



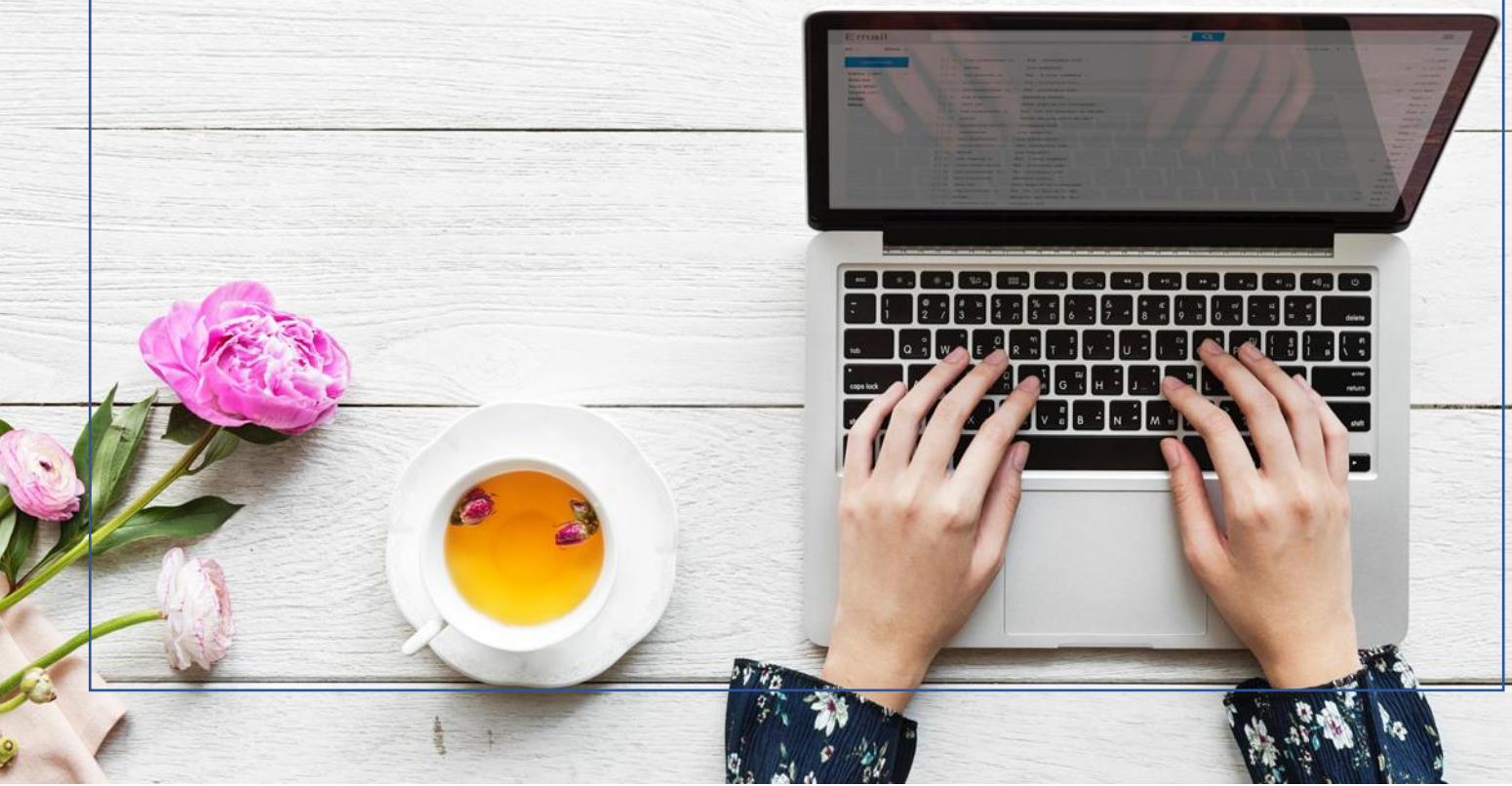
## 5 Steps to Creating a Thriving Workplace

