studs said if you came home without homework, she would ask, "You have homework?" If you said "No," she'd say, "You know everything?" Again if you said "no," she'd say, "Well, you have homework now."

ACTION:

Take a look at the three traits of leadership: *CARING, INTEGRITY, and HIGH EXPECTATIONS*. How much of those traits do you possess and exhibit? Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10, ten being the best. Then ask two of your colleagues or employees to rate you.

If you find a gap between your scores and their scores, especially in those areas where others rate you lower than you rate yourself, ask them what you would have to do to get a higher score.

Learn more from
Dr. Alan Zimmerman



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- Give feedback that promotes good performance
- Build a workplace where trust and respect are the norms—not the exception
- Increase your co-workers sense of ownership and accountability for the organization's success

The faces of innovation: Part 3

By Lori Gilmore,
Center for Management and Professional Development

In previous issues of Solutions (Fall 2010, Winter 2011), we learned that promoting innovation as a way of life is vital to the success of almost any organization today. In fact, many organizations now realize that innovation is their best strategy to grow in a competitive marketplace. However, to make this happen, it takes each individual contributor to make innovative strides on a regular basis—and that's where all the gold is buried.

The book, *"The 10 Faces of Innovation"* by author Tom Kelley, upon which these articles are based, suggests that there are ten different "personas" that comprise today's innovative employee workforce, and that each persona has the ability to make a profound impact with the right encouragement. Mr. Kelley divided these personas into three distinct areas—**Learning, Organizing, and Building.**

This article continues the exploration of those personas—focusing now on **The ORGANIZING Personas**—which include **The Hurdler, The Collaborator, and The Director.**

The Organizing Personas realize the best ideas must continuously compete for time, attention, and resources. They are savvy about the process of how ideas move forward. They don't dismiss the process of budget, resources, politics, or "red-tape." Rather, they recognize the complex game that it all is—and play it to win!

As you read more about the three Organizing Personas at the right, ask yourself:

Who are the Hurdlers, the Collaborators, and the Directors on your team—and how can you use their strengths to the fullest?

In the next issue of Solutions, we will conclude this series by learning about the Building Personas of the Experience Architect, the Set-Designer, the Caregiver, and the Storyteller.

ORGANIZING PERSONA 1: The Hurdler

The Hurdler knows the path to innovation is strewn with obstacles and develops a knack for overcoming or outsmarting those roadblocks. They CAN "do more with less." They get a charge out of trying something that has never been done before. They are the ones who excel under tight deadlines, make the most of small budgets, and jump over other constraints.

In the words of President John F Kennedy:

"We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too."

President Kennedy was a great example of a Hurdler—problem solvers who overcome naturally. They are the risk-takers and often the most "street savvy" members of the team.

ORGANIZING PERSONA 2: The Collaborator

The Collaborator brings groups together to get things done. Often leading from the center of the pack, they "stir the pot," to create new combinations of ideas to find the solution. They work together with one or more people in order to achieve a common goal. Collaborators value the team over the individual. They are willing to set their own work aside to help you make a tight deadline. A savvy collaborator can perform a subtle form of corporate jujitsu, ultimately turning the strength of opposition into a positive force.

Thomas Edison goes down in history as our greatest inventor partly because he was a master collaborator, championing and cheerleading a talented and coordinated team that turned out a tremendously wide-range of inventions and innovations.

Why do collaborations matter? In part due to the importance of teamwork. Each team member must strive to achieve their personal best while supporting the team's ultimate performance. When a team functions in a smooth rhythm, it is amazing what can be accomplished.

ORGANIZING PERSONA 3: The Director

The Director is the one mapping out the production, putting together the projects, bringing out the best in the team, while honing in on the agencies vision. Their style may range from calm confidence to frenetic energy. Directors rise to tough challenges such as long hours, low budgets, looming deadlines, and inevitable setbacks. Directors expect hardships along the way and are up to the task.

The Directors first and most important task is to always keep the team moving forward, toward the goal. They must have a firm grasp on the business as they are not just in charge of today's operations, but also of insuring there is a tomorrow. Directors can make something out of nothing. They wield a large toolbox and are ready to improvise with whatever techniques, strategies, and resources that are at their disposal.

Where does creativity peak?

By Charles Thompson

Mr. Thompson's comments were taken from the Center for Management and Professional Development's online learning system: *MyQuickCoach*

I want you to think back to your first day in school. There you are, oh so creative. You're there in class. You're raising your hand. You're asking questions. You're looking around the wall at all the things on the wall. Look...there is script going all the way around. There's the letters of the alphabet. There are pictures on the wall. There are colors.

