



Getting to Inspired

How meaning and purpose drive growth, reduce cost and build great companies

An ADP Canada Whitepaper



A more human resource.™

What employees are seeking

"The goal is not to hire people who need a job. The goal is to hire people who believe what you believe."

~ Simon Sinek¹

Inspiration – it's magic stuff. It's behind every hunch that paid off, every great song, every breakthrough invention and every underdog team that took home the trophy. Inspiration is a uniquely human trait, rooted in meaning, that empowers ordinary people to do extraordinary things.

Inspiration is not unique to artists and inventors; it's an essential part of the world's best companies. Competitive salaries and perks are important, but the real reason companies like Virgin, Amazon, Patagonia and John Deere can attract and retain top talent is their ability to inspire the people who work there.

What does inspiration at work look like? How do you build an inspired workplace? What can HR teams do to move their organizations beyond engagement to something truly unique?

This white paper looks at the returns on employee engagement and the changing nature of our relationship with work. It shows how organizations of all types and all sizes can help their employees find meaning, a key part of a committed, productive workforce that sees purpose in work and life. Filling this need helps build an employer brand that attracts and retains top talent.

Leadership expert Simon Sinek draws a distinction between simply hiring people capable of doing a job and hiring those who believe in doing what you do. The first group will work for money; the second will dedicate themselves to your collective success with mind, body and soul.

The social, environmental or other meaning that people find in their work empowers them to rise to the full potential of their roles. In the inspired workplace, employee turnover is very low, demand from qualified applicants is high and the workforce is extremely productive.

Inspiration is sadly lacking in most workplaces

A shocking 65% of workers in Canada are mentally ready to leave their current employer.²

Why is that? After years of creating progressive workplaces with flex time, flat organizational structures, work-from-home privileges, lunchtime yoga and ample vacation, engagement is still elusive, productivity is declining and turnover is costing companies millions of dollars per year.

Yet some people can't wait to get to work each day, even when they're doing physically or emotionally difficult work. Some companies churn out innovative products year in and year out. Some executives inspire their people to deliver extraordinary results every quarter. The difference is meaning.

Why meaning matters at work

Employees want to tackle projects that are meaningful to them on a personal level and have a positive impact on some aspect of their workplace or society.

In Canada, the outlook for employers is not good. A mass exodus of Baby Boomers is putting the squeeze on talent, yet an incredible 42 percent of job offers are rejected. Fully two-thirds of Canadian workers say they are mentally ready to leave their current employer.³

Workers are motivated by more than just a pay cheque. Glassdoor analyzed feedback for 221,000 users and found that for every 10 percent pay increase, overall company satisfaction rises by just one percent. In other words, if an employee's salary jumped from \$60,000 to \$72,000, they would be 2 percent happier at work.⁴

Instead of greater compensation, employees are seeking projects that are personally meaningful, have a positive impact on society or coworkers and that benefit others. They want autonomy, balance with the rest of their lives and more choice about where and how they work.

Why is meaningful work suddenly becoming so much more important?

The need for meaning is nothing new; it's part of the human condition. What is new is where meaning is found. Past generations most often found meaning in community, volunteering, hobbies, family, religion and other interests. Today, we look for meaning in our work.⁵

Two-thirds of Millennials maintain that they choose employers based on the organization's "purpose". In the same vein, just 27 percent of Millennials believe that a company's *raison d'être* should be to make money; most maintain the focus should be on stakeholders and impact.⁶

That's right, a secure job at a good company that offers solid products and services just doesn't cut it anymore. Now employees want to tackle projects that are meaningful to them on a personal level and have a positive impact on some aspect of society.⁷

A global study by ADP identified freedom, knowledge, stability, self-management and meaning as the human-centric needs in the new workplace.⁸ That is a tall order, and one that some top employers have done well to fill. For those organizations struggling to reduce turnover and deliver strong, sustainable results, it's time to discover how they can help their employees create meaning. Meaningful work begins with an understanding of the connections between workplace job satisfaction, engagement and inspiration.

Workers want more

42% of job offers in Canada are rejected

65% of Canadian workers are mentally ready to leave their current employer

The human continuum:



Engagement, inspiration and satisfaction are often used almost interchangeably, but there is a big difference between each. Satisfaction is good, engagement is great, but inspiration is the game-changer.

Satisfaction measures how employees **feel at work**. It rates happiness about compensation, benefits, work environment, career development opportunities and other factors.

Engagement refers to employees' connection to work as measured by the amount of **discretionary effort** they are willing to expend on behalf of their employer.⁹

Inspiration is something or someone that **ignites passion**, a sense of possibility, and a holistic understanding that each employee is a critical part of something bigger than themselves. Inspiration engages the heart, mind and soul, helping employees find purpose and meaning in their work. It recognizes that for some employees, work gives meaning to their lives.