# The WEFQ

*The Workforce Engagement Equation*

*Community of Practice*

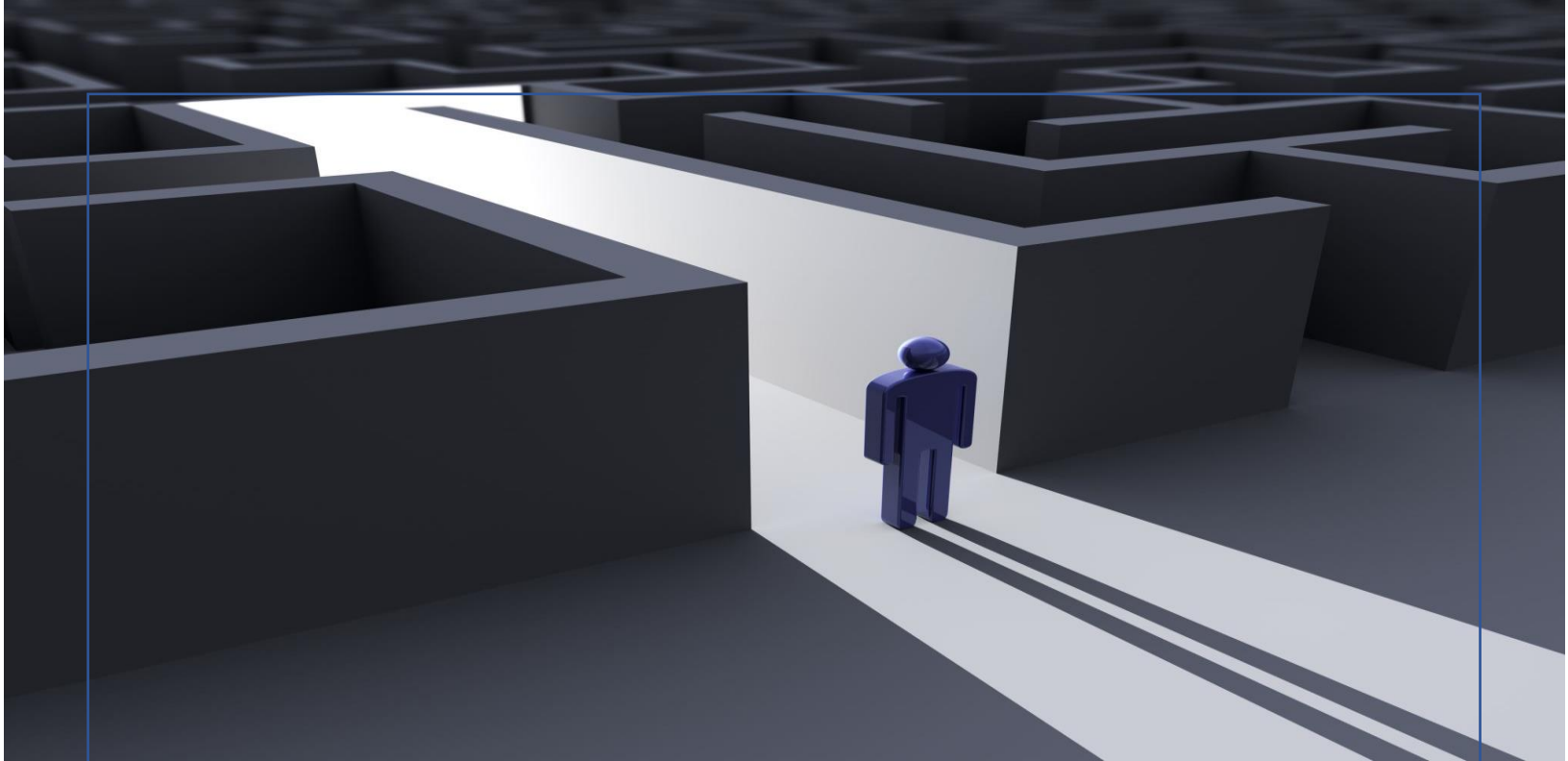
Dedicated to helping individuals and teams thrive



