



# Work engagement

## A core concept for HRM

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# Topics

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1. Work and work engagement
2. What is it and what is it *not*?
3. How often does it occur?
4. How do understand it?
5. How to increase it?

# The Janus-face of work



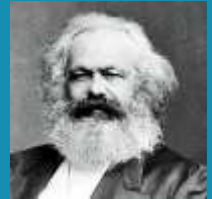
## Labor: Animal laborans

- Effort
- Strain
- Sacrifice
- Blood, sweat & tears



## Order: Animal sapiens

- Creativity
- Productivity
- Challenge
- Development



## The true cost

12,486 Job burnout  
Disability

4 : 1

Source: PsycINFO

2,998 Work engagement

## The positive view

- Energizing
- Enriching
- Exciting
- Engaging

# Changes in the world of work

<i>Traditional jobs</i>	<i>Current jobs</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stability</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continuous change</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monoculture</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diversity</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vertical hierarchy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Horizontal networks</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• External supervision &amp; control</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-control &amp; empowerment</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dependence on organization</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accountability &amp; employability</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fixed schedules &amp; work patterns</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Boundarylessness</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Physical demands</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mental and emotional demands</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Individual work</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Team work</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Detailed job descriptions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Job crafting</li></ul>

# The '*Psychologization*' of work

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For modern organizations, *mental capital* is of increasing importance. Therefore, they do not need a merely '*healthy*' workforce but a motivated workforce that is '*engaged*'.

# What is engagement?

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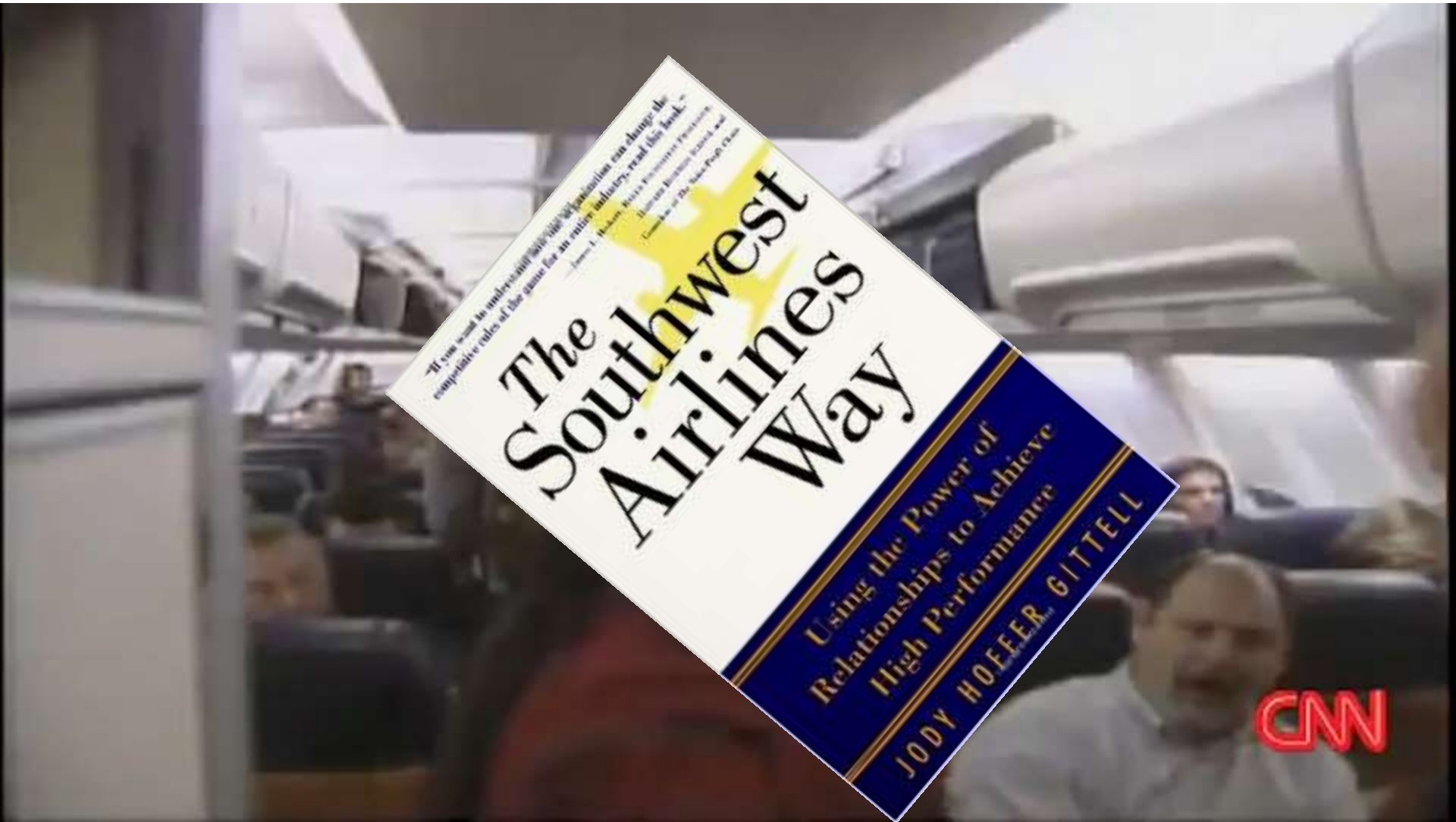


# Definition

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*“Work engagement is a positive, affective-motivational state of fulfillment that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption”*

Schaufeli et al. (2002; p. 74)



[Rapping flight attendant](#)

# Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)

- Vigor
  - *“At my work I feel bursting with energy”*
- Dedication
  - *“I am enthusiastic about my work”*
- Absorption
  - *“I am immersed in my work”*

**Work & Well-being Survey (UWES) ©**

The following 9 statements are about how you feel at work. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. If you have never had this feeling, cross the "0" (zero) in the space after the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you feel it by crossing the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way.

	Almost never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often	Always	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day	

- \_\_\_\_\_ At my work, I feel bursting with energy
- \_\_\_\_\_ At my job, I feel strong and vigorous
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am enthusiastic about my job
- \_\_\_\_\_ My job inspires me
- \_\_\_\_\_ When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work
- \_\_\_\_\_ I feel happy when I am working intensely
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am proud of the work that I do
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am immersed in my work
- \_\_\_\_\_ I get carried away when I'm working

© Schaufeli & Bakker (2003). The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale is free for use for non-commercial scientific research. Commercial and/or non-scientific use is prohibited, unless previous written permission is granted by the authors.

