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THE INNER DRIVERS OF ENGAGEMENT

A Methodology and Implementation Strategy to Build an Intrinsically Motivated Organization

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“The proper question is not, 'how can people motivate others?' But rather...

WHY YOU SHOULD READ THIS WHITE PAPER

Employee engagement may well be the most important factor in the success of your organization. But if your organization is like most, your engagement numbers are not encouraging, and even if your metrics are promising, they may not be telling the whole story.

You probably already know that intrinsic motivation is much more powerful than extrinsic motivation, but is this understanding reflected in your employee engagement strategy? Many employee engagements tactics – even the modern, progressive ones - can actually backfire and sap intrinsic motivation.

Avion has synthesized several research-based theories of human motivation and applied decades of collective experience to develop a new method for building intrinsically-motivated individuals and organizations. Our approach is both comprehensive and simple, and can be activated in your organization almost immediately.

We call it ‘The Inner Drivers of Engagement’, and we are excited share it with you in the pages that follow.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2 **It’s time to turn your employee engagement strategy inside out**

- The cost of disengagement
- Why the usual stuff isn’t working
- Our call to action

4 **How do you build an intrinsically-motivated organization?**

- A Research-Based Method
- The Inner Drivers Model of Individual Engagement
- The Inner Drivers Collaboration Framework

7 **Transform Your Organization with the Inner Drivers of Engagement**

- Activating Intrinsic Motivation

...how can people create the conditions within which others will motivate themselves?”

-Edward Deci, psychologist & co-developer of Self-Determination Theory

It's time to turn your employee engagement strategy inside out

THE COST OF DISENGAGEMENT

It is a well established fact that disengaged employees cost organizations trillions of dollars across the global economy every year.[1]

We know that lower engagement is correlated with poor customer and client service,[2] which has a direct impact on your brand and your bottom line. The supposedly new trend of 'quiet quitting' is actually just a buzzy name for good old fashioned disengagement, which has been sapping discretionary effort and initiative, calcifying progress, and stifling innovation for decades. And when the quitting isn't so quiet, and disengagement leads to departure, the costs of acquiring and onboarding new talent can be 3 times the annual salary for any given role.[3]

So what are organizations doing about it? The answer, in aggregate across the economy is "A lot."

According to Deloitte, organizations in the US alone spend over $100 billion[4] every year on employee engagement and related efforts. Surveys are deployed, policies are updated, perks are introduced, and entirely new employee engagement departments are created. And yet the gains are modest and fleeting, and 'actively engaged' levels hover around 20%[4] for most organizations globally year in and year out.

How can this be so? Every year, organizations invest massive resources into providing their employees with the environment, rewards, recognition, and opportunities to keep them motivated and engaged, and every year the ROI is the same: sub-optimal levels of commitment, vanishing discretionary effort, and the same tepid enthusiasm as the year before.

WHY THE USUAL STUFF ISN'T WORKING

The simple reason these engagement efforts aren't working is because they tend to be focused on the wrong type of motivation. While providing employees with more stuff in exchange for their work seems like the obvious way to motivate them, a large body of research exists showing the shortcomings of this approach.

There are a number of motivational 'hygiene' factors that must be met to avoid what Frederick Herzberg referred to as 'employee dissatisfaction', but simply providing surpluses in these areas does not lead to additional

$7.8
TRILLION ANNUALLY

The percentage of disengaged employees is trending up, with resulting productivity losses estimated to equal to 11% of global GDP 2022.[1]

$2,246
PER EMPLOYEE

Each of the estimated 66%[4] of workers who are disengaged cost their employers thousands of dollars per year in lost productivity and innovation.

3 TIMES
ANNUAL SALARY

Disengaged employees are 41% more likely to resign, and the costs of absence, acquisition, and onboarding new talent can be exponential.[3]

1 https://www.gallup.com/workplace/393497/world-trillion-workplace-problem.aspx
2 https://www.forbes.com/sites/blakemorgan/2018/02/23/the-un-ignorable-link-between-employee-experience-and-customer-experience/?sh=5daee85148dc
3 https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/talent-acquisition/pages/the-real-costs-of-recruitment.aspx
4 https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/talent/future-workforce-engagement-in-the-workplace.html

"The leverage of intrinsic motivation is over **three times as large** as for extrinsic reward expectancy."