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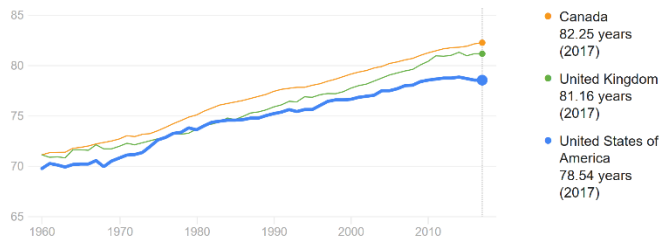


## LACK OF ENGAGEMENT IS A GLOBAL PROBLEM

**B**efore jumping to the five-step solution, let's first put the problem in context: a global [poll conducted by Gallup](#) discovered that out of the world's one billion full-time workers, only 15% of people are engaged at work. That means 85% of people are unhappy in their jobs. And the odds are pretty good that you are among those who find work less rewarding than you'd prefer.

*Average Life Expectance (source=World Bank)*

78.54 years (2017)



Putting this in perspective, the average American lives 78.54 years. Let's consider the adult years – the prime of life between 18 and 67 = 49 years = 429,000 hours. Take off the average 8 hours per day sleeping (or trying to get some sleep) we have about 286,000 conscious hours. Now, consider that the average person spends about [90,000 hours at](#)

[work](#); divide that by the waking hours during the prime of our lives we find that 31% of our lives is spent doing something we don't like!. Probably more if you consider the amount of hours you obsess, fuss, worry, or think about work – or work negatively impacts other aspects of our lives and the number of significant things we miss or are messed up by work!

**W**ould your life improve if you could find more meaning at work? Would you have less stress overall and actually improve the quality of 1/3 of your prime years; maybe even extend your life since stress and depression significantly impact lifespan? That's what I wanted to figure out as I dreaded going to my high-paying corporate job. How would my life change and how many other lives could I help improve if I could find a way to get inspired and share that light of inspiration with others; *I wanted to find a solution to the workforce engagement problem.*

$$\frac{90,000}{286,000} \times 100\% = 31\%$$

# THE WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT EQUATION

**H**ow do you find a solution? You solve an equation! That's the beauty of math, when you know an equation it can be solved repeatably, measurably, and **ANYONE CAN DO IT** easily, rapidly, and consistently. The first step in setting up an equation is determining the factors.

**Engagement is the sum of two conditions:**

***Individual Satisfaction + Organizational Commitment = Workforce Engagement***

Notice, we're not talking about happiness – happiness is harder to quantify, transient, and much more individually variable. But our experience has shown that satisfaction is fairly universal and exists when three conditions are satisfied:

1. **HOPE**: We are not trapped in our current situation and our future holds possibilities.
2. **CONTROL**: We are not helpless victims of our circumstances. We have the power to navigate our circumstances and advance towards our hopes and dreams.
3. **EQUITY**: We are treated fairly. Our efforts are rewarded according to their merits and others are not given undue deference at our expense.

When you create the conditions where these three elements exist – you and others will be generally satisfied – but you may not be dedicated to your organization. We have all had satisfied coworkers who were completely nonproductive. Organizational commitment also requires three conditions to exist:

1. **PURPOSE**: It is hard to be committed to something that you do not value or feel is relevant.
2. **INCLUSION**: Even if we think the organization's work is relevant, we will not feel committed if we feel that we are not relevant to the organization.
3. **ALIGNMENT**: We can feel strongly about the mission of the organization, we can feel like we are part of the team, but these will not keep us engaged if we do not have congruence between our values and those of our employer. We also need to match our needs for autonomy or direction with our employers' need for control.

We become committed to our employers or our team becomes committed to our projects when drawn to the purpose, feel included, and are in alignment.

