

A consensus of experts⁵ agree that engagement is a reflection of an employee's **psychological state embodied in positive meaningful involvement at work (passion), a commitment to organizational goals, pride in work, and a feeling of meaningful organizational belonging as demonstrated through initiative (discretionary effort), purpose, energy, and persistence.**

Moreover, complex daily interactions, especially in the nature and degree of each person's investment, as well as the depth to which engagement is integrated into business practices, are bound by moral and practical imperatives.

Our sense of value, belonging and growth, impact, commitment, purpose, and energy follow from degree of regard we have for others inherent in our interactions. If the engine is fine-tuned, work related well-being is characterized by efficacy and involvement; if the engine has blown a gasket, the result is burn-out, characterized by toxic exhaustion and compromised performance.⁵ How perceptions of worth and associated business practices affect work ethic, for instance, are explored more in Chapter 6, "At What Price Engagement?" and Chapter 7, "Taxonomy of Engagement."

The psychological and sociological implications of engagement are profound yet very simply encapsulated: we should feel we matter. This feeling, more important than and aside from any title we may hold or salary we earn, is a product of understanding of how we fit and that our fit matters to us and to the business vision and mission in which we have been invited to participate.

Therefore, immediacy and intimacy accentuate the quality of personal engagement investments. Fairness, too, in this interaction, is not an arbitrary or relative value but a fundamental prerequisite. If we feel excluded or less valued, total commitment is sacrificed, and energy is consumed, not created.

When experts talk about engagement, they speak of enablement (strategies or ways of getting us there) and drivers (the general factors related to producing more effective outcomes). "Communication" in the abstract, for instance, is considered a driver. The specific action that improves communication is an enabler: a specific change, for instance, open invitations to meetings could be enacted to allow employees to peer behind the curtain. A step further, the invitation implies that employees are able to express their concerns and allows opportunity for more active participation during or after meetings, where team members become more of a part of discussing strategy and improvement rather than merely being informed of strategy decisions.

Effective change moves participants from a passive cog in the wheel to actually moving the wheel, adding to progress. This active role is enabling. Not be confused with psychological co-dependency, as stated in the Towers Watson Global Workforce Study, "enablement is the structure of the investments we make, within our economic means, to identify and remove obstacles in order to make effective choices related to business productivity and to employee growth."⁶

