



7 EXPERTS SHARE THEIR BEST CULTURE HACKS





Scott Johnson

CEO & Founder, Motivosity, Inc.

FORWARD:

The Culture Challenge

Building a company culture is hard.

Just the thought of starting can be overwhelming, often creating more questions than answers. There are tons of books, podcasts, videos, blogs and other free advice from novice social-media influencers. With all the clutter out there, it can be hard to wrap your head around the strategies, tactics, and supposed “best practices.”

We appreciate your frustration. That’s why we decided to cut through the noise for you and go straight to the leading culture and organizational experts -- award winners, best selling authors, and widely respected thought leaders. This ebook is filled with practical advice from the best minds out there. Advice that we wish we had when we first began designing and implementing our culture.

So read on. What you’ll find are some amazing hacks to create and scale a culture of motivated employees, where you’ll see reduced turnover, improved productivity, and a place that your employees love. Roll up your sleeves and let’s get started.



Table of Contents

WHITNEY JOHNSON

Executive Coach and Consultant
WLJ Advisors, LLC



PATRICK LENCIONI

President
The Table Group



JILL CHRISTENSEN

Employee Engagement Expert and Author
Jill Christensen International, LLC



GREG HAWKS

Corporate Culture Specialist
Hawks Agency



CHESTER ELTON

Co-founder
The Culture Works



ADRIAN GOSTICK

Co-founder
The Culture Works



JARED OLSEN

Product Evangelist and HR Consultant
Motivosity, Inc.



Culture Hacks

If you've ever seen the TV show *Parks and Recreation*, you know that Leslie Knope is one of the most engaged employees and managers in the history of television.

For those uninitiated, here's a rundown of a typical Leslie Knope project: Leslie is given an assignment by Ron, her stoic department director and Libertarian government official who is actively trying to stop the government from spending money. Undaunted, Leslie recruits others in the office to accomplish the task anyway.

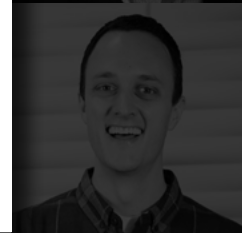
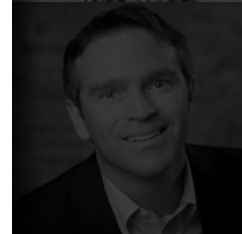
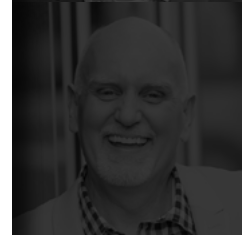
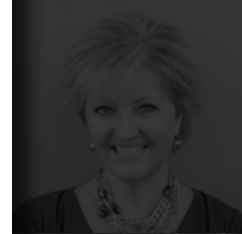
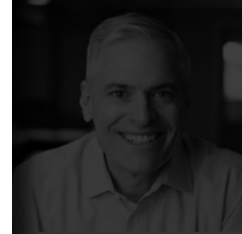
With the enthusiasm and energy of an entire high school cheer squad at Homecoming, Leslie outlines her plans for the project and secures buy-in from her coworkers. She is adept at appealing to the parts of the project that are attractive to them—Andy, the opportunity to help people and have fun; Tom, flashy presentations and local prestige; and for Jerry/Gary/Larry (one person, don't ask), the satisfaction of mundane tasks that get him home right at 5pm.

As plans proceed and obstacles are faced, Leslie is quick to dole out compliments, celebrate every victory (no matter how small), and even makes a scrapbook to commemorate the project. Her enthusiasm is contagious. While not everyone is as thrilled with their government job as Leslie is, there is no doubt that they would do anything to help her when she needs them.

Scrapbooking may not be your cup of tea, but we can—and should—**show our team how much we appreciate their contributions daily**. Think of appreciation as a “culture hack” to getting an environment your employees will thrive in.

W Whitney Johnson is an expert on disruptive innovation and personal disruption. She is the author of *Disrupt Yourself* and *Build an “A” Team*. In 2019, she was ranked #3 on Top 30 Organizational Culture Professionals. Whitney is also the host of the weekly *Disrupt Yourself* Podcast. You can follow her on twitter:

@johnsonwhitney



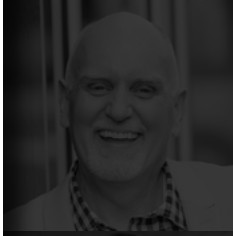
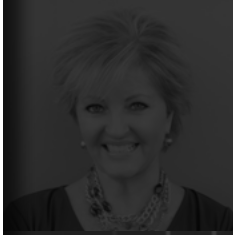
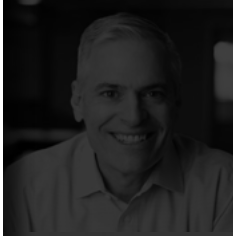
But one size does not fit all; **just as every employee is different, so are their needs for recognition.** Everyone, from the newest employee to the most senior manager, is on a learning curve in your company. What they need in recognition when they are new is not what they require when they've been around the block a few times.

