

$$E = M C^2$$

What Genius Is Powering Your Human Capital?

$$\text{Engagement} = \text{Motivation} \times \text{Culture}^2$$

"You don't build a business.

You build your people and then your people build the business.

It doesn't take a genius to realise that great leaders grasp quickly what motivates individuals in their teams. Executive Coaching allows you time to get those judgements on your people right."

Lee Mears

Partner & Executive Coach at TPA
and former British & Irish Lion

In this series we aim to share what we are learning from our coaching clients on engagement, motivation and culture. Today we will begin to unpick how an employer can more carefully understand what really motivates different people at different times in their professional lives.

We are fortunate. Our clients are all talented senior leaders, required to quickly navigate the often swampy ground towards sustainable growth. Although it took a genius to figure out the original $E=MC^2$, the formula to create a business culture is more simple. A sustainable business culture resides in the hearts and souls of its people. Figuring out what really sparks joy in individuals is clearly a life-long process, yet coaching can achieve unanticipated breakthroughs for individuals, their teams and the organisation.

RECENT RESEARCH

15% of employees worldwide say they are engaged. The economic cost of such low levels of engagement is estimated at \$7 trillion in lost productivity (Gallup, 2018).

Of course, every leader and HR department understands that **engagement** is the key to a successful organisation. Engaged employees have lower chances of leaving their companies, are more satisfied with their jobs, and perform better than their non-engaged colleagues (Bakker et al., 2005; Saks, 2006; Xantholpoulu et al., 2008).

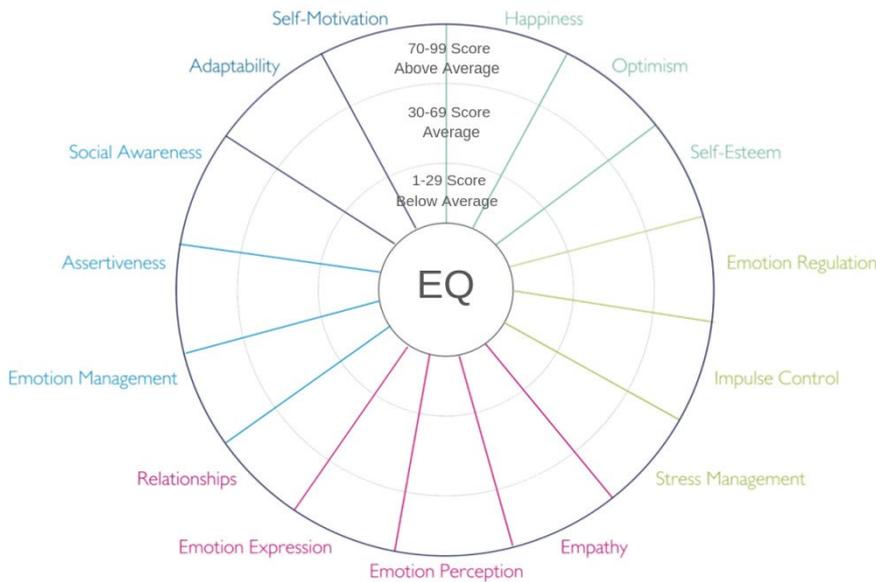
It is also widely accepted that an engaged workforce correlates to how **motivated** the individuals are.

Traditionally, business operating systems were built entirely around extrinsic motivators such as bonuses, pay rises and perks. Dan Pink (2009) shows this 'reward and punishment' approach does not work for many 21st Century roles. A large proportion of jobs today require **intrinsic motivation** – "a desire to do things because they matter, they are interesting and they are important" – to produce the best results. Korn Ferry's global employee opinion database corroborates this view. According to their findings in 2018, a higher proportion of employees who exceeded performance expectations were intrinsically motivated (76%) compared with those who feel extrinsically motivated (60%).

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We wanted to understand this link between motivation and engagement further. At TPA we've been looking at self-motivation from over 100 senior leaders across many industries such as banking, law, insurance, FMCG, consulting, finance and retail. This was assessed using a trait based self-assessment for Emotional Intelligence (TEIQue – Thomas International).



Self-Motivation: This scale measures the extent to which a person is driven by an internal need for achievement.