While job satisfaction is a basic requirement for the proper functioning of any workplace, engagement is proving more elusive. Despite years of employee surveys and executive strategies, about 70 percent of the workforce is still disengaged and almost 20 percent is actively disengaged.¹⁰

Since meaning, belonging and other hot-button drivers are clearly human needs, getting to inspired requires a close look at five basic human needs¹¹ in the context of work:

Freedom Thanks to the rise of online collaboration, businesses can enable employees to work remotely from another city or country, building life enjoyment through the freedom to work how and when they want.

Knowledge New technology and globally available learning resources help employees develop skills and learn new things on their own so they can solve problems more quickly and keep work flowing.

Stability For employees, stability comes from knowing that work is valued and their skills are in demand. Technological interconnectedness and constant feedback reinforce feelings of stability, as does the knowledge that geographical location is no longer a barrier to a fruitful career.

Self-management Technology removes barriers to collaboration and helps all employees to focus more on work. Real time feedback and recognition also help employees to maintain high productivity and performance.

Meaning Meaning comes from working on projects that are personally fulfilling, have a positive impact on society, or benefit people's well being. While technological advancements have given some employees more freedom to choose where and how to work, technology has given others the ability to choose jobs that better fulfill their needs.

When the need for meaning is fulfilled, inspiration can result. It's a workplace quality that goes beyond an emotional connection with the company, is often greatly intensified by strong, dynamic leaders¹² and typically ties in not just with the company, but with the work itself.

The power of an inspired workforce

Every organization has the power to achieve inspiration because, in the end, all work is meaningful. Whether it's providing patients with better healthcare or making telephony experiences more user-friendly and enjoyable, if an organization can identify 'why' employees do what they do and not just 'what', it creates meaning. Every employee also needs to know (and be reminded) how the work they do contributes to the firm's success.

While there is no clear definition for what constitutes an inspired workforce, it's safe to say that in most workplaces where there is a line-up of well-qualified candidates who want in, meaning, purpose and inspiration are factors.

We need a more caring workplace

That inspiration remains elusive for most organizations is hardly surprising. In their book *The Inspired Workplace: How Building Community at Work Unlocks Organizational Potential*, Dr. Hugh Drouin and Marv Franz assert that to get to inspiration we need a more human, truly caring workplace.¹⁴

A recent study spanning 18 countries bears this out. It reveals that only 11 percent of organizations foster trusting environments where employees are encouraged to make decisions, take risks and innovate. It also finds that 70 percent of companies are focused on short-term success and only 14 percent share information effectively.¹⁵

The benefits of an inspired workforce:



- Better productivity and performance
- More innovation and creativity
- Maximized retention and loyalty
- Employees become brand ambassadors
- Shorter time-to-hire
- A strong employer brand¹³

What does an inspired workforce look like?



Imagine waking up in the morning ready to take on meaningful work.

YWCA Metro Vancouver is a classic example of a truly inspired workforce. The organization offers Vancouverites a range of programs and services, with a focus on women's equality and empowerment. YWCA Metro Vancouver uses a powerful quote to attract recruits: "Imagine waking up in the morning, ready to take on meaningful work for an organization that is changing lives across Metro Vancouver."

The organization's services include helping women in distress with support and housing, supporting childhood development, and much more. Front-line staff are empowered to identify trends and adjust programming accordingly to maximize real life impact. As a result, employees feel they have a personal hand in making a difference.

What does an inspired workforce look like? (continued)



Hallmarks of an inspired workplace

- ✓ A company mission to bring positive, meaningful change
- ✓ Magnetic, passionate leaders who reinforce the 'why' of the organization
- ✓ A culture that fosters leadership in the ranks
- ✓ A culture centred on community, where companies genuinely care
- ✓ Empowered employees
- ✓ A culture of creativity
- ✓ Programs and benefits that help employees thrive personally and professionally
- ✓ Rigorous hiring criteria
- ✓ Technology that impacts and measures employee well-being

Identifying inspired workers

Inspired workers share three traits:

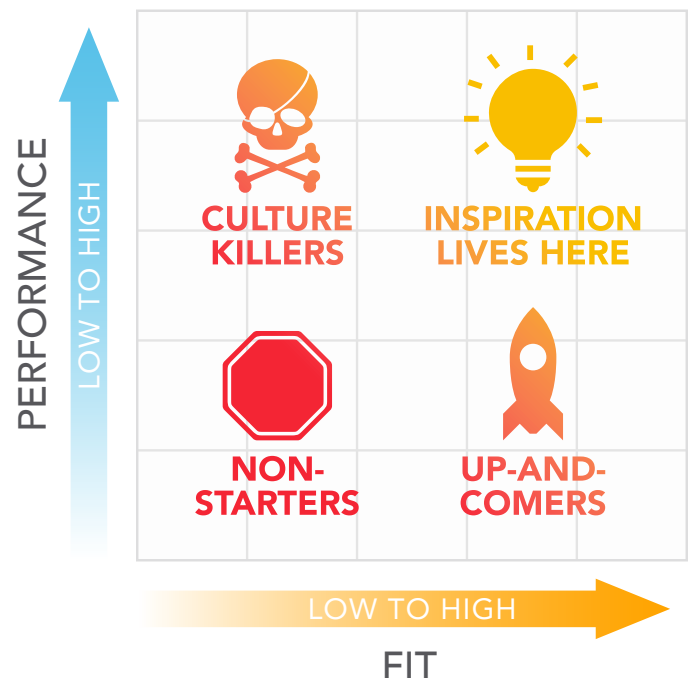
Learning – Inspired workers have the opportunity to learn in their jobs. HR thought leader Josh Bersin notes an explosion of employee learning opportunities, especially online learning. As cost and logistical barriers crumble, employees can take an Ivy League course from their desk for as little as \$100. Learning can become a daily activity¹⁶. Even the smallest workplaces can provide the same opportunities to learn as their larger competitors. Learning can include online courses, adding a college degree, job shadowing, or participating in a mentoring program.

Impact – The work that inspired workers do has a beneficial external effect. Whether it's improving lives or reducing environmental impact, what they do has meaning.

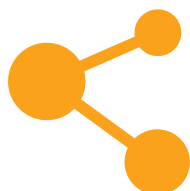
Belonging – Inspired workers have a keen sense that they form part of a team. They are well aware of their own role in contributing to an endeavor that is much larger than just them and their specific job – an effort that people can believe in and to which they can commit.

Hiring for inspiration

In his book *Rock then Roll: the Secrets of Culture-Driven Leadership*, former CEO of ING Direct, Arkadi Kuhlmann, discusses the importance of fit. While we all want high performers, those who are a bad cultural fit—successful lone wolves who do their own thing—have the potential to tear the fabric of the organization apart. By virtue of being high performers, they are *de facto* leaders. But if they only inspire people to look out for themselves or don't provide any inspiration at all, culture and therefore inspiration will suffer. The lesson is: steer away from the top left quadrant. Be rigorous, be picky about behavioral fit, and hire for the top right.



8 ways to create an inspired workplace



Connect employees with organizational purpose & results

When you share your collective higher purpose and recognize that each employee makes a significant contribution to the company's success, everyone involved suddenly has a stake:

The result? Employees feel their work is personally meaningful and take ownership and responsibility for their collective success, resulting in a higher calibre of work. Find your higher purpose and you can inspire your team.

- John Deere puts factory workers together with the farmers who use their tractors.
- Facebook connects its developers with users who have found people important to them through the site.¹⁷



Foster a sense of community in the workplace

Community is a climate in which people, and the relationships they share, are valued. It's a by-product of an organization that places as much value in its people as it does in its products or services. It's important to focus on the whole person and empower workers to discover and express their creativity. Workplace community helps employees feel like they belong to and care for something larger than themselves — fertile ground for inspiration.¹⁸



Set and stick to rigorous recruiting standards

When your competitive advantage is the people you employ, choosing who will join the ranks is incredibly important. Some companies place such importance on cultural fit they actually let go of those who don't share their vision¹⁹. No one wants high performers who don't fit with the company's purpose, either – that can pull the focus away from higher purpose.

8 ways to create an inspired workplace (continued)



Use technology to meet basic employee needs

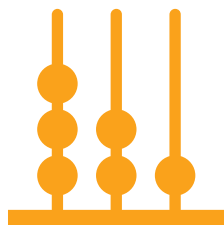
Technology is an important part of creating the right conditions for an inspired workplace to thrive. It is a driving force behind the evolution of work, and touches not only where people work but how they collaborate, how they learn and what they do. Employers can engage a wealth of new feedback apps to solicit employee impressions of everything from social recognition to engagement and well-being. The mere act of soliciting such feedback has been shown to increase engagement.²⁰

Technology is also increasingly being used to automate repetitive tasks in order to free up time for higher value, more meaningful work. It can help you to make more precise, data-driven decisions regarding recruiting, compensation and talent management. It can also provide the unique data analytics you need to shape a workforce matched to your business strategies and needs.



Challenge employees

Research shows that people like to meet manageable challenges.²¹ Employees want to be empowered, have their abilities tested and praised. The opportunity to lead, take risks and make mistakes allows them to reach deep within themselves and achieve more.



Track engagement and development

Putting an employee engagement and development plan in place is an important part of achieving inspiration in the workplace. HR departments can leverage technology to track progress, including measuring and tracking engagement, offering and tracking online learning and tuition programs, tracking skill sets, and nurturing high-performer development.