Schaufeli et al. (2002, 2006)

World-leading questionnaire for academic research (> 90%)

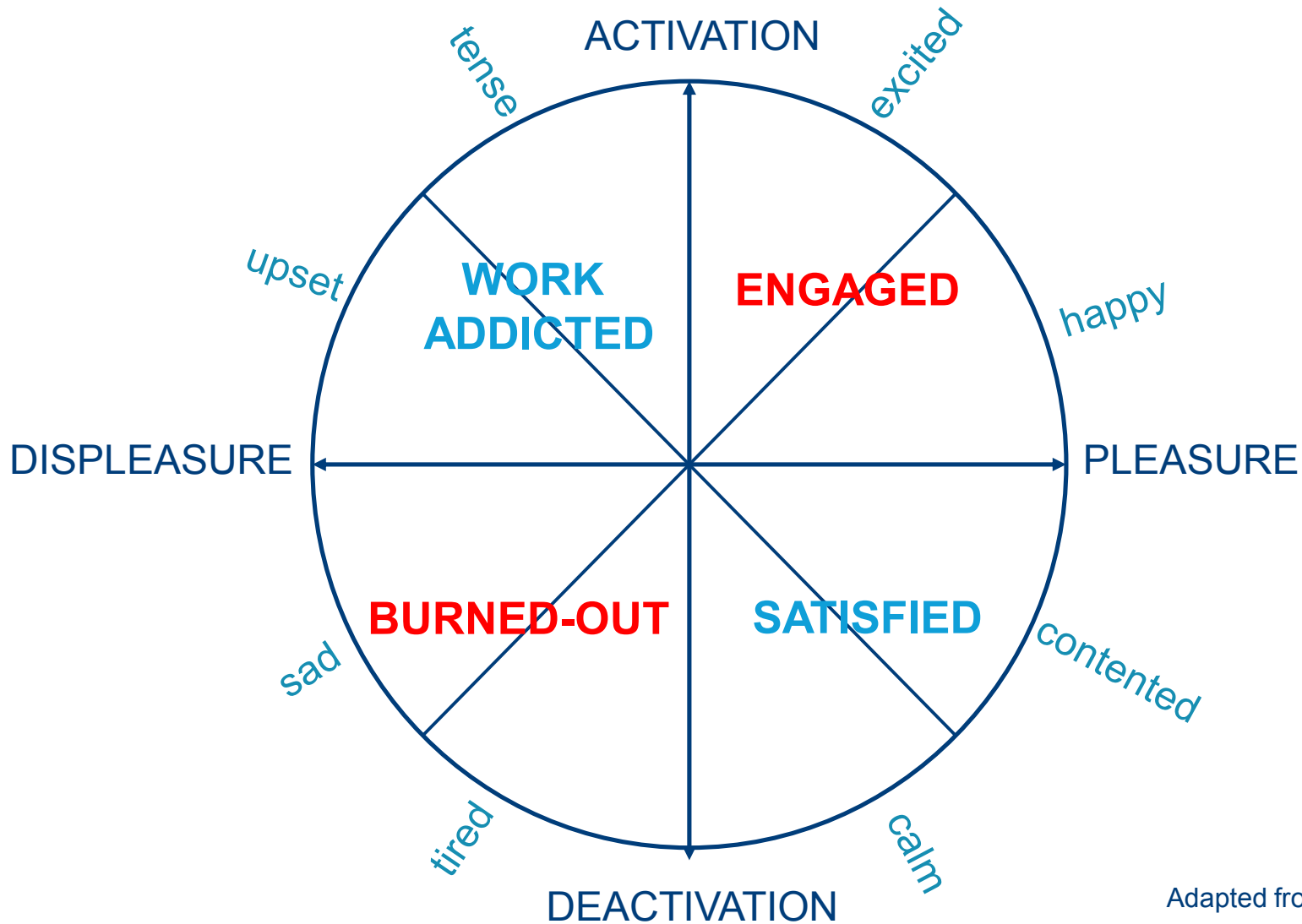
Available in 27 language versions from [www.wilmarschaufeli.nl](http://www.wilmarschaufeli.nl)

Self-other correlation: .60 (Mazetti et al., 2018)

Ultra-short 3-item version (Schaufeli et al., in press)

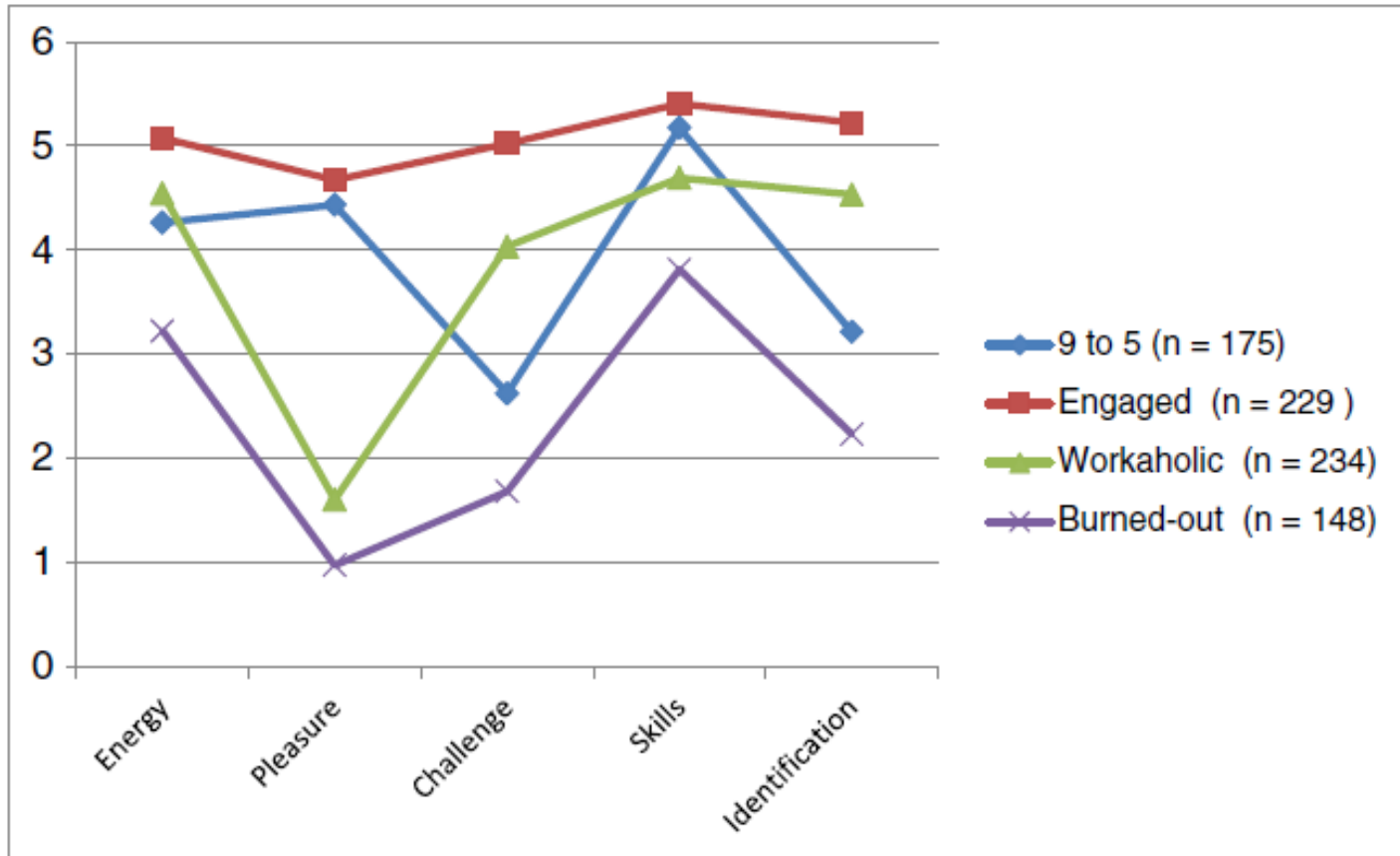
Utrecht General Engagement Scale (UGES - Schaufeli, 2018)