Adaptability: This scale measures how effective one is at adapting to new environments and conditions and how one deals with change.

Happiness: This scale measures enjoyable/pleasant emotional states and is primarily directed towards the present rather than past (e.g. life satisfaction) or the future (optimism).

Definitions from the TEIQue Assessment - Thomas International

For more information on TEIQue please visit: <https://www.thomasinternational.net/en-gb/assessments/assessments-we-offer/teique/>

OUR RESULTS

Our results showed that **people who scored themselves as highly Self-Motivated were also more likely to score themselves above average on Adaptability and Happiness.**

ADAPTABILITY AGAINST SELF-MOTIVATION

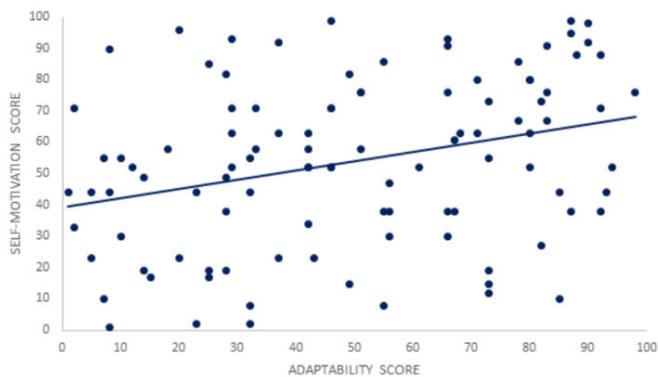


Figure 1: Spearman's correlation showed a significant positive relationship ($p < 0.05$, $r_s = 0.309$)

HAPPINESS AGAINST SELF-MOTIVATION

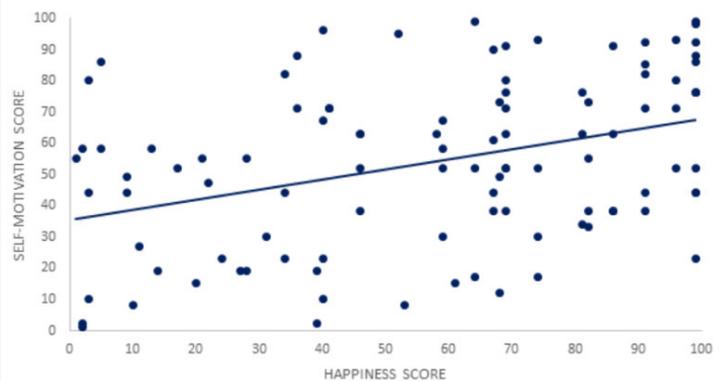


Figure 2: Spearman's correlation showed a significant positive relationship ($p < 0.05$, $r_s = 0.367$)

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The relationship between these factors is interesting in helping us understand the link between motivation and engagement. In today's rapidly changing, disruptive business environment, adaptability is considered a hugely important trait for company innovation and growth. It also suggests that those who assess themselves as highly self-motivated report being happier and more satisfied with their lives.

Thomas International's recent Engagement study (2018) corroborates these findings. They found that the people who scored above average in Happiness, Emotion Management and Self-Motivation in the EQ assessments positively predicted high engagement levels in their parallel study.

Somewhat surprisingly **our results also showed that 30% of our high-performing leaders assessed themselves as below average on self-motivation** (40% rated themselves as average and 30% described themselves as above average).

The senior leaders who scored below average on self-motivation were often surprised. When we explored this further by looking at the particular individuals that fell within this bracket of lower self-motivation, we noticed that each client had very different reasons behind their capacity to self-motivate.

Of course, some of these individuals had significant life changing events which impacted on their self-motivation in a variety of ways. The danger, however, is assuming low self-motivation means a person is driven by salary, status, career progression etc. Some are; however, many have a strong desire to simply know they add value – often seeking affirmation from a trusted line manager and touched by public awards and gratitude from their teams.

Those with lower self-esteem often work long hours and are relentless in their pursuit to make others proud. Great leadership means understanding the motivations of those you lead and helping to reduce the often toxic rivalry subtly expressed in senior teams. It is said assumption is the enemy of communication. In our experience we know that people can make a LOT of assumptions about what motivates fellow colleagues.