You get out of your seat and sit on the floor. You eat milk and cookies. You share...you talk. And guess what you get to bring to class the first day? A box of crayons! And now, for those of you that are really lucky, you get to bring the box of 64, and those of you are really, really lucky, you get to bring a box of 128. Remember the metal sharpener on the side? You had 128 different colors to color the sky, the trees, the grass.

Creativity was what it was all about. Asking questions, hearing responses, asking, "why."

And then every year after kindergarten, they started taking that stimuli away and you went from 128 colors or 64 colors to a Bic pen, black and blue, and you hated the color red because that meant you were wrong.

It's no wonder that the famous educator John Holt said, "We entered school as question marks; we graduated as periods."

Where are you today based on your lifetime inventory? At five years of age, we ask 65 questions per day. What do they all start with? Why. But by the time we get into management, we only ask six questions per day. If we ask "why," it's not "Why--why is the sky blue?" It's "Why did you do that?" It's an accusatory "why" rather than an exploratory "why." We also ask what, when, and how, which have right answers.

Well, it's interesting. Our question asking goes from 65 questions per day to six questions per day when we go into management. And guess what...when we retire, our question asking goes back up again.

Let's look at something else: laughter. We laugh 113 times per day at five, 83 times per day at eight, and only 11 times per day at 44. You probably know some people that are in the negative numbers of laughter. We call them terminally serious. But once we retire, the laughter level goes back up.

These two curves also follow the same creativity curve. Look at the creativity curve. You score 98 percentile on your lifetime creativity at five; you're down to two percentile at 44, and it starts going back up again when you retire.

So ask more questions, laugh, challenge—because we can't wait till retirement to spark our creativity.

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- Dr. Rick Kirschner



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Solutions

"The problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them." Albert Einstein

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Pain to gain: Finding the lessons in crisis

As unfathomable as it may seem, something positive may come out of the nuclear crisis in Japan. Natural and environmental disasters tend to bring about a large-scale period of reflection and retrospection. People wonder, “What could have been done to prevent this?”

Communities, government agencies and energy companies around the world are scrutinizing their own nuclear power sites in the wake of the disaster at the Fukushima plant. This one crisis, as devastating as it is, has the potential to teach important lessons and prevent future nuclear disasters around the world.

Finding the lessons in crisis is part of what we call “reframing the experience.”

Reframing is easier when the experience isn’t about you and when it’s as far away as Japan is from the United States. Personal and physical distance automatically increases our perception as well as our courage to face hard truths.

It is more challenging to see the lessons inherent in our own life. Why — because our pain often blinds us to the possible gain. That’s why in order to make the shift from pain to gain, you first have to:

1. Acknowledge what is so
2. Allow feelings to surface (the pain)
3. Call in outside support

This capacity to reframe the experience — to find lessons in crisis, disappointment and pain — is critical to moving forward in almost any situation. As leaders we need to build our own capacity to find the lessons to be learned, as well as coach our employees to focus on these lessons rather than dwell on the damage of mistakes.

Let’s take a look at some tips to help with the two sides of reframing an experience.

Translating Your Own Pain to Gain

When things happen to you personally, how do you react? Do you blame others and focus on the past—or do you decide to be reflective about yourself and look to the future?

To reframe a situation and gain the lessons to be learned, ask yourself questions such as:

- What are the deeper lessons that I need to learn from these experiences?
- What lessons haven’t I fully grasped?
- What still needs to be worked on?
- What major issues have I encountered?
- What kinds of people keep on showing up in my life, presenting problems to me?
- What is it that I’m just not “getting” or need to work through?

Guiding Someone Else to See the Gain

When someone who works for you makes a mistake or disappoints someone else, you again have the choice to focus either on blaming the person for past errors, or helping the person learn from the experience and moving on. As a leader, you can coach others to be reflective about the situation and look to the future.

To get started, try asking your employee to work through any of the following exercises:

- Learn more.** Figure out what was happening with you or others that might have led to the mistake.
- Write about it.** In a journal or notebook, reflect upon what happened, what lessons you learned, and what good may come from this situation. Make a list of what you could have done differently in the situation.
- Gain perspective.** Ask others if they have ever made similar mistakes, and if so, how they view the mistake in hindsight. What did they learn from the situation?

Each of these exercises may help the employee to pinpoint a specific “lesson learned,” and, ultimately, take responsibility for the mistake. When we as leaders are open to finding our own lessons and replacing blame with personal gain, we are able to help others learn from their experience and move on as well.

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“It’s easy to come up with new ideas. The hard part is letting go of something that worked for you two years ago, but which is no longer useful.”

