

All you need is "flow". Management, the positive way.

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ALL YOU NEED IS FLOW: MANAGEMENT, THE POSITIVE WAY

Renzo Ardiccioni

Well-being in the Workplace

Happiness and work – isn't there a contradiction in those terms? Not necessarily. We are used to regarding management in terms of structure, production, efficiency, competence, and so on. There is a sense of structure, of an expansion of organized thoughts originating from director's offices, spreading to the various levels of management, getting processed into production through different levels of deciders, thinkers, workers. We can perceive a sense of verticality. Whether a company's goal is to offer products or services to customers, the organization must be very well structured in order to thrive and expand.

But is that really all it needs? A perfect organization and a variety of tasks efficiently distributed between competent managers? Certainly not. There are also more subtle aspects that could be beneficial to the organization, a psychological component that could benefit equally each employee. In the workplace, a new wave of well-being has already begun to spread in a horizontal way.

A large amount of time is spent at work, and a worker should be able to expect more than a paycheck or the promise of bonuses in order to flourish. The workplace should be seen as a small community, where each one could feel involved, and also gain meaning in their life as a reward for the amount of work given. Besides the earnings, a pleasant working environment, social events that may all contribute to the wellness of a worker, there is also a psychological aspect that should be taken into account. As pointed out by Vakkayil, Della Torre & Giangreco (2017), the role of the manager in promoting wellness has been increasingly recognized, and their perception and interpretation of the employee's wellness are crucial in the process of implementing new policies (Caldwell, 2004). However, the need to develop original products of high quality could put employees under pressure and be detrimental to their physical and mental well-being. While it is important to implement policies and practices that may bear a high level of production and standards, in practice, there might be personal discord, tensions and difficulties inherent to social groups (Guzzo & Dickson, 1996). The role of the manager is certainly pivotal, fulfilling requests, handling deadlines and full agendas on the one hand, and on the other hand, motivating workers, helping them giving their best, while keeping a pleasant working ambiance. Certainly managers are essential for getting the best from their employees, but they also need to become aware of and help in the development of the employee's leadership qualities. It is crucial that a manager, in his role as mentor, maintain or increase the well-being of the employee.

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Positive psychology is a new sphere of psychology which focuses on how to help human beings prosper and lead healthy, happy lives. While many other branches of psychology tend to focus on dysfunction and abnormal behavior, positive psychology's main objective is helping people to become happier. Martin Seligman and Mihály Csíksentmihályi (2000), two founders of positive psychology, describe it in those terms: "The field of positive psychology at the subjective level is about valued subjective experiences: well-being, contentment, and satisfaction (in the past); hope and optimism (for the future); and flow and happiness (in the present).

Positive psychology could be considered by managers as a highly effective tool to make each employee give their best, receive consideration and feel involved. Work is one of the driving forces of our lives and one of the many ways to give us a sense of satisfaction. When managers were asked what, in their opinion, activity would do this, most of them answered that it is a job that leads somewhere, or an interesting and pleasurable activity, that would make them feel useful and would be profitable to others, while allowing them to develop their own potential (Morin, 1997). To have a sense of accomplishment, to create and innovate, most people need a challenge. Having the impression that one's work is valuable and purposeful, receiving recognition from their superiors and developing their strengths and skills are the principal factors that make one flourish.

The Basics of Job Satisfaction

There are three determinant factors to well-being at work: an environmental factor, a socio-demographic factors and an individual factor. The environmental factors influencing well-being at work are autonomy, the ability to use one's own skills, the clarity of objectives, the variety of assignments, clarity of feedback and information about the future, the wage, physical security, consideration and support from superiors, social relations, the social value of work and the value that the worker grants to the work (Jahoda, 1981).

Regarding the socio-demographic factors, older workers are happier at work than the others (Birdi, Warr & Oswald, 1995). Several reasons may account for this, among them, the fact that workers evolve over the duration of their profession to more interesting assignments and their expectations are more suited to what they are doing (Warr, 1997). The youngest, at the other end, appear to get greater satisfaction from work, perhaps because of novelty and also for the simple reason that they have found a job for the first time.

As for the individual factors, we all have a different perception of our work. There are those who see it as an obligation, some as a career and others as a vocation. The first focus on the remuneration, the second on advancement, the third on personal achievement. Not surprisingly, those who see their work as a vocation find greater satisfaction, recording minimum rates of absenteeism (Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin & Schwartz, 1997).

