

Passion



“What I realize more than ever now is that my job is curation of our culture ... If you don’t focus on creating a culture that allows people to do their best work, then you’ve created nothing.”²⁶

Why Passion Matters

The Chemistry of High Performance is not just about what you do as an organization, but (more importantly) about who you are. Culture matters—a lot. Culture can be defined in terms of values, behaviors, and attitudes—or it can emerge as a lack of any definition. Whether you have clearly defined it or not, corporate culture exists. It happens with every action, every process, every communication, and every observed behavior. People look for congruence—for authenticity. They want to know that you are who you say you are. The minute there is a hint of inauthentic behavior in the air, your employees pick up on it and no longer listen to your words, but focus on your actions. When there is a disconnect, it can breed cynicism, fear, blame, and forced behavior—all of these outcomes being the enemy of innovation and creativity—the very things that drive new ideas and growth.

How do you create the kind of place where people can do their best work? We know through recent research done by Oracle and the Talent Strategy Institute (2016)²⁷ that organizations that are able to attract and retain great talent, first and foremost, live their values. Their leaders are clear on how they want to treat people, about what they believe in, how they need to support and develop people, and very importantly, how they have the right tools and technology to support and grow the organization.

Organizations that live their values are exciting places to work—people are passionate about being there and making a contribution. The passion, focus, and trust are woven into the very fiber of who they are—it is not a slogan, or a program, or a series of statements posted on a wall—it is how they live, every day.

You can’t fake passion. It is palpable in the energy people have toward the organization, their work, their peers, working together, creating something great.

If passion is so organic, can you do anything to create or inspire it? I believe the answer is “yes!”

²⁶ USA Today, Microsoft’s Satya Nadella Is Counting on Culture Shock to Drive Growth, [usatoday.com/story/tech/news/2017/02/20/microsofts-satya-nadella-counting-culture-shock-drive-growth/98011388/](https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/news/2017/02/20/microsofts-satya-nadella-counting-culture-shock-drive-growth/98011388/)
²⁷ Oracle and the Talent Strategy Institute, Four Ways to Build a Talent Magnet Organization, [oracle.com/us/products/applications/talent-magnet-3236631.pdf](https://www.oracle.com/us/products/applications/talent-magnet-3236631.pdf).



Where Are We Now?

When we began researching culture and engagement in 2014, it was clear that there had to be something beyond engagement—because by all accounts, our efforts in trying to measure and build engagement were largely not working. I came to this conclusion when, year after year, I would see Gallup reports containing similar findings: that 73 percent of the workforce was either disengaged or highly disengaged.²⁸ How can this be, after all the hundreds of millions of dollars spent on surveying engagement, planning and delivering feedback sessions, action planning, resurveying, and training? It's because engagement is not a survey, training program, or post-survey planning seminar—it is the result of doing a lot of things right within your organization. It is the outcome of passionate people doing great work, and organizations being clear about their values and living them in real ways. It happens when leaders want to create great employee experiences for their people and own the translation of values into behaviors that create a culture.

Getting to passion begins with the realization that you have to go beyond engagement. In the book *"Engagement Is Not Enough"* by Keith Ayers, I discovered a new approach. In my 20-plus years as



Working Human

an HR practitioner and thought leader, I have rarely come across a book that so clearly defines how to create passion in an organization. It clearly articulated and presented a pathway for organizations to create great cultures. It not only identified the elements of passion, but also defined the path for leaders to follow for supporting the development of their people and teams. It offered a Passion Index (Intégro Leadership Institute, 2008) that organizations could use to understand where they were relative to the conditions and behaviors that created passionate organizations.

In creating the elements in the Chemistry of High Performance, it was essential to have the discussion about passion, culture, and high-potential leadership because they were not just the "what" of an organization, but the "how." The "who and how we are, behind what we do." So, I went to the source, and contacted Keith Ayers and asked if he might be willing to be a contributor to

this ebook. I was beyond thrilled when he said yes.

It is exciting to offer Keith's perspective, wisdom, and knowledge in the upcoming sections. While I may have edited and added content here and there for the sake of connecting this work to the whole, this is Keith's contribution, for which I am very grateful.

At a time when people are telling us they want more from work—where they want more connection, relationship, conversation, and collaboration—the work of culture, passion, and leadership are more important than ever. In the age of digital HR, it is not about replacing the relationships and conversations with technology, but about using technology in ways that support living your values, great employee experiences, connections, and collaboration.

Let's begin with a look at how to get to passion!



How You Win

²⁸ Gallup, *State of the Global Workplace*, [securex.be/export/sites/default/content/download-gallery/nl/brochures/Gallup-state-of-the-GlobalWorkplaceReport_20131.pdf](https://www.gallup.com/securex.be/export/sites/default/content/download-gallery/nl/brochures/Gallup-state-of-the-GlobalWorkplaceReport_20131.pdf).

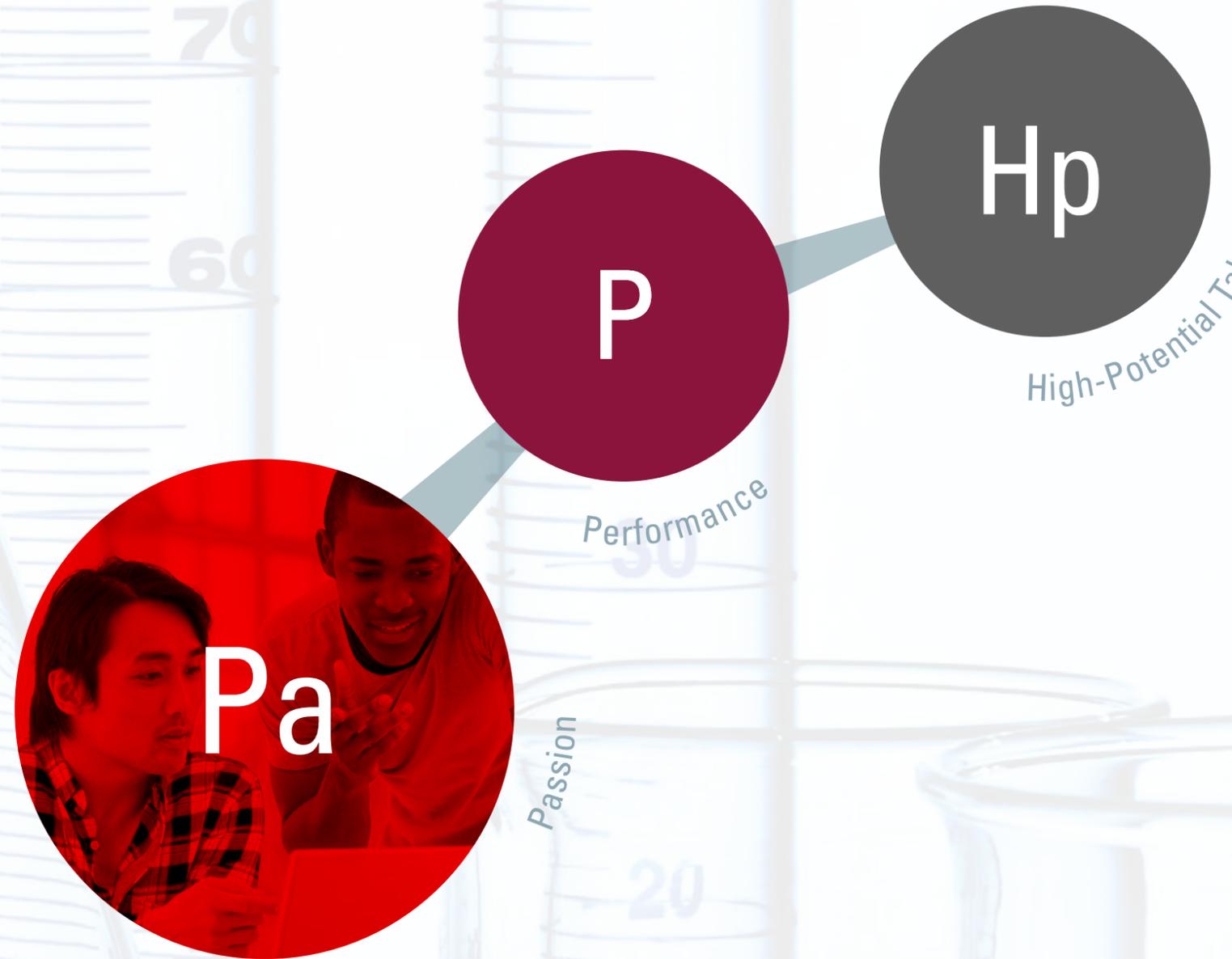
How Do You Get Beyond Engagement to Passion?

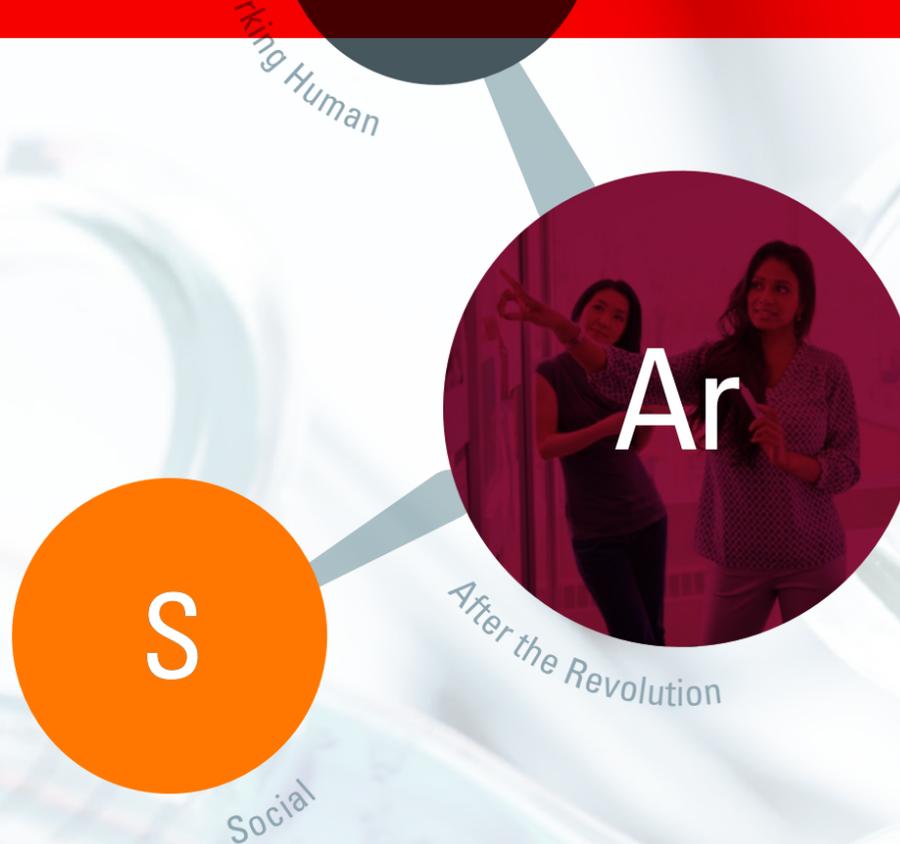
This question led us over time to take a different approach—instead of looking for measures of engagement, we wanted to measure employee passion.

The distinction between the two matters. Are people passionate about the actual work they do on a daily basis? Are they passionate about the organization they work for—its culture and values demonstrated through senior leadership? What are the drivers of employee passion? Ultimately, we believe it is looking into an emotional connection, hence our use of the term *passion*, rather than just *engagement*.

In our experience, there is a significant difference between passion for the job and passion for the employer. We believe that people who are passionate both about their work *and* their employer are substantially more committed to the organization. After all, if they are passionate only about their day-to-day tasks—their profession—they could easily leave the organization and find the work elsewhere.

What we believe is missing from the discussion of engagement is the understanding that the employee must have both a really strong commitment to the organization they work for, and a passion for doing their best in everything.





Passion and Performance

At Intégro Leadership Institute, we have long witnessed the positive impact of employee passion on bottom-line results through our work with organizations across the globe.

The CEO of a major Australian construction firm credits his firm’s drive to improve employee passion levels for its ability to double sales while only increasing staff numbers by 29. Increased passion for the organization was a major contributor to the surge in productivity the company achieved through the customer-service and relationship-building improvements.

We also collaborated with a major pharmaceutical company to help develop greater team cohesion and personal responsibility for its sales teams. The firm’s regional manager for Asia noted how her sales teams displayed significant improvements in decision-making and accountability. A more passionate group of employees took more responsibility for its collective performance.

In an effort to build a passionate culture at his firm, the general manager of a large Australian manufacturer worked with us to focus on leadership skills to embed the culture at all levels. We measured over time the positive impact that a sustained emphasis on trust-based leadership has had on employees’ trust for senior management, and increased passion for the organization. They attribute this extraordinary success in large part to the culture they have developed together.

In each of these instances, and in many others, we have noted how passionate employees create winning teams. Yes, an organization can function with average levels of engagement. But without a doubt, passion is a significant factor differentiating between good and great organizations.

Passion Versus Engagement

So what exactly is a passionate employee? Passionate employees are focused, responsible, and committed to consistently perform at their best. They know their value, and have a strong emotional connection with the organization they work for—they feel a sense of pride and commitment. As a result, they deliver exceptional value to their internal and external customers.