# Types of employee well-being



Adapted from Russell (2003)

# The proof of the pudding ....



Salanova et al. (2014)

# Engagement goes beyond satisfaction

Correlation between engagement and job satisfaction:  
**.53**  
(k=4, N=9,712)

	k	N	Satisfaction	Engagement
<i>In-role performance</i>	5	1,175	.30	.39
<i>Extra-role performance</i>	4	1,139	.24	.43

Christian, Garza & Slaughter (2011)

# Work engagement *is not* workaholism

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## WORK ENGAGEMENT

- Approach motivation
- Secure attachment
- “Enjoyment” stop-rule
- Promotion focus

## WORKAHOLISM

- Avoidance motivation
- Insecure attachment
- “Enough” stop-rule
- Prevention focus

Van Beek et al. (2011, 2012); Schaufeli et al. (2008); Taris et al. (2010); Van Wijhe et al. (2011)

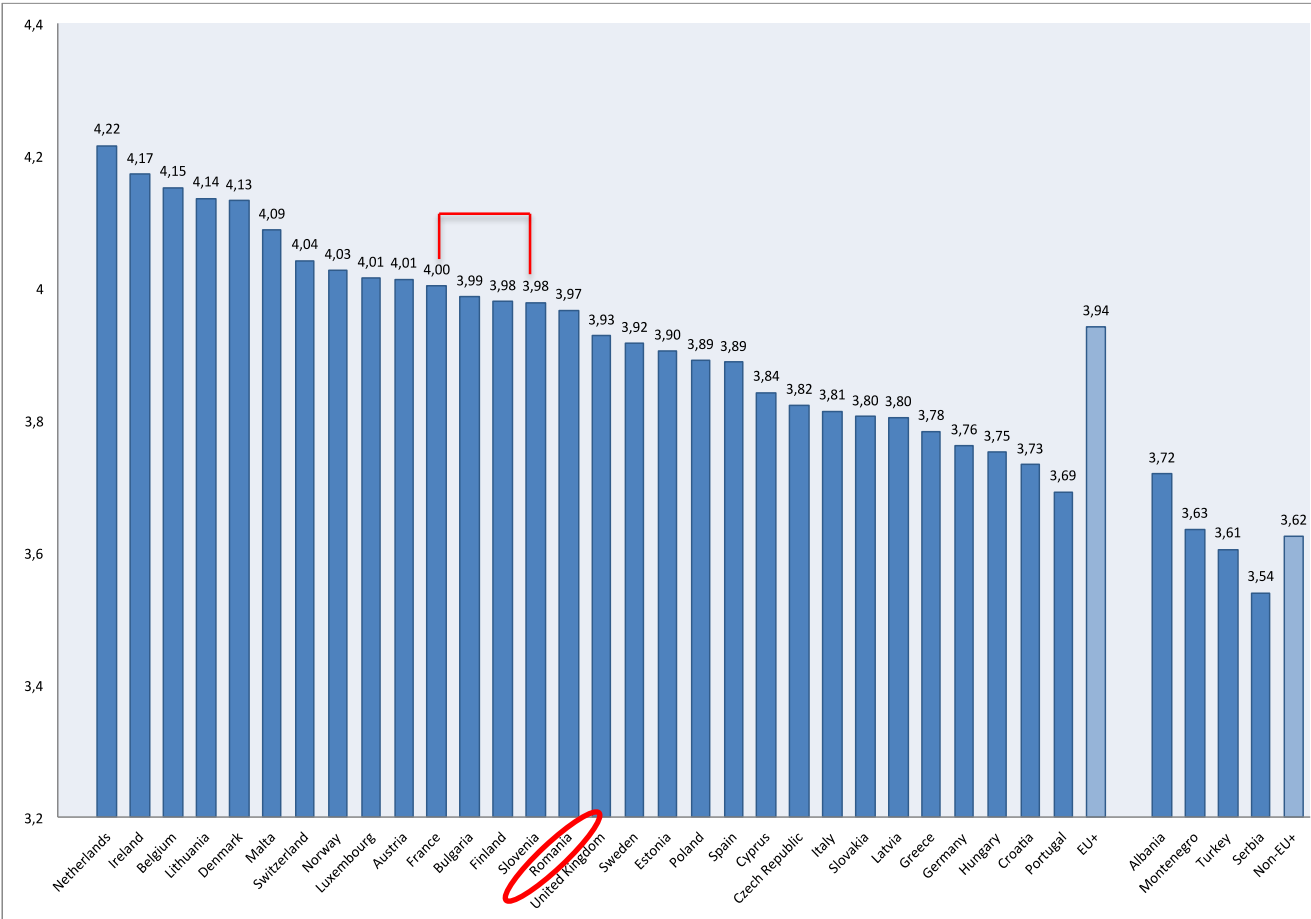
# Prevalence of engagement

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# Work engagement in Europe (1-5)