Besides the will to surpass oneself through a rewarding career, there are more fundamental traits of character that may contribute to happiness at work. Warr (1999) has highlighted two major elements of the personality traits, positive affectivity and negative affectivity. Individuals with high levels of positive affect perceive their work as a source of greater security, finding greater social support. Those with high levels of negative affect, on the other hand, suffer greater

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dissatisfaction, whatever their job. There is a clear correlation between negative affect and psychological problems at work. Let's add that people with high levels of negativity can generate more stressor factors at work (Gaucher, 2010).

Despite such a variety of individuals and temperaments, how can well-being at work be increased? One of the ways is to improve the global satisfaction, regardless of the organization. Longitudinal studies show that although job satisfaction and overall satisfaction influence each other, the influence of overall satisfaction on the job satisfaction is far stronger than the mutual influence (Headey & Wearing, 1992). Another way is to increase positivity, both at personal level and through the interactions between workers, whatever hierarchical level they may occupy. Positive behaviors at work, also known as organizational citizenship behavior, are both cause and effect of satisfaction at work, in other words, job satisfaction promotes positive behavior and positive behavior encourages job satisfaction (Turnispeed, 2004).

An organization includes several individuals having specific strengths and weaknesses, skills, qualities and virtues. Leveraging diversity and finding cohesion within groups and teams is not an easy task. It requires strong, inspired and inspiring management, a supportive and stimulating attitude from the leaders, an ability to discern the qualities, potentials and skills of each employee in order to distribute tasks more efficiently, and especially a long-term vision and contagious optimism that push each employee to give the best of himself without leading anyone to burnout. The job demand-resource (JD-R) model has explained how deadlines or workload (demands) can lead to physiological or psychological exhaustion (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001). The JD-R model assumes that the onset of burnout depends on various characteristics of the work environment. When the constraints are too high, the employee runs out of energy without disengaging. On the other hand, if the resources are too limited, the model predicts a high disengagement score but no depletion of energy. It is in the case of an environment rich in constraints and poor in resources that exhaustion and disengagement will be present. The JD-R also explains how demands moderate the relationship between resources and commitment so that the motivational influence of resources on engagement is enhanced when employees are faced with demands ranging from moderately high to difficult (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Management, the Positive Way

There are many realistic actions to be taken to promote well-being in enterprises. Needless to say, managers hold a key role in improving satisfaction and happiness. Their qualities are used in multiple ways. One of the smartest ways is honesty. The best manager is one who is honest with himself and has the intellectual honesty to consider collective well-being as a main source of wellness. There is a relationship between self-assertion of executive and managerial efficiency (Ames & Flynn, 2007). The managers with an aggressive behavior, arrogant, competitive or one with a weak behavior, submissive, unassertive, are both perceived as a symptom of poor efficiency by collaborators. The ideal would thus appear to be an assertive behavior from the managers, being able to respond in the best way in every situation, and also capable of adapting to all types of people and personalities within the company. This is particularly true in cross-cultural management situations, or when people from different cultures are working together,

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without necessarily sharing the same personal values or business.

In his book *Good to Great* (2001), Jim Collins underlines the importance of humility in leadership. The companies with greater success over a long period have several common features, like being directed by managers with strong professional will but, at the same time, who know how to remain discreet and even humble, that is, resembling more Socrates than Caesar or Napoleon. For sure they have ambitions, however, these ambitions are more directed towards the service of the enterprise, rather than towards their personal glory.

One of the most interesting concepts about this was introduced by Robert Greenleaf (1977) when presenting the idea of "leader servant," a concept quite old, knowing that the etymology of minister is servant or helper. The concept of servant leadership has been the object of many in-depth studies in management. This attitude seems related to many positive aspects of operations within organizations. It gives rise to greater team efficiency, all members united for a progressive empowerment and higher level of satisfaction among collaborators.