When you have a fresh-faced Andy Dwyer who is enthusiastic but inexperienced it is important to give praise, encouragement, and *permission* to do what he is being asked to accomplish. Employees on this low-end of the learning curve may sometimes feel overwhelmed with all of the new information they are taking in, but with proper encouragement and validation they will eventually find their way to the sweet spot.

The sweet spot is where experience, confidence, and enthusiasm come together to give the employee satisfaction in their work. They know what they should do, how they should do it, and what is expected. Accomplishing tasks is easier, but not so easy that things are on autopilot. For employees in this phase of the learning curve it is vitally important that they receive thanks for the work they are doing. As they feel their work is appreciated, they remain connected to the organization and continue to push for new growth.

Eventually, an employee will advance from the sweet spot to mastery (the high end of the learning curve). Skills are on autopilot; the challenge is gone. These employees can be valuable mentors and keepers of institutional knowledge, but it is easy for them to become disengaged from the rest of the team. When you praise them (and please, do praise them), be sure to thank them for helping those who are still learning. Acknowledge their role in your teams' success. When they are ready to spread their wings to form their own premiere multi-media entertainment conglomerate, let them soar, and be sure to remind them of their strengths as you wish them well.

If you want to be the Leslie Knope of your office, aka a supervisor that employees will gladly help in times of need, you need to show them the recognition that they are craving in the way best suited to their position on the learning curve.

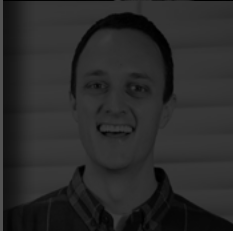


Or make a scrapbook for every project. Your choice.



Take-aways

- Engaged employees are innovative, highly motivated, and drive results
- Engaged employees empower their peers to be engaged
- Show your team how much you appreciate them everyday
- Customize the way you show appreciation. Employees need different forms of recognition based on how long they've been with the company



Overcome Job Misery

When I was in high school, my mother gave me a copy of the book “*What Color Is Your Parachute*” so that I could start thinking about what kind of career would be best for me one day. About seven years later, I finally read that book and benefited from it immensely. In addition to helping me find a job that suited my talents, it provoked my interest in career counseling, a hobby that I dabble in today. Helping people discover passion in their work lives gives me great satisfaction.

However, in the past few years I’ve come to realize that the pursuit of the right career may be a little over-rated. Don’t get me wrong, I continue to enjoy, and greatly value, helping people find careers that allow them to use their natural talents. It’s just that we sometimes mislead ourselves into thinking that this alone is enough to make us satisfied in our work. Let me explain.

BAD JOB VS. MISERABLE JOB

It isn’t uncommon to hear someone say that so-and-so has a good job. If you ask someone what a good job is, you’ll get a variety of answers depending on the person.

For some, a good job is about being paid well, for others it’s about the prestige of working for a well-known company, and for others still it might be about having the freedom to avoid sitting behind a desk all day in an office.

We also hear people say that so-and-so has a bad job, which can mean that they are underpaid, have to do manual labor, or sit in an office without ventilation or natural light. It is almost entirely subjective.

Patrick Lencioni is the author of ten business books including his latest release, *The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business*, and the national best seller, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. He is founder and president of The Table Group, a management consulting firm focused on organizational health.

www.tablegroup.com



What is not subjective is the definition of a miserable job, because it's largely the same whether you are an executive, waiter, teacher or professional football player. **People who are miserable in their jobs dread going to work and come home frustrated, defeated and weary.**

MISERY'S IMPACT

The cost of job misery is very real, both for individuals who are miserable and for the families and friends of the people who must live with them. Scores of people suffer everyday as they trudge off from their families and friends to jobs that make them more cynical, unhappy and frustrated than they were when they left.

Over time, this dull pain can erode the self-confidence and passion of even the strongest people, which in turn affects their spouses, children and friends in subtle but profound ways.

Organizations are not immune to the effects of misery either. Some studies show as high as 77% of workers are dissatisfied with their work, and that the primary driver of job dissatisfaction is not pay or benefits, but rather the relationship that an employee has with his or her supervisor.