6<sup>th</sup> EWCS-2015; N = 43,850

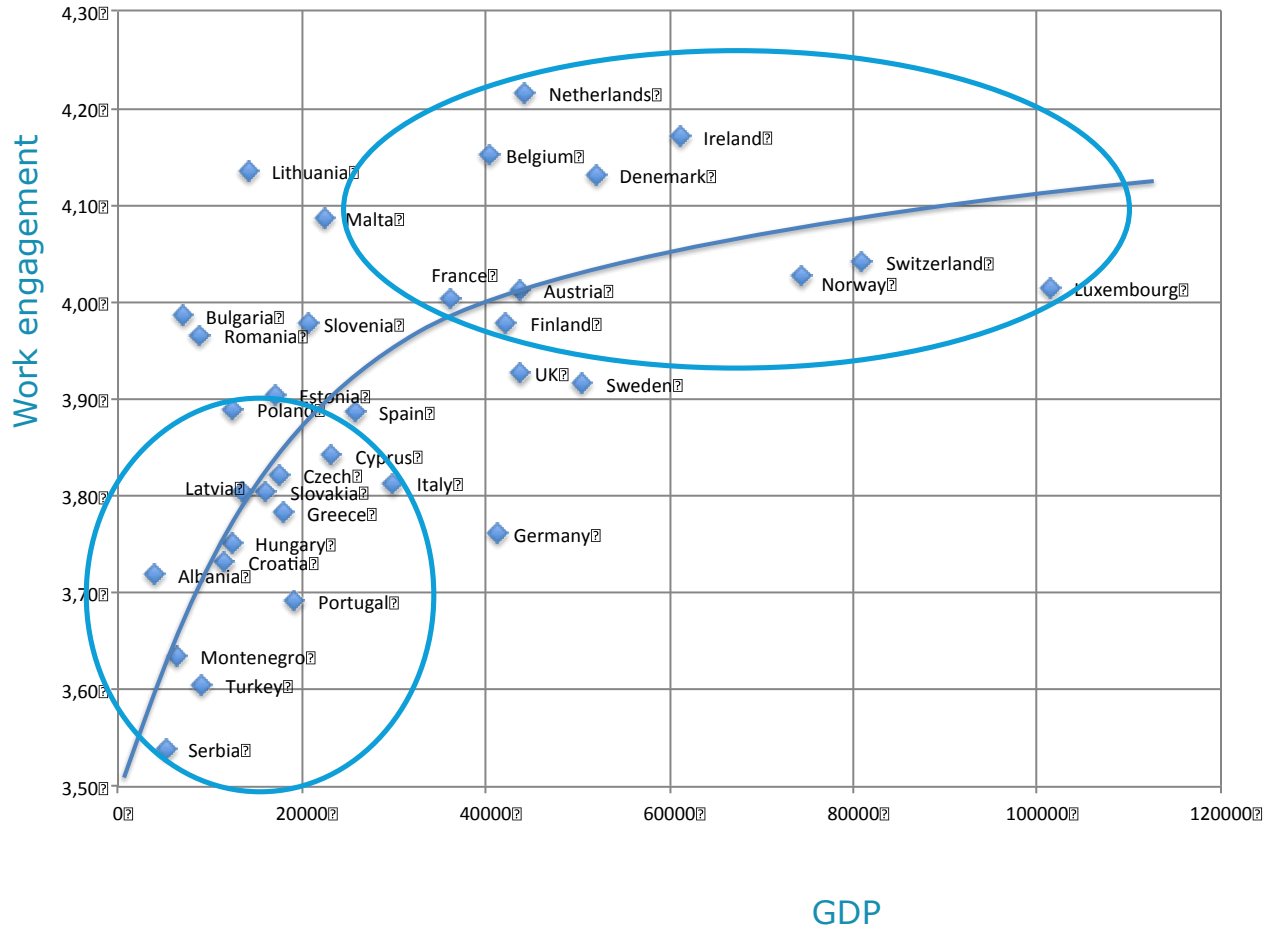


## Dominance analyses

1. Occupation (68%)
2. Industry (17%)
3. Sector (4%)
4. Contract (3%)
5. Education (2.5%)
6. Gender (2.5%)

Hakanen et al. (2019)