Can we talk about a corporate ethic for the development of well-being at work? In his book *The Moral Advantage* (2004), William Damon, professor at Stanford, demonstrated how it is possible to make one's own principles coincide to one's professional career. However, acting according to righteous ethical principles does not mean earning more or less money, it simply means not being in contradiction with our own values, those which guarantee us a serene life. It is about understanding how the leaders and the managers can reach their financial objectives, while feeling proud of their moral integrity and of their contribution to society. Humanist management is, first of all, a way of being, an honest state of mind. One cannot imitate trust. When a business executive trusts his employees, they feel more responsive, more committed, more motivated. In a growing number of companies, employees decide together on timetables, which are no longer imposed by management, making the ritual of card-punching an old memory. These actions can do nothing but fostering well-being at work. In addition, trust is also at the heart of innovation. In societies where mutual trust exists, everyone can speak their own mind, regardless of the rank they may occupy in the organization. Employees spend a great portion of their working time on innovative projects of their choice, in a kind of collective brainstorming in which error is always accepted as an aspect of the game and successes are recognized and appreciated (Lecomte, 2016).

The more a company is responsible, the more profits will increase, provided that enough money is invested in the first phase. In fact, well-being matures slowly and the results become obvious only after a period of adaptation. Pushing employees' happiness in pursuit of short-term economic profit would therefore be completely counterproductive. A fake humanist management would only create rancor, discouragement and unmotivated employees.

Several new managerial theories for improvement of well-being at work have given excellent results, confirmed by scientific research. One of these is transformational leadership, which is about all the resources required to encourage our colleagues to make changes for improving their performance. The transformational leader must be able to share his vision and goals and motivate a team of competent collaborators, while being attentive to their limitations and needs. Transformational leadership resides on four behavioral aspects: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Ideal, inspiration, intellect, individual, the so-called « Four I's » (Bass, Avolio & Atwater, 1996).

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The idealized influence, or charisma, takes shape when the manager acts according to what he judges right and ethical, and not according to what he evaluates as simple, easy, or profitable. Leaders personify behavioral role models, they inspire pride, respect and trust. Collaborators identify with leaders and want to emulate them.

Inspirational motivation is the ability to persuade employees to do their best, through one's own example. The leader illustrates clearly his expectations, putting much emphasis on what could be accomplished. Employees are promoted to collaborators, making everyone's work meaningful, creating team spirit, enthusiasm and optimism. Doubt provoking speech is completely banished.

Intellectual stimulation occurs when the transformational leader encourages collaborators to reflect and find new ideas, which makes everyone more confident in their abilities and reinforces their well-being at work. Transformational leaders stimulate collaborative efforts to be innovative and creative, questioning what was taken for granted, redefining problems and addressing old situations in a new way. Creativity is encouraged. Brainstorming becomes a daily working tool. There is no public criticism of the mistakes made by individual members of the group. New ideas and creative solutions to problems are required for collaborators, all of whom are involved in the problem-solving process and finding solutions. The leader encourages collaborators to try new approaches, without censoring their ideas just because they are different from their own. Side thinking is defined as a common way of reflection, always framing every problem from a different angle, redefining it from a new perspective, becoming the secret to innovation and creativity at work (De Bono, 1985).

Individual consideration is the sincere attention the manager offers to his collaborators, listening to their problems with an empathetic mind, watching over for any signal that warns of unreasonable living conditions for each employee. This is a particular form of social support, which allows the construction of a sincere relationship between managers and collaborators. In that case, transformational leaders are very careful about the success and growth needs of everyone and act as mentors. Individualized consideration is established by creating new learning opportunities within a supportive climate. Individual differences are recognized in terms of needs and inclinations. The leader demonstrates acceptance of these differences and is mindful enough to adapt his or her speech, depending on each individual. For example, some employees may receive more encouragement, more autonomy, more rigid standards or more structured tasks. The interactions are personalized, the leader is capable of individualized consideration, being empathetic and capable of listening. He delegates activities as a means to develop collaborators. Delegated activities are monitored to see if collaborators need further guidance and support, as well as to evaluate their progress).

Numerous research has demonstrated the positive effects of transformational management. Sarros and collaborators (2002) have shown that it improves job satisfaction, confidence in managers, perception of justice and equity, while at the same time lessening those feelings of alienation at work, defined as lack of motivation, of power, combined with a sense of separation and distance. Researchers have advanced the hypothesis that transformational leadership may have significant positive repercussions on the managers themselves (Sivanathan, Arnold, Turner & Barling, 2004).