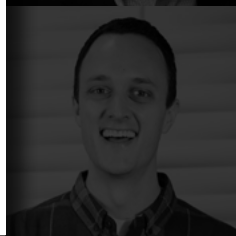
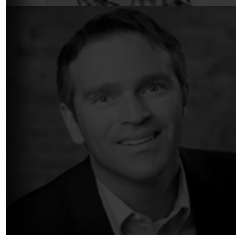
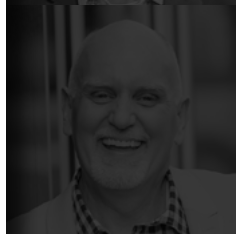
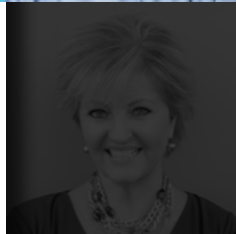
Such widespread **dissatisfaction kills morale and productivity within companies, and drives up the cost of recruiting, hiring and retraining new employees**, all of which takes a huge, if not easily measured, toll on the bottom line. Gallup estimates that the annual cost to the American economy due to lost productivity is somewhere in the vicinity of \$350 billion.

THE THREE CAUSES

The causes of job misery, are as simple as they are common, and are the subject of my most recent book, *The Truth About Employee Engagement*. What I'd like to do here is explore just one of those causes, which is the most obvious and perhaps most important of the three. I call it *anonymity*.

ANONYMITY

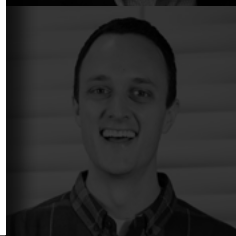
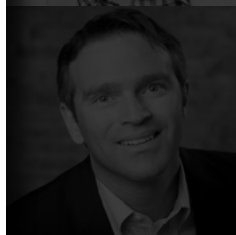
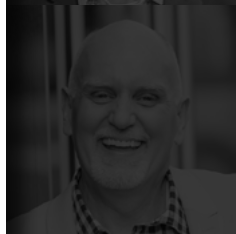
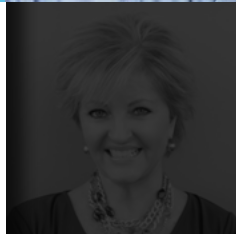
No employee, regardless of how much money he makes or how much she loves the nature of the



work she does, can be fulfilled without a manager who knows and cares about them as a unique individual.

Yes, that seems ridiculously obvious, which makes the pervasiveness of anonymity so puzzling. Ask most employees whether their managers really understand them, whether they are genuinely interested in them as human beings, and most will say 'no.' Ask their managers the same question, 'why don't you get to know and understand your employees more?,' and assuming that they'll admit the problem, here are some of the likely reasons:

1. **Political correctness:** during interviews, managers are instructed by legislators and lawyers to avoid any personal questions that might be construed as discriminatory and/ or irrelevant to the job. Unfortunately, when an employee actually starts working for them, many of those managers continue to deal with them at an arm's length, rather than treating them as a human being, one with a family and a history and aspirations and hobbies.
2. **Amnesia:** so many managers seem to forget what it was like when they were more junior employees. They don't remember the impact that a manager can have on an employee's sense of self-esteem, enthusiasm and job fulfillment just by taking an interest in someone's life outside of work.
3. **Fear of the "Touchy-Feely":** some managers downplay the impact of the human element on the productivity and fulfillment of their employees, often because they are embarrassed. This can stem from their discomfort with being emotionally open with people, from their fear of seeming disingenuous, or from the painful realization that they haven't generally taken an interest in the employees who work for them.
4. **Busy-ness:** some managers don't believe they have the time to take an interest in their people. They see themselves as individual contributors who happen to have direct reports. For them, any time taken away from "real work" is a waste and a threat to making progress.



Obviously, they don't have a sense of the impact that a manager can have on an employee's productivity and morale. Of course, no excuse is a good one for a manager to avoid treating employees like the three-dimensional human beings that they are- mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, grandparents and neighbors, all of whom have a need to be known by the person who oversees their work.

OVERCOMING ANONYMITY

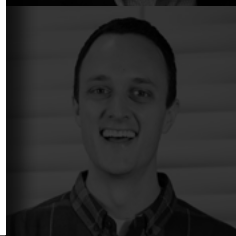
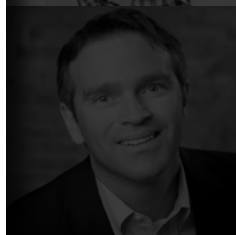
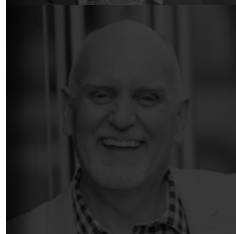
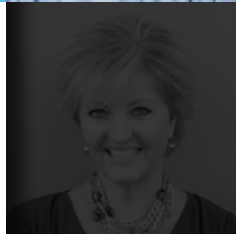
Managers who struggle with demonstrating a real interest in their employees need to do one or both of the following. First, they have to **overcome their fear of being politically incorrect**. Yes, our current legal climate makes it necessary for managers to be careful about the kinds of personal interview questions they ask. But that doesn't mean they should continue in that same vein after an employee comes on board.