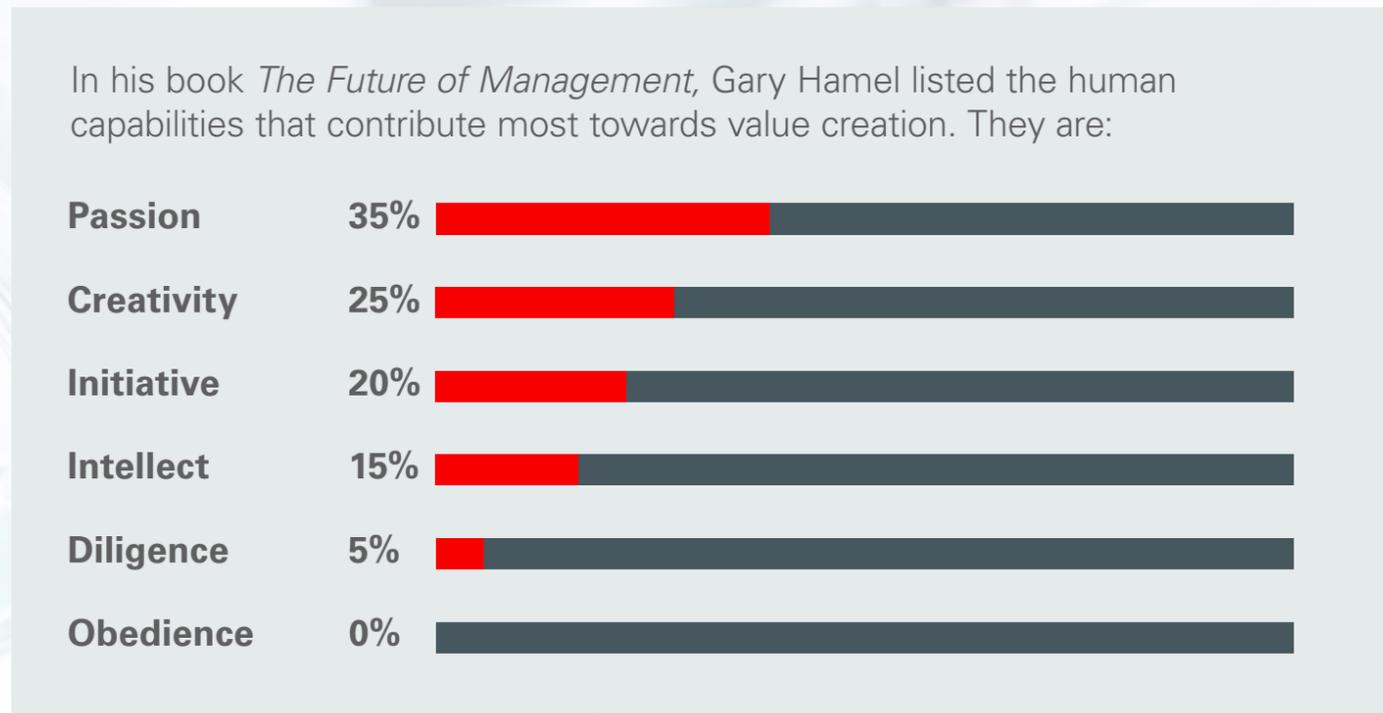
He went on to say:

“
I’m not suggesting that obedience is literally worth nothing. Instead I’m arguing that rule-following employees are worth zip in terms of the competitive advantage they create.
 ”

It is important to note that the top four capabilities that contribute 95 percent of value creation cannot be forced by management—the employee will only contribute these capabilities when they want to.

In a recent CEO report by PwC,²⁹ we see that the hardest skills to recruit for are not the tangible skills associated with one’s discipline or practice area; they are the unique characteristics within the person—their approach, the way they think and behave, what they believe, how they interact with other people, how they show up, and how they apply their knowledge and skills within the organization.

29 PwC, UK CEOs Bullish on Business Growth, but Fear for the Global Economy—PwC CEO Survey, pwc.co.uk/who-we-are/regional-sites/northern-ireland/insights/global-ceo-survey.html.



**The view from the top:
2017 PwC CEO Survey results.**

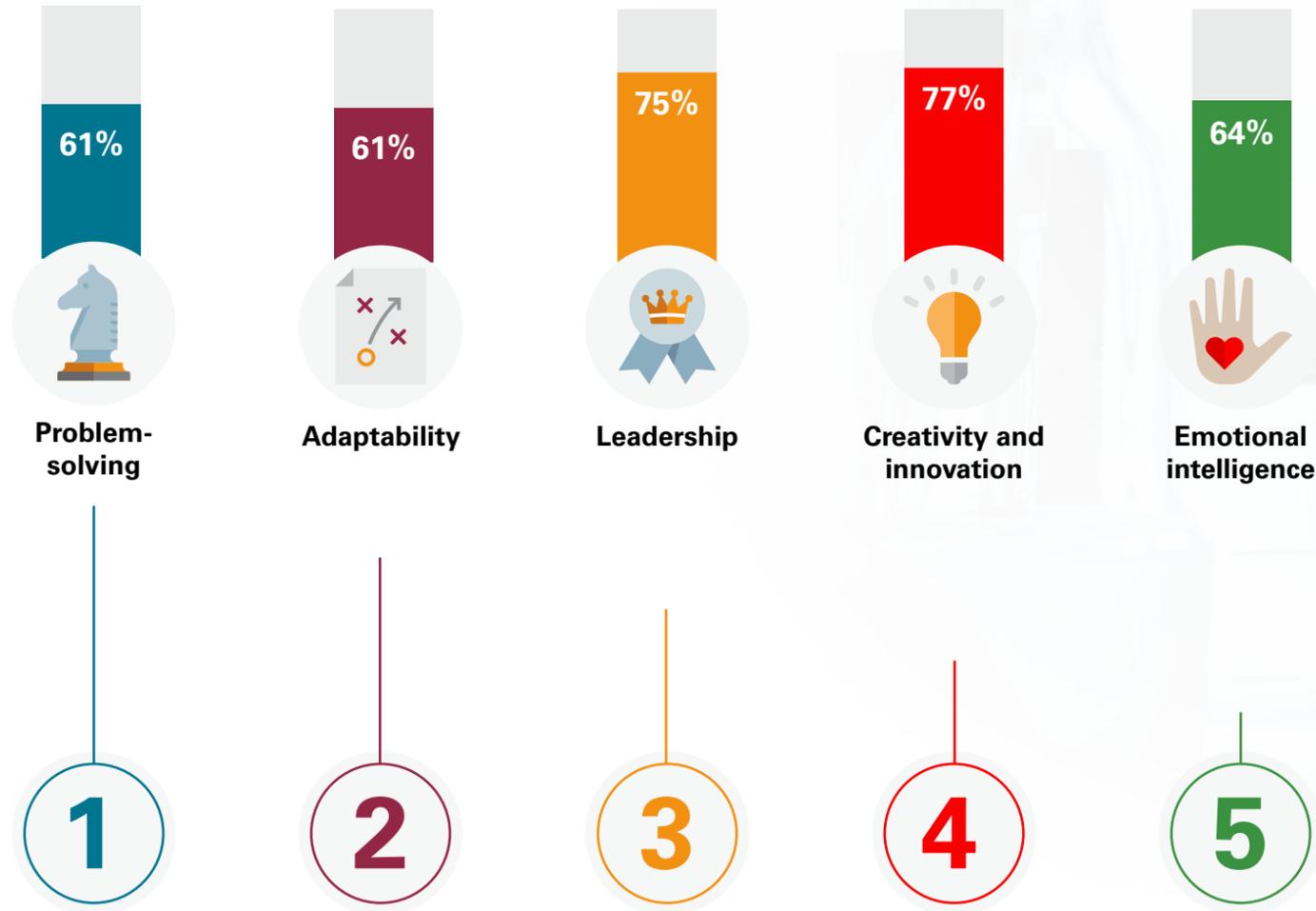
The hardest skills to find are those that can't be performed by machines.

Q: How difficult, if at all, is it for your organization to recruit people with these skills or characteristics?

Q: In addition to technical business expertise, how important are the following skills to your organization?

Difficulty in recruiting people with skill

Respondents who answered *somewhat difficult* or *very difficult*



Importance of skill

Respondents who answered *somewhat important* or *very important*

Given the primary purpose of your organization is to deliver value to your customers, the more passionate your employees are, the more value you will deliver.

The distinction between passion and engagement was also a differentiator in gathering our research. We found, through our interactions with employees in our research and consulting capacity, that people find it difficult to assess their own engagement level. It is too abstract.

But when we ask people if they are passionate about something or not, it is much more natural for them to provide an answer. We have found this especially helpful when distinguishing between passion for the work and passion for the organization. The question tends to bring out an instant reaction one way or another—an emotive response. This apparently semantic difference has become critical for our research.

The Importance of Trust

Stock options, incentives, and bonuses do not create teams of passionate people—trust does. In a general sense, as interpersonal trust develops within an organization, or between organizations that need to interact with one another, relationships form more easily. In reality, much of what we ultimately achieve in business comes from relationships—both internally and externally.

The most successful executives tend to be those who can build and sustain such relationships. As interpersonal trust diminishes, relationships become more distant and conflict may even ensue. For leaders, a high level of trust is necessary to ensure that employees are passionate and committed to the organization's purpose, values, and vision. Employees need to know they can trust the organization's leadership team and their immediate management.

Most leaders accept that trust is important, but many fail to understand that simply being a trustworthy person does not automatically create a trusting relationship. People make judgments about how trustworthy their leaders are based on their perception of what their leaders do, not on what they say or what they intended to do.

Given that behavior ultimately builds (or diminishes) trust, leaders can be trustworthy, honest, and ethical, and yet employees may not trust them. For example, you may have worked for a manager who was honest, ethical, and extremely intelligent, yet had no people skills. She was judgmental and saw no problem in criticizing employees in front of the whole team. Being honest and ethical didn't help this manager build trust because her actions negated those qualities.

To increase effectiveness in building trust, leaders at all levels of the organization need to take personal responsibility for their behavior and commit to using all four of the behaviors that build trust: acceptance, openness, congruence, and reliability.



The Values That Build Trust

After many years of sharing these four trust-building behaviors with leaders, I found that although most acknowledged that it was a simple, and powerful tool, many of them struggled to follow through and use the behaviors. So in 2007 I decided to explore what it would take to motivate leaders to be more diligent in operating by these behaviors. I identified two values that drive each of the four behaviors.

My thinking was that if you believed in the values, the behavior would follow.

Here are the four behaviors with values that drive them:

Behaviors	Supporting Values
Acceptance	Respect and Recognition
Openness	Receptivity and Disclosure
Congruence	Straightforwardness and Honesty
Reliability	Keeps Commitments and Seeks Excellence

When you genuinely operate by these eight values day in, day out, because you believe it is important to do so, you will see amazing results. The trust your team members have for you will grow substantially, and with that trust will come increased levels of engagement, passion, and performance.

It may seem simple, almost *too* simple. But you would be amazed how many employees say that their bosses lack some or even all of these values. How many do you think you adhere to every day?



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The Eight Values That Build Trust

How would your team members rate you on each statement?

1. Respect

I respect people for who they are.

Yes, this is also one of the needs that ignite passion, and it is important that you believe in respecting and accepting people. Respect is the foundation on which mutual trust is built. If a member of your team does not believe you respect them, they simply will not want to work for you.

2. Recognition

I appreciate what they do.

If someone does a good job, why shouldn't that be noted? After all, if they do a bad job it certainly will be. How can your employees improve unless good work is recognized?

3. Receptivity

I solicit others' thoughts and opinions.

There is no better way to show someone that they are important to you than to listen to what they say. Do you ever ask: "What are your thoughts on this issue?" "How can I do a better job?"

4. Disclosure

I share my thoughts and opinions with others.

Just as your team members like to be able to share their views, they also want to know what *you're* thinking. They want to know what's going on in the organization. A lack of transparency leads to uncertainty and confusion.

5. Straightforwardness

I am direct with people.

When a team member asks you a question and you respond without really answering it, it is painfully obvious. They know an evasive answer when they get one. Being direct does not mean being blunt. Tell it how it is—with respect.

6. Honesty

I am honest and ethical.

We all want to succeed in our professional endeavors, but sometimes people push boundaries and may bend the truth a little. Do you tell the truth and avoid ethical gray areas?

7. Keeps Commitments

I keep my commitments.