-Roger Von Oech



Strengthening Missouri's Future Missouri Certified Public Manager Program

A Note to Solutions Readers: In July, the Center for Management and Professional Development in partnership with Missouri State University's Management Development Institute sponsored the **Missouri Certified Public Manager Program's Capital Conference**. To share a small part of the curriculum with interested supervisors and managers, one program in the conference, "*The History and Culture of Missouri Politics*" presented by Dr. George Connor from Missouri State University, was opened for general enrollment. Dr. Connor's presentation was overwhelmingly applauded by participants, and we asked him to provide an article based upon his program for *Solutions*.

Political Awareness

The Missouri Constitution: A frame of reference

By: Dr. George E. Connor, Department of Political Science, Missouri State University

When discussing the Missouri Constitution, it is important to recognize that it exists within a double context. The Constitution of Missouri must, perform all of the tasks required by any legitimate constitution but, must do so within the broad context of the federal system as defined by the U. S. Constitution. Political scientist Donald S. Lutz defined this unique aspect of American constitutionalism and offers a framework by which we can examine both the theoretical and federal contexts.

While this may be an oversimplification of Lutz's theory, he argues that all constitutions perform six functions:

- Create a form of government
- Distribute political power
- Establish the authority of government
- Limit the power of government
- Provide for conflict management
- Define citizenship

Taken together, Lutz argues that a constitution defines a "way of life" for a nation or, in this case, a state. The six-part framework allows you to compare the U.S. Constitution to a state constitution, compare state constitutions to other state constitutions, and compare constitutions within states that have had more than one.

Alabama, for example, has had ten constitutions while Massachusetts has had only one; adopted in 1780. At one point, Minnesota had two constitutions that operated simultaneously. Missouri has been more in the middle of the pack; adopting constitutions in 1820, 1865, 1875, and 1945.

While straight-forward, a comparison between the U. S. and Missouri constitutions is revealing. With respect to form of government, the U. S. Constitution establishes a federal republic. While Missouri, too, has a republic form of government, it is a unitary, not federal, form with power concentrated in the hands of the state. However, Missouri's initiative and referendum process establishes, at least in part, a democratic government that is wholly absent from the U.S. document.

At first glance, the distribution of power, or separation of powers between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, is similar in both constitutions. While separation of powers is implied by the national document, Missouri's Article II is exclusively devoted to the delineation of the principle of separation of powers.

Moreover, Missouri's Constitution takes this separation to another level with the description of powers and duties of the separately elected Lt. Governor, Auditor, Treasurer, and Secretary of State. Again unlike the United States, this separation is further defined in Article IV, sections 22 through 52, with description of the executive branch departments.

The United States Constitution, unlike its predecessor the Articles of Confederation, is established under the authority of "We, the people." Similarly, the Preamble to the Missouri Constitution begins with "We, the people...with profound reverence for the Supreme Rule of the Universe and grateful for His goodness." While the



PHOTOS: Participants attending *The History and Culture of Missouri Politics* touring the State Capitol and listening to Dr. John Connor's presentation in Hearing Room 7.

meaning of the phrase "separation of church and state" means many things to many people, there is a glaring difference between the two constitutions here.

Does the inclusion of God in the Preamble, make Missouri a more Christian or religious state? The answer is no and the explanation is straight-forward. As in other states with similar language, the people of Missouri are the parties to the contract and God is called upon as a witness only. In fact, as is outlined in Article I, sections 5 through 7 and Article IX, Section 8, Missouri's separation of church and state is fairly stringent.

This article concludes on the next page.

The Missouri Constitution: A frame of reference

Continued from page 6

The definition of *constitutional* government is a government that is limited. In most cases these limits are defined by a Bill of Rights. Without dwelling on the historical issues that separated the Federalists from the Anti-Federalist, I think it is safe to say that the U. S. Bill of Rights was a post hoc compromise. Not so with Missouri. If limiting government is the most important function of a constitution, then it must have been more important to our states' founders than their U.S. counterparts, because it is placed first; immediately after the Preamble.

While many would argue that checks and balances, like separation of powers, fulfills the constitutional function of distributing political power. I prefer to see checks and balances as a mechanism of conflict management. One best manages conflict by avoiding it and the idea of shared powers enables both the U. S. and Missouri constitutions to avoid conflict. The most visible mechanism for conflict management in both the U. S. and Missouri constitutions is the amendment process. Granted, this steam valve of constitutionalism does not always work but it is there to release potentially destructive pressure. Here again, the contrast between the two documents is stark. As was noted above, the citizens of Missouri have the power to amend the constitution without the intersession or intervention of the General Assembly, and have done so with increasing frequency.

Although some would argue that the limitation of government is the most important function of constitutionalism, I think it is clear that, at least for the first two constitutions, the definition of citizenship was paramount in Missouri in 1820 and 1865. The convention of 1820 adhered to the mandate of the Missouri Compromise with respect to slavery. Going beyond the Compromise, the convention called upon the legislature to "pass such laws as may be necessary to prevent free Negroes and mulattoes from coming to, and settling in this state, under any pretext whatsoever."