Of course, that doesn't mean all personal topics are suddenly fair game. It just means that managers should act like human beings, and not the automatons that our legal system requires them to be during the interview process.

Second, managers need to overcome their fear of coming across as insincere. That's not to say that they need to get comfortable being insincere. They just need to realize that it is okay if employees initially suspect that they are being manipulative. They have to have the courage and wisdom to realize that the truth about their intentions will eventually become clear after they demonstrate consistent, genuine interest in their employees as people.

THE OTHER CAUSES

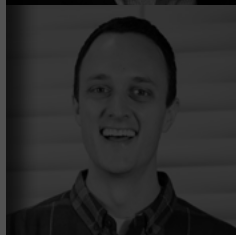
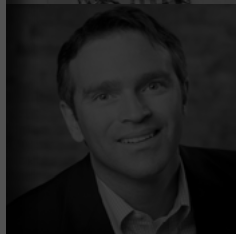
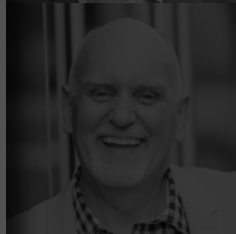
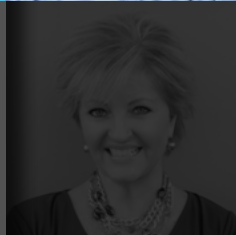
Addressing anonymity is the first of the three areas that managers need to tackle. To transform our ailing workforce, there is more work to be done, in the areas of employee irrelevance and something I call 'immeasurement'.



However, more than anything, managers need to understand that job misery at work is costly, unnecessary, and treatable. It is my sincerest hope that the advice and perspective in my book changes the way managers approach their jobs so that employees find true fulfillment in theirs.

Take-aways

- 77% of workers are dissatisfied with their work
- The primary driver of job dissatisfaction is the relationship that an employee has with his or her supervisor
- Dissatisfaction kills morale, productivity, and drives up the cost of recruiting, hiring and re-training new employees
- Lost productivity costs the U.S. economy \$350 billion every year
- No employee can be fulfilled without a manager who knows and cares about them as a unique individual



Driving Values Home

According to Gallup, only 27 percent of employees believe in their company's values. Needless to say, I was alarmed when I read this statistic since values describe an organization's culture, which is defined as "how we do things here." Values describe who you are, what you believe in, what you hold to be dear and true, and the attributes that everyone should "experience" when they interact with anyone in your organization. Examples of values include Accountability, Innovation, Results-Oriented, Fun, Continuous Improvement, and Bureaucracy-Free.

When considering the fact that two-thirds of employees do not believe in their company's values (i.e. culture), it's not surprising then that two-thirds of U.S. workers say that they are disengaged. This is not a coincidence, rather a correlation, as great cultures drive higher levels of employee engagement.

In my opinion, the main reason employees do not believe in their company's values is because the values do not accurately reflect the organization's culture. For instance, more than a decade ago I worked for a company that had Accountability as one of its six values. However, virtually no one was held accountable in that organization and worse, favoritism and unfairness ruled the day. Everyone who worked there knew this was the case and hence, it was reflected in our pathetically low employee engagement score.

While it's okay for an organization's values to be aspirational (yet achievable), it's not okay for an organization's values to be a flat-out lie. Why? Because everyone who interacts with your organization will discover it, which will prove detrimental to what people think about your

Jill Christensen is a former Fortune 500 executive, who led Global Internal Communications at Avaya and Western Union. Her proven approach to increase engagement has allowed her to partner with leaders around the world to improve productivity, retention, customer satisfaction, and revenue growth by re-engaging employees. You can learn more about Jill here:

jillchristensenintl.com



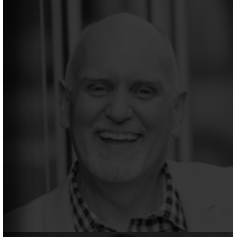
organization, and your ability to attract and retain great talent. It's no secret that now more than ever, former and current employees are more than happy to go to the Glassdoor website and let the world know about your organization's achievements and strengths, lies and weaknesses. If you are not honest about who you are, you will be found out and the consequences could be great. My Culture Hack? Conduct a Values Audit. In the audit, conduct a survey and face-to-face focus groups to ask employees if they believe your values truly reflect the organization and "how we do things here." If the outcome is poor, start over and ask employees for their help creating a short list of positive, inspirational values – five to seven - that describe who you are, what you believe in, and the attributes that people will "experience" when they interact with the organization.

