

ENGAGEMENT SWEET SPOT

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Often, I get asked how you can keep the finger on the pulse of engagement in real time, and how you get to the core of engagement for people – especially millennials. This question is always very exciting, because I love exploring different questions that are asked to measure engagement of employees. Even more so, it's great finding/working through solutions that pave the way for people to follow up and take action as a result.



It's definitely difficult to stay fully absorbed and enthusiastic in a monotonous routine, and it applies to everybody: business executives, students, stay-at-home parents, etc. This is why the "core of engagement" doesn't differ based upon age or the individual; it is rooted in each individual's purpose: *Passion*. Your passion does not have to be affiliated with work, many times, it isn't. Regardless of what part of your life it holds (other than an important one) it sheds a light into what it is that truly ignites you. How

amazing would it be if that eager ambition existed even at work? However, passion alone doesn't give us the full answer needed to ensure the highest levels of **engagement at work**; otherwise, I would spend my entire work day shooting hockey pucks in my backyard, or at the rink watching little kids play the game I love. It is imperative that we align our passion to other parts of our life in order to hit the goal of our sweet spot where everything comes together.

The journey to discover your individual passion is a lifelong one. As you begin to uncover what you are passionate about, you can start focusing on the opportunities that allow your passion to be fulfilled. When leading an organization, this intersection is a great place to not only understand the employee, but help him/her build experiences for future: personal and professional, growth and productivity (as well as potential). For those of us working in the field of [Talent Management](#) and **Leadership Development**, we can only deduce if an employee has potential in an area if we give them the opportunity to explore and experience it. Help to open up this space for your staff and let them thrive.

Consider all of the opportunities that exist within an organization: research, development, financial advancement, creative growth, and so on. When we recognize everything that is crucial to create the greatest optimization, we can then carve out personalized work for an employee that is best aligned to their **Experience**. Experience being a combination of past work, knowledge, skills, education, and ability. When experience and opportunity overlap we can trust that we have someone who has the talent to complete necessary tasks with the greatest effectiveness. Here, everyone is giving. The organization to its employee and vice versa. But, as fabulous as this is for the company, does it maximize the individual's human potential?

The last intersection is the toughest for an organization to unravel, mainly because they may not have any opportunities to leverage for their employees. Where Experience and Passion meet is where leaders need to be open to new ideas of the employee, and look for ways to incorporate his/her gift. And again, it doesn't all have to be work-related. I, for example, love to work with kids. For years I worked as a Recreational Therapist with teenagers and doing all sorts of youth development as Youth Director. Then I came to a place in my life when I needed a change and started working with (a bit older) kids in the HR field. While it was a fairly dramatic shift, it still aligned to what was most important to me: my passion for helping individuals maximize their human potential.

It's not always easy finding that perfect alignment – the sweet spot – and in no way is it simple, but here is a story about a leader helping an employee with his desire to keep aligned to his passion.



There's a certain mentee of mine, Michael, who's been a joy to work with for years. A truly bright kid, he has been successful before, during, and after college. Michael found a job that definitely incorporated his opportunity and his experience all aligning to his passion. After a couple years, Michael began to identify even more opportunities to leverage his experience and passion, helping both himself and the company, but his current supervisor wanted him to stay completely focused on one or two things at a time.

A few months later, Michael received an offer by one of his former supervisors asking him if he would be interested in interviewing for a role outside of the company. A bit disconnected and unmotivated by his current position, Michael felt like that the new role and organization would be a better fit for his passion and growth potential.

Michael has worked there for over a year now and has had tremendous success, is highly engaged, and most importantly, very happy. He's extremely thankful to his supervisor for the opportunity who simply said, "Better to lose a great employee and talent to somewhere and someone that he trusts, than to lose one all together." As a leader of human potential, Michael's previous supervisor truly understood what it meant to help someone align to their passion, and has created a deep committed relationship with someone that will last a lifetime. The benefits of which will only continue to bear fruit for years to come.