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# Work Engagement Profile Interpretive Report

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Report prepared for

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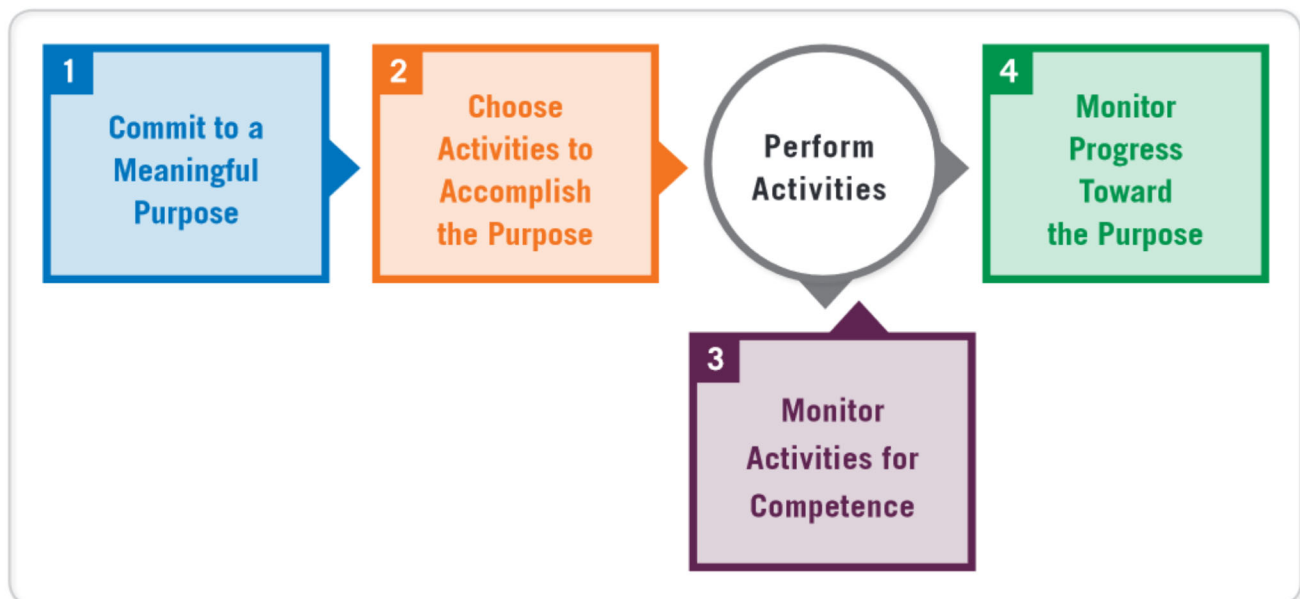
## UNDERSTANDING WORK ENGAGEMENT

The *Work Engagement Profile* measures key factors that keep you engaged in your work. By *engagement*, we mean the energy and thought you put into your work. By *work*, we mean both the activities you perform and their intended purpose. When you are engaged in your work, you take steps to ensure that your activities are effective in accomplishing their purpose.

The self-management process shown below provides a more detailed picture of what engagement entails. The circle represents your behavior as you perform work activities. The boxes show the steps you take to direct your activities toward accomplishing their purpose. As depicted, self-management involves four steps:

1. Committing to a meaningful work purpose—one that is worth your effort
2. Choosing activities that you believe will best accomplish the purpose
3. Making sure that you are performing those activities competently
4. Ensuring that your activities are making progress toward the purpose

### The Self-Management Process\*



\* Adapted from Kenneth W. Thomas, Erik Jansen, and Walter G. Tynon, Jr., "Navigating in the Realm of Theory: An Empowering View of Construct Development," *Research in Organizational Change and Development*, 10(1997): 1–30. Reprinted by permission.