(Cho, Y. J., & Perry, J. L. 2012)

engagement.[5] If, for example, an employee is already satisfied with her healthcare benefits, providing her with even better benefits is unlikely to impact her effort and commitment in any meaningful way. People need to feel that their contributions are acknowledged and valued, but once these drivers are satisfied at a level they perceive to be reasonable and fair, increased rewards provide diminishing returns.

What's more, when incentives and rewards are contingent and abstracted from the task itself, they actually tend to reduce motivation and engagement over time.[6] Take the example of an IT service desk technician who genuinely enjoys helping people. To drive engagement, his organization introduces a new platform where employees can send each other digital appreciation tokens and monitor a leaderboard showing who has received the most tokens for the month. While the technician initially feels more recognized for his contributions, over time he becomes less engaged with his powerful intrinsic motivation to help his co-workers, and instead experiences reduced engagement driven by an abstract and fleeting extrinsic motivation to accumulate tokens.

While extrinsic motivators have a role to play in employee engagement, the most powerful drivers of engagement come from within.

OUR CALL TO ACTION

Organizations and individuals share a vested interest in creating the conditions for intrinsic motivation to thrive. In addition to increased engagement and related performance outcomes, research has also shown that an individual's orientation toward intrinsic motivation is highly correlated with their overall happiness and well-being.[7] So in addition to creating more effective organizations, intrinsically motivated people create a better life experience for themselves.

To build a highly impactful, innovative, and personally fulfilled global workforce, leaders tasked with improving employee engagement need to turn the entire paradigm inside out. Organizations should stop focusing their efforts on identifying and providing the external incentives and rewards they think will compel their employees to provide more effort, and instead collaborate with their people in a shared mission to help them develop and sustain a deep and abiding experience of intrinsic motivation.

But as an enterprise engagement strategy, how can organizations influence the inner workings of their employees' psyches to drive intrinsic motivation at scale?

The shortcomings of common employee engagement tactics:

TACTIC	INTENDED OUTCOME	WHY IT OFTEN DOESN'T WORK
Pay raises and bonuses	Make people feel incentivized to work harder	The promise of rewards decreases intrinsic motivation over time
Roll out company mission statement	Make people feel like their work is important	Will not engage people if not integrated into their own sense of purpose
Improve technology and physical office environment	Make people feel enabled to do their best work	Tools and spaces alone don't create inner feelings of mastery and impact
Create public recognition platforms and programs	Make people feel that their contributions are appreciated	Praise becomes currency, and is perceived as performative and inauthentic
Offer flexible work time and location options	Make people feel in control of how they get their work done	Only provides most basic aspects of autonomy without giving people true control

5 Herzberg, F. (1964). The motivation-hygiene concept and problems of manpower.
6 Deci, E. L., (1972) The effects of contingent and noncontingent rewards and controls on intrinsic motivation.
7 Waterman, A.S. (2005) When Effort Is Enjoyed: Two Studies of Intrinsic Motivation for Personally Salient Activities.

How do you build an intrinsically motivated organization?

A RESEARCH-BASED METHOD

Avion's Inner Drivers of Engagement approach is designed to unlock deep personal fulfillment for individuals, and to unleash the full potential of the organizations they belong to. It is based on a body of consistently validated research, as well as Avion's collective experience working with individuals, teams, leaders, and organizations. The approach draws on three different but related theories of human behavior.

SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY (SDT)

Since its development by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan in the 1980s, SDT has been validated by decades of research, and has led to dozens of related theories and applications related to human behavior. The theory posits that the development of intrinsic motivation in humans requires the satisfaction of three psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness.[8]

PERSON-CENTERED APPROACH (PCA)

Carl Rogers pioneered person-centered therapy in the mid 20th century, and the approach has since been applied to a broad set of disciplines, including executive coaching and organizational psychology. The core tenet of PCA is that humans have an innate tendency to find internal fulfillment, and that this self-actualization process is best facilitated through non-directive experiences in which people are encouraged to explore their inner context without judgement.[9]