By engaging employees in the process of drafting your values, you will increase engagement because every person in this world wants to have a voice at work and know their voice is being heard. In addition, you will get an accurate picture of your culture – one that employees can believe in, buy into, and role model.

However, you are not done there. Once you have a set of values that accurately reflects who you are, you have to bring your values to life. The worse thing you could do is allow your values to be nothing more than a plaque on the wall or a list on your website. How do you make your values come to life?

- Hire for a values match.
- Accountability. In the performance management process, rate people on their ability to meet their goals and their ability to live your values – 50/50.
- Reference your values in every company communication.
- Create a recognition program that enables employees to reward people who live the values/exhibit behaviors aligned with the values.

Building an amazing culture is not difficult. It starts with having a short list of values that honestly reflects who you are and then bringing them to life. It ends with everyone living the values and holding them in the highest esteem. Priceless.



Take-aways

- Only 27% of employees believe in their company's values
- The main reason employees do not believe in their company's values is because the values do not accurately reflect the organization's culture
- Organizational values should be aspirational yet achievable, and a true reflection of the company
- Conduct a value audit to see if employees believe in your core values
- Create a recognition program that enables employees to reward people who live the values/ exhibit behaviors aligned with the values



Four Pillars of Healthy Culture

One of the great duplicities about healthy culture in organizations is that IF it doesn't come from the top, it's not sustainable. Company-wide, there is a lot of truth to that. Yet, as a capable professional, you and I have the opportunity to shape our immediate environment within our department, floor or location, if we so determine.

The majority of companies aren't intentional about culture. When left on its own, like all living things, it will exist somewhere between neutral and toxic. Instead of blaming upper management or C-Suite leaders, why don't we initiate an effort in our corner of the work world? I've heard all the excuses...

- I'm not in charge.
- I don't have any authority.
- I don't have a budget.
- It doesn't matter anyhow.
- I can't do anything about it.

Everyone is not a leader. Being thoughtful about crafting a healthy environment for us and our colleagues takes a significant amount of intentionality, reserved for those who aspire to leadership. If we're convinced by the above justified excuses, the following will not resonate. However, if you intend to exert yourself, despite your current reality, here are Four Pillars you can incorporate, fostering a healthy culture in your immediate environment.

As a Corporate Culture Specialist, Greg Hawks brings an expansive leadership portfolio of two decades of mentoring, developing teams, and crafting culture. His approachable personality and vibrant demeanor are useful attributes for attacking mediocrity. His playful attitude cloaks a directness that pinpoints root issues. Learn more about Greg Here:

hawksagency.com



HONOR

Typically considered an act reserved for only a certain few who have attained rare-air status: Being at a company a long time, achieving the impossible, consistently surpassing goals and so forth. Yet giving honor is an available weekly action.

How have you felt when you've been honored? Wouldn't YOU like to feel that way every week?

Honor is a combination of three elements:

1. Strategic Appreciation
2. Valuing Contribution
3. Valuing the Person

When we commit to offer an observation weekly using one of those three, or a combination of them, we gift honor to our colleagues. This nurtures a healthy culture!

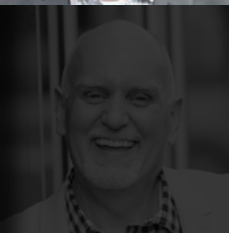
EXCELLENCE

Most people mistakenly identify stewardship as excellence. Stewardship is "doing the best I can, with what I have." When resources are limited, sometimes this is all we can do. Excellence, however, is a two-fold proposition. It's an extraordinarily high-standard we set which then an outside voice affirms or denies its quality. From that data, we adjust, adapt or accelerate.

Whether client facing or buried deep in cube land, you and I can live by standards that propel us towards excellence consistently. Excellence is on the other side of obstacles; therefore, determination and accountability are always necessary to sustain it.

Incorporating peer-to-peer accountability amongst your team is a transformational option. Seize it!

This too is something we can determine and control, fostering a healthy culture.



IDENTITY

In days gone by, individuals found their identity IN their work. In our ever-evolving society, the aspiration to bring our whole selves TO work is a priority. Whether supervisor, subordinate or colleague YOU can contribute to the people on your team feeling engaged. Knowing what motivates co-workers requires sincere curiosity with a dash of interest.

As we discover their strengths, motivations, dreams and goals, we can partner with them to spend as much time as possible in those areas. When applied across a team, department or floor, the enhanced camaraderie evolves into increased productivity and greater fulfillment in the work.

Of course, everyone has their job to do, which will entail aspects we don't love. In healthy cultures though, we work alongside our colleagues to diminish weaknesses and magnify strengths!

SIGNIFICANCE

Simon Sinek made famous "Start with Why". But long before that, we humans have been aspiring to make a lasting impression, leave a legacy and change the world.