## WHAT MAKES WORK ENGAGING?

When the right conditions are in place, each of the steps in the self-management process can give you an *intrinsic reward*—a positive boost of energy that you get directly from your work that motivates you to keep performing at your best. The *Work Engagement Profile* measures these intrinsic rewards:\*

- Your sense of **meaningfulness**—the opportunity you perceive to pursue a worthy work purpose
- Your sense of **choice**—the opportunity you perceive to select activities that make sense to you and to perform them in ways that seem appropriate
- Your sense of **competence**—the accomplishment you experience in skillfully performing the activities you have chosen
- Your sense of **progress**—the accomplishment you experience in advancing toward the work purpose

The rows in the chart below show that two of these rewards come from your work *activities* and the other two come from your work *purpose*. The columns show that two rewards are forms of *opportunity* and two are forms of *accomplishment*.

### The Four Intrinsic Rewards



\* This list of intrinsic rewards is adapted from Kenneth Thomas and Betty Velthouse, "Cognitive Elements of Empowerment," *Academy of Management Review*, 15 (October 1990), 666–681.

## WHY ARE INTRINSIC REWARDS IMPORTANT?

Intrinsic motivation as measured by the *Work Engagement Profile* has to do with the psychological rewards people get when they care strongly about their work and do it well—even when no one is watching. The work becomes an important source of satisfaction and fulfillment. In many ways, the four intrinsic rewards—sense of meaningfulness, sense of choice, sense of competence, and sense of progress—serve as *psychological vital signs* indicating how well your job is working for both you and your organization.

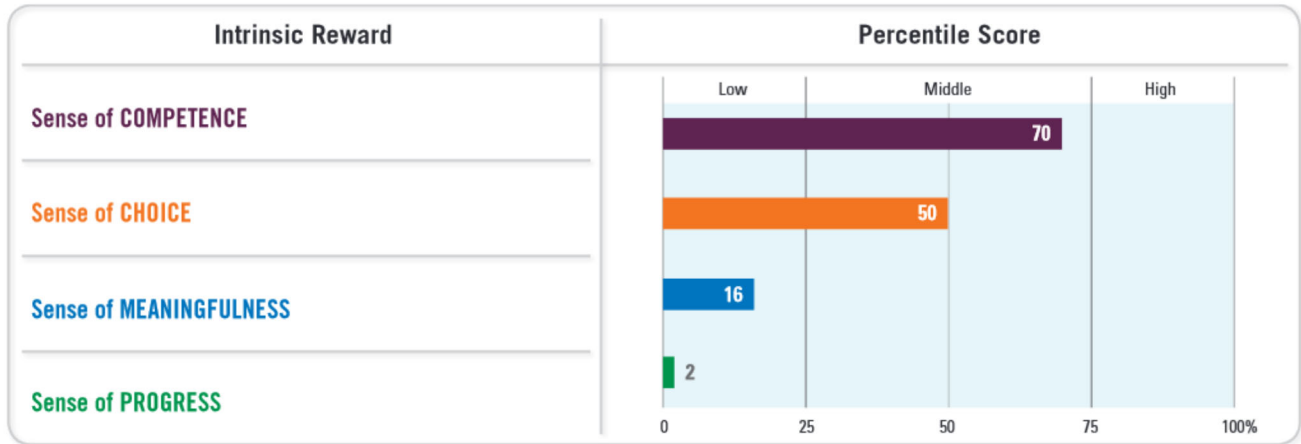
Contrast this with extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is based on rewards that are given by managers as incentives for good work—for example, pay raises, favorable job evaluations, and bonuses. The rewards do not come from the work itself—they are external and controlled by others. When people are motivated mostly by extrinsic rewards, they care more about getting those rewards than about doing good work. They tend to perform just “well enough” to get the rewards—and may not enjoy the work.

Research shows that the four intrinsic rewards affect a broad range of valuable contributions you make to your organization.\* If you score higher on these rewards, you tend to concentrate more on your work, be more innovative, and be seen as more effective. You also are more likely to remain in the organization, recommend it as a place to work, and recommend its products and services to potential customers. At the same time, these rewards increase your sense of well-being. Your work hours are filled with more positive feelings and fewer negative ones. Your job satisfaction is higher, you experience less stress, and you are more likely to feel that you are developing professionally.

