

Creating a Joyful Workforce: A Recommended Reading List

Joy in Work Defined and Background

- Definition of “Joy in Work”: Intellectual, behavioral and emotional commitment to meaningful and satisfying work. (Sirota D, Klein D. *The Enthusiastic Employee: How Companies Profit by Giving Workers What They Want (2nd edition)*. Pearson FT Press; 2013.)
- “By joy, we refer to the feeling of success and fulfilment that results from meaningful work... without joy and meaning in work, the workforce cannot perform at its potential. Joy and meaning are generative and allow the best to be contributed by each individual, and the teams they comprise, towards the work of the Triple Aim every day.” ([Sikka R, Morath JM, Leape L. The Quadruple Aim: care, health, cost and meaning in work. *BMJ Qual Saf.* 2015;24:608-610.](#))

Results Associated with a Joyful Workforce

- Maximizing your return on people: When researchers looked into human capital management (HCM) drivers, they found that traditional human resources (HR) metrics don’t predict organizational performance. The more accurate drivers are leadership practices, employee engagement, knowledge accessibility, workforce optimization, and organizational learning capacity. This article provides data on how this worked for many different types of organizations and the tools to measure your own HCM scores. ([Bassi L, McMurrer D. Maximizing your return on people. *Harv Bus Rev.* 2007;85:115-123.](#))
- This study uses meta-analysis to examine the relationship at the business unit level between employee satisfaction-engagement, and the outcomes of customer satisfaction, productivity, profit, employee turnover, and accidents. The authors found relationships large enough to have substantial practical value, showing that changes in management practices that increase employee satisfaction may increase business unit outcomes, including profit. ([Harter JK, Schmidt FL, Hayes TL. Business-unit-level relationship between employee satisfaction, employee engagement and business outcomes: A meta-analysis. *J Appl Psychol.* 2002;87:268-279.](#))
- Organizational level analysis of relationship between satisfaction, attitudes, and performance: Data was collected and a correlation and regression analyses supported a relationship between employee satisfaction/attitudes and organizational performance.

[\(Ostroff C. The relationship between satisfaction, attitudes and performance: An organizational level analysis. *J Appl Psychol.* 1992;77:963-974.\)](#)

- An anonymous cross-sectional survey including a self-assessment, a validated depression screening tool, and standardized assessments of burnout and quality of life (QOL) was sent out to surgeons. Results showed that major medical errors reported by surgeons are strongly related to a surgeon's degree of burnout and their mental QOL. ([Shanafelt TD, Balch CM, Bechamps G, et al. Burnout and medical errors among American surgeons. *Ann Surg.* 2010; 251:995-1000.](#))
- UK study showing the relationship between performance and profitability and employee engagement. Improving engagement improves performance. ([MacLeod D, Clarke N. *Engaging for Success: Enhancing Performance Through Employee Engagement. A Report Government.* London \(UK\): Department of Business, Innovation and Skills; 2009.](#))

Conditions That Contribute to Joy in Work

Choice and Control

- Individual variation: A company called MEC offered a workshop on happiness that increased the employee happiness levels. Results following the workshop found that empowering employees to participate in personal development training pays off; happier employees are more productive, happiness is contagious, happier employees are better equipped to manage stress, and happiness inspires good management. (Champagne C. [How One Company Taught Its Employees How to Be Happier, and What Happened Next.](#) Fast Company; April 9, 2013.)
- Research by Erin Kelly and Phyllis Moen from the University of Minnesota (U of M) finds that a workplace environment that allows employees to change when and where they work, based on their individual needs and job responsibilities, positively affects the work-family interface and reduces turnover. ([Flexible Schedules and Results-Oriented Work Environments Reduce Work-Family Conflict and Turnover, U of M Researchers Find.](#) University of Minnesota; April 6, 2011.)

Equity and Fairness

- Fairness: A longitudinal study predicted changes in burnout or engagement by identifying two types of early indicators and were measured two times within a one year interval. Among this group, those who displayed a workplace incongruity in fairness moved to burnout. Implications include enhanced ability to customize interventions for targeted

groups. ([Maslach C, Leiter MP. Early predictors of job burnout and engagement. *J Appl Psychol.* 2008;93:498-512.](#))

- Fairness and burden of the electronic health record (EHR): The researchers found that physicians who perceived themselves or their practices as providing high-quality care reported better professional satisfaction. EHRs were a source of frustration, with major concerns about interoperability between systems and the amount of physician time involved in data entry. ([Friedberg MW, Chen PG, Van Busum KR, et al. *Factors Affecting Physician Professional Satisfaction and Their Implications for Patient Care, Health Systems, and Health Policy.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2013.](#))
- This study shows that when leaders are fair to the members of their team, the team members display more citizenship behavior and are more productive, both individually and as a team. ([Qiu T, Qualls W, Bohlmann J, Rupp DE. The effect of interactional fairness on the performance of cross-functional product development teams: A multilevel mediated model. *Journal of Product Innovation Management.* 2009 Mar;26\(2\):173-187.](#))

Safety and Joy

- The basic precondition of a safe workplace is protection of the physical and psychological safety of the workforce. Both are conspicuously absent or considered optional in many care-delivery organizations. ([Roundtable on Joy and Meaning in Work and Workforce Safety. *Through the Eyes of the Workforce: Creating Joy, Meaning, and Safer Health Care.* Lucian Leape Institute, National Patient Safety Foundation; 2013.](#))
- This paper presents a model of team learning and introduces the construct of team psychological safety. Results show that team psychological safety is associated with learning behavior, but team efficacy is not. These results support an integrative perspective in which both team structures, such as context support and team leader coaching, and shared beliefs shape team outcomes. ([Edmondson A. Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly.* 1999 Jun;44\(2\):350-383.](#))

Teamwork and Daily Improvement

Removing the wasteful and inefficient practices that drive out joy (e.g., lead with participative management: understand and address factors that contribute to and detract from joy in work)

- Teams perform at their best when leaders create conditions that allow them to manage themselves effectively. It's about applying a concise set of guiding principles to each unique group situation. ([Hackman JR. *Leading Teams: Setting the Stage for Great Performances.* Boston: Harvard Business School Press; 2002.](#))

Individual/Personal Resilience and Growth for All Members of the Staff (Nurture)

- This study illustrates that the individual factors of resilience include the capacity for mindfulness, self-monitoring, limit setting, and attitudes that promote constructive and healthy engagement with the challenges at work. It is in the interest of health care institutions to support efforts of all team members' capacity for resilience because it increases quality of care and reduces burnout, errors and attrition. The article also includes other industry insight. ([Epstein RM, Krasner MS. Physician resilience: What it means, why it matters, and how to promote it. Acad Med. 2013; 88:301-303.](#))