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Transformational leadership has borne its fruit in different sectors (Charbonneau, Barling & Kelloway, 2001). In a longitudinal study on managers of transformational management banks, it was noted how employees' performances were far superior to those of employees with traditional managers. Transformational leadership is in fact currently the most popular business leadership model. It is radically distant from the old-fashioned transactional leadership model, formed by a system of rewards/punishments, and that, even more deleterious, of lack of leadership or *laisser-faire*.

It would be profitable to keep in mind that all progress originates at individual level. Well-being develops within someone. Every revolution, big or small, is always on an individual level, whether it is managerial or at the level of employee and collaborators. The pleasure of mutual aid, empathy and altruism is a viral disease that can be, fortunately, very contagious. Being honest with oneself, being honest with others is the first step towards positive transformation. Keeping the sense of honor high is the most important step towards the discovery of our nobility and, as a result, can only bring us well-being and happiness.

More Well-being, More Results

Promoting well-being at work also increases results. Redesigning the organization of work now becomes an essential factor. The most important model, in this sense, is based on the characteristics of the work. Work is defined here in five dimensions: diversity of competences, definition of the appointment, importance of the appointment, autonomy and feedback. In these five categories we find three subordinate psychological states of mind: the perception of the job interest, the perception of one's own responsibility for the final results and the concrete knowledge of the above results. These states also influence intrinsic motivation, performance, satisfaction at work and, consequently, poor absenteeism or turnover. The intensity of the need for personal fulfillment acts as a modulator between work characteristics and state of mind. Basically, to improve well-being at work, we need a convincing management and a convincing feedback on the outcome.

There are three other factors that occupy a key role in well-being at work, that is, the clarity of the assignment, agreement on the assignment, and an appropriate task. The clarity of the assignment implies that one has enough information on the job and, in perspective, on future improvements. An agreement on the appointment requires that requests and expectations be proportionate and limited, and it also implies satisfaction, both economic and relational. Clarity of the assignment is positively correlated with job satisfaction, commitment to work, well-being, an absence of negative stress and anxiety. Proper assignment means feasible and stimulating work altogether.

Teamwork promotes well-being, because it meets a need for interrelation and partnership, creating social support, even in the non-working environment. The team can provide practical and emotional assistance while carrying out the assignments. It can also help develop positive factors of resilience, favoring more well-being and performance. Habitually, when a new team is formed, it takes a while before all the gears of the group get started. To accelerate team amalgamation, extra-work activities such as a hobby or practice a sport can be created. Working

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in well-established teams is undoubtedly much better than working alone or in unskilled teams (Carter & West, 1999).

Personal and interpersonal skills may become of particular support in a group environment. Among others, empathic communication, listening to others, negotiating assertively, resolving conflicts, recognizing the role of each partner is important. Non-conflictual diversity is always welcome and tends to favor the best results. The diversity of knowledge also promotes innovation (Belbin, 1981).

The strengths of character or forces *tout court* can favor the performance quality in a given activity. The best strategy is to try to increase these forces rather than to reduce weaknesses. At the top of the list, we find empathy and impartiality. Foresight-based development is also based on the search for skills or talents. Thirty-four different types of talent have been identified, divided into four major themes, such as human relations, reflection, effort and impact. Under the first theme, for example, are included communication and empathy, in the second, analysis and strategy, in the third, adaptation and focus, in the fourth, positivity, contagious enthusiasm, and knowing how to give orders (Gaucher, 2010).

A development based on strengths requires three steps: identifying talents, understanding the individual's opinion of oneself, changing their behavior to enhance their talents. In essence, this involves knowing their fields of excellence, naming them, sharing them with everyone, considering to what extent performance can be increased by co-ordinating talents and behaviors, adding other skills and knowledge in order to adopt them as often as possible.

There are important clues to be able to recognize the forces in activity. For example, the desire and will to learn more quickly, as well as the satisfaction experienced in carrying out certain assignments. The main focus of strength-based development is to promote activities they enjoy, rather than the unpleasant ones. In an internal study done in a company, it was observed that the development of strength, rather than the reduction in weaknesses, contributed more to the productivity of the enterprise as well as the well-being of workers. While in the three years prior to the survey, productivity varied around 1%, in the year when strength development program was put into place, productivity increased by 6%. Moreover, two teams saw their score improved by 9% (Connelly & Kelloway, 2003).

