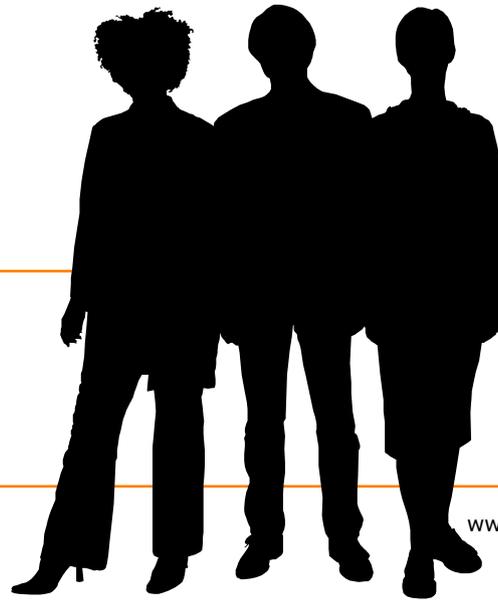


Research Nuggets

2011:1 Everyday Engagement

Decision Dynamics
IDEON Science Park, Scheelev. 15
SE-223 70 Lund, Sweden
Tel +46 46 181 530



www.decisiondynamics.se

Discover the great potential of everyday work engagement!

Decision Dynamics has found that almost everybody of the initially surveyed persons waste a lot of their potential and engagement in their everyday work. There are great opportunities to improve everyday engagement and performance by developing one's weekly work activities to better utilize one's potential.

Imagine your most engaging hours during a typical work week. For example, if you are an HR manager, then it may be organizing competence developing activities. Now, imagine your *least* engaging hours during a typical work week. This could perhaps be demotivating routine tasks or sitting through meetings that do not seem to lead anywhere. Is there a big difference in how engaged and well you perform in these different work situations? Well, then you are not alone. Early findings from an ongoing Decision Dynamics study not only indicate much greater performance in high engagement work hours, but also that almost all suffer from several low engagement hours that hardly use any of the employees' potential in most of our work weeks.

We are measuring everyday engagement and performance with our new tool Decision Dynamics *Engagement Compass*[™]. Respondents answer few and simple questions about how efficient and fast they perform, how well they cooperate with others, and how high quality they achieve during their most vs least

engaging work hours during a normal work week (on scales from 1 to 5). The average results are shown in Figure 1 below, which highlight differences as great as 50% to more than 75% performance improvements during the most engaging work hours (the orange diamond) in contrast to the least engaging work hours (the gray inner diamond).

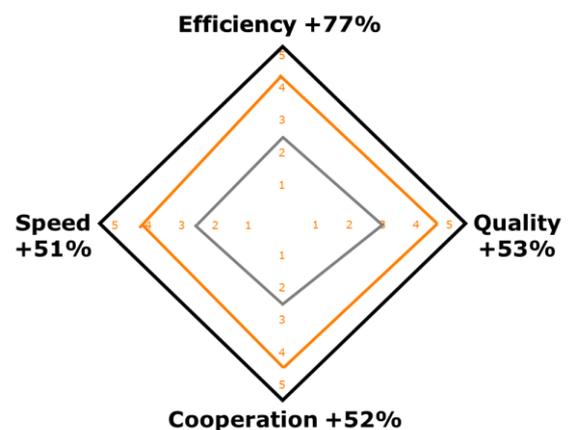


Figure 1. Difference in performance factors between most and least engaging work hours in a typical week.

The really bad news is that almost everybody are losing a lot of performance every work week due to low engaging tasks during their worst hours. We often do not think about how much performance we waste during these hours. However, these many losses by almost everybody on a weekly basis add up to huge organizational losses over time.

On the other hand, the really good news is the great opportunities to improve performance by making these worst work hours more engaging. Just by turning one of your least engaging hours into one more of your most engaging hours, you and



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your organization will gain a lot of engagement and performance from changing only about 5% of your job content.

Some ask: How many high engagement hours can people have, given that so many feel increasingly high work pressures? This concern confuses prevalent performance pressures with much more sustainable engagement improvements. We unfortunately often try to improve performance by demanding more and more of employees which is naturally felt as higher pressure that can be stressful and not sustainable in the long run. However, engagement is the gateway to win-win solutions where people gain greater motivation and organizations gain greater performance.

This is highlighted by a second key finding in our study. We also ask respondents about how much of their potential they use in their most vs least engaging work hours. We are finding enormous differences of as much as 125%, as illustrated by Figure 2.

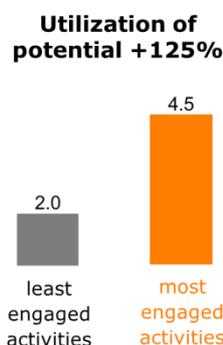


Figure 2. Difference in utilization of potential in least and most engaged work hour in a typical week.

What seems to be really killing the everyday engagement of people is doing things that do *not* utilize their potential. It is not being able to utilize one's potential in these low engagement tasks that is so destructive and unsustainable. In sharp contrast, it is being allowed to utilize more of one's potential that generates greater engagement and sustainable performance.

Here is what you can do:

1. Let everybody gain everyday engagement

Avoid devaluing people as lacking engagement, since everybody varies greatly in their engagement depending on which tasks they do during their work weeks.

2. Exchange some of your work hours

Suggest how you could turn one or more of your least engaging weekly work hours into some of your most engaging hours.

3. Help managers discover the specific engaging talents of their co-workers

Support managers and colleagues in a process to see, respect, and trust a person's unique potential and how to use these engaging talents in a constructive way.