\* These findings are detailed in the “Technical Brief for the Work Engagement Profile,” by Kenneth W. Thomas ([www.cpp.com/WEPTechbrief](http://www.cpp.com/WEPTechbrief)).

## YOUR PROFILE OF SCORES

Your profile of scores, shown below, indicates how strongly you experience the four intrinsic rewards that drive your energy and engagement when performing your work. Your scores are arranged in descending order by percentile. These percentiles show how your scores compare to the scores of other people who have taken the *Work Engagement Profile*.<sup>\*</sup> Your percentile scores tell you what percentage of the people in the sample scored the same as or lower than you did on each reward.



The intrinsic reward on which you scored highest is sense of competence, and you scored higher than 70 percent of the people in the sample on that reward. The reward on which you scored lowest is sense of progress, and you scored higher than only 2 percent of the people in the sample on progress.

The graph's solid vertical lines at the 75th and 25th percentiles separate the middle 50 percent of the scores on each reward from the top 25 percent and the bottom 25 percent, respectively. Scores that fall in the top 25 percent are considered to be in the high range. Similarly, scores that fall in the bottom 25 percent are considered to be in the low range. Scores that fall in the middle 50 percent are considered to be in the middle range.

<sup>\*</sup> Information about the norm sample that formed the basis for scoring is reported in the "Technical Brief for the Work Engagement Profile" ([www.cpp.com/WEPTechbrief](http://www.cpp.com/WEPTechbrief)).

## INTERPRETING YOUR PROFILE

### Your Overall Engagement Low Middle High

The average of your four reward scores falls in the **middle range**, indicating that you derive a moderate level of energy and satisfaction from your work. Although you experience some negative feelings about the work, you have enough positive feelings to be somewhat positive overall. You likely feel that your work is okay on balance but somewhat less energizing and fulfilling than it could be. This is enough to keep you moderately engaged, but there is significant room for improvement.

### Your Priorities for Building Engagement

Sense of <b>COMPETENCE</b>	Middle range	Mild Energizer: Moderate Priority to Boost
Sense of <b>CHOICE</b>	Middle range	Mild Energizer: Moderate Priority to Boost
Sense of <b>MEANINGFULNESS</b>	Low range	Energy Drain: Strong Priority to Build
Sense of <b>PROGRESS</b>	Low range	Energy Drain: Strong Priority to Build

The differences between your four intrinsic reward scores, which extend from the middle to the low range, are moderate in size. These differences indicate that there is more room for improvement in some intrinsic rewards than in others. Thus building some rewards may be a higher priority and be more effective in increasing your engagement than would be raising other rewards.

In particular, your low-range scores on progress and meaningfulness indicate a major drain on your energy and engagement—and suggest that building these two intrinsic rewards is a relatively strong priority for you. In contrast, your middle-range scores on choice and competence indicate that raising these rewards—while helpful—is a secondary priority.

### Action Tools

The rest of this report is designed to help you monitor and build the four intrinsic rewards in your work. The reward on which you scored highest is presented first, and the reward on which you scored lowest is presented last. Each reward is covered in two pages. The first page helps you explore how that reward contributes to your energy level at work. It offers descriptions of how high-, middle-, and low-range scorers experience that reward to help you verify your results—and to spot any improvements you might be able to make. The second page offers building blocks for that reward as well as actions you might take to help you enhance the reward. The final page of the report provides a template for an action plan you can use to chart your progress toward your goals for development.



## YOUR SENSE OF COMPETENCE

Competence is the accomplishment you experience in skillfully performing the work activities you have chosen. The sense of competence involves the feeling that you are doing good, high-quality work on those activities. Depending on the nature of your work, your sense of competence may involve dealing skillfully with people, with technical situations, or with both.

Your **middle-range** score indicates that this reward makes a moderate or limited contribution to your energy level at work. You have the sense that you are performing your work activities moderately well—that your overall performance of these activities meets reasonable standards. It is likely that you experience a feeling of pride or satisfaction in the way you perform most activities but have reservations about how well you are performing some others. On balance, you feel fairly confident and capable at this job but see some room for improvement.