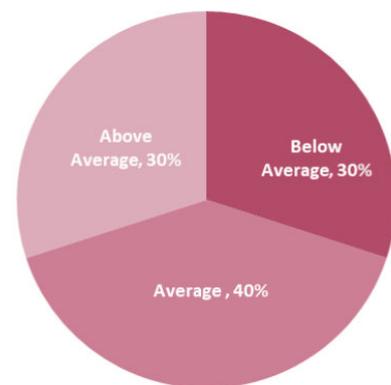
CONCLUSIONS

So, if we accept the research that being self-motivated helps you perform better, feel better, and ultimately makes you more engaged at work, then how can organisations unlock this within their employees?

Engagement interventions can fail by assuming that merely the publication of a company purpose and /or a strong rewards package will be enough to motivate each person in the company.

Understanding what really motivates a particular individual needs a much stronger lens. We also perhaps need to accept that many talented, effective senior leaders are not naturally self-motivated. Both Korn Ferry's Report and Thomas International's Engagement Survey reflect our own approach in Executive Coaching when it comes to understanding motivation: the key is in understanding the individual in front of you. That's why having time to think through Executive Coaching is deeply motivational for senior leaders.

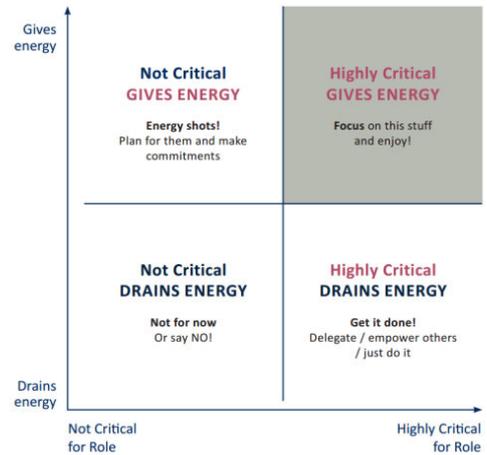
SELF-MOTIVATION
% of where our clients scored



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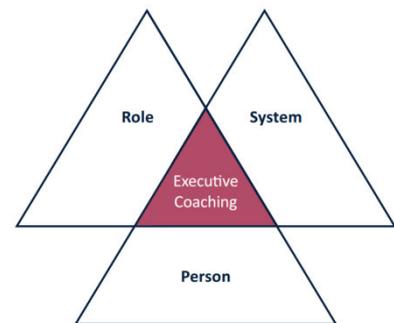
- You first need to understand a **person's unique motivators** – what has shaped their values and beliefs? What drives that individual to want to succeed? What are their self-limiting beliefs? Sometimes you need to 'water the root not just polish the apple' to motivate your best people.
- Then you connect those motivators to the **role** that person is doing – how does their role align with their own value set? What is critical for this role and gives them energy, what is critical but drains their energy? What do they simply love doing?
- You can *then* connect to what the company seeks to do as a whole (**the system**) - something that brings every person together under a shared purpose. The culture.



We call this approach **P. R. S (Person, In Role, In System)**

The key to engagement is in bringing together all of those elements in P.R.S.

Executive Coaching is often the fastest way to properly understand what really energises and engages people and crucially the people they then need to motivate. Culture is then how we think, feel and interact.



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CASE STUDY

Creating a Purpose Driven Organization, Harvard Business Review, 2018

(<https://hbr.org/2018/07/creating-a-purpose-driven-organization>)

An engagement invention that illustrates this well comes from KPMG, "where employees were encouraged to share their own accounts of how they were making a difference. This evolved into a remarkable program called the 10,000 Stories Challenge. It gave employees access to a user-friendly design program and invited them to create posters that would answer the question "What do you do at KPMG?" while capturing their passion and connecting it to the organization's purpose.

In June company leaders announced that if the staff could create 10,000 posters by Thanksgiving, two extra days would be added to the holiday break. Employees hit that benchmark within a month. But then the process went viral—after the reward had already been earned. Twenty-seven thousand people produced 42,000 posters (some individuals made multiple submissions, and teams produced them as well). **KPMG had found a brilliant way to help employees personally identify with its collective purpose.**"

Report Prepared by the Research & Analytics Team at The Preston Associates

(www.theprestonassociates.com)

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