# Engagement, economy and governance



## Related with

1. Less corruption (CPI)
2. More integrity (IPI)
3. More democracy (DIX)
4. Gender equality (Gini)
5. More individualism

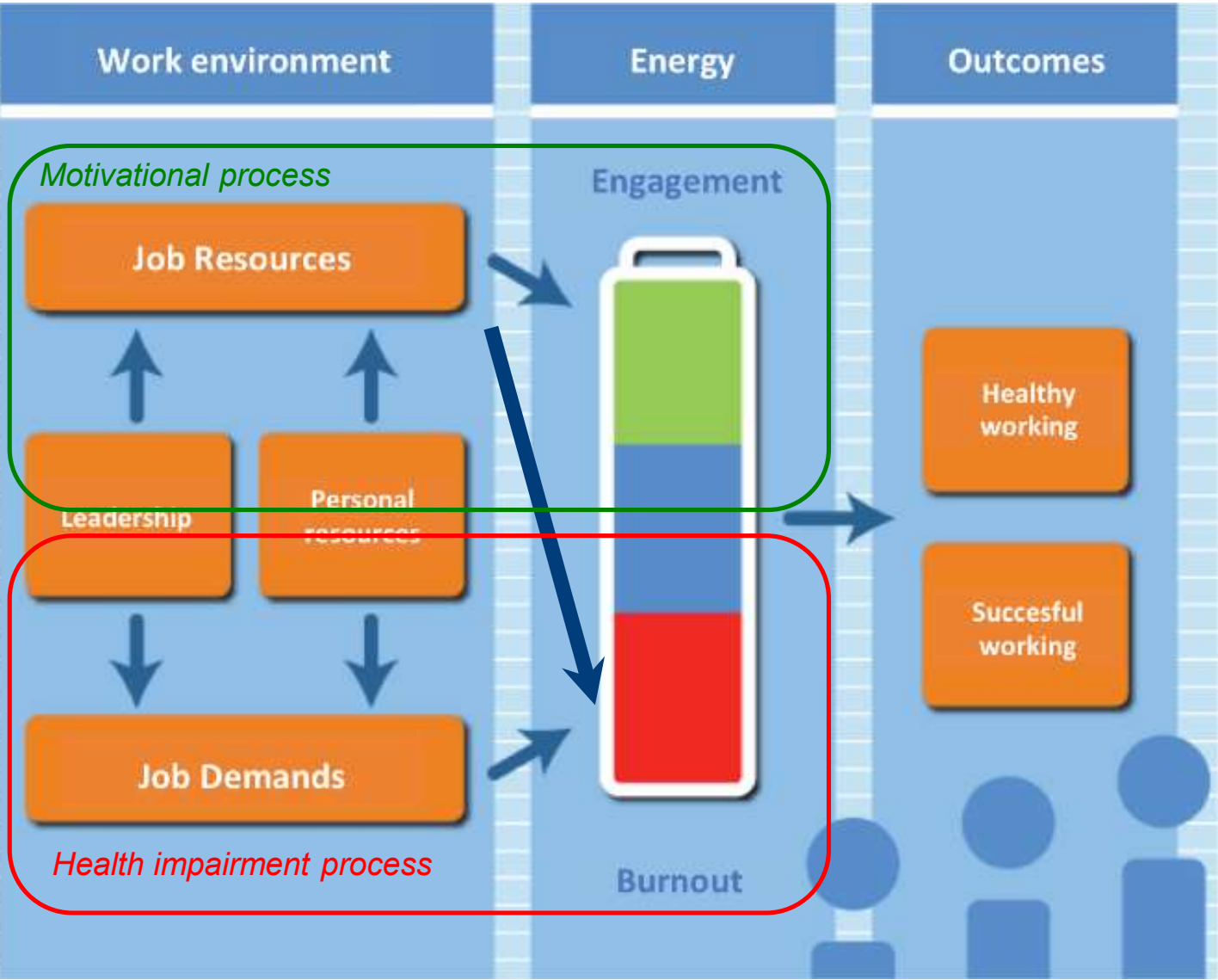
Schaufeli (2018)

*“Living in a well-off, stable, and well-governed society helps happiness”* (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2008; p.132)

# How to understand engagement?

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- The Job Demands-Resources model



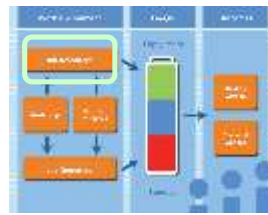
**Overviews:**

- Bakker & Demerouti (2014, 2016, 2017)
- Schaufeli & Taris (2014)

**Meta-analyses:**

- Crawford et al. (2010)
- Lesener et al. (2019)
- Nahrgang et al. (2011)

# Core job resources



## *Social*

- Social support
- Team climate
- Role clarity
- Recognition

## *Organization*

- Communication
- Trust in management
- Alignment
- Value congruence
- Procedural justice

## *Work*

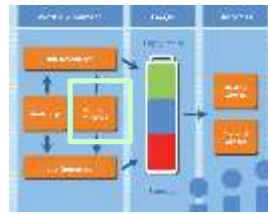
- Job control
- Person-Job fit
- Task variety
- Use of skills
- Adequate tools
- Participation in decision-making

## *Growth*

- Performance feedback
- Career possibilities
- Possibilities for learning & development

Schaufeli & Taris (2014)

# Personal resources



- Emotional stability
- Extraversion
- Conscientiousness
- Internal locus of control
- Self-esteem
- Optimism
- Self-efficacy
- Achievement striving

For reviews see: Simpson (2009), Schaufeli & Salanova (2008), Schaufeli & Taris (2013)

# Engaging leadership



## Inspiring

- Connects with mission and purpose of organization
- Enthuses for plans and ideas
- Emphasizes the meaning of the job



Meaning

## Strengthening

- Delegates tasks and responsibilities
- Encourages using talents and strengths
- Challenges



Growth

## Connecting

- Encourages collaboration
- Promotes team spirit
- Manages conflicts



Relatedness

## Empowering

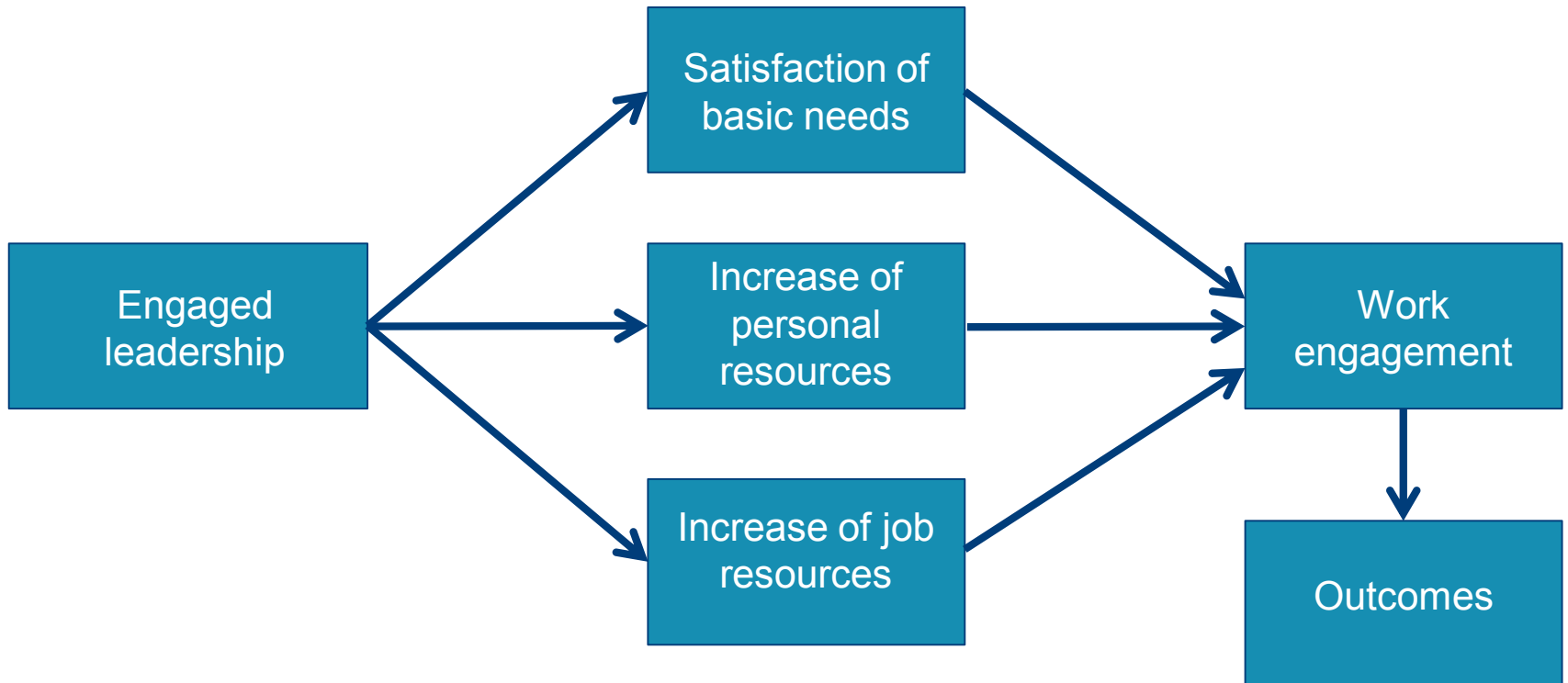
- Recognizes ownership
- Stimulates freedom and responsibility
- Encourages voice