Combined, the six elements form The Workforce Engagement Equation<sup>®</sup>, TheWEQ for short:



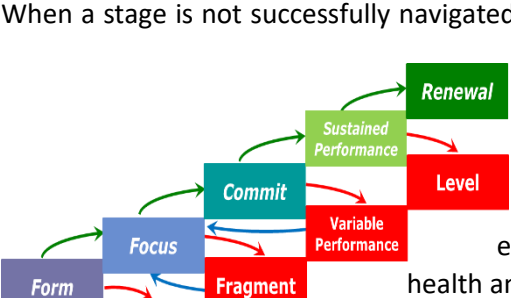
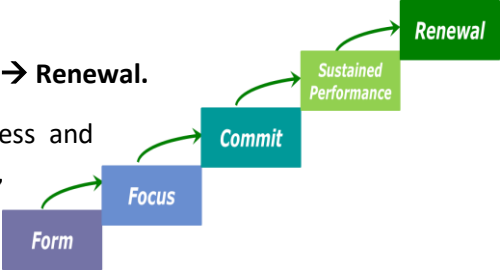


# 5-STEPS TO CONSISTENTLY CREATE ENGAGEMENT

Knowing the equation is a great start, but we can't simply say, "Trust me" and expect these elements to arise like the changing of the seasons; we need actionable, detailed plans; we need to solve the equation. Mathematics has an order of operations, a pattern used to consistently reach the correct solutions; solving TheWEQ also follows a pattern that consistently gets you the answer you're looking for. TheWEQ has a five-step order of operations:

**Forming → Focusing → Committing → Sustained Performance → Renewal.**

If the group successfully navigates the first stage, cohesiveness and effectiveness improve. When a stage is not effectively traversed, group cohesiveness and productivity are impacted. Consider these increasing levels of organizational health and maturity.



When a stage is not successfully navigated, the group founders; they experience confusion, frustration, and lowered productivity. The group cannot simply keep plowing ahead believing that it will all somehow work itself out. **Hope is not a strategy.** The group needs to circle back to explore why the previous stage was not implemented well. Failing to navigate a developmental stage, the group experiences an alternate, less effective state of organizational health and maturity:

**Stumbling → Fragmenting → Inconsistent Performance → Leveling**

## Intuitive Understanding of Team Developmental Stages

The reality of our daily work lives are busy and hectic; the best management tools work as intended and are practical enough to use day-to-day without requiring unsustainable effort or additional layers of complexity. You have to be able to adapt and make decisions on the fly, "laying down the tracks as you run the train." That's the strength of TheWEQ model – it's intuitive and actionable at the speed of life.

When a group initially forms, there are both individual and group needs that must be met for team formation to progress to a higher level of cohesiveness and productivity. Chief amongst these needs are orientation, trust, and the development of a common vision. If the leader effectively leads the organization through forming, the group begins to focus on the tasks at hand. If the group doesn't form well, they stumble, experiencing internal conflict, frustration, and stalled progress. To recover from stumbling, the needs of the forming stage must be addressed; high performing groups will not form without meeting the essentials. Don't assume that these needs will work themselves out. Too often leaders assume, and many business models teach, that conflict, power struggles, false starts, and frustration are just a part of normal group dynamics. This assumption is one of the reasons so many organizations fail to achieve the results they seek.

It is true that stumbling occurs so often that it feels like it is just a normal part of group development, but we've found that stumbling occurs so often because leaders frequently haven't thoughtfully formed the group. They don't take the time to clearly communicate the vision, provide orientation, and build trust;

they take these elements for granted and assume each individual understands and is aligned and committed to their vaguely articulated mission. They also assume that the group norms, standards of behavior and group dynamics that form during a contentious period will somehow become a solid foundation for the group to move towards sustainable high performance. Most often, dysfunctional norms grow out of unmanaged conflict; norms such as mistrust, guarded communications, fragmentation, cliques, backbiting, withdrawal, lowered morale, and factional infighting become the group's foundation. Unless resolved effectively, these dynamics linger and fester preventing the group from ever reaching its full potential.

**TheWEQ is built on the practical application of two significant principles of Behavioral Economics:**

1. All human behavior is rewarding on some level
2. Every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets

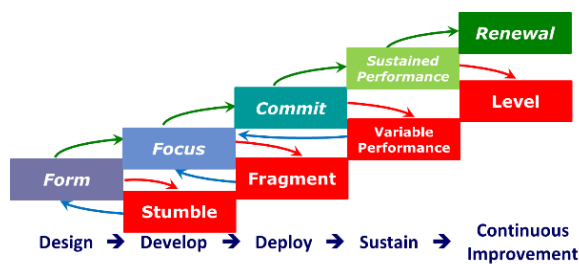
**Applying systems thinking to improving team dynamics and organizational effectiveness delivers rapid, measurable, consistent improvements.**

Every stage of TheWEQ is built upon field tested principles that allow you to sense where the group is at. Once you understand the principles, you'll be able to gauge the team's health and maturity and intervene to navigate around obstacles to achieve higher performance.