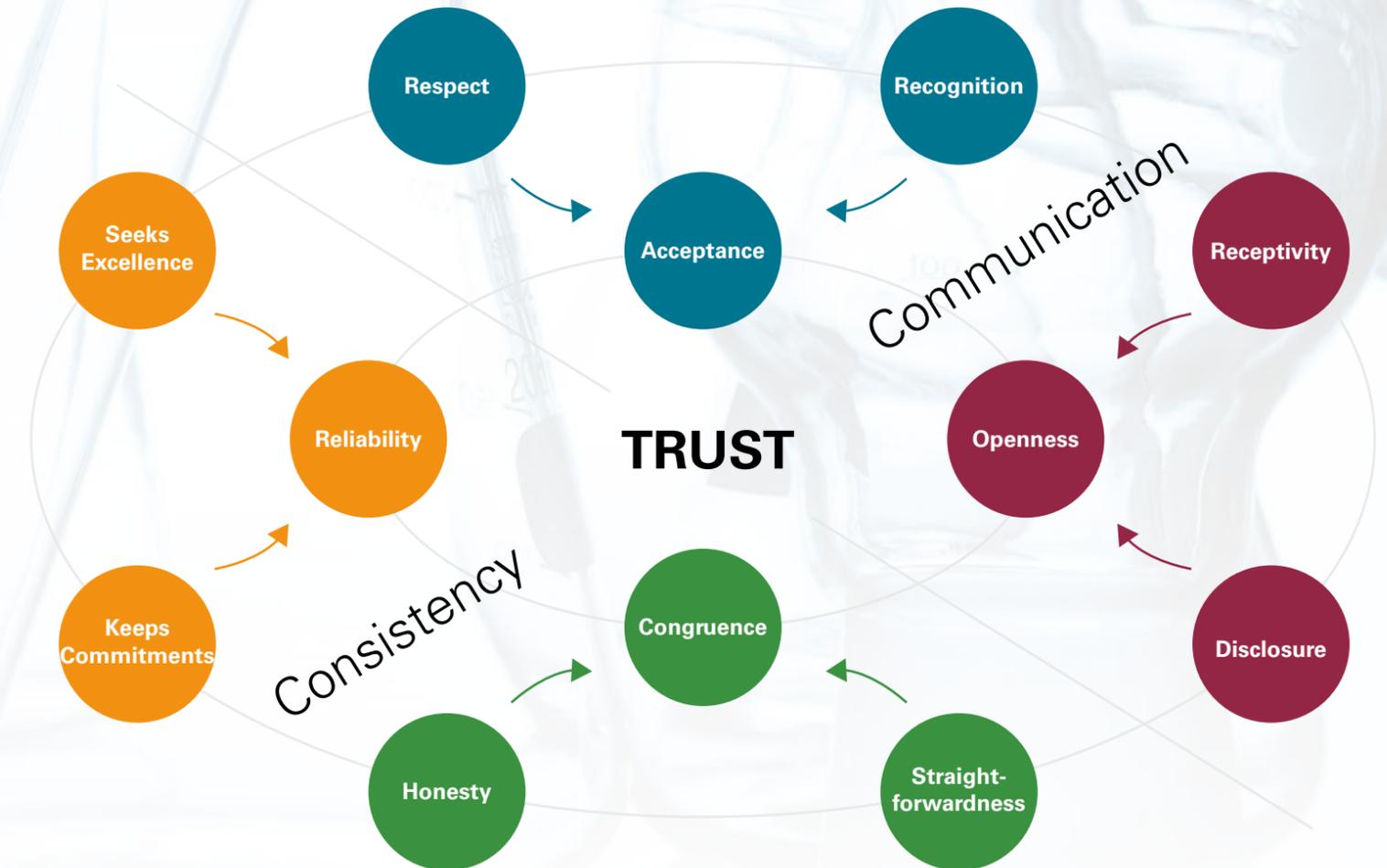
If you say you're going to do something, do it. Some of us are overly optimistic about what we can achieve. We might commit to something without considering its feasibility, or just simply forget. Stop and think when making commitments: "Can I really follow through on this commitment?"

8. Seeks Excellence

I always do my best.

Leaders advance their careers through hard work and dedication. As a leader, once you've achieved your goals, do you give up? Have you reached a certain altitude where you are happy to cruise along? Employees trust a leader who is always striving to improve their own performance, and that of their team.

The Values that Build Trust™



Research Findings

We wanted to test the idea that many employees are passionate about what they do, but that not all of them are passionate about the organization they work for. In establishing a true customer-focused culture, in which all employees act as veritable ambassadors for the organization—promoting the business and its values simply because they believe in them too—it is essential to ensure that employees are passionate about the organization as well as the job they do.

Rob Markey, a partner at management consultants Bain & Company and coauthor of *The Ultimate Question 2.0: How Net Promoter Companies Thrive in a Customer-Driven World*, refers to this link between employee passion and customer service as “passion advocacy.”

We decided to survey more than five thousand employees at a variety of organizations in Australia and the United States to better understand passion.

We found that a large majority identified themselves as passionate about what they do—and broadly fit into the “engaged” category. But of these employees, only 57 percent were passionate about the organization as well. This gap—the **passion deficit**—underlies the hidden emotional disconnect among otherwise engaged employees.

This is a challenge for employers. First, those who are passionate about what

they do but not passionate about the organization will be more difficult to retain. High-potential and otherwise engaged employees are the ones you most want to keep, so focusing on passion is key. Second, those who are not passionate about the organization are less likely to deliver excellent customer service than those who *are* passionate. After all, why would they promote an organization they are emotionally disconnected from?



Trust Is the Foundation

Having identified these values, we developed the survey so we could test how important these values are to employees, and how they rated their organization’s ability to operate by them. This section of the survey was called the Values that Build Trust (VBT).

We developed one item for each trust value, and asked two questions about each:

- How important is this to you personally?
- How well does your organization operate by this value?

Participants responded using a 10-point scale for both questions, where 1 was the lowest and 10 was the highest.

The metrics of measuring passion—how we did it and what we found...

Over 5,000 surveys were collected between 2012 and 2016, with an even split between the US and Australia, across a wide range of industries including manufacturing, healthcare, government agencies, IT, finance, and not-for-profit.

The results were very clear: These eight values that build trust are significantly important to virtually everyone. The average score for importance on each of the eight values ranged from 9.1 to 9.4 out of 10.

The most important measurement in this section is the gap between personal importance and what we call the work performance score—how well employees perceive the organization to be operating by these values. The total gap scores for all eight values is a very good indicator of the level of trust that exists within the organization; more specifically, between management and employees.

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Does trust correlate with employee passion?

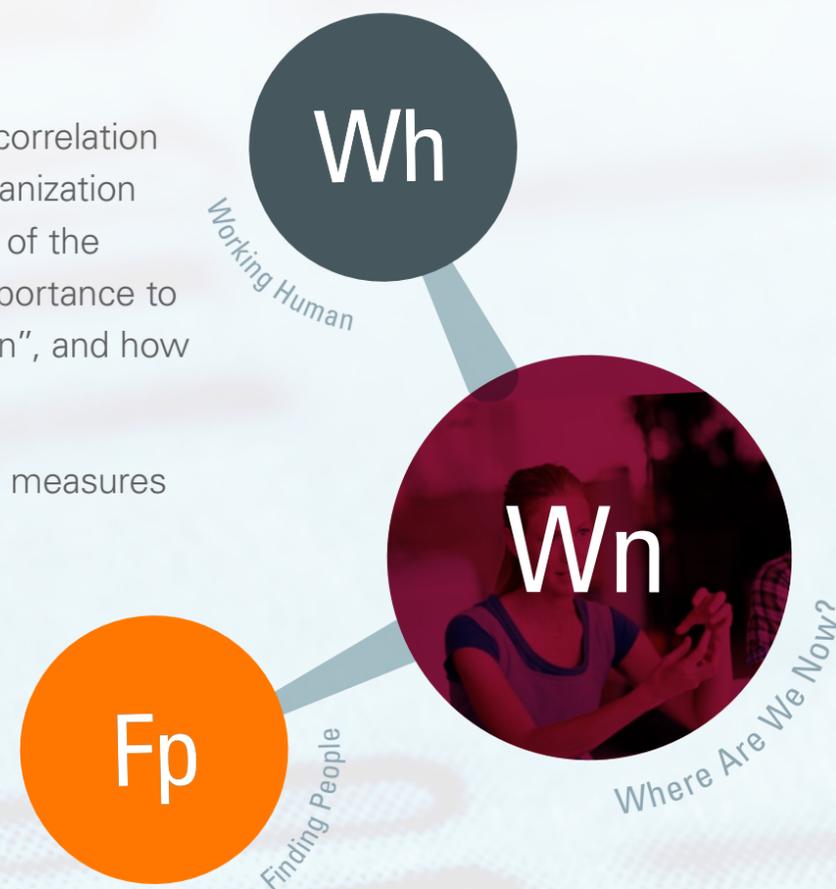
We hypothesized that there would be a strong correlation between the trust employees have for their organization and their level of passion. So in another section of the survey, we developed items to measure the importance to employees of the five “needs that ignite passion”, and how well those needs were being satisfied.

This section, the Employee Passion Index (EPI), measures the five employee needs:

1. The need to be respected
2. The need to learn and grow
3. The need to be an insider
4. The need to do meaningful work
5. The need to be on a winning team

We asked employees to respond to 10 distinct items, two for each employee need. First, respondents rated the importance of the item to them personally and then how well they believed their manager, team, or organization satisfied this need.

Each item was assessed on a 10-point scale, where 1 was the lowest and 10 was the highest.



The critical measurement here is the gap between “importance” and “satisfaction”, where again we take the total gap scores for the 10 items to create a single number, the Employee Passion Index. Obviously, the higher the gap score the less satisfied employees are, and the less passionate they are, particularly about the organization.

Level of employee passion.

The last question we asked employees in the survey was to determine how passionate they are about the work they do, and their organization.

The survey asked respondents to choose which one of five descriptions best described them. The descriptions outlined the behavior, thinking, and feeling of employees who fit the following five categories:

Level 5: Passionate about both the job and the organization

Level 4: Passionate only about the job

Level 3: Passionate only about the organization

Level 2: Not passionate but still conscientious

Level 1: Disconnected from the job and the organization

People Are Not As Passionate About Their Organization

Our findings uncovered some good news and some challenging news. First, the good news: *86.5 percent of respondents were either Level 4 or Level 5*, indicating that the vast majority of employees are at the very least passionate about their job and the work they do; they know that what they do is contributing value.

Now for the challenging news: Of the passionate employees, just under half identified themselves as passionate about their job, but not about the organization. More precisely, in our research sample as a whole, 37.5 percent of respondents, whom we refer to as Level 4 employees, identified themselves as “passionate only about the job” compared to 49 percent, the Level 5s, who identified themselves as “passionate about the job and the organization.”

Members of the Level 4 group are dedicated to the work they do, but could most likely be persuaded to do it elsewhere. Given that they are passionate about their work, they are most likely high-potential people. But their lack of passion for their organization means they are not likely to be going the extra mile, and certainly not acting as passion advocates.

This presents an opportunity for leadership. The primary reason that Level 4 employees identify themselves as passionate about what they do, but not about the organization is because of one phrase in the description: “You don’t feel your contribution is valued.”

By focusing on the five needs that ignite passion described earlier in this chapter, leaders can ensure that all team members know that their contribution is valued, and develop *more “passion advocates,” and ultimately contribute to better bottom-line results.*

Employers are missing an enormous opportunity to convert more than a third of their staff, who are not currently advocates, to be actively promoting the organization. Imagine the impact that increasing such a significant number of passion advocates could have on your organization—from culture to customer satisfaction.



What Do You Really Believe About Your People?

In the end, it comes down to what you really believe about people. Do you believe that people are inherently trustworthy and want to do the best they can do for their company?

Or do you believe that people are inherently self-serving and only want to do the least they can get away with to keep their jobs? That people cannot be trusted? If this is your view, we've found no research to support it—and it can be detrimental to your success in managing people.

Trust is an essential foundation for creating a high-performance team. When you genuinely trust people, believe in and partner with them, when you get them more involved and give them more responsibility, then you have people who really want to do their best for you.

Take time to think about the people on your team. What are the unique skills and talents they bring to the table?

Do they have hidden strengths they could be using to better the team? If you don't know, then take time to find out.

When you believe in people, you lay the foundation for an open and honest work environment in which employees feel switched on, engaged, and prepared to be passionate about their work and their organization. It may not always seem this way, but your team members really want to make a difference and want to do their best. It is only when you truly believe this about your people that you will be able to build the trusting relationships necessary to get the best performance from your team.

Pamela Stroko

Vice President, HCM Transformation & Thought Leadership at Oracle Corporation.

Keith Ayers

Founder of Intégro Leadership Institute, and author of *Engagement is Not Enough: You Need Passionate Employees to Achieve Your Dream* (Elevate, July 2008).