To prepare, enforce and implement such changes within an organization takes time, attention, care, and involves each member of the organization. It can be perceived as a monumental task at first, but there is much to gain. Adding the horizontal dimension of sharing talent, forces and creativity between partners, to the vertical dimension of economic growth may only lead to more wellness and prosperity. Would everyone be ready for this kind of change? Considering a gain in profit, in personal well-being, and the possibility to use one's skill and creativity may become appealing to many, including the most conservative. This opening to a slightly different way of management may become the norm in the future. According to Jacques Lecomte (2012), the new generations of Y and Z are the absolute hope. Altruism, empathy, and generosity take an increasing part of their values. By leveraging the spirit of sharing and collaborating through social networks, young YZs are looking for less hierarchical and meaningful relationships. Less careerists compared to their predecessors, the baby boomers of Generation X, they seek, above all, a greater sense and utility of their work, which is now integral part to their lives.

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Strength of Character at Work

Strength of character is defined as good temper, willing, certain, but also righteous and altruistic. One's character is an individual's signature, therefore favoring certain types of character in the business environment is certainly beneficial for the entire organization. The job that can make one feel more accomplished also makes one feel more comfortable, performing tasks related to their temperament and strengths of character (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). In particular, those who felt more agreeable with the activity carried out had high levels of gratitude, hope, vitality, curiosity and love.

Managers who know the strengths of their collaborators know how to accept their diversity and use it best when assigning responsibilities or leading teamwork. In multicultural organizations where different cultures share different values, the forces of character correspond to the origin of the workers. For example, North Americans consider work in terms of personal achievement, while Asians are rather in terms of duty (Heine, 2001).

Positive forces can be, so to speak, worked and developed. In terms of management, such forces of character may even become virtues and be used as such for a better organization of work. In this perspective, the qualities of an organization are not simply the sum of individual forces, but rather the result of corporate culture as a whole. Park and Peterson (2003) highlight five essential virtues of an organization: purpose, safety, fairness, humanity, and dignity. Purpose, in this case, means developing a common vision of the organization's ethical goals. Security and safety must be applied concretely and ensure physical and psychological well-being of employees. Fairness is characterized by giving clear rules to everyone, being respectful of individuals, thus allowing competition and co-operation to function equally well within the company. Humanity is defined as mutual concern. Dignity is characterized by the fact that everyone is treated in the same way, without favoritism and without taking into account the role of the individual outside and within the company.

Two more important traits of character to consider within an organization are creativity and emotional intelligence. Creative people are quite independent, non-conformist, daring, open to innovation, flexible on the intellectual level. They also know that they are exposed to risk and are typically noticed, although they are not always easily manageable. Everyone may have a potential for creativity that should be encouraged and developed. Creativity is not only the gift of a genius, leading to great discoveries, great inventions, and magnificent artifacts. Quite the contrary. The creative mind may also function on the very low gear, by small steps, adjusting itself to the task, no matter how trivial it is. Strict surveillance, rigor, pressure and systematic control are all factors that inhibit the development of creativity.

Creative people tend to work in the same field for a long time because creativity is specific, i.e. being creative in one field does not necessarily mean that one is creative in another. In terms of intercultural management, it has been observed that organizing teams of different cultural backgrounds may favor creativity (West & Anderson, 1996).

Concerning the impact of emotional intelligence on companies, many management studies have confirmed that those with a higher emotional intelligence quotient are perceived as more "visionaries," or able to strategically anticipate the future. These people generally experience

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better relationships with others and better support in the whole (Côté, Lopes, Salovey, & Beers, 2005). Even more economically, there are more advantages, benefits and profits in companies where the emotional intelligence quotient is high (Cherniss, 1999).

Swimming in the Flow

Albert Schweitzer declared that it was not so much success that is the key to happiness, rather than happiness to be the key to success. Simply stated, we must begin with happiness, our own happiness. We are not our achievements, we are our happiness. To be well at work, we have to feel, to the last fiber of our body, that state of flow, that specific psychological (condition) that consists of the optimal sensation of feeling well into our skin, of being at the right place at the right moment and being immersed in the right activity (Csíkszentmihályi, 1990). Although this state of mind could be felt during several daily activities, it could be experienced at its maximum during work, when we are intensely focused on our task. In a sort of space-time distortion, the task gives us an immediate feedback of our value. When a job fully satisfies us, we may already consider ourselves as very lucky. Not everyone, in fact, has a sense of fulfillment at work. Let's see, in detail, how to always feel at our best in the working environment.