### Parallel Paths – Group Development and Project Management

Along with addressing the human factors, high performing teams need effective systems, processes, and metrics. Instead of looking at these elements separately, TheWEQ helps you understand and implement the management operating systems concurrently – saving time and effort. TheWEQ uses a five-stage project management model in parallel with the stages of group development thereby weaving project management into the group development and vice versa:

#### Design → Develop → Deploy → Sustain → Continuous Improvement



Each stage is characterized by its own unique set of needs that fall into one of two categories:

1. Team Needs
2. Organizational/Project Needs

Each set of needs can be satisfied by applying the appropriate set of tools and tactics:

Each stage has desirable outcomes and observable characteristics. These indicators become navigational aids that reveal where the team is at and where it's heading. Without an understanding of the signs, one can become as lost as an inexperienced sailor circumnavigating the globe without a compass or even a sextant let alone a GPS.

Now that we have both the equation (the problem to be solved) and the navigational chart (the order of operations to solve the equation), let's explore how each element of the TheWEQ is achieved during the five steps climbing to higher performance and greater workforce engagement:

Form <input type="checkbox"/>	To Form the team	Everyone needs orientation <a href="#">understanding the goal</a> and <a href="#">inspire trust</a> – only after they believe the destination is worth the effort will they begin the trip
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## Step 1: Form the group by establishing a shared vision

Forming occurs after coming together beginning to transition from a group of individuals into a promising team.

Remember the first rule of behavioral economics – every behavior is rewarding on some level. If you want people to engage, help them understand what’s in it for them – how they will benefit - why people work. No one works solely for the mission or vision of an organization – they too must benefit – and if you only focus on the monetary reasons you will fail to engage their hearts. More than “because you’re being paid”, help them see their future – their growth, their personal development, they are part of an anchor that supports the community and the way of life they love. When you do this you are planting the seeds of [HOPE](#) and have helped the new team members gain an understanding and appreciation for the [PURPOSE](#), two of the six factors of TheWEQ.

You’ll know you’ve navigated forming well when you see the team begin to develop:

- A shared purpose and identity
- Widespread understanding of the team’s mission
- Growing excitement

You’ll know you’ve not formed well when you see the following behaviors:

- Lack of understanding
- Mistrust and guarded communication
- Anxiety and apprehension

Form <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	To Form the team	Everyone needs orientation <a href="#">understanding the goal</a> and <a href="#">inspire trust</a> – only after they believe the destination is worth the effort will they begin the trip
Focus <input type="checkbox"/>	To Focus them	<a href="#">Create Systems</a> and <a href="#">solve problems</a> through an inclusive process to focus individuals on their <a href="#">roles and responsibilities</a> – must understand what to do and when

## Step 2: Focus the team by building systems and processes

Focusing occurs when the team becomes aligned and creates the systems and procedures that will achieve the vision and mission.

Individual team members understand the goals and their roles as well as the goals and roles of others.

When you formed the team you helped them understand what the team mission was, why it was important, and how each would benefit – now you’re going to include them in helping to figure out HOW. By using an inclusive process, you create understanding and greater buy-in. You’ll also have a greater chance of people accepting their roles and goals.

Utilizing the inclusive process helps team members gain a sense of [Control](#) and satisfies their needs for [Inclusion](#), two more factors of TheWEQ being satisfied. You may even help increase the sense of [Equity](#) by having them define and accept their roles!