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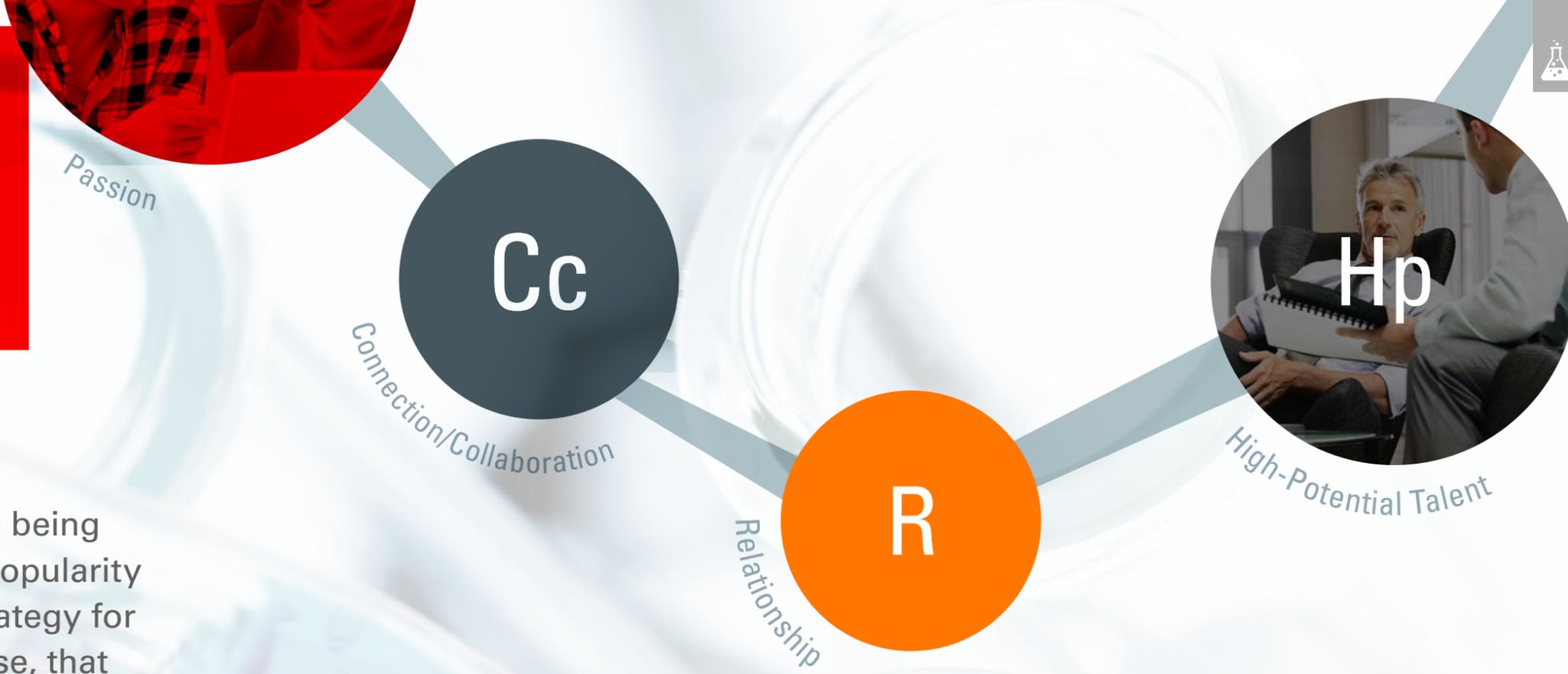


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Where Are We Now?

Chapter Two: Part Two

Culture



Years ago there was a phrase being bantered about that gained popularity for its truth: “Culture eats strategy for breakfast!” It means, of course, that often the best strategies and plans evolve to face reality when you try to implement them in an organization—and then you must deal with the realities of what the culture is and isn’t.

Culture can be what is visible and spoken, but often is characterized by what is unspoken and what lies beneath the surface—the things everyone seems to know about but you may not see in the light of day—that’s what makes it so powerful. It happens when people talk about “how things really are” versus corporate messaging. In this competitive talent market, having a great culture

where people can do their best work is essential. Understanding what matters in creating great cultures and then guiding the further development of your organization’s culture can give you a distinct competitive advantage. Competitors may be able to copy business strategies and plans—but they can’t copy who you are and that unique formula for how you live and work day to day.

Culture is often viewed as the “soft stuff.” In reality, it is the “hard stuff”—hard to change within organizations, and more importantly, directly responsible for business performance.

In this section we will look at the dimensions of culture and how it impacts the bottom line—and give you ideas and tools you can use to create a more passionate culture in your organization.



What Is Culture?

An organization’s culture is translated as “the way we do things around here.” For example, in a high-performance culture, everyone in the organization is focused on performing at their best, and delivering on the organization’s value promise.

The culture is a reflection of the values, beliefs, and behaviors by which people operate in the organization. Where does it come from? It starts with the CEO and the leadership team creating the values, beliefs, and behaviors that form the guardrails of the culture.

What are the values, beliefs, and behaviors by which your leadership team operates?

Trust is an essential foundation of a healthy, high-performance culture. Employees who trust their managers are far more productive than those who don’t. According to our research, the most engaged employees identify trust for their boss as one of the principal reasons for their commitment to the job and the organization.

And yet it seems that many leadership teams do not know how to build trust with their employees.

Trust Matters

Jennifer Deal, a faculty member at The Center for Creative Leadership, published her book *Retiring the Generation Gap* in 2007, with groundbreaking research about generational differences. Her research found that there are 10 things that all generations have in common, and if we focused on what we have in common, the differences would be insignificant.

Number three on the list of things that all generations have in common is that *trust matters*.

“People of all generations and at all levels trust the people they work with directly (bosses, peers, and direct reports) more than they trust their organizations. And people trust their organization more than they trust upper management.”³⁰

Academic studies have also shown conclusively that trust and employee engagement have a direct positive impact on performance.

³⁰ Jennifer Deal, *Retiring the Generation Gap*, Wiley.

A recent study by two academics who specialize in hospitality management, Tony Simons of Cornell University’s School of Hotel Administration and Judy McLean Parks of Washington University, showed that hotels where employees found their managers to be highly trusted were significantly more profitable than the average.

They concluded that an incremental improvement in trust for management (a 2.5 percent improvement on the academics’ five-point scale) increased annual profits by an average of \$250,000 per hotel—a huge impact for the bottom line.

Low trust in the leadership team is not uncommon—many business leaders fail to gain the trust of their employees because they don’t understand trust. They think that because they are honest and ethical and produce good business results, that people will trust them.

But there’s more to trust than that.

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Many of the hotels with high management integrity converted over ten cents more of each dollar of revenue into profits than others (at an average revenue of \$10 million this would translate into \$1 million more profit in these hotels). Does behavioral integrity make a difference to the bottom line? The evidence said emphatically—and hugely—yes. We had detected the integrity dividend.

Here are the details of the chain of impact that we saw:

- ***Where employees feel their managers keep promises and live by the values they describe, they trust their managers more.***
- ***Where they trust their managers more, they become more emotionally committed to the company—caring more deeply about its mission and taking pride in working for it.***
- ***Where they feel greater emotional commitment to the company they are more willing to stay in their jobs and go beyond their formal job descriptions by providing discretionary service to satisfy guests’ requests.***
- ***Guests who experience discretionary service from hotel employees like it and feel more satisfied.***
- ***Satisfied guests translate to repeat business, which boosts profits.***
- ***Employee retention boosts profits as well.***³¹

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³¹ Tony Simons, “The Integrity Dividend,” integritydividend.com/articles/theres-a-price-on-your-integrity.html.

Understanding Trust

Building trust is driven by two core skills: consistency and communication. Fail at one of them and you fail at both.

It takes time to build trust. The same is true with consistency: Are you consistently honest and ethical, or do you sometimes bend the truth a little? Do you consistently do what you say you will do and do it well, or do things occasionally fall through the cracks and you let your team down?

Senior managers are typically good at the skill of consistency because they value honesty, integrity, and achieving results. However, the importance of communication is often lost on them, resulting in an avalanche of electronic messages, mostly one-way communication. The kind of communication that builds trust with employees is the one-to-one kind. Building trust requires actually talking with, and listening to, your people.



The Trust Model (Intégro, 2017)

To better understand consistency and communication, we dig a little deeper and discuss the four behaviors that build trust: **Reliability, Congruence, Acceptance, and Openness**. You may be thinking that there must be more to building trust than four behaviors—but follow our thinking for a moment.

Many years of research have found that all trust-building behaviors are subsets of these four behaviors. And we are all looking for a clear and simple model—and like to focus on what actually works.

There are two behaviors that demonstrate consistency: *reliability and congruence*.



1 Reliability

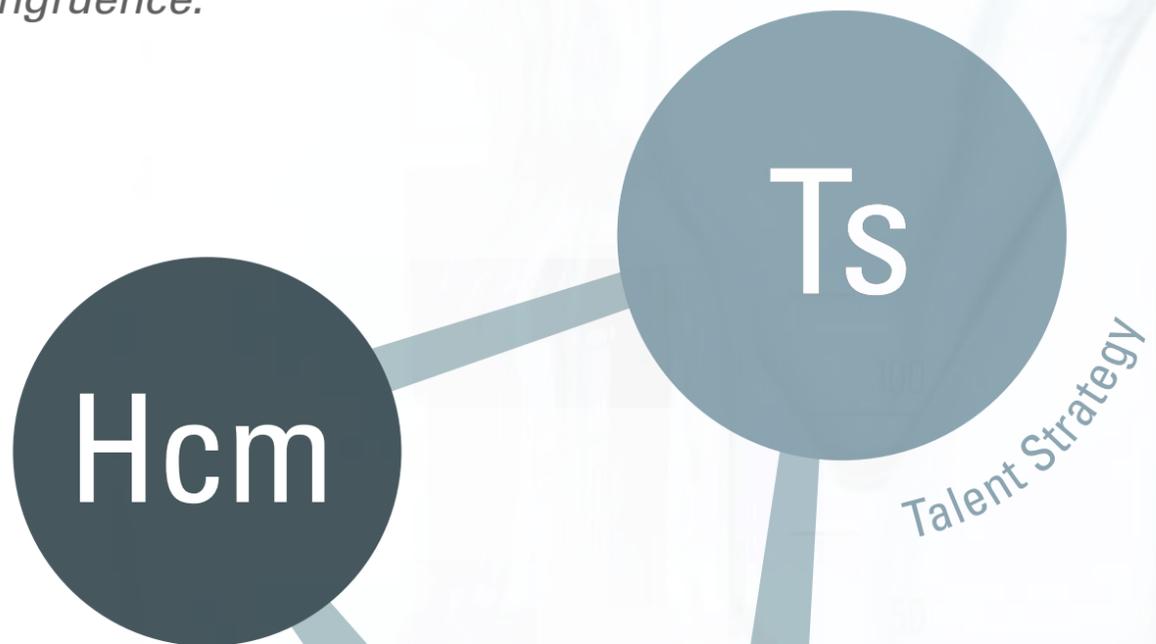
You know the people you can rely on the most—when they say they’ll do something you know it will be done. When you share something with them in confidence, you know it will stay that way. When they do something for you, you know they will give it one hundred percent.

Reliability is the most obvious of the four trust-building behaviors, especially in the work environment. We are all evaluated based on our ability to deliver—to do our jobs—and how well we do it. We are most conscious of reliability and its importance when people let us down, or when we let others down by failing to deliver on expectations.

Some leaders struggle with reliability because they tend to overcommit themselves. With the best of intentions, they say they will do something, but then realize they have overcommitted, and

are not able to deliver. Typically, these people are enthusiastic, optimistic, and energetic—strengths that are essential for starting new projects, but can start to fade prior to completion. When you overcommit, it’s often because you are too busy to be time-conscious. One phone conversation can evolve into an impromptu strategy session, and you completely lose track of time, only to realize you are 15 minutes late to the next meeting.

Leaders who are naturally strong in reliability take their commitments seriously and won’t make a commitment until they are sure they can not only keep it, but also do it to the best of their ability. They typically have high standards, are very time-conscious, and find it difficult to trust people who fail to keep commitments or consistently run late for meetings.





2 Congruence

The second of the behaviors that demonstrate consistency is congruence. The best way I know to explain congruence simply is to draw on geometry and the example of congruent triangles. Congruent triangles have the same angles, so they are the same shape. They can be different sizes, but they are congruent because the angles are the same.

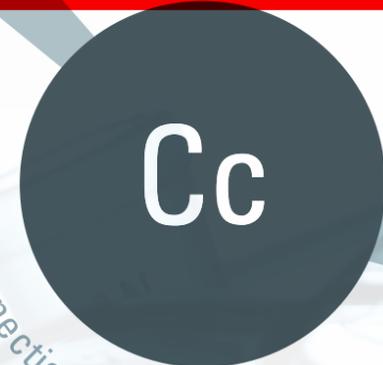
Congruence means “the same as”. What I mean by that is simple—I tell you the truth, and don’t sugarcoat the pill. What I do is the same as what I said I *should* do, from a principle perspective. I walk my talk. This is different from doing what I said I *would* do—that would be reliability. There are two different equal parts to congruence—the first is *honesty*, which is about character and values, and the second is *straightforwardness*, which is a communication skill that is influenced by personality.

When looking at a leader’s natural strengths and challenges around congruence, it is important that we focus more on *straightforwardness* than honesty.

It is possible to have leaders who struggle with being straightforward. Typically, they do so because they don’t want to hurt people’s feelings or alienate them. On occasion, they may say things they don’t really mean just to avoid unpleasantness or conflict. They can also tell a long roundabout story rather than getting straight to the point, especially when there is bad news—which can ultimately increase frustration within the team.

Those who are naturally strong in straightforwardness pride themselves on their ability to tell it like it is. They call it like they see it and aren’t afraid to share. Others may see them as blunt or insensitive at times, but you always know where you stand with them. Not only are they good at straightforwardness, they trust people who give them straight answers and find it difficult to trust those who do not. It is important to note that *straightforward* doesn’t mean *blunt*—without paying attention to the feelings and impact on others.

Passion



Connection/Collaboration



Talent Review

The two behaviors that build trust using communication are *acceptance* and *openness*.

1

Acceptance

This is the least understood, and possibly least practiced trust-building behavior. Being accepting means to accept someone completely for who they are—to be nonjudgmental.

Who you are is OK with me.

I am not talking here about judging someone's performance, I am talking about judging someone for who they are. There is a significant difference. The reason trust breaks down so easily in many organizations is that performance is viewed as paramount and respect for the individual is a low priority.