Given the political circumstances of the day, it is not surprising that the 1865 convention reversed this course and passed an ordinance ending slavery: "all persons held to service or labor as slaves are hereby declared free." As the 1820 convention went beyond the Missouri Compromise, the 1865 convention went beyond the emancipation of slaves. As punishment for past offenses, the Radical Republicans inserted the Ironclad Oath into the new constitution: "No person shall be deemed a qualified voter, who has ever been in armed hostility to the United States...or has ever given aid, comfort, countenance, or support to persons engaged in any such hostility." While establishing citizenship for blacks and disenfranchising former Confederates, the Ironclad Oath also introduced the term "bushwhacker" into constitutional parlance.

With the removal of the Ironclad Oath in 1870, the Constitutions of 1875 and 1945 focused on more mundane matters – the description of offices and the respective powers of the legislative and executive branches. Missouri's Constitution, our frame of reference, began to look a bit more like everyone else's.

If you are interested in more on this topic, see Donald Lutz *The Origins of American Constitutionalism* (1988) and George Connor and Christopher Hammons *The Constitutionalism of American States* (2008).

Problem Solving

Quick Tips and Time Savers



Train staff to send short e-mails.

When an employee sends you an e-mail that is longer than necessary, reply that it will take you some time to read the lengthy message. Over time, this response will encourage staffers to write shorter notes, especially when they want speedy answers.

"Empty your brain"

At the end of the day, write down anything that needs to be followed up on. Trying to remember everything leaves you with nagging thoughts for the rest of the night—which prevents relaxation.

Stop a colleague from interrupting.

If you have a co-worker who constantly cuts you off during meetings, let him know that if he allows you to have your say, you'll be more likely to pay attention to his comments. Example: "John when we're at meetings and I'm talking, I'd appreciate it if you'd wait until I'm finished to make your comments. It really distracts me if you talk before I'm finished, because then I can't listen properly to what you have to say."

Delegating tasks doesn't mean discarding them.

Maintain your interest, both casually ("How are you doing on that project we discussed?") and formally (Exactly when will you deliver the final projections?).

Beat stress surges that hit you during the day.

When you feel a round of stress coming on, try loosening up with a few big cleansing breaths. Then, give yourself a sense of accomplishment by tackling an easy ten minute task. Tinker with a broken machine or exercise the other side of your brain by working on a crossword or jigsaw puzzle.

Start everything you write with a quick summary.

You should always be able to say to yourself, "If readers read nothing but the summary, they'll get the key points."

Want an efficient way to hand out accolades?

Get others to help you do the job. Example: At S.C. Johnson & Sons in Wisconsin, workers nominate teammates for a special award, *The Standing Ovation*. Each week, the entire team stops work, goes to the lucky recipient's work area and gives that person a standing ovation.

Is engagement just a fad?


“Engagement” has been the hot buzzword in management circles the past couple of years. Like many trendy workplace concepts, it has its skeptics, and Christopher Collins is willing to be described as one.

Collins is an associate professor of human resource management at Cornell University and the author of “Critically Examining Engagement,” an article published this year on *Human Resource Executive Online*.

Collins doesn’t argue that engagement is unimportant. “I truly believe that employee engagement (defined as motivation to do the right things to help drive performance at

an organization) is critical to manage,” he writes in his article. His worry is that managers and HR professionals aren’t treating employee engagement the right way—that companies are too focused on surveys that ask questions like whether employees have a best friend at work. “I don’t know if you definitely need to have a best friend at work,” Collins said in a recent interview with *Leading for Results*.

What you do need, as the interview makes clear, is a solid understanding of what engagement really is, and how managers and organizations can use it effectively.



Three components of engagement

Engagement isn’t a phenomenon to be measured with a simple survey. Collins has identified three distinct aspects of engagement that employers need to address:

- Commitment to a manager**
An employee’s supervisor can make the difference. “When we see leaders who are more charismatic,” says Collins, “who ask for input from employees, involve employees in decision making, share information with employees, help to develop employees—employees say they’re more engaged and more committed to that leader.”
- Engagement to the organization**
“Employees may feel proud to work for the organization because of its name, its reputation, its ethical treatment of employees, or simply because employees believe that their company is doing good things as a whole,” Collins explains.
- Engagement with the job and work**
Employees may simply enjoy and feel challenged by the work they do every day, regardless of any other factors. Collins emphasizes that you don’t need all three elements to have an engaged workforce. “In many situations you can do okay by just having one or two of them in place.” Employees may not be engaged at the highest level, but they’re still more engaged than employees at companies where none of the elements of engagement exist.