Autonomy

# How does engaging leadership work?

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## Individual outcomes 'healthy working'

### Good physical health

- Stress-reactivity (Langelaan et al., 2006)
- Autonomic cardiac activity (Seppälä et al., 2012)
- Reduced risk of CVD (Eguchi et al., 2015)

### Good mental health

- Depression, anxiety, burnout (Hakanen & Schaufeli, 2012)
- Psychosomatic complaints (Schaufeli et al., 2008)
- Quality of sleep (Kubota et al., 2011)
- Recovery (Sonnentag et al., 2012)

### Positive attitudes and behaviors

- Workability (Airila et al., 2012)
- Personal initiative (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008)
- Organizational commitment (Hakanen et al., 2008)



## Organizational outcomes 'successful working'

### Low health and replacement costs

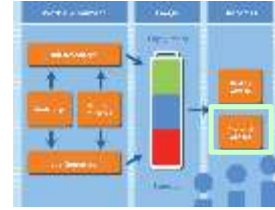
- Sickness absence frequency (Schaufeli et al., 2009)
- Occupational injuries and hazards (Nahrgang, 2011)
- Turnover intention (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004)

### Good performance

- Customer satisfaction (Salanova et al., 2005)
- Job performance (meta-analysis: Christian et al., 2011)
- Creativity (Bakker et al., 2018)
- Safety behavior (meta-analysis: Nahrgang et al., 2014)

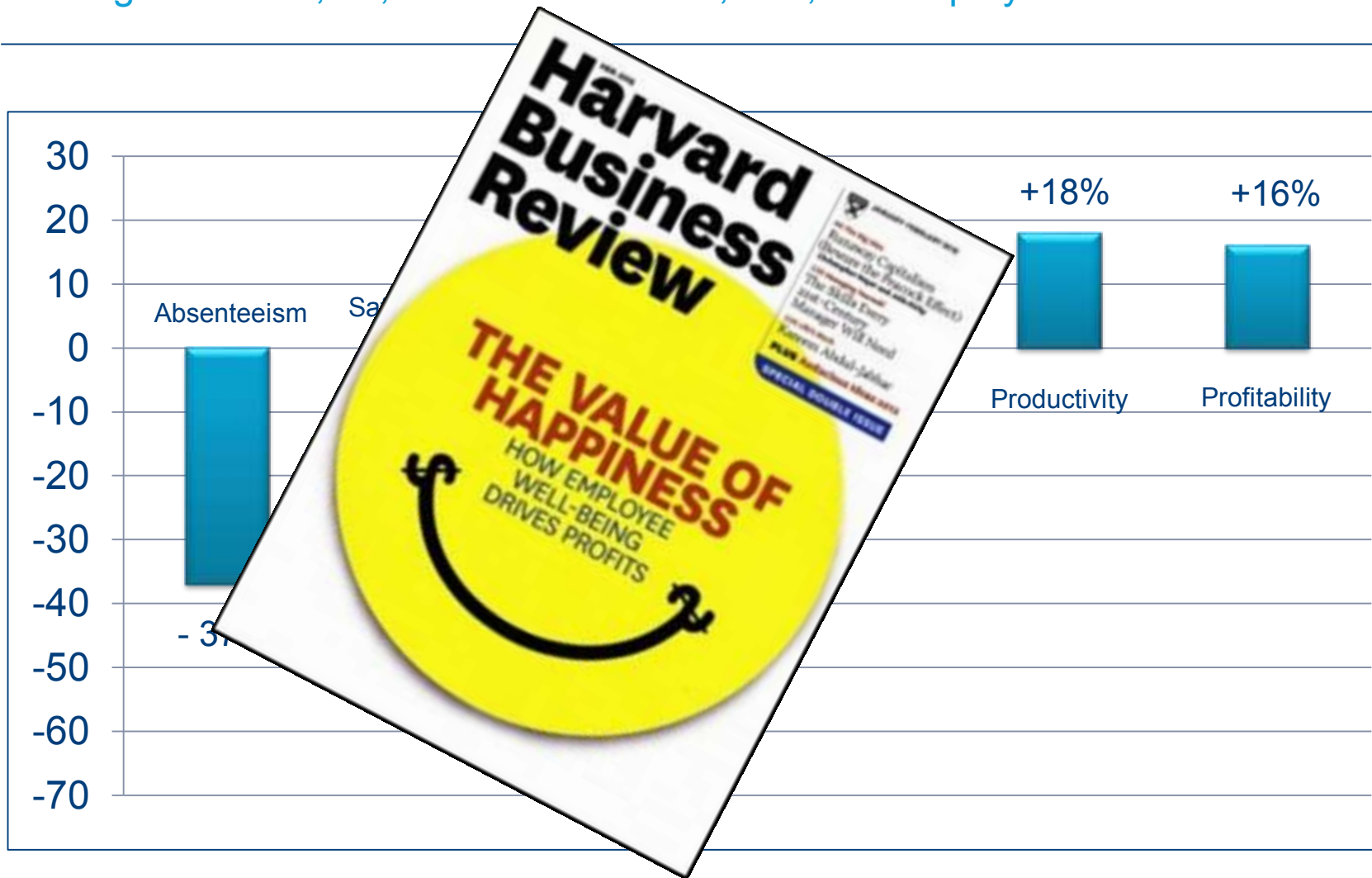
### Superior business outcomes

- Financial turnover (Xanthopoulou et al., 2008)
- Productivity (Harter et al., 2006)
- Profitability (Schneider et al., 2018)