Obviously, it is important in business to achieve high performance and to measure and evaluate what you

are doing and look for ways to improve. This requires judgment. Too often, when someone does not perform as expected the person judged is possibly left feeling belittled, and the trust is destroyed.

I am not suggesting that you should accept poor performance, or a failure to achieve goals. What I am saying is that you want the trust and commitment of your employees, you must recognize that they are human beings who have a need for respect. Learn to deal with the behavior and the performance as separate from the person.

Leaders who have difficulty accepting others are often those who set extremely high standards for themselves and others. When others do not measure

up, a short fuse of intolerance can ignite; they tend to become critical—whether they express it openly or not. They can also be very self-critical when they do not measure up to their own standards.

People who are naturally strong in acceptance are more understanding and forgiving of those who make mistakes. It doesn't mean they will accept poor performance; they may just find it easy to understand those who are dealing with performance issues. As a result, they find it easy to trust others who are as respectful and accepting as they are, and don't trust people who tend to be insensitive, uncaring, and judgmental of others.

2 Openness

We are becoming more familiar with the need for more transparency in organizations, and often that is interpreted as a need for more one-way communication. **True openness requires two-way communication.**

Great leaders are not only great communicators who openly share their ideas, opinions and ambitions for the future—they are also excellent listeners. They want to hear from their team members what their ideas, opinions, and ambitions are. They let their team members know how they are performing, and they want to know how their team members see *them* performing. To genuinely build trust, it has to be a two-way street.

It is important for leaders to become more aware of the situations in which they find it easy to be open, and when they struggle



Finding People



Wn

Where Are We Now?

to be open. For example, a leader may find it easy to be open in one-on-one meetings, and struggle with being open with a group. Or vice versa.

It is also likely that you are comfortable being open with some people, and very uncomfortable being open with others. The better you know yourself and why you struggle to be open in some situations, the more effective you can become at building trust. Consider the cost to the relationships and the team's performance because of failure to have open, honest conversations—is it worth it?

Some leaders have difficulty being open because they are naturally inclined to be more private. They keep their thoughts and feelings to themselves and require

a high level of trust for another person to open up to them, especially about their feelings. These leaders typically have a strong need for accuracy and find it difficult to describe their feelings. To accurately describe a feeling is difficult for even the most open communicators, and is particularly challenging for introverted leaders.

There are also leaders who are naturally open, who are happy to share their feelings with anyone who will listen. In fact, at times they may share so much that others feel uncomfortable with the level of personal information they reveal. Because of their natural openness, they find it easy to trust people who are open with them, and struggle to trust people who lack openness. They see them as secretive, guarded, and withdrawn.

Some Trust-Building Behaviors Are Easier than Others

Building trust with others usually comes easily with people who are similar to you. They see your behavior as normal—it makes sense to them. For example, if you are dealing with someone who places a high priority on punctuality and attention to detail, they will find it much easier to trust you if you are on time for the meeting and have all the facts you need to support your argument.

But be aware: If you are five minutes late for the meeting and don't have all the detail the other person is looking for, expect a cold response from them due to the disconnect in priorities.



Trust for Upper Management

The leadership team of any organization is charged with the responsibility to deliver results—bottom line, shareholder value—and to run an honest, ethical organization. There is a high priority on reliability and congruence. Typically, members of the leadership team focus primarily on these two behaviors and see themselves as trustworthy when they do.

Employees expect the leadership team to run a successful, honest, ethical organization, but they determine the trustworthiness of the leadership team by their communication—do they accept me, respect me as a person and do they listen to me? Trust for senior management from the employee's perspective is measured by the acceptance and openness of trust-building behaviors.

Members of the leadership team must understand that gaining the trust of all employees requires them to use all four trust-building behaviors. If any one of them is missing, trust will be diminished.

Creating a High-Performance Culture

There are three areas to focus on and evaluate your readiness before starting on a culture change process:

1. What do you want to achieve—what does high performance look like? What are your strategic objectives? How will you measure success?

2. How do your employees need to behave to achieve those objectives? What values and beliefs do they need to operate by to ensure they behave in that way?

3. What leadership behaviors are needed to create a culture where employees want to, and can, behave the way you want them to?

In a high-performance culture, employees are passionate about the company they work for, and passionate about the work they do—they know that what they do is making a meaningful difference. And they know that their contribution is valued.

The key question now is what leadership behavior will create the culture that results in passionate employees behaving in a way that will achieve the high-performance objectives.

Five Needs That Ignite Passion

The good news is that turning a group of employees with varying levels of engagement into a high-performing team of passionate people is achievable for any leader willing to put in the effort and develop the skills needed. It won't happen overnight—it takes time, commitment, patience, and the belief that the effort is worth it.

The key is to ensure that employees' needs are being met. If employees' needs are not met, they switch off and look for somewhere else to work. There

are three areas to focus on and evaluate your readiness before starting on a culture change process: It's no different than you looking for a new coffee shop if your existing barista does not satisfy your coffee needs, you may go elsewhere.

Many managers believe that employees are primarily motivated by money—despite many research studies over the past 30 years that have demonstrated that not to be true.



High-Potential Talent



Performance



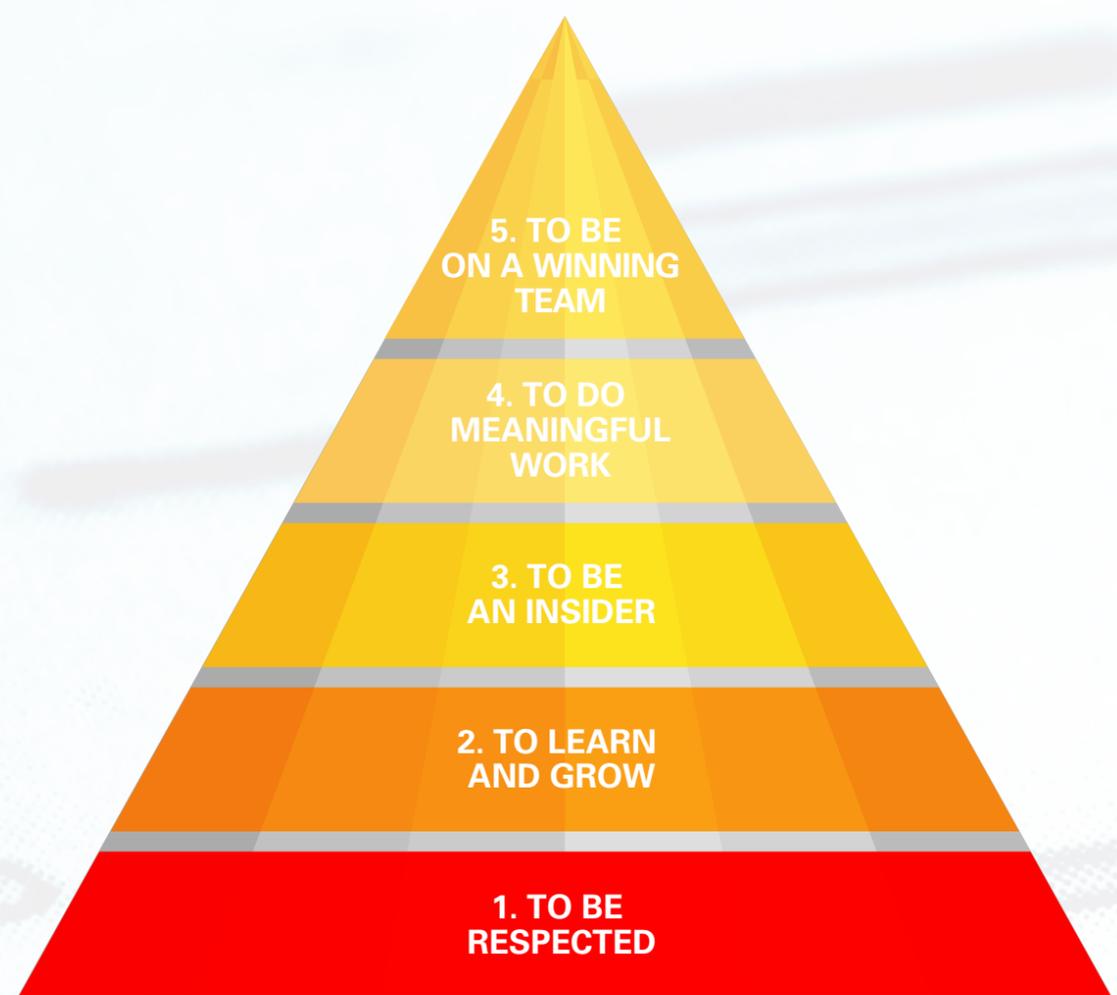
Passion

The Passion Pyramid™

Our research identified five needs that ignite employee passion. Satisfy these five needs for all of your team members and you will have a team that is passionate about your organization and passionate about delivering their best every day.

How do we know that? We surveyed over 5,000 employees across a range of industries in the US and Australia to ask them how important these needs were to them personally on a ten-point scale, where 10 is extremely important.

With two questions measuring each of the five needs, the average score for each of the needs is 9 out of 10 for importance. These needs are important to virtually everyone, and if they are not satisfied, not only do passion and commitment diminish, but trust is broken as well.



These five needs form a hierarchy, meaning that you have to start at level one. The need to be respected must be satisfied, and continue to be satisfied, before employees will look to you, their leader, to satisfy the need to learn and grow.

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| <p>1. The need to be respected: This is not rocket science; people need to be treated with <i>respect</i>. They need to be listened to and know that what they do is valued by their leaders. There are many ways leaders unintentionally treat employees with disrespect, and nothing diminishes trust faster.</p> | <p>2. The need to learn and grow: People have a natural desire to develop their talents and do things that utilize their strengths. They want to perform at their best. To do that, they need to continue to <i>learn and grow</i> in their roles.</p> |
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| <p>3. The need to be an insider: No one likes to feel left out. Being included in discussions, being involved in decision-making, especially decisions that directly impact employees, makes it clear that employees are on the same team as their leader.</p> | <p>4. The need for meaning: People need to know that what they do is meaningful, and need to understand how their work contributes to their organization's purpose—beyond making money—the purpose that makes them proud to work there.</p> |
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- 5. The need to be part of a winning team:** The highest levels of passion come from being a part of, and contributing to, the success of a winning team. I'm sure you have experienced the elation of team spirit on some of the teams you have been part of in your life.

Satisfying These Needs Will Transform Your Culture

The strong correlation we found between these five needs and the level of trust employees have for management provides a valuable insight into the relationship between trust and employee passion. The results of our research show that as employees gain greater satisfaction on these five needs that ignite passion, we see an increase in the level of trust for the organization.

In other words, the more dissatisfied employees become with the organization's performance in satisfying these five needs, the less trusting they tend to become of the organization.

Unless organizations pay particular attention to building strong workplace cultures based on trust, cultivating a fully committed workforce that is passionate about both the organization and the job may prove to be a significant challenge.

In closing, our research also suggests that if organizations do not place a strong emphasis on building workplace cultures based on trust, they stand to lose those employees who love what they do but would rather do it somewhere else.

Pamela Stroko

Vice President, HCM Transformation & Thought Leadership at Oracle Corporation.

Keith Ayers

Founder of Intégro Leadership Institute, and author of *Engagement is Not Enough: You Need Passionate Employees to Achieve Your Dream* (Elevate, July 2008).

Chapter Two: Part Three

High-Performance Leadership



Finding People



Workforce Analytics

It's no secret that as organizations go through change, disruption, and external challenges, and try to create a compelling value proposition for existing and future employees, managers at all levels are needing, in many cases, to redefine their work and their roles. Building a high-performing team requires different skills and capabilities than those of being a subject-matter expert on a dimension of the work.

For some leaders and managers, the transition to new ways of working can be awkward. Some perceive it as changing the rules of the game midstream, and they may be unprepared for what lies ahead.

In this chapter we have been talking about how to get to passion and how to create a great, compelling culture. Leaders and managers at all levels are key to creating a place where people want to work and where they want to stay and contribute to building a successful, thriving business.

There is always one question asked when talking about how to create high-performing organizations: "What do the leaders actually do?" As we saw in the passion and culture research on trust and the behaviors that create a passionate organization, simply put, there are actions and practices that have a great impact on high performance.

In the Passion Pyramid™ we see what leaders need to do to create a positive environment and experience for employees. We know that these actions and behaviors form the basis of trust and connection, in addition to creating an environment for development. This

combination helps build a passionate workforce—as a source of passion advocacy for the organization.

In this section we will take a detailed look at what leaders do and why it is important.