Find what’s missing

The problem is measuring the factors, and this is where Collins is somewhat critical of many management consultants’ work on engagement. “They tend to have measures that mix up the things that predict engagement, how engaged people are, and the outcomes of engagement,” he says. This can lead to a situation where managers don’t know what to fix, let alone how to go about it. Breaking engagement down into the three elements discussed above is an effective way to clarify the issues, Collins maintains.

For example, if a survey shows that an organization is low on employee engagement with managers, you know what to look for: Are leaders dictatorial? Do they make all the decisions themselves? Says Collins, “That’s when you get to the point where you can say, ‘Here’s the type of engagement that’s low, and here’s what we can do to improve it.’”

Happiness is not the point

One final point to keep in mind: Engagement doesn’t necessarily correlate to workforce “happiness.” Collins notes that employees can feel happy because their job is easy. That doesn’t mean that engaged employees are generally miserable, though. “Part of what creates that engagement to leaders, or to the job, is the fact that you feel challenged,” he tells LFR. “It’s the fact that you’re working on exciting things. People see where they’re going, someone’s communicated what their role is going to be in this effort, and they can feel that sense of excitement around that.”

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Before you ask, “Why aren’t my employees working harder?” ...ask yourself, “Why are my employees working?”

A Solutions Book “Overview” for:

“The Why of Work: How Great Leaders Build Abundant Organizations That Win” by Dave and Wendy Ulrich

According to studies, we all work for the same thing—and it’s not just the money. It’s meaning. Through our work, we seek a sense of purpose, contribution, connection, value and hope. Digging down to the meaning of work taps our resilience in hard times and our passion in good times.

Employees who find meaning in their work are more competent, committed and eager to contribute. Leaders who help their employees discover meaning in what they do—and why they do it—can reap the benefits of a successful, productive work team and organization.

To better define the value, energy and hope that creates meaning at work, Dave and Wendy Ulrich, authors of “The Why of Work,” have come up with seven questions that may provide the blueprint for success.

What Am I known For (Identity)?

This question is best answered by doing two things. First, make sure you know what your customers expect from your team and what skills, tasks and actions are required to meet those expectations. Then, identify the unique strengths and interests of your team through conversation, observation, varied assignments and assessments.

Once you know what strengths exist within your team, merge them with your customer’s needs and expectations to better position the team—and each employee—to provide the products and services your customers need while doing what they do best. The employee receives greater fulfillment and meaning from their job while helping the team and organization fulfill its purpose.

Where Am I Going (Purpose and Motivation)?

The Ulrich’s contend that clarity about where we want to go and why is crucial to a sense of meaning. They believe that leaders should ask themselves that question and encourage their employees to think about that too. If you’re interested in some personal discovery, use the exercise below to identify the things that motivate you and add purpose to your life and work:

PART 1:

For 20 minutes, write whatever comes to mind that describes what your life would look like five years from today if you had become your best self and your dreams were realized.

For an additional 20 minutes, write whatever comes to mind describing what your work team or organization would look like five years from now if it had become the best it could be and all your hopes for it were realized.

PART 2:

Looking at what you wrote, identify any words that refer to creativity, imagination, or having great ideas.

Then look for words that refer to setting or achieving goals, personal or professional development, or gaining recognition for accomplishments.

Next, look for words that refer to good relationships with others, spending time with people, meeting people, or deepening personal or professional relationships.

Finally, look for words that refer to solving problems, making a difference, mentoring or developing others, and seeing people succeed.

Whom Do I Work With (Professional Relationships and Teamwork)?

In today’s workplace, many observers contend that as a result of tweets, blogs, web-based bulletin boards and more, there is a decline in interpersonal skills. If that is true, it doesn’t change the fact that there is still a lot of work to be accomplished with others and within teams. Great leaders help employees build skills for professional friendships between people and among teams.

Whether you believe that having friends at work is important or not (see the previous article – “Is Engagement Just A Fad”), the Gallup Organization’s research on the importance of socialization and friendships at work revealed that employees who do have a friend at work are seven times more likely to be purposely engaged at work than those who do not. They are almost twice as likely to be satisfied with their pay, and that number goes to three times as likely for those in lower paying jobs.

People with friends at work are also 27 percent more likely to see their strengths as aligned with their organization’s goals. And those same individuals are statistically more likely to satisfy customers, get more done in less time, have more fun on the job, innovate and share more ideas, and simply show up more consistently.

While work friendships can sometimes lead to problems (like too much talking and not enough working), the advantages seem to far outweigh the disadvantages. Bottom line—great leaders often develop good friendships at work and encourage others to do so too. They model the skills of listening to concerns, resolving conflicts and making amends—and apply those skills to relationships between people and among teams.

