



# The Meaningful Leader®

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# The Meaningful Leader®

## Engagement at Work

*Engagement* means a deep connection between who the person and the work. Engaged employees use their physical, cognitive, and emotional energies to maximum performance. Engagement is also related to individuals' feelings of pride for their organization and their willingness to go "above and beyond," expanding their roles to meet the organization's needs. Thus, engaged employees are not only satisfied: Instead, they feel that their work is part of their identity; their work colleagues, members of their community. Engagement sets a high bar to employees and organizations.

*Engagement matters.* The construct has been tied to greater productivity, better customer service, higher quality, lower turnover, and, overall, a more meaningful and rich work life.

The purpose of *The Meaningful Leader®* program is to introduce leaders to key competencies related to employee engagement.

## Program Summary

*The Meaningful Leader®* competencies are self-awareness, building connections, developing others, and inspiring meaning. We recommend adding to the program personality and 180-degree competency assessments including engagement questions. To measure personality, we recommend the Narrative Big Five assessment, which provides users with scores on five main traits (Resilience, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) and 23 subtraits.

- *Resilience* refers to a person's reactivity and tolerance to stress.
- *Extraversion* has to do with general sociability and friendliness.
- *Openness* refers to a person's levels of imagination, complexity, and comfort with change.
- *Agreeableness* refers to a person's comfort with not having his or her way and cooperating with others.
- *Conscientiousness* refers to a person's general levels of focus, methodicalness, and organization.

To measure *The Meaningful Leader®* competencies, we developed a 180-degree tool, which provides leaders with their followers' perceptions of key competencies and their followers' current levels of engagement.

## The Meaningful Leader® Competencies

The leadership competencies we used to build *The Meaningful Leader®* are:

- *Self-awareness* means the ability to recognize one's personality tendencies and typical behaviors, as well as one's assumptions, biases, and emotions.
- *Building trust:* Meaningful leaders build a culture of trust and enhance their own trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is the quality of someone who can be trusted. The leader's trustworthiness impacts the followers' feelings of meaningfulness and safety at work. The Meaningful Leader® program addresses four components of trustworthiness:
  - ... Benevolence involves altruism, service, and concern for others. Followers are more likely to trust the leaders who protect their interests and genuinely care for them.
  - ... Authenticity has to do with the leader's willingness to be open, honest, and vulnerable.

- ... Reliability has to do with the leader's value-behavior congruency. Followers want to rely on their leaders and trust that the leaders will do what they said they would do.
- ... Fairness means the willingness to treat employees equitably, regardless of personal preferences or feelings of closeness. Fairness is an essential component of employees' feelings of safety at work. A perceived lack of equity can be particularly disengaging.
- *Breaking silos* involves leaders' ability to build bridges among their reports and encourage a collaborative and open environment.
- *Information sharing* means openly sharing information with the followers and fostering a culture of transparency and collaboration.
- *Leading for fit* means assigning to reports responsibilities that match their abilities, personality tendencies, and interests. Managers who "lead for fit" also help their reports uncover unique strengths and devise "alternative success routes" or strategies when the reports must accomplish less natural tasks.
- *Maximizing performance* means supporting employees' development and helping establish an advancement plan and process. This competency includes coaching; providing timely, balanced and clear feedback; and establishing an optimum balance between challenge and support.
- *Facilitating growth* means supporting and encouraging the career development of one's reports.
- *Promoting safety* means modeling respect for others and holding employees accountable for making their team members feel safe at work.
- *Recognizing the work* means acknowledging the followers' contributions to the team and the organization as a whole.

Additional competencies may be added to match the organization's needs and goals.

## **Program Structure**

The program may be conducted in a two-day workshop or in multiple two- to three-hour sessions. These sessions may be conducted face-to-face or via live webinars. The following is a possible program structure for a series of face-to-face sessions.

- Session 1: Self-awareness and personality
- Session 2: What is engagement and why does it matter?
- Session 3: Building trust, breaking silos, sharing information
- Session 4: Leading for fit, connecting fit and personality
- Session 5: Maximizing performance and facilitating growth
- Session 6: Psychological Safety
- Session 7: Fostering a Culture of Recognition
- Session 8: Program conclusion, wrap up, action plans

For additional information on bringing The Meaningful Leader® program to your organization, please contact:

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