Consider this the new leadership job description for building a passionate, vibrant culture with great business performance.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

OUTCOMES



Level 1: People Skills That Build Trust

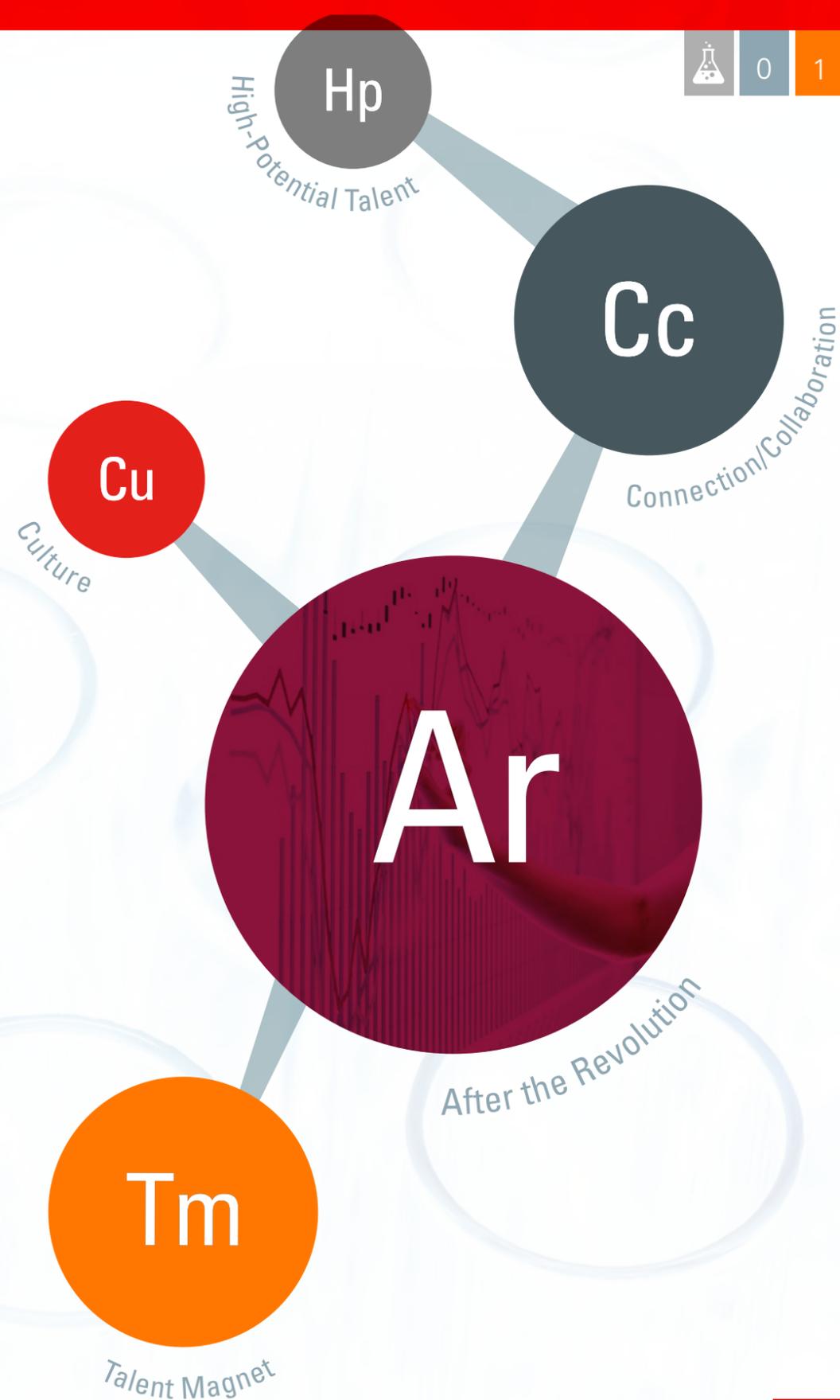
Leaders must have and use strong people skills to build trust and satisfy the need for employees to feel respected. Trust and respect go hand in hand. When you trust someone, you are letting them know that you respect them.

In part one, we focused on the importance of trust as a foundation for a high-performance culture, and explored in depth the four behaviors necessary to build a high level of trust.

We know from our research that when managers are consistently *accepting* of employees, *open* and transparent with them about what is really happening, are *congruent* in operating by their core values,

while demonstrating their *reliability* by keeping their commitments—that both employee trust and passion are high.

However, while building trust is the first and most important of the people skills needed to be effective as a leader, you will not be effective in the other people skills if you have not first successfully built trust with your team. Once that is accomplished, there are three other key people skills for demonstrating respect and building trust to a much higher level.



1. Solve problems.

When problems arise at work, what is the first thing you do? I'm not referring to analytical problem-solving techniques; rather, I want you to think about how you react when problems arise. Do you immediately start gathering information to determine how the problem occurred, or do you immediately ask who caused it and look for the person or persons to blame?

Any time you spend on *assigning blame*, focusing on *who* rather than *what* or *how*, is time not spent on solving the problem. Have you ever worked for a leader who was a *blame-assigner* rather than a *problem-solver*? You know what impact that had on your trust for that manager.

Unless it is an emergency, the first thing to do when you become aware of a problem is gather information. Then, define what the real problem is and the sequence of events that led up to it *before* you attempt to determine a solution. Gathering information usually means getting input from the other people involved, so they can provide any information they have regarding the steps you need to take to solve the problem. When addressing the problem, always focus on the *process* that led to the problem, not the *people*.

Getting people to tell you what they know about the problem is the key to being a successful *problem-solver* and cannot happen without a high level of trust.

Have you ever had a situation where nobody seems to know anything about the problem but your gut feeling tells you they know more than they are letting on?

To successfully gather the information you need, people have to be open and straightforward with you. That is why the skill of building trust must come first; the deeper the trust you have with your team members, the more quickly problems are disclosed, and you can immediately get to work on identifying what the real problem is and coming up with the best solution.

Assigning blame achieves the opposite—it demonstrates disrespect! It puts people on the defensive, they become more self-protective and keep valuable information to themselves. In the future, any information that could incriminate them or their coworkers will be withheld. If your employees believe their mistakes will be treated like crimes, they not only try to cover them up; they also stop using any creativity or initiative that might result in mistakes.



2. Facilitate change.

Note that *facilitating change*, not *implementing change*, is the people skill here. This distinction is critical. Think of the typical responses people in your organization have toward change when they are not consulted. If your organization is like most, the reaction is resistance!

Many organizations implement change from the top down: the senior leadership team identifies a problem, decides on the best solution, and implements it, often without any consultation with the employees. Do the changes make sense? In most cases, the leadership team would say yes. But would they have discovered a better solution with input from more stakeholders?

In a low-trust workplace, employees will resist change, even when it is beneficial to them.

The people skill of facilitating change means that the leader involves team members in the problem-solving and decision-making process and works with them to embrace the change. No resistance—just a commitment to making the change work. Involving employees in the change process is another very effective way of demonstrating that you truly respect them, and further evidence that they are respected.

Valuing ideas, being inclusive...

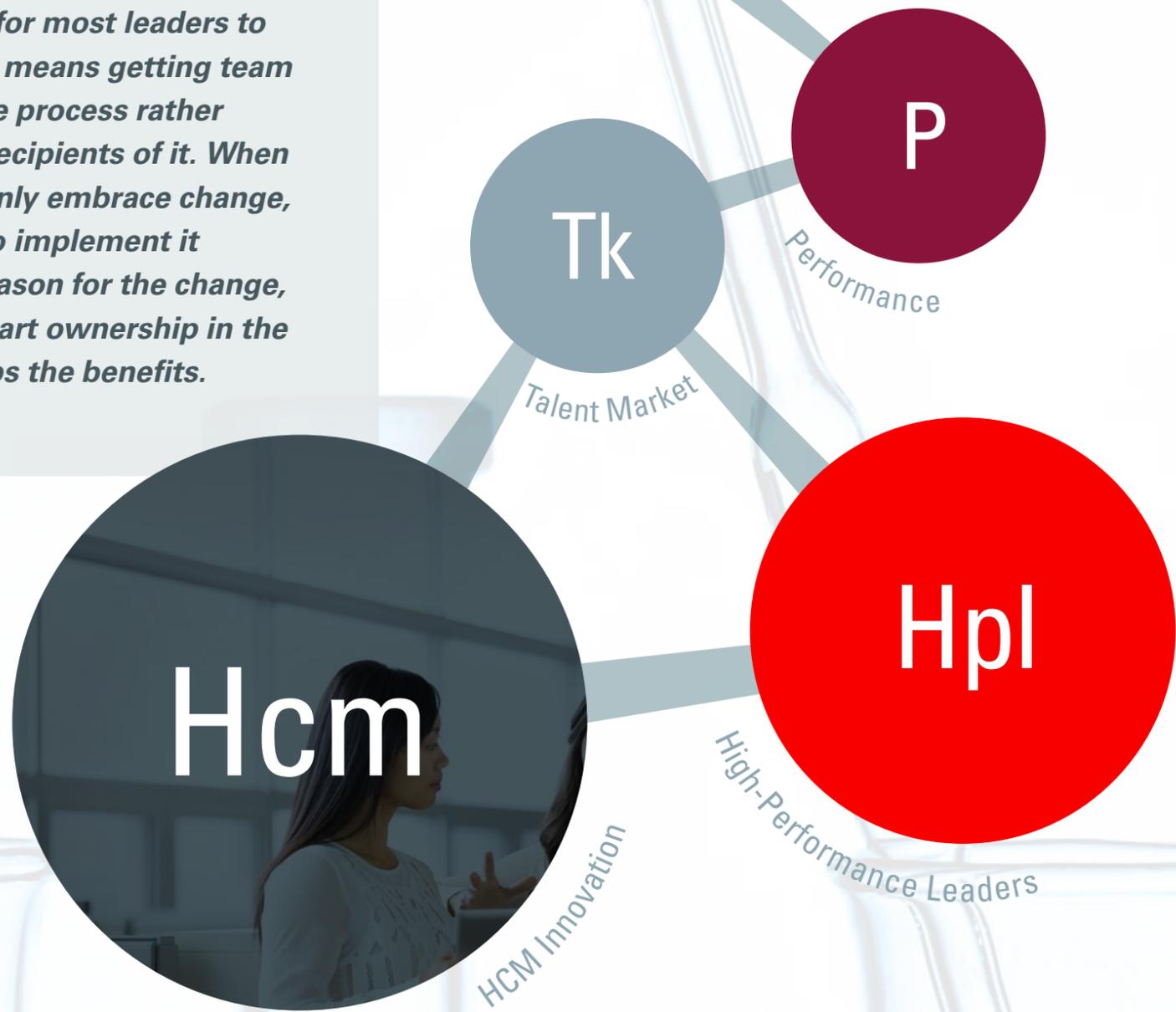
The President of an AAA club on the East Coast decided to seek input from employees in developing the organization's strategic plan. In the past, the senior management team had developed the plan and simply announced it. So, when George, an accountant and internal auditor, and Penny, a revenue analyst in member services, were invited to be part of a task team to review the strategic plan before implementation, they were surprised and honored. Neither had been asked to make recommendations to management at this level before.

The task team felt that the strategic plan needed to be more innovative if AAA were to keep pace with new services and an increasing number of members making their own travel bookings online. The task team also came up with a number of new ideas for services that would generate more revenue. They put together a report and presented it to the senior executives. Their ideas were embraced and virtually all of their recommendations implemented, greatly contributing to the club having one of its best years ever.

Both George and Penny reported it was a very rewarding experience, and that the ongoing opportunity to participate in town hall meetings and other task teams has made their jobs much more interesting. Penny said, "Even though my job hasn't changed, I enjoy coming to work so much more now."



Facilitating change is a skill that does not come naturally—it is far more natural for most leaders to simply tell people what to do. It means getting team members involved in the change process rather than making them the passive recipients of it. When they do get involved, they not only embrace change, they enthusiastically help you to implement it because they understand the reason for the change, it makes sense, and they have part ownership in the decision. Your organization reaps the benefits.



3. Satisfy needs.

As a manager, do you ever consider how much fun you are to work for? You may not have placed much importance on ensuring your team members enjoy working for you, but if they don't, they won't be passionate about their work. Having fun at work does not mean being frivolous or goofing off. People have fun when they are being creative, solving challenging problems, being of service to others, or developing new skills. Fun in this case is experiencing the joy of the work, feeling fulfilled when you can have a positive impact.

The reality is that the people you are hiring today have already identified what their needs are beyond making money, and they want to work for an organization that places values on those needs, and supports achieving personal and professional goals.

Applying These Four People Skills to Building Trust

Although building trust is the first of four people skills, it is important to use the other three people skills to create an even stronger trust relationship.

Think of a person who reports to you, where the trust relationship is not as good as you would like it to be. A relationship where it would be beneficial for both you and your company to have a stronger trust relationship with this employee.

Take action in four ways:

- 1. Solve problems:** Identify a problem or challenge that this person is experiencing that is a barrier to them being more successful in their job. They may only be willing to share with you a minor irritation at this stage, but that would be a good starting point. Have them describe the problem and what they believe the cause is, and any barriers to solving it.

2. Facilitate change: Work with them to identify the best solution to that problem, and support them in facilitating the change needed to resolve it. You will most likely have additional resources that they don't, so your support will be of great benefit to them.
- 3. Satisfy needs:** Now that their problem is solved, their needs are also satisfied. It is very satisfying to solve a problem that has been irritating you for some time. Their trust for you has gone up because you have removed a source of irritation and made their job more satisfying.

- 4. Repeat the process:** You can now repeat the process—because as they trust you more, they will be more open to share other problems they would like help with, that they weren't willing to share before. When you work through this process with them again and solve another problem, the trust level grows even stronger.

So even though building trust is the first people skill, all four people skills can be used to strengthen trust relationships with all members of your team. And, in the process, build a strong mutual respect.



Level 2: Coaching, Counseling, and Mentoring Skills

The need to learn and grow is an instinctive need. We can see that most clearly in children, who have a constant hunger to explore and learn. You may have worked with some people who appear to no longer have this need—they are quite content to continue doing things the same way year in, year out, or worse, they think they know it all.