This article continues on the next page.

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Continued from page 9

How Do I Build A Positive Work Environment (Culture)?

A positive work environment is one in which employees are committed, productive and likely to stay around a while; where customers pick up on positive employee attitudes; and the organization’s reputation in the community is enhanced.

A great leader pays attention to the work environment and patterns of how things are done. They notice when things work well and question when bottlenecks and delays prevent work from being completed on time. They ask newcomers at work for their impressions on what is positive and what is not; and make public statements about their commitment to shaping a positive work environment.

What Challenges Interest Me (Personal Contribution)?

Different people find different kinds of work easy, energizing, and enjoyable—and different problems meaningful. Employees who are competent but not committed will not perform to their full potential. Too often employees feel emotionally disconnected from the work

they do. Their work may capture their talents and time, but not their heart.

It should come as no surprise then that when there is a clear line of sight between what we do and what we value, we find work more meaningful. Great leaders personalize work conditions so that employees know how their work contributes to outcomes that matter to them.

Most people engage in – and value work that can be categorized into three areas:

Intellectual – analyzing problems, discovering alternatives and creating innovative solutions.

Physical – doing things that emphasize concrete, touchable results like making mock-ups of new designs or products, doing on-site visits to observe how work is done, and turning ideas into action.

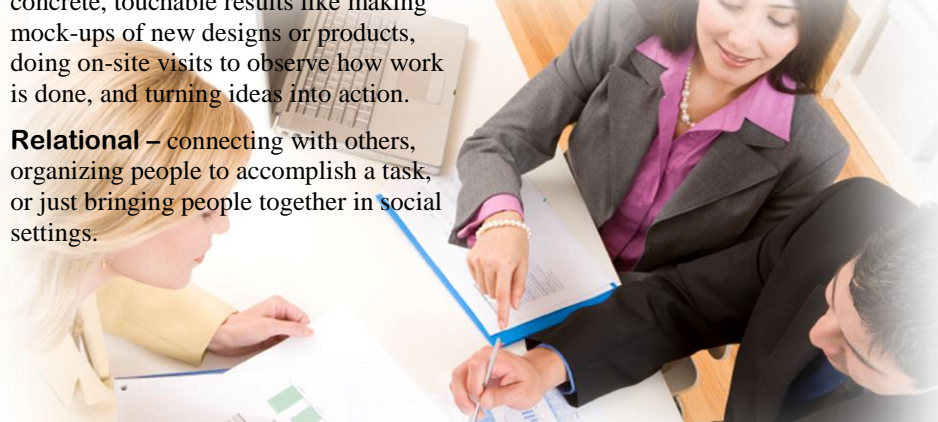
Relational – connecting with others, organizing people to accomplish a task, or just bringing people together in social settings.

While few positions are rarely one or the other, a great leader may decide to use a self-assessment like the one below to determine what his preferred style of work is, or as a way to talk to employees to determine their preferred work type.

This article concludes on the next page.

“The task of leadership is to communicate clearly and repeatedly the organization’s vision...all with intent of helping every person involved understand what work needs to be done and why, and what part the individual plays in the overall effort.”

-James O’Toole



For each question, check only one of A, B or C

QUESTION	A	B	C
What word describes your work preference?	Ideas	Actions	Relationships
What work challenges would most excite you?	Drafting a proposal/report	Building a model	Being part of a team
What work outcome would most delight you?	Someone using my ideas	Someone using my product	Someone inviting me to join him/her
What work image appeals to you the most?	Sitting in a chair with a book	Working in a shop with tools	Engaging in conversation
How would you prefer to spend your time?	Learning about a new idea	Perfecting a new technique	Making a new friend
Which would you prefer to work with?	Words	Tools	People
Which would you rather do?	Plan and organize	Implement and make happen	Make others feel comfortable
If you worked for an airplane manufacturer, which would you rather do?	Design the plane	Build the plane	Show customers the plane
What is the best part of your workday?	Having time to think and reflect	When I get things done	When I share the day with someone else
If you visited a foreign country, what would you prefer to do there?	Learn about the history and culture	Participate in the local activities	Talk to and get to know the people
TOTAL	Intellectual	Physical	Relational

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Continued from page 10

How Do I Respond To Change (Growth, Learning and Resilience)?

In 1976, Americans drank an average of 1.6 gallons of bottled water per year; in 2006, the average was 28.3 gallons. One in eight couples married in the United States during 2005 met online.

These changes and millions more constantly take us into new territory. When we face change and take risks to work outside our comfort zone, learn from failure and keep trying, we become not only more resilient, but also more satisfied with life.