You’ll know you’ve focused the team well when you see:

- Growing optimism and commitment
- Understanding and acceptance of individual roles and responsibilities

You’ll know your team isn’t well-focused when you see the following behaviors:

- Fear, anger, cynicism
- Conflicts and confusion
- Unproductive challenging

<b>Form</b> To Form the team	Everyone needs orientation <a href="#">understanding the goal</a> and <a href="#">inspire trust</a> – only after they believe the destination is worth the effort will they begin the trip
<b>Focus</b> To Focus them	<a href="#">Create Systems</a> and <a href="#">solve problems</a> through an inclusive process to focus individuals on their <a href="#">roles and responsibilities</a> – must understand what to do and when
<b>Commit</b> To grow their Commitment	Provide <a href="#">training and opportunities to practice</a> - <a href="#">give Feedback</a> to <a href="#">build mastery</a> - Competence builds confidence leading to commitment

### Step 3: Gain Commitment through training and practice

Team members become committed as they embrace the team’s mission as their own, become more engaged and commit to team success; they move from ME to WE!

Once the systems and processes have been worked out, give the team a chance to practice and become skilled in their new roles. Take the time to mentor each member – nothing shows you care for someone more than investing your time in their success. This is important; you will never have an engaged team if they come to work feeling unsure and insecure. **Competence builds confidence which leads to commitment.**

Greater competence and confidence increase [Hope](#) and [Control](#); your direct support and encouragement increases the sense of [Inclusion](#) and ensures [Alignment](#). Their increased competence also reinforces their sense of [Purpose](#) – their there for a reason and they are directly benefiting being a part of your team!

You’ll know your team is becoming committed when you see:

- Growing skills
- Clear integrated goals
- Culture of inclusion
- Building Esprit de Corps

You’ll know your team isn’t becoming committed when you see the following behaviors:

- Apathy
- Internal competition and political gamesmanship
- Blocked team communication
- Lack of accountability

<b>Form</b> To Form the team	Everyone needs orientation <a href="#">understanding the goal</a> and <a href="#">inspire trust</a> – only after they believe the destination is worth the effort will they begin the trip
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<b>Sustained Performance</b> To help Sustain Performance	<a href="#">Consistent application</a> of <a href="#">Logical Consequences</a> builds a climate of <a href="#">empowerment</a> , <a href="#">professionalism</a> , and <a href="#">excellence</a> - <a href="#">pride</a> being on a winning team <a href="#">sustains progress</a>

### Step 4: Sustain performance with documentation and standardization

Your team’s will be able to Sustain Performance: when the organization is cohesive, skilled, and consistently achieves its goals.

Now that the team is achieving the mission and delivering on customer and stakeholder expectations, you’ll need to ensure consistency

if you want to sustain performance. Procedures should be updated to reflect “As Built” operations. Ensure you maintain an ongoing line of communications with customers/stakeholders. Ensure metrics and standards are broadly available and closely adhered to. You’ll want to delegate more and more to the team since their competence has grown. You’ll also need to apply “Logical Consequences”. Insist that the performance review and promotion process is fair and equitable.

To be logical, a consequence must incent the desired behaviors (behavioral economics). When I do good things, good things happen; when my performance is sub-par or inappropriate there are appropriate consequences. Logical consequences are simple and intuitive but frequently not present or consistently applied in many workplaces. For instance, Sam didn’t put the effort and attention into the presentation, so you task Sarah to stay late the night before the meeting to make it right. Sarah suffers and there are



no real consequences to Sam. Another common example is a manager who continuously calls on her “star player” while others aren’t involved or included. Yelling at everyone at a team meeting when a problem was caused by one or two of the team is another frequent example of “Illogical Consequences”, thus the common phrase, “no good deed goes unpunished” and “the more you work, the more you are worked.”

Promote and reward team members commensurate with their contributions – don’t let the emotional antics of difficult employees create an environment where they are given deferential treatment in order to “Keep the Peace”.

Creating a climate of Logical Consequences that is consistently and broadly applied is the greatest determinant of the team’s sense of [Hope](#), [Control](#) and [Equity](#). Delegating more increases both [Inclusion](#) and [Alignment](#). Constantly delivering on the team’s mission increases the feelings of accomplishment and sustains the sense of [Purpose](#).