Why does what you do matter? Why does what your teammates do matter? I don't know the specific answer for you, but if dollars are being exchanged for your skills and service, be assured it does matter!

When we possess that sense of mission and purpose around our efforts, it compels us to care, make sacrifices and consider how to keep increasing value. The very essence of a healthy culture.

You and I initiating action to incorporate these four pillars is a hearty undertaking. It's worth it because we spend so much time at work! All four of them require us to be relationally smart, while engaging our co-workers at a slightly deeper level. That very activity will unlock a healthy culture.

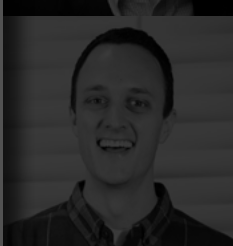
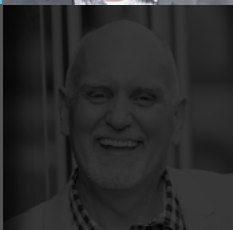
If you're blaming supervisors or management for the culture, why not take on the task of making your immediate work-world a much more enjoyable, productive place?



For more info or help, connect with Greg at www.HawksAgency.com or on LinkedIn at www.Linkedin.com/in/ghawks. He's on twitter, Instagram and facebook too, of course.

Take-aways

- The majority of companies aren't intentional about their culture
- Culture isn't the C-suites responsibility - it's everyone's
- The four pillars to create a healthy culture:
 - Honor
 - Excellence
 - Identity
 - Significance



HR Hack: Job Sculpting

HR professionals have been trying to find ways to make work more rewarding from time immemorial. As part of that process, many tell us it's just common sense to sit down with each of their people regularly and work on career development. After all, it's one of the few things we *can* control. It usually takes years to affect an employee's compensation in a meaningful way, and we can't give out better perks or benefits if an employee is rocking it (*I'm going to give you a better dental plan, Johnson; I've seen your kids and they're a mess*). But career development: That we can help with.

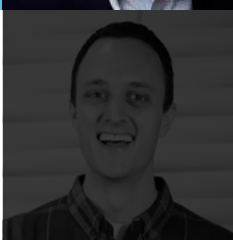
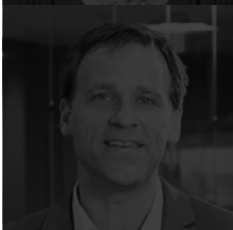
We call this practice *job sculpting*. It's the art of forging a customized career path to help employees do a little more of what they find motivating and little less of what frustrates them—increasing your chances of retaining and engaging talented people.

While sculpting sometimes might involve substantial changes in responsibilities, and might even eventually mean facilitating a team member's move to a new role in another team; we've found those cases are rare. Most often relatively small changes in responsibilities or work situations create huge boons in productivity and loyalty.

Wisdom on this comes from James Waldroop, who was director of the MBA Career Development Program at Harvard Business School for 19 years, and Timothy Butler, who is the current director. They have found that Harvard MBAs are more likely to stay and stay committed in a job if the work matches more of their deeply embedded "life interests."

Now, these are not hobbies or personal interests, but their work passions. "Deeply embedded life

Chester Elton and Adrian Gostick are authors of the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and USA Today bestsellers *The Carrot Principle* and *All in*. They are founding partners of The Culture Works. They train and consult on leadership issues with organizations such as AT&T, Procter & Gamble, and American Express. Learn more about their work here .
www.thecultureworks.com



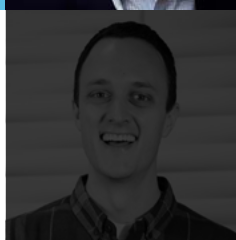
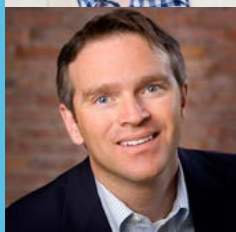
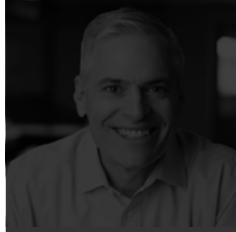
interests do not determine what people are good at—they drive what kinds of activities make them happy. At work, that happiness keeps people engaged, and it keeps them from quitting,” they said.

These two Ph.Ds argue that organizations can gain a competitive advantage through this process. For instance, Waldroop and Butler have noticed that firms recruiting their students have a significant advantage over competitors when they emphasize a commitment to helping their professionals think about and manage their careers.

But then, of course, HR must help their organizations deliver on the promise. How? That takes a little persistence and a touch of resourcefulness. For instance, a salesperson with a passion for quantitative analysis might be given a stretch assignment to work with market research, while still selling. An engineer who yearns to be more creative might help the communication team design new sales support materials or user manuals—again, while retaining her primary role in engineering.