SENSEMAKING THEORY

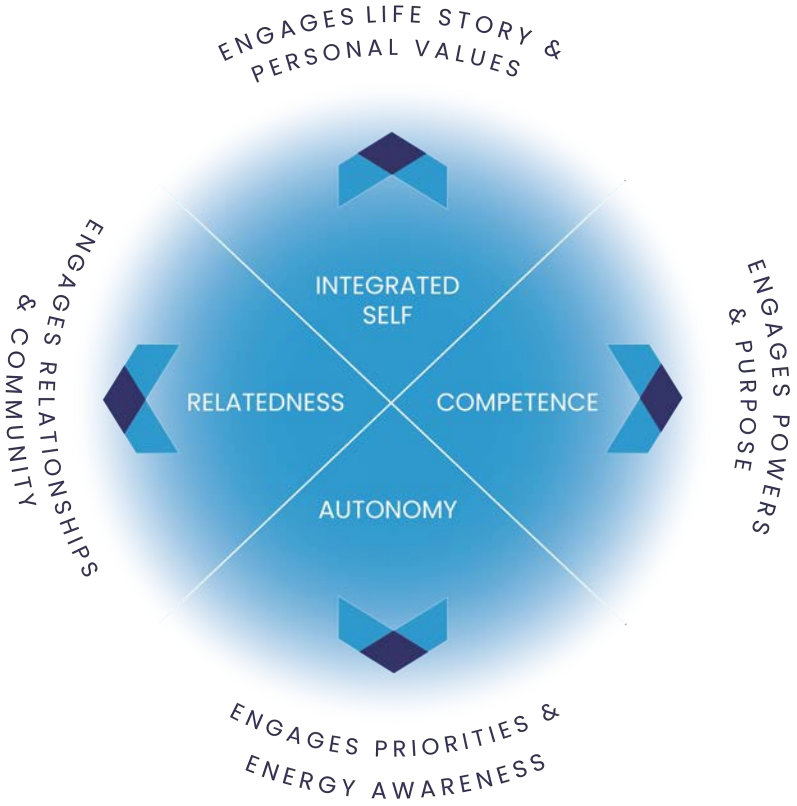
Sensemaking is a theory of social and organizational psychology introduced by Karl Weick in the 1970s, which explores how humans assign meaning to events and experiences.[10] The aspect of the theory we are concerned with here describes how groups and individuals in organizations collaborate to derive meaning from shared experiences.

The Inner Drivers of Engagement method synthesizes these theories to create a practical approach organizations can utilize to foster intrinsic motivation and engagement - primarily through learning and development initiatives, but also through culture and team building experiences, policy design, and any other touchpoint of the employee experience.

The approach consists of a model illustrating the core drivers of intrinsic motivation and the engagement touch points they create, and a collaboration framework illustrating the accountabilities organizations share with individuals in creating an environment where intrinsic motivation will flourish.

8 Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior.
9 Raskin, N.J., & Rogers, C.R. (1989). Person-centered therapy.
10 Weick, K. (1995). Sensemaking in organizations.

THE INNER DRIVERS MODEL OF INDIVIDUAL ENGAGEMENT



A VIRTUOUS CYCLE OF MOTIVATION

Combining Self-Determination Theory's three psychological needs with the need for self-actualization described by the Person-Centered Approach, the Inner Drivers Model is designed to generate sustained intrinsic motivation and ever-increasing engagement.

Each driver is an internal emotional state connected to an external form of engagement, which support and build upon one another in a virtuous cycle. For example, an individual with a strong inner sense of competence is better able to engage their powers in a purposeful way at work. The resulting impact they make instills an even greater inner sense of competence, enabling even more impact.

The drivers also fuel each other in various ways. For example, an individual who feels a sense of integrated self-identity and engages with their life story and values at work is more likely to bond with co-workers, in turn fostering a growing sense of relatedness.

DRIVER 1: INTEGRATED SELF (PCA)	DRIVER 2: COMPETENCE (SDT)
Who are you? Embrace the experiences and values that make you who you are, and integrate them into a cohesive, positive sense of personal identity at work.	**What are you capable of?** Identify your existing skills plus those you would like to acquire, and map them to a vision of ever expanding impacts you intend to make at work.
ENGAGES LIFE STORY & VALUES	ENGAGES POWERS & PURPOSE
DRIVER 3: AUTONOMY (SDT)	**DRIVER 4: RELATEDNESS (SDT)**
How do you apply yourself? Visualize the activities and habits of the most effective and fulfilled version of yourself, and take control of everything in your power at work to move that vision to reality.	**Who is with you?** Explore the ways individuals and groups at work count on you and how you count on them, and continuously build stronger bonds and accountability with them.
ENGAGES PRIORITIES & ENERGY AWARENESS	ENGAGES RELATIONSHIPS & COMMUNITY

PUTTING THE MODEL TO USE

The Inner Drivers Model is intended to distill the theories it is based upon into a simple, practical guide individuals and organizations can use to harness the virtuous cycle of intrinsic motivation and engagement.