First of all, we must know exactly what our strengths, our natural abilities and our acquired skills are. Knowing how they stand out from those of our colleagues gives a certain advantage in our professional field or within an organization. Where do we stand regarding "virtues" such as wisdom and knowledge, courage, spirituality, transcendence, temperance, justice, love, and humanity? Are we average compared to our surroundings, or can we make additional efforts to improve ourselves? From these virtues we can extract the necessary strengths and develop the maximum ability to love and be loved. We will find a taste for beauty and work well done. We will forgive, become understanding and will acknowledge the presents we have been offered and be grateful without ever losing sight of our innate taste for novelty and curiosity.

Our success is contagious. Feeling well at work gives concrete results, it has an impact on productivity and on the quality of the work done returning (even more) feelings of wellness. When immersed in the flow, there is no more space for boredom or apathy, not even for anxiety or stress caused inevitably by new assignments. We are simply immersed in the state of happiness, midway between excitement and relaxation, and ready for a new challenge.

Developing flow is realistic and feasible. The first step is having the certitude that an activity constitutes a challenge through which we are going to test our abilities. While we are completely absorbed by an activity, we should have the clear feeling that we are the master of our work and not vice versa. In this situation, we are in the state of flow, our ego has been left aside, we are happier to be doing instead of thinking. Time has stopped.

We are now aware of how to develop our key strengths. In essence, satisfaction in work comes from being able to feel involved, using strengths as opposed to trying to rectify the weak points. This is the key essence of positive psychology, walking with confidence towards the best, putting an end to the confusion of insecure lands. Progressing with calm, without agitation, because the more we get agitated the more we sink into the quick sands of hardship. Thanks to positive psychology, we can always walk with our head raised.

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A few more words about how to stay in the flow. Gratitude. Giving your colleagues a warm "thank you" or even a perfect stranger is free and this simple kindness is beneficial to everyone.

Studies systematically demonstrate that confident, open and smiling people are much more appreciated and, by the same reasoning, their skills judged more effective. A positive attitude is therefore the basis of individual success. This positive attitude can certainly be transmitted to those around us, but it must not be imposed, it must introduce itself slowly and gradually.

Good humor expands into an unstoppable contagion. Why not smile at every occasion, exchange a few words with colleague instead of compulsively check social media or smartphone. It may happen that we have a nerve crisis or maybe we burst into tears and reveal our weakness. This is by no means a negative fact, more of a manifestation of human fragility that can make us even more supportive and compassionate toward our colleagues more about our qualities.

Optimism. Seeing the positive side in every situation turns one into a contagious optimistic, as well as seeing an opportunity in every problem, rather than a problem in every opportunity. Tricking the brain into positiveness has an effect. Since vocabulary is never neutral and the brain tends to simplify complex sentences, it is best to tell that circumstances are not good, instead of asserting that they are wrong. We express the same idea but the brain forgets the negation of the first formulation, keeping "good" instead of "wrong." After all, with simple cunning, we can also fool the brain, in our own interest.

Optimism should be paired with enthusiasm, otherwise ideas have few chances of coming to their realization. Enthusiasm cannot be assimilated to a simple sympathetic excitement. It is much deeper, powerful and massive. When taken by this feeling, no goal is unattainable, no obstacle cannot be knocked down, no one within a team can help but feel empowered and involved. This state of energy can certainly be cultivated and developed, stimulating all of our internal forces towards well-being and satisfaction.

Another key strength is curiosity. Is our attention turned outwards? If we are interested in novelty, then we are on the right path. New does not necessarily mean better, but without our curiosity we will never know. All the great inventions and great changes of humanity were born out of curiosity and not only knowledge.

Finally, the great key force with which all philosophies, all religions, and everyone has experienced is love. To remain on a simple and concrete plane, how can we use this invaluable treasure during our activities? Do we like all our colleagues? Which one, in particular? Why? What do we normally do to weave a network of acquaintances that are not only useful, but allow us to live at our best, every day, at work? And there is nothing more contagious of this strength, at work as in everyday life.