John Lowery, CEO of the 300 person Michigan firm Applied Imaging, says this process means paying attention to the little things you hear from your people: “We have a technical specialist who loves photography, so we’ve asked him to take pictures at our corporate events. He brings every bit of equipment imaginable and is so engaged. We have a woman on our front desk who is an English major. We asked if she would mind proofing our company brochures before we go to print. She said: ‘I’d love to do that.’ She’s given us great feedback, and does she ever feel valued!”

Harvard’s Waldroop and Butler cite the example of Carolyn, a star analyst they met at a leading Wall Street firm, who was talented at designing sophisticated quantitative approaches. Executives tried to ensure Carolyn’s loyalty by giving her above-average raises and bonuses, but unbeknownst to them, she was thinking of leaving. She wanted to have more of an impact on decision making and group direction—a say in who the group hired, how the team was structured, and how they could interact better with other areas of the company.



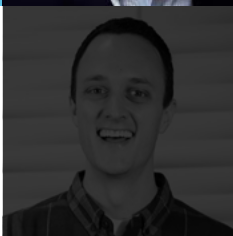
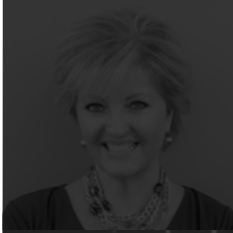
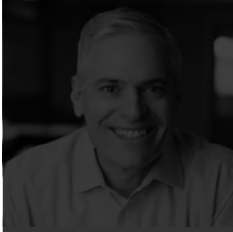
The story does have a happy ending. HR intervened and sat Carolyn and her boss down and arrived at a player-coach role for her as coordinator of research. She continued to work as an analyst, but also assumed a leadership role on a couple of cross-functional teams. They got her involved in hiring and promotion decisions, and she sat in when the executive team brainstormed on strategic direction. A year later, the research group had never been more productive, and Carolyn was happy and engaged.

It must be said that this kind of tailoring approach involves people doing things that you actually need done, not just those they would like to do more of. In some cases, we must accept that the person might not be good at what they love to do. The activity must be not only motivating but also a strength for the person, or something they can realistically get better at with time and effort. Work is not simply about people pursuing passions. If it were, we would have a surfeit of professional chocolate tasters and basketball players.

So, how can HR help tailor jobs to optimize a bit more of their people's enthusiasm and talents, all within the boundaries of what's best for the organization and its performance mandates?

Dan Helfrich, Chairman and CEO of Deloitte Consulting, asks his people: "What do you want to get better at?" to help determine their core motivators. "I want to know about a challenge they feel ready to take on but haven't been given the chance to do in another team. Then as the time goes along, wow, the alignment that comes from giving them small tasks or opportunities that align with what they shared with you."

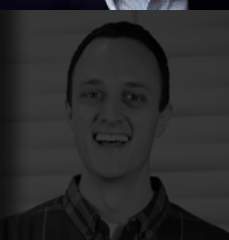
Helfrich gave us the following example: One of his team members was the hub of coordination for multiple work streams. She knew the status of everything that was going on in the team. "But," he said, "she was starting to feel like a reporting mechanism; she wasn't being given a chance to think creatively or strategically." Helfrich assigned the woman to take the lead on a new project, allowing her to work with a blank white board and lead the creative process. "That has unlocked career growth that wouldn't have happened otherwise," he added.



For employees, the benefit of the job sculpting process is obvious. For the organization, the payback can be powerful as well, as sculpting can help diagnose how each team member's specific tasks are (or are not) aligned with his or her motivations, and can uncover subtle changes that can lead to increases in team morale, engagement, and results.

Take-aways

- Job sculpting — forging a customized career path to help employees do more of what they find motivating and little less of what frustrates them
- Increases your chances of retaining and engaging talented people
- Employees are more likely to stay with and stay committed in a job if their work matches more closely to their deeply embedded “life interests”
- Ask employees “what are you interested in getting better at?” to help determine their core motivators



The Culture Divorce

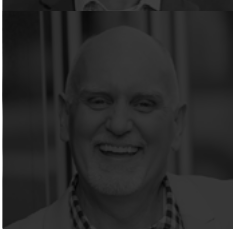
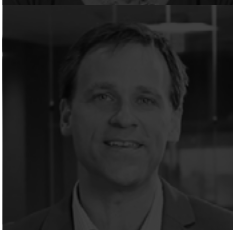
It's time we start blurring the lines in who we are at home and who we are at work. I've talked to far too many people who say, "You've never seen that side of me, because I don't act that way at work." I even remember a time where I asked a colleague, how their weekend was and they said, "It was okay, I got engaged." "Engaged!?" I blurted. "Tell me all about it!" We had a great conversation about all of the details, the ring, who helped pulled it off, and what made it so spectacular. What surprised me, however, was the fact that this employee almost didn't say anything, and wouldn't have, had I not asked.