You’ll know the team can sustain ongoing operations when you see:

- High productivity
- Focus on team achievement
- Culture of excellence
- Satisfaction

You’ll know your team isn’t sustainable and will have variable performance when you see:

- Low / sporadic productivity
- Missed deadlines / frequent mistakes
- Culture of entitlement or fear & placing blame
- Focus on individual gains

<b>Form</b>	To Form the team	Everyone needs orientation <a href="#">understanding the goal</a> and <a href="#">inspire trust</a> – only after they believe the destination is worth the effort will they begin the trip
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<b>Renewal</b>	To keep the energy needed for Renewal	The entire organization <a href="#">celebrates successes</a> while making opportunities for individuals to advance in their careers <a href="#">creating opportunities</a> for new team members

### Step 5: Renewal

Too often organizations coast once they’ve reached sustained performance. The business news is full of once successful organizations that have been eclipsed by market changes or have become stagnant with no opportunity for growth of their employees.

To sustain success, you must ensure your team is in a state of renewal. You’ll know your team is in Renewal when a culture of excellence is

maintained; individual team members may change, but the organization continues to consistently achieve its goals.

A culture of renewal can only exist after you’ve navigated the four previous stages well. At this point, your team should regularly celebrate both individual and team successes. Implement a process of internal audits and external benchmarking. Utilize a continuous improvement methodology like six-sigma to look for ways to up your game. Expand the training programs to go beyond job training; include leadership and personal development skills to grow the next generation of leaders. As you make opportunities for individuals to advance in their careers, openings will exist to excite and engage new team members. As your team continues to thrive in the culture of renewal you will continue to regularly solve TheWEQ:

**Individual Satisfaction + Organizational Commitment = Workforce Engagement**

**(Hope + Control + Equity) + (Purpose + Inclusion + Alignment) = Workforce Engagement**

You'll know your team is in renewal when you see:

- High productivity
- Celebration and good will
- Low turnover
- Ease of recruiting top talent
- Continuous improvement

You'll know your team is stagnating when you see the following behaviors:

- Frustration & burn out
- Change resistance
- High turnover
- Unfilled positions
- Ineffective improvement projects

## FINDING YOUR OWN VOICE

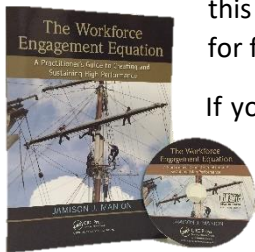
**B**y following these five steps you will consistently build strong teams that are truly engaged. You will have succeeded because you've created a shared experience – people aren't just working for you – they are eagerly working WITH YOU!.

Once you understand the five stages and their indicators – you'll gain a stronger sense of what needs to be done and when. Soon, you're leadership won't feel scripted; building strong teams will become second nature – you'll make the process part of your instinctual capabilities. You'll be able to observe behaviors that are not productively aligned with the team and ask yourself, "Why? What is missing: hope, control, equity, inclusion, purpose, alignment?" And you'll be able to intervene to get the individual back on track and the team moving to higher levels of health and maturity.

Remember, like all living things, staying healthy and continuing to thrive is an ongoing process.

## WE'RE HERE TO HELP; JOIN THE COMMUNITY

**E**ven though it's hard to summarize a 600 page book into 10 pages, I hope you have found this brief summary of TheWEQ methodology helpful. As a special offer for taking the time to learn more about TheWEQ, mention this article and join our Member's-Only forum on [Facebook](#) for free.



If you'd like to continue to grow your leadership capabilities with an online leadership feedback survey as well as utilizing the online team assessments and training tracking with your team portfolio as well as add more than 25 downloadable templates to your manager's

toolkit, I encourage you to join the Community of practice at <https://WorkforceEngagement.Solutions>.

## TWO MONTHS FREE

In addition to free access to the Facebook Forum, use the special code **20off20** and you'll get two months of your membership absolutely FREE!

We look forward to having you join the community and continue growing and learning!

### Member Benefits

1. Full Access with subscription
2. Unlimited Team Assessments for 4
3. Individual Leadership Assessment Survey
4. Team Leader Qualification Checklist
5. Training Tracking for 4
6. 25+ Downloadable Templates
7. Detailed Explanations of the 50 Elements of Team Health
8. Access for 1 to the Monthly Training Webinars