Effectively, positive psychology consists in searching for what is going well, and why, in order to focus on those points, rather than focusing on what is wrong. Positive management is mostly the attitude that a manager can adopt towards an employee, which is an attitude of optimism, the consideration of human beings in relation to happiness and commitment. However, we must not forget the pragmatic aspect of "positive management," in France as elsewhere, which is also adopted in order to increase the productivity of employees, limit absences and turnover. To practice a positive management, it is important to work on the environment, relationships, missions, the possibility of evolution and schedules. To learn all those skills there are training

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sessions in France, but they are quite few.

In a research project of our Department GEA (*Gestion des Entreprises et des Administration*) at Le Mans University, we wanted to know more about the conditions of management in our department of Sarthe and take the pulse of the situation (Ardiccioni *et al.*, 2018). The objective of this project was to answer the question, "Would it be interesting to apply positive management within companies and organizations in our territory?" Thus, we decided to carry out a small management satisfaction survey in three organizations that do not officially practice positive management. We therefore administered a satisfaction questionnaire from December 1st to 22nd, 2017 to a sample of 150 employees, including 50 employees from the geriatric center Charles Drouet, 50 from the *Intermarché* store in Rémalard and 50 from the *Institut Universitaire de Technologie du Mans*. According to our survey report, in a sample of 150 employees, 33% of employees feel bad, even very bad at work. This large percentage seems to be due to a workspace, schedules, remuneration and a workload not adapted to their needs. According to these employees, work has an impact on their personal life, which is mostly bad or very bad. In addition, the management methods used by companies are not suitable for the majority of employees, they are either too directive or delegative for them. In addition, this study indicates that 88% of employees would like positive management to be adopted within their company. This survey confirms the interest in setting up positive management.

In addition, we interviewed the employees of an organization that expressly practices positive management. The association *Montjoie* has a mission of protection, accompaniment and promotion of the person, particularly the protection of childhood, social integration and inclusion, socio-professional integration and health. The company has set up positive management to make their employees more productive, happy and loyal, as well as to reduce turnover and work-related accidents. Without necessarily having followed training, the managers and leaders have adopted a positive behavior, created an environment conducive to work and have rearranged the schedules. We noticed that such method takes time to set up, as they must convince their teams, set and adjust limits. The positive feedbacks are comparable to those obtain by similar researches on this subject and the results support their efforts. Employees are more creative, more productive, and take initiatives. At the professional level, it helps reduce absenteeism and turnover, increase creativity and productivity, and improve the image of the recruiter. On a personal level, employees are happier, healthier and have a better family life.

Thus, this project has shown that it would be interesting to apply positive management within companies and organizations in our region. Then, we to ask ourselves, how would it be possible to develop positive management? The debate is open.

Conclusion

A prosperous company is the result of efficient work and personal involvement. The amount of time and efforts that

each member of an organization is genuinely willing to give depends widely on the benefits they will gain, and the reward is not only accountable in terms of money, but also in well-being. The best organization is not necessarily one that ends the year with the highest net

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gain, but one that in responsible for improving the quality of life of its workers and customers (Csíkszentmihályi, *cit*.). Feeling outstanding and successful at work promotes positive behaviors such as altruism, mutual aid and punctuality. Wellness for sure facilitates success. Happy individuals have more positive emotions, improved adaptability, are less affected by any surrounding negativity, all of which promote the fulfillment of their aspirations. Managers who are willing to get involved personally, to listen, show empathy, observe, and assign tasks suited to each member of the team, in a word, to become transformational leaders will obtain better results. When individual strengths and virtues are shared, moments of difficulty, such as corporate crises, are more easily overcome, and each member of the team feels more inclined to bond with colleagues and supervisors to make work even more interesting and challenging than before. In those transforming in leadership and the addition of mutual support and resilience, lay the key to a prosperous organization.

Abstract

Key words: flow, positive management, positive psychology, well-being at work

Lately, the general interest in positive psychology has grown rapidly, as it provides valuable information on how people can develop and use their strengths to navigate life's challenges and live to their full potential. There is a certain interest for directors and managers to invest time and energy to improve the quality of life in their organization. However, the need to offer unique services and customized products of higher quality demands for creative, involved and motivated employees, without increasing their emotional burden in a world already stressful. Managers hold a key role in helping employees use their full potential, develop their unique skills, and feel involved in the success and general sense of satisfaction within their organization.

We also tried to clarify the conditions of management in our department of Sarthe, the door of the French West.

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