I don't believe this is a natural state—I see it as a defensive reaction to their environment, or in the case of the know-it-all, a protection of their ego. I believe it comes back to the first need: to be respected. It makes sense to me that if an employee does not feel respected by their leader, they will have no interest in learning from that leader—because they don't respect them either.

Our research clearly shows that employees rate the importance of the need to learn and grow at 9 out of 10, therefore if you want to retain talented people, and make

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a mentor as “a trusted counselor or guide.” The best mentors I have had had three basic skills: adaptive listening, counseling, and coaching.

use of their talent to improve performance, it is essential to create learning opportunities and for all team members to feel respected.

The employee's immediate manager is in the best position to know what the employee is currently achieving, and what they are capable of. In most cases, the immediate manager is also more knowledgeable and experienced in the work the employee is doing. Therefore, they are in the best position to help their team members learn and grow—to mentor them.



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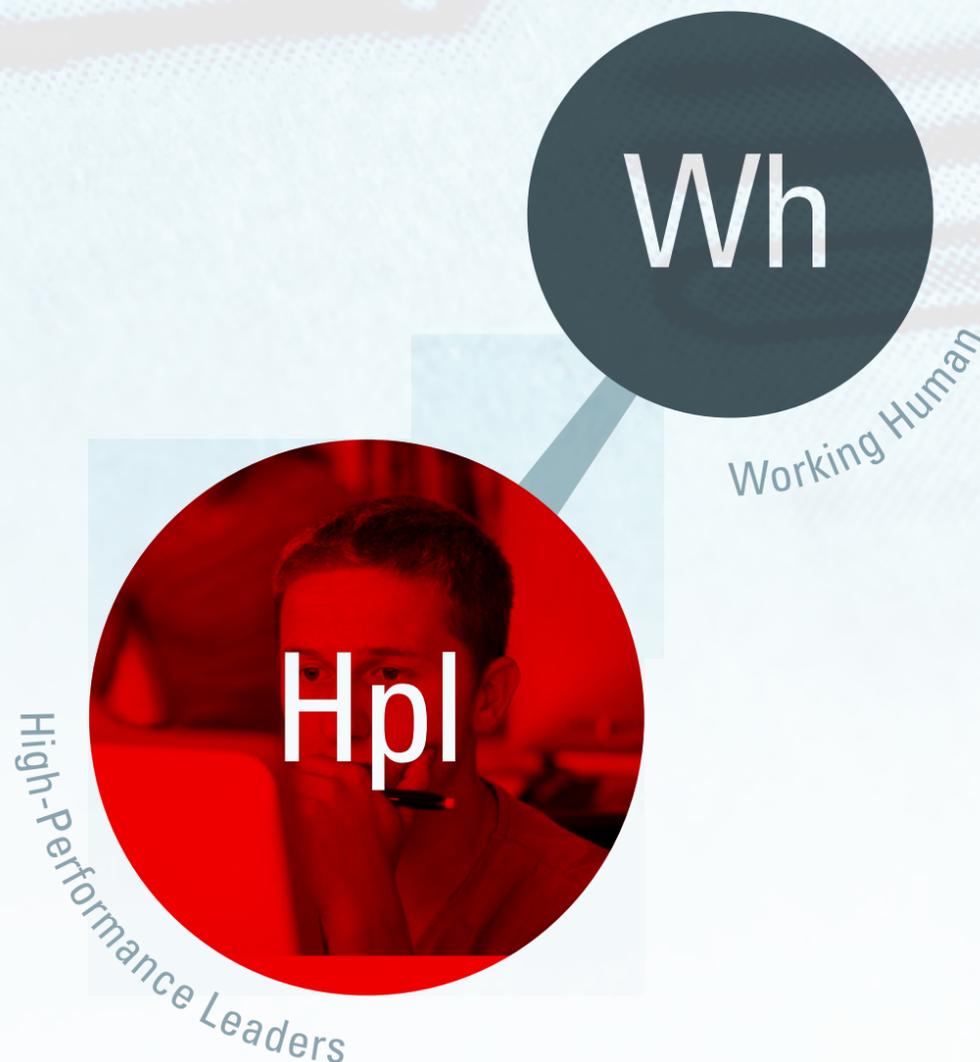
Adaptive listening.

What I mean by adaptive listening is that they listened carefully to what I said, and also tuned in to the feelings behind what I was saying. They listened to comprehend, and they listened with empathy.

Comprehensive listeners listen to understand. They ask questions for clarification, they make connections between ideas, and they paraphrase to ensure they have clearly understood what you said.

Empathic listeners tune into the feeling content of what you are saying. They say things like “this is really important to you, isn’t it?” or “I get the feeling that you’re not happy about that.” Unfortunately, in my experience, not many leaders are good at these critical listening skills—and yet most leaders I’ve met are really good at evaluative listening.

An evaluative listener is focused on determining whether they agree with what you are saying or not. They are listening so they can make a decision about whether



what you say is right or wrong, or if it has any value for them. They say things like “absolutely right!” or “I don’t agree with you!” The downside of evaluative listening is that you are focused on your own agenda. You are thinking about what you know to be right or wrong, and comparing what the other person is saying against that.

You won’t learn very much if all you do is listen evaluatively—and that’s what the know-it-all does.

Counseling.

Counseling is asking questions and listening—it is not telling. The skill is in being able to ask questions that help the other person discover their own answers, and make their own decisions. This does two things. They are more excited about and committed to the decision, because it was their idea, and they take ownership of the decision—they accept responsibility.

Often people need a “thought partner” or someone to help them think through something. The value of sharing ideas and having someone to ask great questions and offer a perspective can lead to greater insight and lead to new opportunities.

Coaching.

Coaching is helping people gain knowledge and develop new skills. Again, it is far more effective when it is done through asking questions to help people discover things for themselves, rather than telling them what to do.

Leaders also need to learn to use more open-ended questions than closed questions. This is a skill that a lot of leaders I've worked with struggle to do well. They ask closed questions like, "Don't you think that our performance is a problem?" Rather than open questions like, "What, in your opinion, are the barriers to improving our team's performance?"

Some organizations implement mentoring programs that exclude a person's immediate manager from being his or her mentor. I think this comes from some archaic idea that managers should not get too close to the people they manage because they will have a difficult time disciplining or firing them.

I do not object to mentoring programs providing people with guidance from sources other than their immediate manager or supervisor. I do, however, have concerns with managers or supervisors believing it is not their responsibility to mentor their own team members.

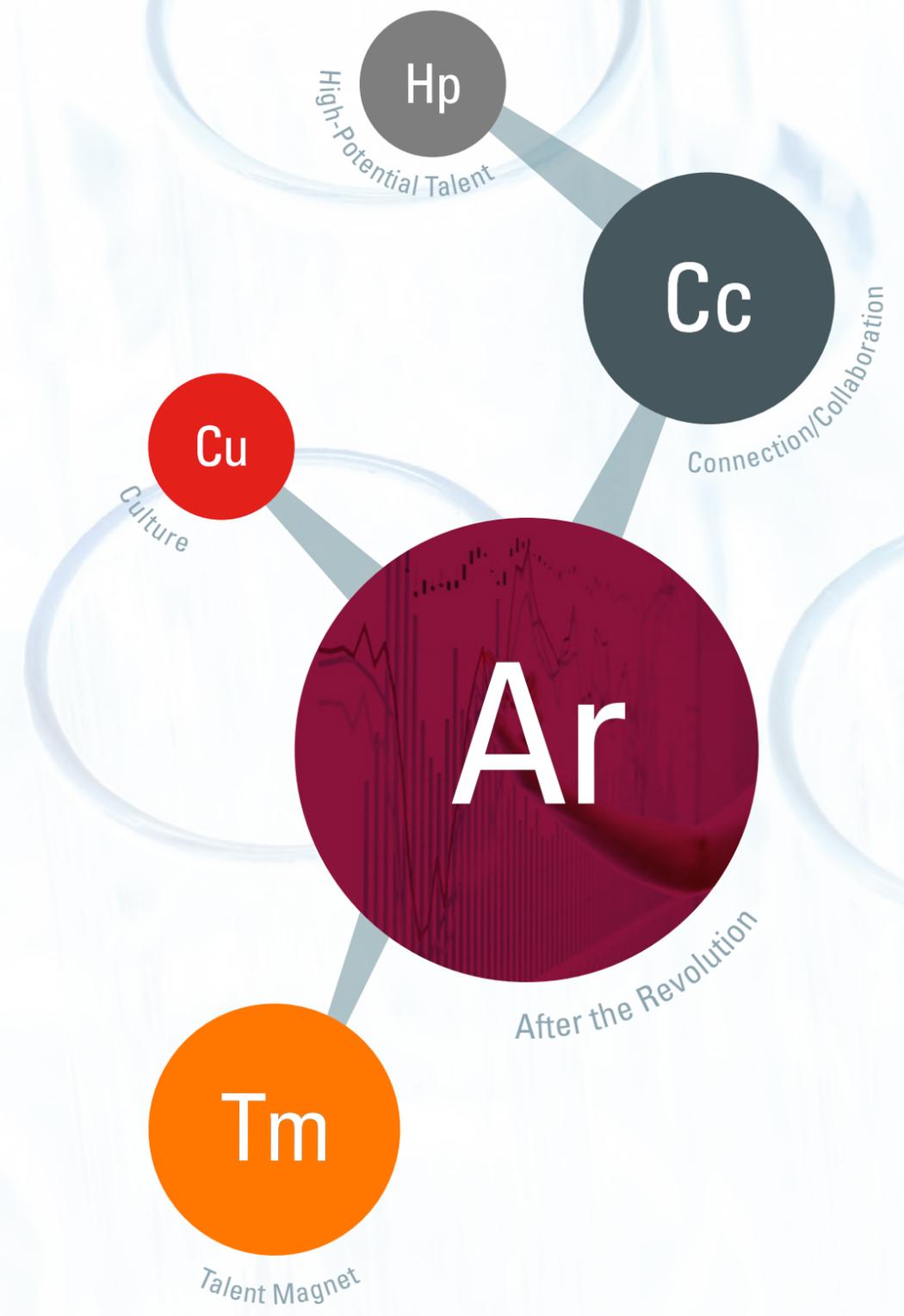
It is natural for people to want to be better and improve their performance. Mentors play an important role in helping people be their best, and in my experience, the reward for putting in the effort is that the mentor gains just as much as the person they are mentoring.



Talent Magnet



How You Win



Level 3: Being Inclusive

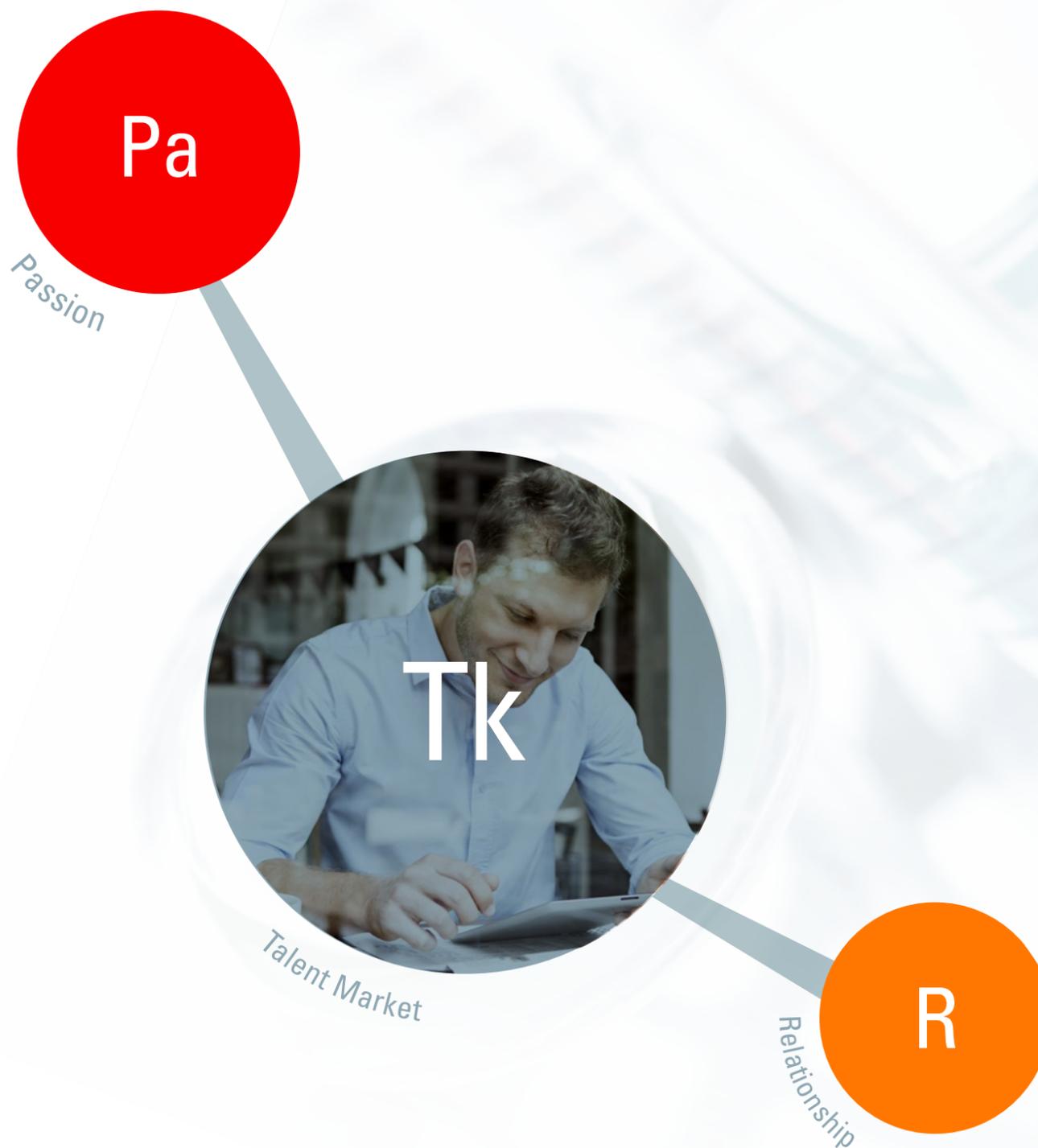
Can you remember a time when you were the new kid at school or the new person at work? What did other people do for you that made you start to feel like an “insider”?