Leaders who encourage learning seek new ways to do things. In the face of change they are open to experimenting, adapting and improving. They are self-reflective and encourage others to do the same by asking questions such as:

- What can I learn about myself from what just took place (in a meeting, conversation, or presentation)?
- What did I do in this setting (meeting, conversation, task) that worked? Why?
- What did I do that didn’t work? Why?
- Is this how I generally respond to similar situations?
- What could I try instead?

Leaders who are focused on learning in the change process approach difficult and new assignments by asking lots of questions and are open to alternatives rather than locked into “we’ve always done it that way.” They challenge themselves and their team to develop an attitude for innovation that captures their commitment to experimentation.

To manage their team effectively, leaders understand that:

- Ideas can come from anybody.
- It’s important to share as much information as you can.
- It’s okay to recruit/trust somebody more insightful than you.
- Doing at least one thing each week that contributes to the organization in a manner that energizes you can have a dramatic impact on your own motivation level.
- It’s okay to look for quick wins.
- You can’t just say “I like it” – you also need to focus on why you like it.
- Before dismissing a “bad” idea, consider how it can be transformed with new approaches that have a greater chance for success
- Even if it’s not “your thing,” you must still focus on budgets and timelines because they are important to innovation too.
- You care about the customer first.
- Having an innovation sparring partner who challenges you to keep thinking outside the box (even if he/she is your exact opposite in how they think) can be invaluable.

What delights me (civility and happiness)

Great leaders strive to move their teams and organizations from indifference to inclusiveness through problem solving, listening, curiosity, diversity and compassion. They help shape the vision or identify problems, and also help their teams muster the stamina to get somewhere new. They begin by identifying “who is on the bus” with them by asking themselves these pointed questions:

Who are my most creative employees? What do they need to work creatively?

- More clarity about what is needed?
- Defined parameters?
- More help?
- More experience?
- More encouragement?
- More protection from the criticism of others in the early stages of change?
- More realism about what can or cannot be done?

Who are my least creative employees?

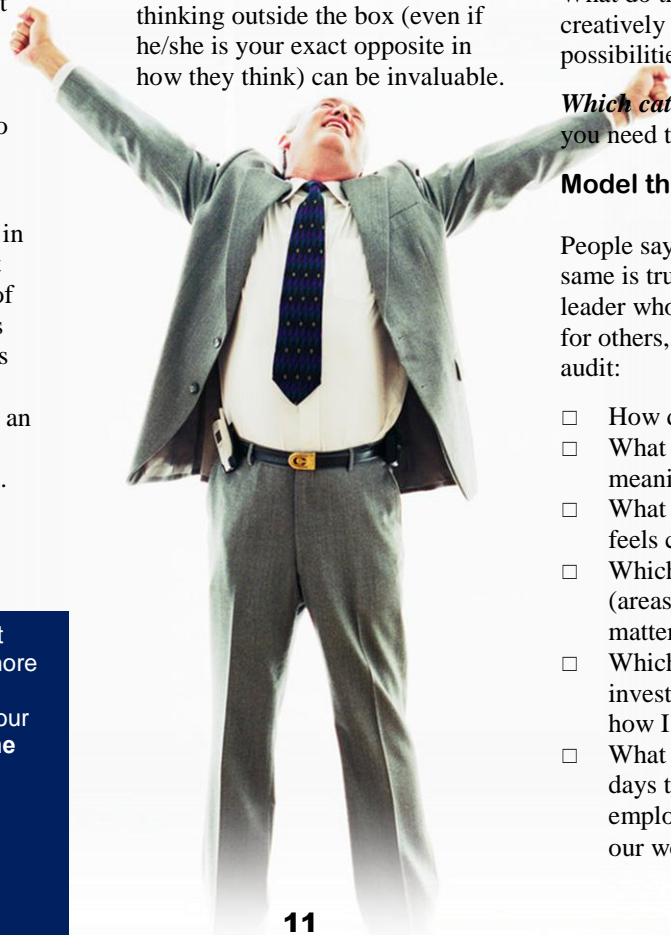
What do they need to work more creatively (Consider the same possibilities listed above.)

Which category do I fall into? What do you need to work more creatively?

Model the Way

People say charity begins at home. The same is true for meaning. To become a leader who shapes and creates meaning for others, start with a personal meaning audit:

- How do I feel about my work?
- What aspects of my job are the most meaningful to me?
- What am I trying to accomplish that feels connected to my own values?
- Which of the seven questions (areas) about meaning at work matter most to me?
- Which of the seven areas could I invest in to make a difference in how I experience my job?
- What could I do in the next 30 to 90 days to help myself and my employees find more meaning in our work?