Compare your middle-range sense of competence to the experiences of people who score in other ranges.

- **High-range** scorers have the sense that they are handling their work activities well—that their performance of these activities meets or exceeds their personal standards. They are likely to find themselves fully involved in these activities as they perform them—paying full attention to their actions and their effects so that they can make adjustments. They feel a sense of satisfaction, pride, or even artistry in how well they handle these activities and how well they respond to the challenges they encounter when performing them.
- **Low-range** scorers do not have the sense that they are performing work activities well, and their day-to-day performance does not satisfy them. They may feel frustrated by conditions or events that prevent them from doing their work as well as they could. They may feel that their abilities and training don't adequately equip them for their job. They may feel awkward because they are learning new skills that they haven't yet mastered. They may be getting undue criticism from others or being overly critical of themselves. They may even have done their job so long that it feels easy and unchallenging—so that they no longer feel pride in doing it well.

## TAKING YOUR SENSE OF COMPETENCE TO A HIGHER LEVEL

Because you scored in the middle range on sense of competence, you have room to significantly increase that reward and its contribution to your energy level. You can use the following building blocks and action steps to increase your sense of competence.

### Knowledge and Models

Add to your competence by seeking out role models and mentors who can give you examples of better ways of performing your work. Take courses and read books that will give you additional work-related knowledge.

### Positive Feedback

Saying that 95% of your work is done well enhances your sense of competence, whereas saying that 5% of your work is inadequate diminishes your sense of competence—even though both are equally true. When evaluating your work, try to give yourself feedback that is “appreciative” (positive) rather than “deficiency focused” (negative). Give due emphasis to what you are doing well and what is improving.

### Skill Recognition

Recognize the role of your competence in what is going well. Give yourself the credit you deserve. Resist the tendency to explain away your successes as being due to luck, help from others, or the simplicity of the task.

### Challenge

People are especially aware of their competence when they do things they weren't able to do before. Encourage yourself to stretch by taking on work activities that are demanding yet possible for your set of skills. Likewise, welcome work that requires you to grow by developing new skills.

### High, Noncomparative Standards

Help create a culture of competence by setting high standards for yourself that are clearly linked to the work purpose and vision. Include ethical standards involving integrity. Likewise, avoid self-defeating comparisons of yourself to colleagues; learn from their success without feeling threatened.





## YOUR SENSE OF CHOICE

Choice is the opportunity you perceive to select work activities that make sense to you and to perform them in ways that seem appropriate. The sense of choice is the feeling that you are free to choose—that you are able to use your own judgment and act out of your own understanding of the work.

Your **middle-range** score indicates that this reward makes a moderate or limited contribution to your energy level at work. You have the sense that you have a fair amount of influence or control over how you do your work. You are mostly able to do things in ways that make sense to you, but there are some important exceptions. You are able to use a substantial amount of judgment but also have to live with some questionable decisions or procedures. You do what you can with the choices available to you.

Compare your middle-range sense of choice to the experiences of people who score in other ranges.

- **High-range** scorers have the sense that they are making or influencing the significant decisions that bear on how they do their work—so that they are able to do things in ways they think will be most effective. Because of that, they feel a strong ownership of their work, believe in the approach they are taking, and feel responsible for making it successful. They also use their best judgment and creativity. They are likely to take initiative, seek out needed information, experiment with new approaches, and make necessary adjustments to cope with the situations they encounter.
- **Low-range** scorers have the sense that their actions are strongly constrained—by rules, by their boss's dictates, or by other people. These constraints often seem inflexible, so that they are unable to deviate from them—even when the constraints make no sense or when they see a better way of doing things. They have limited opportunity to take initiative or show creativity. They feel frustrated with these constraints and sometimes have to settle for less-than-optimal outcomes, making it hard for them to feel personally responsible for these outcomes.