As a teaching tool, it can be used to help individuals unpack and explore the dynamics driving their engagement at work. It is also a useful rubric for managers to drive intrinsic motivation in the ways they delegate work, conduct coaching conversations, and provide feedback.

The model can also be used as a diagnostic tool to assess an individual or group's current level of intrinsic motivation, and the underlying positive and negative factors impacting it.

THE INNER DRIVERS COLLABORATION FRAMEWORK

A SHARED INTEREST IN ENGAGEMENT

The companion to the Inner Drivers Model is the Inner Drivers Collaboration Framework, which identifies how organizations and individuals partner to maximize intrinsic motivation and engagement.

The framework is largely based on Sensemaking Theory, which posits that organizations are fundamentally storytelling systems, tasked with making sense out of ambiguous circumstances and uncertainty to drive cohesion among groups of people. The theory also describes the sensemaking process within individuals, indicating that personal identity fundamentally informs the way people interpret, internalize, and take action on organizational narratives.[10]

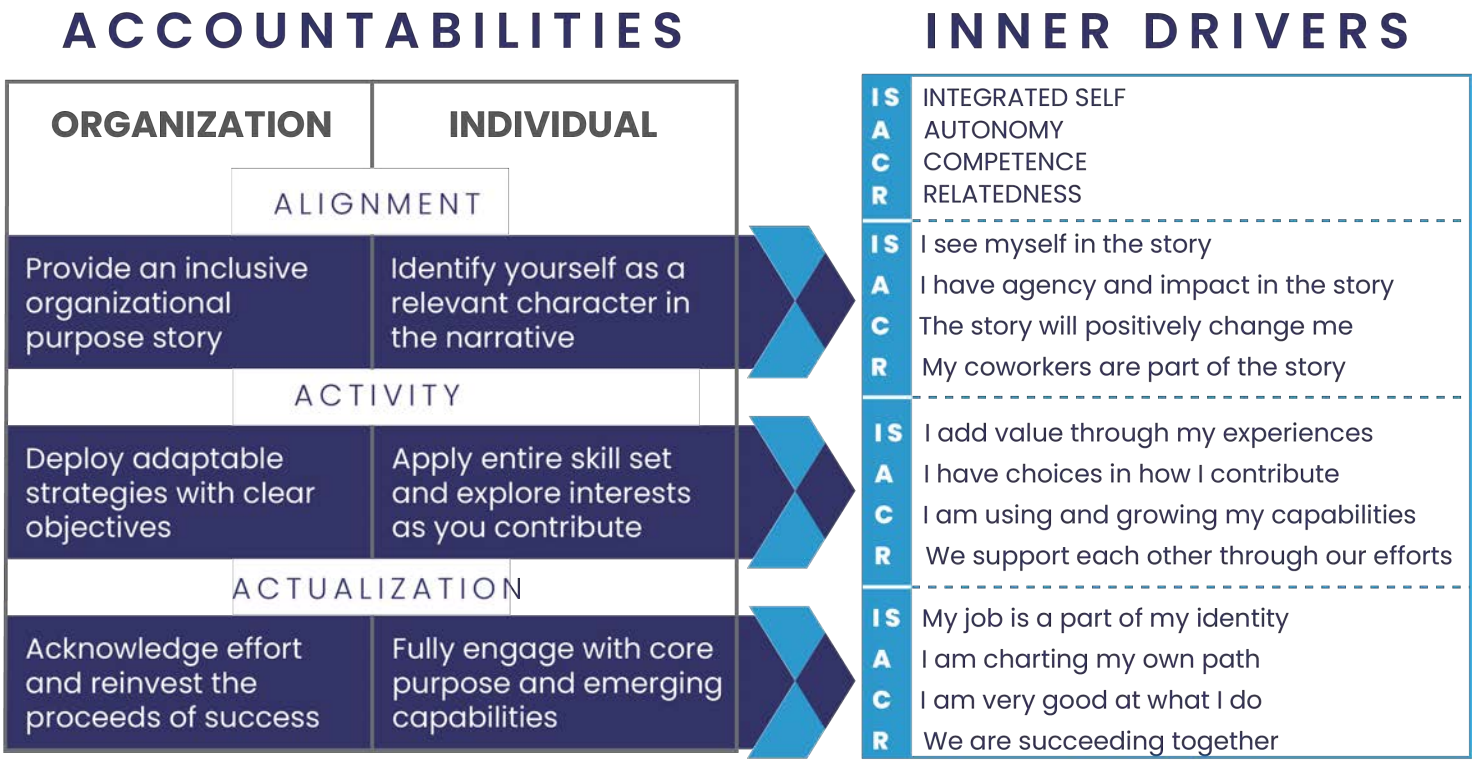
It is not enough for organizations and leaders to simply share mission statements, communicate strategy, and celebrate and reward success. All of these elements are integral to motivation and engagement, but without providing employees with encouragement and support to integrate and activate organizational stories within the context of their own personal identity, the motivational power of self-actualization is unlikely to manifest. As the psychologist Carl Rogers put it, "No one else can know how we perceive, we are the best experts on ourselves."

ENGAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITIES

The Inner Drivers Collaboration Framework presents interdependent accountabilities between organizations and individuals in developing shared stories of alignment, activity, and actualization, and the ways in which those shared narratives support inner drive.

Alignment is the 'why' story – why does this organization exist and why am I a part of it? Activity is the 'what' story - what does the organization do and what is my role in that? And actualization is the impact story – how has the organization delivered on its promises and how is my life transformed for the better because of it?

The Inner Drivers Collaboration Framework is meant to be used as both a teaching tool for individuals and leaders, and a filter through which culture initiatives, strategy and goal setting, policies and process, and organizational narratives of all types can be validated and optimized.



Transform your Organization with The Inner Drivers of Engagement

ACTIVATING INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

There are many ways, big and small, to unleash the power of intrinsic motivation in organizations. As with all employee engagement efforts- but even more so with those that ask employees to examine their personal emotional context, transparency and open communication are of paramount importance in garnering trust and commitment. So no matter the scope of the activation, your strategy should include a robust communication plan and a forum to collect and share feedback.

The most direct and effective way to activate intrinsic motivation is to provide educational resources and experiential opportunities to the individuals in the organization. These efforts may look different depending on the functional role and size of the audience – managers and leaders may require a more robust experience than individual contributors, and your strategy might include group workshops for intact teams. But regardless of how it is organized, finding ways to expose every employee to the science and practice of intrinsic motivation, and supporting them in applying it to their own internal context is a powerful foundation for engagement.

Another tactic to activate intrinsic motivation is to audit existing programs, policies and processes against Inner Drivers principles. Can employees in every functional area see themselves in the mission statement, or does it need to be more inclusive? Are goal setting and performance management programs helping people make sense of the strategic story, or do they need a redesign? Does the employee engagement survey measure intrinsic motivation, or does a new question set need to be developed?

No matter of the scope of your activation, Avion has the expertise, the resources, and, of course, the intrinsically-driven motivation to help your organization and your people thrive.

Here are a few ways we can partner with you.

The Inner Drivers of Engagement Workshop Experience

Participants learn the Inner Drivers model and framework, and explore their relationship with each of the four drivers to maximize their motivation and engagement. Includes an intrinsic motivation self-assessment inventory and the creation of an individualized engagement action plan.

The Inner Drivers Keynotes and Seminars

The key insights, philosophy, mindsets, and best practices of the Inner Drivers approach can be delivered as a high impact presentation and table activity at your next learning conference, summit or team offsite. The core content can also be delivered as a series of virtual seminars.

The Inner Drivers of Engagement Workshop for Leaders

The same experience as the core workshop, but with added content related to fostering intrinsic motivation in those you lead. Topics covered include applying the Inner Drivers approach to feedback and coaching, strategy and vision, and leadership presence.

Inner Drivers Organizational Consulting

Avion can help you review and revise internal practices, policies, and tools to ensure they align with the drivers of intrinsic motivation. Potential areas of support include mission, purpose, and values statements, goal setting and performance management, employee recognition programs, and employee engagement surveys.

Let's talk!

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