If you'd like to learn much more about building winning organizations, find more information for each of the questions included in this article and discover your own “why of work,” buy the book, “**The Why of Work: How Great Leaders Build Abundant Organizations**” by Dave and Wendy Ulrich, McGraw-Hill Publishing, 2010.

Resilience

Resilience is the ability and courage to bounce back and try again when faced with change. One of the greatest examples of resilience is U.S. President Abraham Lincoln. Born into poverty, Lincoln faced defeat throughout his life. He lost eight elections, failed at two businesses, and suffered a nervous breakdown. Here is a sketch of Lincoln's road to the White House:

1816: His parents were forced out of their home.

1818: His mother died.

1831: He failed in business.

1832: He ran for the state legislature and was defeated. He lost his job. He wanted to go to law school but couldn't get in.

1833: He borrowed money from a friend to begin a business and lost it all by the end of the year. He spent the next 17 years paying off his debt.

1834: He ran for the state legislature again and won.

1835: He was engaged to be married when his fiancé died and his heart was broken.

1836: He had a total nervous breakdown and was in bed for six months.

1838: He sought to become speaker of the state legislature and was defeated.

1843: He ran for Congress and was defeated.

1846: He ran for Congress again and won. He went to Washington and did well.

1848: He ran for reelection to Congress and was defeated.

1854: He ran for Senate of the United States and was defeated.

1856: He sought the vice presidential nomination at his party's national convention and got fewer than 100 votes.

1858: He ran for U.S. Senate again and was defeated.

1860: He ran for, and was elected, *president of the United States*.

Clearly, Lincoln not only learned from setbacks but demonstrated almost inconceivable resilience. His biographers have described the emotional strengths that contributed to his enormous resilience:

Empathy: He could put himself in the place of others and appreciate their point-of-view.

Humor: He used self-deprecating humor and storytelling to put people at ease.

Magnanimity: He held no grudges against those who disagreed with him.

Generosity of Spirit: He publicly admitted mistakes and took blame for administrative errors.

Perspective: He put things in context, to see the big picture.

Self-control: He controlled his public emotions, sometimes by writing a letter to himself and then tearing it up.

Balance: He was able to relax and entertain friends even in the midst of stress.

Social Conscience: He tirelessly worked to serve others.

Lincoln's resilience enabled him to cope with huge setbacks and try again—maintaining the perspective that he had enough of what it would take to succeed. Today's leaders facing setbacks and challenges of their own may be able to strengthen their personal and professional resilience by taking a cue from one of our country's greatest presidents.

6 GREAT WORK PARADOXES

1. You don't need to save the world. You do need to make a difference.

The desire to do great work isn't a call to abandon your everyday life and become a martyr to a cause—but it is a call to do more meaningful work. What can you do more of that makes a difference, has an impact, moves things forward and engages other people to do GREAT WORK with you? There are opportunities to do any of these things all around you right now.

2. GREAT WORK can be private or public.

It can be nice to get the applause, or receive the pat on the back that says, *Well done!* And sometimes GREAT WORK does just that—but not always. Often the reward of GREAT WORK is simply a moment of private triumph—when you know you've done something that raised the bar a little, something that pushed you to go a little further than you did last week.

3. GREAT WORK is needed, but not always wanted.

What calls you to do great work is often a feeling of "I can't take it anymore. I've got to do something different." But remember that GOOD WORK can get in the way of GREAT WORK—because GOOD WORK can mean sustaining the way things are with minimal interruption. Taking a stand for GREAT WORK may mean swimming against the tide.

4. GREAT WORK is both easy and difficult.

Sometimes when you're doing GREAT WORK, it's a glorious thing. You're in the zone and things come easy—but not always—and not most of the time. Sometimes, trying to do GREAT WORK will test you. It will require uncertainty, picking yourself up off the floor, and using every bit of your skills and talents along with your resilience to make it through.

5. GREAT WORK is about doing what's meaningful, not necessarily about doing it well.

Here's the irony: It's often easy to deliver good work (or even bad work) at an excellent level. GREAT WORK often means working at the edge of your competence, because the work is different and you haven't done it a thousand times. You're unlikely to be able to do it perfectly the first time.

6. GREAT WORK can take a moment, or a lifetime.

GREAT WORK can happen in a single moment at a time when you feel your best, achieving a personal triumph. It can be the culmination of days, weeks or years of practice. GREAT WORK can also be a project that develops over time—something that you've started and seen through. Not every minute of the journey may have been great, but what it adds up to is. GREAT WORK can also take a lifetime. It can be a commitment to making changes in yourself and your world by the work you do, or a connection to a cause that pulls you forward and helps you be who you want to be. **Somehow, time can both shrink and stretch to accommodate a GREAT WORK moment.**