Insider status is a very powerful motivator. Employees who know they are insiders know they are on the same team as their managers; they feel more involved and want to contribute more. Most importantly, it creates an emotional connection with the organization—they feel a part of it.

It is much easier to be inclusive of someone who is like you—comes from a similar background, had a similar education, is from the same culture. Conversely, it is more challenging to feel that way towards someone you don't have anything in common with. Fortunately, there are steps you can take to get to know that person, accept them, and be inclusive of them.

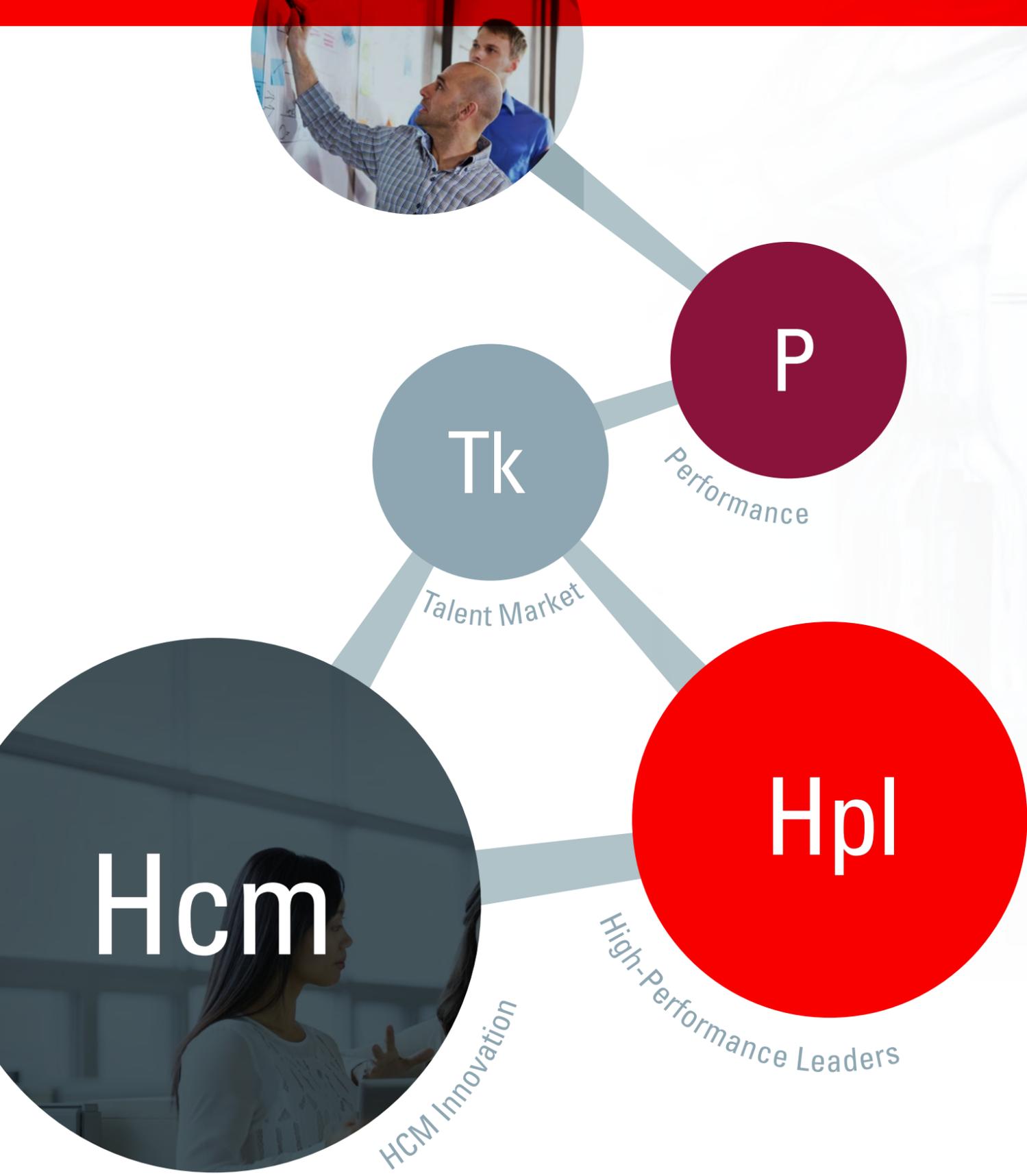
Step 1—Knowledge: Here is a challenging exercise for you to do. Take a sheet of paper for each member of your team. Write their name at the top, and what you know about them to be different from you. For example, if you are the opposite gender to them, write that down as a difference. Do the same for differences like race, family background, education, height, weight, age, personality, and any other differences that come to mind.

Now write down any beliefs you have about each difference you have identified. How do these beliefs affect the way you relate towards people from each of these groups? Do any of these beliefs you have make another group inferior in some way? You may think your belief is correct, but what is more important for you as a leader: to be right or to be effective? When everyone on your team feels like an insider your whole team will be more productive and successful.



Step 2—Understanding: You do not have to have had the same experiences as other people to understand them. As you listen to what they have experienced, and how they see things, use empathic listening to tune in to their feelings as well as comprehensive listening to understand the factual information they are sharing.

While listening, mentally picture yourself in their situation and imagine, “If I had been through that, if I were in the same situation as them, how would I be feeling?” It’s not the same as actually being there and feeling it, but having this level of empathy is an important step in beginning to understand them. Your goal is to understand how they see things, and why they respond to certain situations the way they do without judging them.



Step 3—Acceptance: Being receptive and curious about others’ differences helps you to build respect for them and to truly value their differences. Increasing your knowledge of team members who are different and getting to know them so you can understand where they are coming from will help you to learn to respect them.

Acceptance means being nonjudgmental of the person; it means believing he or she is basically a good person and intends to do the right thing. What are your basic beliefs about people?

As a part of our research we asked over 20,000 employees how important it is for them to “do their best in everything they do.” The average score is 9.4 out of 10. People want to do the right thing and they will if they know that you accept and respect them.

Step 4—Behavioral skills: How you behave towards people who are different is affected by your knowledge, understanding, and acceptance of them. Use the four people skills—build trust, solve problems, facilitate change, and satisfy needs—to adapt the way you relate to each person’s uniqueness.

What can you do to ensure that everyone on your team feels welcomed every day? What difference do you think that would make to your team’s performance?



Where Are We Now?



Working Human



How You Win

Level 4: Alignment with Purpose, Values, and Vision

The need to do meaningful work has always been there—people do want to know that what they’re doing is making a difference. That need has increased in importance in recent years with millennials entering the workforce. As Daniel Pink said so well in his book *Drive*, purpose is an essential part of Motivation 3.0.

When employees can see that the company they work for is making the world a better place, and just as importantly see how what they do contributes to the organization’s purpose, their passion for the organization goes to another level.

The power of purpose and values.

In their book *Built to Last*, Jim Collins and Jerry Porras do a great job of defining the power of organizational purpose and core values.

Purpose: “The organization’s fundamental reasons for existence beyond just making money—a perpetual guiding star on the horizon; not be confused with specific goals or business strategies.”

Core values: “The organization’s essential and enduring tenets—a small set of general guiding principles; not to be confused with specific cultural or operating practices; not to be compromised for financial gain or short-term expediency.”

The *purpose* of your organization is the very reason it exists; therefore, it makes sense that the better you fulfill that purpose, the more successful your organization will be. It also makes sense to create a *purpose statement* everyone is passionate about and committed to fulfilling.

The reason for having a purpose statement is to align employees behind that purpose, to inspire them to live by it, and to increase the passion and commitment they have for your organization.

If you have a purpose statement that doesn’t inspire people, and fails to clearly state in a few words why your organization exists and how it makes the world a better place for your stakeholders, then it is a waste of time and effort.

Purpose or mission?

An organization’s purpose, its reason for being, is not a short-term event. For many companies their purpose will not change over its entire lifetime. I encourage people to always use the term purpose rather than mission to describe the reason the organization exists.

It is more meaningful for employees as well. Try it out! Ask some of your employees what an organization’s mission is, and then ask them what an organization’s purpose would be. My experience is that they are much clearer about what the purpose of an organization is, and usually confused about what mission means.

Using the term mission often also create confusion between mission and vision. I have seen several organizations with a statement that is preceded by, “our mission and vision is...” No wonder

employees get confused, and emotionally disconnect—there’s nothing to get passionate about.

Vision, as the word implies, is a picture of what you want your company to be at a point in time in the future. The value of a well-articulated vision is that employees see an exciting future for the organization, and they want to be a part of it.

Meaningful work is important work.

Team meetings are typically focused on achieving daily, weekly, and monthly goals. These goals are very important to the manager because they are held accountable for achieving those goals. But how important are they to employees, other than to ensure that they keep their jobs?

I’m not suggesting that you should not have these goals, or not focus on them in team meetings. A goal is critically

important to delivering performance, but it is not an end in itself—the goal may be the “what we have to deliver” but the “why” and the “how” are equally important.

So how often do you talk about the purpose of what your team members are doing, how they are contributing to the organization’s purpose, and how well are they operating by your core values?

There are two questions we asked employees in our research to determine how important meaningful work was to them:

1. The purpose of my organization makes me feel proud to work here. The average score for importance is 8.8 out of 10.

2. The work I do is meaningful because it helps my organization fulfill its purpose. The average score for importance is 9.1 out of 10.

People want to make a difference—do you have a culture where they can?



Talent Market



High-Potential Talent



Relationship

Level 5: Building a High-Performance Team

In the book *The Wisdom of Teams*, authors Jon R. Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith define a high-performance team as one that has a small number of people (12 or fewer); has team members who are equally committed to a common purpose, goals and working approach; who hold each other mutually accountable; and who are also deeply committed to one another's personal growth and success. They care about each other.

Building a high-performance team out of a group of employees doesn't happen overnight, although it doesn't have to be overcomplicated either. The research is quite clear: People have a need to do their best, they want to make a difference, and it will be most satisfying when they can do it with other people they like and respect.

Where do you start?

I'd suggest you create a simple spreadsheet. In column A, list the five needs that ignite passion starting with respect, and leave a few rows for each one. Then put the names of your team members across the top in columns B, C, D and so on.

In the first row for each member of your team, write down everything you respect about that person, and don't just stick to things you respect about them at work—what do you respect about them as a person? Don't forget to include their personal lives.

In the second row, the need to learn and grow, write down what would you like this team member to learn to be more effective in their job or as a person.

The need to be an insider is best satisfied by involvement and inclusion. So, in the third row, write down what you could do as their leader to get each team member more involved in discussions and in decision-making. Are there any special projects that you would like to see happen that you could get your team involved in?

One of the most highly rated questions in our survey that measures the importance of the need for meaning is: "The work I do is meaningful because it helps my organization fulfill its purpose." The best way you can satisfy this need for each team member is

to show them how the work they do is contributing to the purpose of the organization. So, in the fourth row, write down the questions you could ask each team member in order to clarify how what they do contributes to the organization’s purpose.

You won’t have to do very much when you get to row five (the need to be on a winning team). By the time you follow through and have meetings with each team member to achieve what you’ve outlined in the spreadsheet, you will have a team of very passionate people who know they are respected, are eager to learn and passionate about contributing, and know that what they are doing is making a difference.

When we asked employees how important it was for them to “focus on continually improving their performance”, the average score was 9.1 out of 10, yet how often does your team meet to discuss how they could improve their performance?

There are three things that, if added to your team’s agenda for your regular meetings, would accelerate them becoming a high-performance team:

- 1. How well is our team doing in contributing to the purpose of the organization? Ask team members to come up with examples.**
- 2. How well is our team doing at operating by our organization’s core values? Again, ask team members for examples of times when they did, and times where they could have done better.**
- 3. What do we, as a team, need to do to continually improve our performance?**

Becoming a high-performance leader, one who successfully creates high-performance teams, will not only ensure your success in your career; it will also make your life very rewarding.

Our goal has been to make that journey easier for you by identifying the five needs that ignite employee passion, and the leadership skills needed to create that high-performance team. It takes time to create the performance, culture, values, and outcomes that define a passionate organization. Building trust doesn’t happen overnight, but through practice, perseverance, and focus, it is possible to transform any team and organization.

Pamela Stroko

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Keith Ayers

Founder of Intégro Leadership Institute, and author of *Engagement is Not Enough: You Need Passionate Employees to Achieve Your Dream* (Elevate, July 2008).