# Gallup's business case for engagement

152 organizations; 32,394 business units; 955,905 employees



Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002

KU LEUVEN

# How to increase work engagement?

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- Research

# Examples of engagement interventions

## Individual

- Strength-based micro-counseling (Peláez, Coó & Salanova, 2019)
- Gratefulness and kindness (Ouweneel, Le Blanc & Schaufeli, 2014)
- Mindfulness (Leroy, Anseel, Dimitrova & Sels, 2013)
- Career management training (Vuori, Toppinen-Tanner & Mutanan, 2012)
- Individual job crafting training (Van den Heuvel, Demerouti & Peeters, 2012)

## Team

- Manager led group meetings (Allen & Rogeslberg, 2013)
- Caring leadership (Bishop, 2013)
- Team redesign (Cifre, Salanova & Rodriguez, 2010)
- Team-level collaborative job crafting (McClelland, 2014)

## Organization

- Performance management (Mone et al., 2011)
- Quality improvement (White, Wells & Butterworth, 2014)
- Leadership development (Biggs, Brough & Bardour, 2014)

# Overall evaluation

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## Observations

- Very few well-designed, controlled studies (i.e. randomized clinical trials)
  - Only one meta-analysis (k=14; Knight, Peterson & Dawson, 2017)
  - Four types of interventions:
    - Increase personal resources (k=4)
    - Increase job resources (k=2)
    - Leadership training (k=4)
    - Health promotion (k=4)
  - All but one study used the UWES
- Organization-based interventions are virtually absent

## Conclusion

- *“The meta-analytic results demonstrated a positive, small, significant, effect on work engagement ( $g = .29$ ) and each of its three sub-components, vigour, dedication and absorption. This suggests that interventions aimed at increasing resources in the work environment and improving well-being can improve employees’ work engagement, in accordance with the JD-R model” (Knight et al., 2017, p. 804)*

# How effective is an EL-training program?

EL-training (length: 8 months)

- 6 training days
- 2 face-to-face sessions
- 3 peer consultation sessions

Quasi experimental design (multinational of electronic health systems)

- 13 managers in intervention group (plus 109 team-members)
- 39 control managers (plus 218 team-members)
- Measurements of KPI's before, after, and after 2-6 months

Results KPI's:

- Registered sickness absenteeism
  - Reduction with 5%: from 7.7% (before) via 3.7% (after) to 2.2% after another 2 months
- Team performance
  - 10% more Orders Booked On Time (OBOT) : from 87% (before) via 92% (after) to 97% after another 6 months

**Conclusion: The engaging leadership training has a positive, sustained effect**

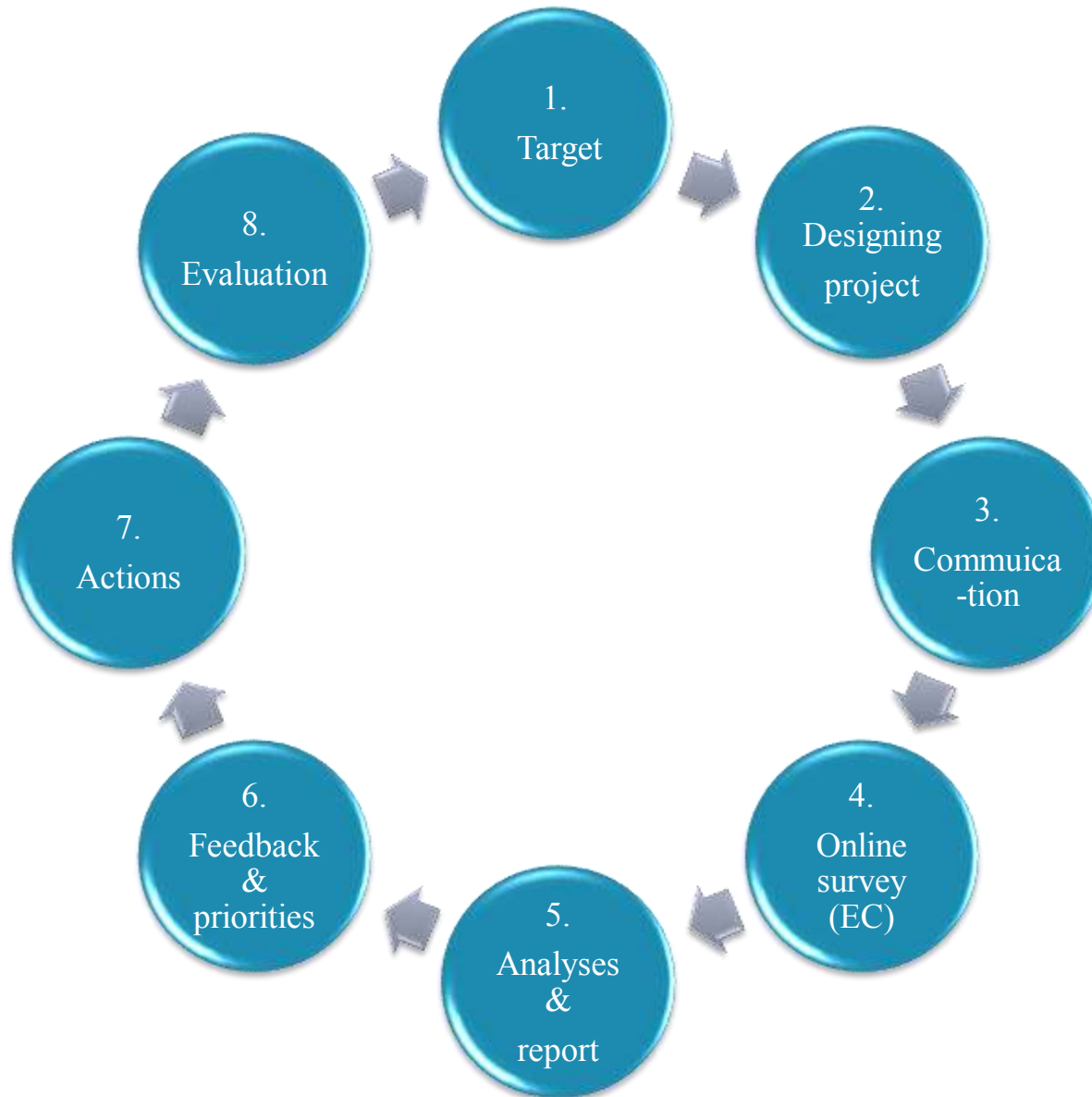
# How to increase work engagement?