8 ways to create an inspired workplace (continued)



Place inspiring leaders at the helm

Inspiring leaders radiate positivity, energy, belief in the organization, its mission and the work it does. They are the driving force that moves organizations forward and an important source of inspiration. Leaders who inspire share several important characteristics:²²

- ✓ Harbour and radiate a passionate commitment to serving their team
- ✓ Communicate a bold, specific, and consistent vision
- ✓ Sell the benefits of their team's ideas, and their organization's products or services
- ✓ Tell powerful, memorable, and actionable stories
- ✓ Praise and empower people to take risks, rewarding the effort and encouraging them to be their best selves
- ✓ Provide direction, reinforcing the organization's 'why'



Foster a sense of leadership in the ranks

Leadership can be taught. It's more about attitude than it is about having a team to lead. With a positive attitude, confidence and commitment, virtually everyone can be a leader. Instilling a sense of leadership starts with recognizing people for their strengths, which builds confidence that increases employees' ability to self-manage.²³

Conclusions

Inspiration is magic. It's what helps ordinary people do extraordinary things. It also powers the world's most successful organizations.

An inspired organization is more than the sum of a great culture, plenty of opportunity to learn and a workplace built around human needs. It's also an organization that thrives with committed employees, greater productivity and a strong employer brand.

Inspiration is no accident, no rare coincidence: it's what happens when great leaders, great workplaces and great people come together to do something meaningful.





References

1. [How great leaders inspire action, Simon Sinek, TED Talks, September 2009](#)
2. [Chances Are You'll Pass Up A Great Job For A Meaningful One, Huffington Post, Business Canada, October, 2016](#)
3. [Chances Are You'll Pass Up A Great Job For A Meaningful One, Huffington Post, Business Canada, October, 2016](#)
4. [Does Money Buy Happiness? The Link Between Salary and Employee Satisfaction, Glassdoor.ca, June 2015](#)
5. [The Inspired Workplace: How Building Community at Work Unlocks Organizational Potential, 2014](#)
6. [The Deloitte Millennial Survey 2016: Winning over the next generation of leaders, 2016](#)
7. [The Evolution of Work: The Changing Nature of the Global Workforce, ADP Research Institute, 2016](#)
8. [The Evolution of Work: The Changing Nature of the Global Workforce, ADP Research Institute, 2016](#)
9. [Employee Satisfaction vs. Employee Engagement: Are They the Same Thing? An ADP Whitepaper, 2015](#)
10. [State of the American Workplace, Gallup, 2012](#)
11. [The Evolution of Work: The Changing Nature of the Global Workforce, ADP Research Institute, 2016](#)
12. [The Inspired Workplace: How Building Community at Work Unlocks Organizational Potential, 2014](#)
13. [Become a Talent Magnet: Strategies and tools for building your Employer Brand, ADP Canada, 2015](#)
14. [The Inspired Workplace: How Building Community at Work Unlocks Organizational Potential, 2014](#)
15. [The Inspired Workplace: How Building Community at Work Unlocks Organizational Potential, 2014](#)
16. [HR Technology Disruptions for 2017: Nine Trends Reinventing the HR Software Market, Josh Bersin, Bersin by Deloitte, 2016](#)
17. [People want to see meaning in their work, Naphtali Hoff, SmartBrief.com, December 2016](#)
18. [The Inspired Workplace: How Building Community at Work Unlocks Organizational Potential, 2014](#)
19. [What Engagement Rock Stars Do: Real life examples of the top 10 employee engagement drivers in action, ADP Canada, 2016](#)
20. [Research Report: Predictions for 2017 – Everything is becoming digital, Deloitte](#)
21. [The Inspired Workplace: How Building Community at Work Unlocks Organizational Potential, 2014](#)
22. [Seven Ways to Inspire Employees to Love their Jobs, Forbes Magazine, 2013](#)
23. [The Inspired Workplace: How Building Community at Work Unlocks Organizational Potential, 2014](#)



A more human resource.™

About ADP Canada

ADP Canada gives organizations of every size the tools to help their people thrive. From basic payroll to complex people management systems and analytics, we help business leaders make better decisions. Our clients trust ADP to provide strategic insights and on-demand expertise to build and inspire the workforce they need.

To learn more about how to create an inspired workforce call us at 866-622-8153.

866-622-8153

ADP.ca

ADP does not give legal advice as part of its services. This document provides general information regarding its subject matter and should not be construed as providing legal advice. This material is made available for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for legal advice or your professional judgment. You should review applicable law in your jurisdiction and consult experienced counsel for legal or tax advice.

ADP and the ADP Logo are registered trademarks of ADP, LLC. ADP A more human resource is a service mark of ADP, LLC. All other marks are the property of their respective owners.

Copyright © 2017 ADP Canada Co.

MCGTIWP0217E