## TAKING YOUR SENSE OF CHOICE TO A HIGHER LEVEL

Because you scored in the middle range on sense of choice, you have room to significantly increase that reward and its contribution to your energy level. You can use the following building blocks and action steps to increase your sense of choice.

### Authority

Problem-solve with your boss on how you can make your own decisions on specific matters that are important to your work—for example, being able to respond immediately to customer requests or changing conditions, controlling resources, and so on. Demonstrate how this authority would allow you to better achieve the work purpose.

### Trust

Earn your boss's trust in your judgment so that he or she feels comfortable allowing you to make your own decisions. Show that you can self-manage effectively. Also, learn to listen for and trust your own judgment.

### Security

People can become afraid to trust their own judgment when they are punished for taking reasonable risks or making understandable mistakes. Recognize the value of honest mistakes as opportunities for learning and development.

### Clarity of Purpose

It is impossible to make intelligent choices without a clear purpose. When you encounter new or unexpected circumstances, you need to clarify or reinvent your purpose to fit those circumstances.

### Information

Informed choice requires adequate information. Make contact with people who have information or expertise you need—both inside and outside your organization. Get access to relevant information systems and databases. Share information with people who need it.



## YOUR SENSE OF MEANINGFULNESS

Meaningfulness is the opportunity you perceive to pursue a worthy work purpose. The sense of meaningfulness is the feeling that you are on a path that is worth your time and energy—that you are on a valuable mission and that your purpose matters in the larger scheme of things.

Your **low-range** score indicates that this reward area acts as a drain on your energy level at work. You have the sense that you are spending much of your time on relatively unimportant or even pointless matters—that what you are doing won't make much of a difference or contribution. At times, it feels as though you are simply waiting for something better or more interesting to come along and putting in your time until it does. Without a strong sense of purpose, it is likely that you often have to force yourself to concentrate on the work and may sometimes feel that you are just going through the motions.

Compare your low sense of meaningfulness to the experiences of people who score in other ranges.

- **High-range** scorers have the sense that they are devoting their time to something of real value—that their work could make a significant positive difference. They feel a strong sense of purpose and direction—that this is what they should be doing right now. They want to spend their productive hours on this important work and may resent spending time on any less meaningful matters that intrude. They bring their best attention, thinking, and creativity to the work and are committed to doing all they can to move it along.
- **Middle-range** scorers have the sense that their work serves a purpose that is of moderate value or importance, so that it deserves a fair day's effort. They are aware that their work makes a contribution—a positive difference. However, the pull of the purpose may be in the background a good part of the time, so that they may have to stop and think about it occasionally to remind themselves of its importance.

## BUILDING A SENSE OF MEANINGFULNESS

Because you scored low on sense of meaningfulness, this is a priority area for change—a primary avenue for reducing the drain on your energy and making your work more intrinsically rewarding. You can use the following building blocks and action steps to build a sense of meaningfulness in your work.

### Noncynical Climate

A sense of meaningfulness flourishes in a noncynical climate that encourages idealism and commitment. Seek out supportive people and groups that can help you nurture your ideals. Do not dwell on comments made by cynics. Control your own cynicism.

### Clear Values

A sense of meaningfulness comes from shared values about what is important and why. Take time to examine your values and passions about what is important. Seek groups that share them. Remind yourself and your colleagues of these values when necessary.

### An Exciting Vision

A sense of meaningfulness is often expressed in a shared vision of some future state that you and your colleagues would like to create, and how it would add value to the world. Propose such a vision if none exists. If the vision that exists does not quite work for you, consider proposing changes or additions that you would need for it to tap into your passions.

### Relevant Work

To be meaningful, your work must be clearly related to the shared vision. Find ways to eliminate or subcontract busywork that does not clearly contribute to the vision. Ask “What can be done here that is meaningful?” when approaching a new situation. When necessary, remind yourself and others how the work contributes to the vision.

### Whole Tasks

Your work is more meaningful when you can complete a whole project or at least a major, identifiable portion of it—something you can point to with pride as your contribution. When possible, negotiate for whole, identifiable work tasks.