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- Practice



# Intervention cycle



# Case example

- Dutch hotel chain operating 22 hotels
- 1,055 employees
- Core values:
  - Respect
  - Entrepreneurship
  - Passion
  - Style
  - Customer orientation



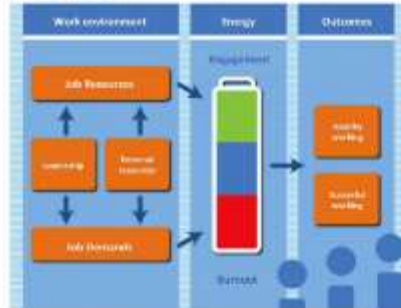
Schaufeli (2017)

# Survey: Energy Compass (demo)

## Your energy process



Work can be very pleasant and give you a lot of energy, but in contrast it also can be quite stressful. By being aware of the things in your work that make you feel energetic (job resources) or that drain your energy (job demands) you are better able to manage your own energy level and to be less dependent on others. The goal of this short demo was to measure your score on some common job demands and job and personal resources relative to that of other employees. Consider the battery on the right - job resources improve your energy and job demands are energy draining. Personal Resources that you can draw on, like flexibility, are helpful in dealing with job demands and benefiting from job resources.



On the next pages of the report your scores are compared to the total of the average employees, which serves as a benchmark. This allows you to identify what things are good and what things can be improved.

## Summary



Your scores on the questions in this short demonstration are summarized on this page. On the next pages you can read more about your scores and what you could do to improve them.

A red score indicates a relatively unfavorable score.  
A blue score indicates an average score.  
A green score indicates a relatively favorable score.

### Job Resources

- Performance feedback
- Job Control
- Social Support

### Personal resources

- Flexibility

### Job Demands

- Workload
- Change
- Conflicts at work

Your overall energy

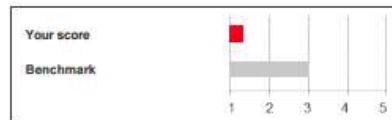
- Engaged
- Tired

## Job resources



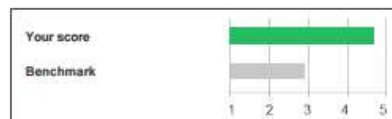
Job resources refer to those aspects of your job that are positive and energizing. They may also stimulate learning, growth and development. Examples are job control – i.e., the freedom to make your own choices at work – rewarding contacts with and support from your colleagues, feedback about how you do your job, and future career perspective. Job resources are not only important in their own right because they make you feel energetic at work, they are also useful for dealing with job demands, particularly when they are high.

### Performance feedback



Performance feedback is about the amount of information that you receive about the results of your work. You receive relatively little performance feedback. It is not clear if your performance is up to standard. As a result of this you possibly do not know what to improve. If you value performance feedback on this topic you can ask your supervisor, colleagues or customers for feedback.

### Job Control



Job control is very important, especially when dealing with a high workload. When you have a lot of job control, you may decide on the content, pace and scheduling of your work, and on the way you do your job. You score relatively high on job control. You feel that you can make your decisions that help you cope when the workload is high.



## Strong points

### Job demands

- Low work home conflict
- Low emotional demands

### Job resources

- Social support
- Team atmosphere
- Role clarity
- Recognition
- Use of skills
- Leadership (incl. trust)

### Outcomes

- Team commitment
- Organizational commitment
- Turnover intention

## Weak points

### Job demands

- Work overload
- High pace of change

### Job resources

- Team effectiveness
- Team crafting
- Person-job fit
- Fair pay
- Adequate tools
- Possibilities for learning



# Actions taken

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- **Renewing the HR-cycle** (past performance → feed forward; talent chart)
- **New training curriculum** (better based on training needs)
- **Site visits and lunch-time round tables**
- **New communication channels** (town hall meetings, posters)
- **Improve ICT-systems**

# Evaluation

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- Outcomes

- Engagement increased with 4%
- Burnout decreased with 1%
- Job satisfaction increased with 4%
- Organizational/team commitment increased with 4%
- Turnover intention decreased with 3%
- Better team effectiveness 2%

# Evaluation



- Positive changes
  - Recognition
  - Available tools (ICT)
  - Fair pay
  - Organizational justice
  - Possibilities for learning and development
  - Career perspective
- Negative changes
  - Pace of work
  - Interpersonal conflict
  - Work-home conflict
  - Use of skills

# Conclusions

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- Most outcomes improved slightly
- Overall, only small changes

- **Renewing the HR-cycle**
  - Recognition, career perspectives
- **New training curriculum**
  - Possibilities for learning & development, career perspectives
- **Site visits and lunch-time round tables**
  - Recognition, organizational justice
- **New communication channels**
  - Recognition, organizational justice
- **Improve ICT-systems**
  - Availability of tools



# Final conclusions

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## Work engagement....

- ... is a specific type of employee well-being
- ... differs across countries
- ... is related to various job- and personal resources
- ... has positive effects for individuals and organizations
- ... can be increased through individual, team, and organizational measures
- .... potentially bridges the gap between OHP an HRM

# Golden rules for work engagement

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1. Use your strengths, talents, and passions.
2. Adopt a healthy life style.
3. Be optimistic; focus on opportunities not on problems.
4. Help and assist others; be kind and cooperative.
5. Take initiative and use opportunities.
6. Ask for feedback to improve.
7. Look for meaning in your work.
8. Set high, but realistic goals.
9. Keep your job challenging.
10. When your engagement drops, talk to your supervisor.



*Thanks for your attention !*

More information

Academic: [www.wilmarschaufeli.nl](http://www.wilmarschaufeli.nl)

Consultancy: [www.3ihc.nl](http://www.3ihc.nl)