The research shows that people are twice as likely to look for a new job around a key milestone moment. This includes birthdays, work anniversaries, graduating college, birth of a child, and getting married as a few examples. We are so much more self aware in those moments if what our employment is, aligns with what our life goals and ambitions are. When you have a new baby in your arms, it is easy to self reflect and say, "Is what I'm doing at work going to align with how I take care of this newborn?" The same is true for each life milestone.

Being vulnerable at work can be hard. We worry that if we talk about how the stress of the job, work hours, or disfunction on our team, will make our leaders say, "Obviously this employee is no longer a good fit for our team and company." We syke ourselves out and say, "The less information I share about how I truly feel, the better."

The number one cited reason for turnover is the relationship with your manager. When managers start to get to know who you the person is, and not the employee, you can find common ground, real meaningful conversations, and improved performance.

Jared Olsen is an entrepreneur, workplace culture enthusiast, and Nacho Libre lover. He is on the board member at Disrupt SLC and was named by Utah Business Magazine as the first ever HR Disruptor of the Year. Jared's thought leadership has been published by Fox Business, Silicon Slopes, Utah Business Magazine, KSL, and the Deseret News.



One example that demonstrates this is Adams story.

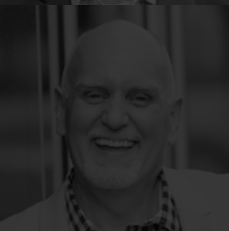
When I was the Chief People Officer at a firm, I had a manager come to me and say, “Adam needs to go on a performance improvement plan for attendance.” I asked more details, we pulled the reports and confirmed he was consistently late for work. I asked how conversations had gone about attendance and the manager said, “Not great, he just sits there like he is in trouble and doesn’t say much.”

I then encouraged Adams manager to sit down with Adam and ask some questions that would encourage Adam to be vulnerable. Long story short, Adam was the youngest of 7 children, and a bit of a “whoops” baby. When he was born, his father was in a severe car accident, which made him highly medicated for nearly all of Adam’s life. The only thing in life that Adam wanted was his father’s approval. Since he felt he never had it, that projected to other authority figures. This included older adults, religious leaders, and anyone in management. He said he best responded to those who didn’t see his flaws, but the positive things he accomplishes.

By asking these probing questions, we learned that if we could validate Adam, show him an increase of love first, and give a big stamp of approval on what he was doing well, he would be ready to take feedback. We then were able to talk through attendance issues and saw immediate improvement. Adam moved from being on a performance improvement plan to being a top performer and a year later was promoted to a new role.

What changed? His manager asked probing questions about who Adam was, what made him tick, and what his needs were. Having this conversation once was not enough. Adam and all of us need continuous feedback and open, honest communication that advance the conversation about our job performance, alignment with company values, and career goals.

Next time you have a 1:1 with a member of your team, don’t focus on if they “exceed

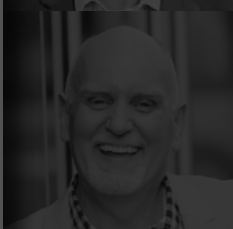


expectations,” but have a genuine conversation from one human to another. Find out their current state in life, goals, desires, hopes, and then correlate that conversation with how it aligns to the work they do for you each day. If you can get to vulnerability with your employees, you’ll start looking forward to 1:1 feedback instead of dreading having a performance management conversation.

Also, Adam is getting married in December 2020, and his Dad will be there... I’m confident with a big smile, being unbelievably proud of what his son is doing.

Take-aways

- People are 2x more likely to look for a new job around a key milestone moment such as graduating college
- If Managers don’t make a conscious effort to get to know their employees, they risk seeing an increase in turnover and decrease in productivity
- The most common reason employees give for quitting a job is having a poor relationship with their manager
- Companies with healthy employee-to-manager relationships see improved performance and engagement
- Get to know your employees by asking them questions that give the opportunity for employees to share vulnerability giving you insights into what you can do as a manager





About Motivosity

Motivosity is the company intent on helping people be happier at work. Motivosity provides a best-in-class employee recognition and feedback software platform used by companies like DuPont, Instructure, Hitachi Chemical, Western Governors University, Cotopaxi, and others to improve employee engagement and build company culture. Motivosity customers experience a 90%+ user engagement rate. Our software drives amazing results by making visible all the great work your team members are doing, connecting employees to each other, facilitating consistent communication between managers and employees, and providing actionable insights for company leadership to make more informed business decisions.