## YOUR SENSE OF PROGRESS

Progress is the accomplishment you experience in advancing toward the work purpose. Your sense of progress involves the feeling that the work is moving forward and that your activities are really accomplishing something.

Your **low-range** score indicates that this reward area acts as a drain on your energy level at work. You feel discouraged by a lack of visible progress toward your work purpose. You may feel that you are stuck or even losing ground—or you may feel that progress is very slow, and that you are only plodding along, thinking, “This could take forever.” You may begin to lose confidence in the choices you and others have made and to have less optimism and enthusiasm about the work. You may begin to feel that the effort you put into the work is pointless.

Compare your low sense of progress to the experiences of people who score in other ranges.

- **High-range** scorers are encouraged that their work purpose is moving forward. They have a strong sense that their work is on track and moving in the right direction—that their efforts are succeeding. They see convincing signs of progress that show them things are working out—that the purpose is being achieved. They also have the sense that things are moving relatively quickly—that they and their colleagues are really “cooking.” This progress gives them confidence in the choices they have made and optimism and enthusiasm about the future.
- **Middle-range** scorers feel that their progress is moderate. When they stop to think about it, they realize that they are making gradual progress. There may be occasional setbacks, progress may be slower or less dramatic than they would like, or progress may be limited to certain parts of their work, but things are generally moving forward. Overall, this moderate sense of progress makes it easier for them to keep working at the job.

## BUILDING A SENSE OF PROGRESS

Because you scored low on sense of progress, this is a priority area for change—a primary avenue for reducing the drain on your energy and making your work more intrinsically rewarding. You can use the following building blocks and action steps to build a sense of progress in your work.

### Collaborative Relationships

Progress is easier to achieve when people in an organization help each other. Work to build trusting, collaborative relationships with others involved in your work. Problem-solve to find solutions that meet everyone's needs.

### Milestones

On longer tasks, especially, it's easy to lose a sense of progress as the days and months pass. Develop a clear picture of the sequence of key events, or milestones, that must be reached to achieve your purpose. Recognizing each milestone when it's reached provides a way of marking significant progress. Chart and post progress through these milestones.

### Celebrations

Celebrations are a way to amplify your sense of progress. Take time to stop and celebrate important milestones—for both you and your work team. If nothing else, pause occasionally during team meetings to remind each other how far you've come on a project.

### Access to Customers

Work purposes are often about doing something of value on behalf of customers, whether external or internal. Find ways to meet with customers and solicit feedback on how well your work has met their needs.

### Measures of Improvement

Use customer feedback and other information to track improvements on recurring work. Improvements typically involve achieving the purpose better and/or faster. Try to measure the things you care most about, not just what's easiest to measure.

## ACTION PLAN

Because your overall engagement level falls in the middle range, you have significant room to strengthen your intrinsic rewards—and increase the energy and satisfaction you derive from your work. This section gives you an opportunity to write down some next steps to help make that happen.

Sense of progress and sense of meaningfulness are the rewards on which you scored lowest, so building those rewards is likely a priority for you. Listed below are the building blocks for progress and meaningfulness. In the spaces provided, write in any specific action steps you can take to create or strengthen those building blocks.

Building Blocks for Sense of Progress	Actions I Can Take
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative Relationships</li> <li>• Milestones</li> <li>• Celebrations</li> <li>• Access to Customers</li> <li>• Measures of Improvement</li> </ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Building Blocks for Sense of Meaningfulness	Actions I Can Take
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noncynical Climate</li> <li>• Clear Values</li> <li>• An Exciting Vision</li> <li>• Relevant Work</li> <li>• Whole Tasks</li> </ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

### To Learn More

For more detailed descriptions of the intrinsic rewards and their building blocks, as well as the actions leaders can take to create a climate of engagement, see *Intrinsic Motivation at Work: What Really Drives Employee Engagement*, 2nd edition, by Kenneth W. Thomas (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2009).

