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FOREWORD TO THE PAPERBACK EDITION

Just exactly what is employee “engagement”? In this book, which you now hold in your hands, Lee Colan defines three different types of employees:

1. Engaged employees love their work and look forward to it every day.
2. Disengaged employees “punch the clock,” but are not involved in the work.
3. Actively disengaged employees don’t like their work and let this be known throughout the workplace.

Lee’s definitions are spot on and the number of employees in each of these categories on your team will greatly determine how successful or unsuccessful your team and your business are. I’ll bet you already know which category you want your employees to fall into and whether or not they fall into that category.

In *Engaging the Hearts and Minds of All Your Employees*, Lee teaches leaders how to engage their employees and how they can achieve 100 percent commitment from their teams. In my favorite part of the book, Lee relates a statement about engagement by the great Peter Drucker. In this profound statement, Peter advised leaders to, “Accept the fact that we have to treat almost anybody as a volunteer.” This statement strikes a chord because there is quite a distinction between what Drucker advised and the way many leaders perceive their employees. Many leaders treat their employees as cogs in the wheel. As a result, there is little engagement, if any, and, more often than not, active disengagement. The underlying idea that this type of leader believes is that, because employees are being compensated for their work, they should be able to do their work and enjoy it. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

The good news is that you can follow Lee’s roadmap to engage your employees in both heart and mind. He skillfully simplifies the art of engagement into actionable steps any leader can take. Your team will not only be more fully engaged, they will also act like owners of the business and deliver better service and business results. The bonus is that they will be excited and inspired to come to work every day!

Life is good.

Marshall Goldsmith

The *Thinkers 50* #1 Leadership Thinker
in the World

INTRODUCTION

As the pace of business quickens and competition stiffens, organizations and their leaders continue to ask, “How can we achieve a *significant and sustainable* competitive advantage?”

Far removed from the simple models of the past, today’s businesses must consider a dizzying variety of factors to ensure their competitiveness. Factors like product design, technology, and distribution channels have to be maximized just to maintain market share. The time-honored “four Ps of marketing”—product, price, promotion and placement—have become less important today than factors like agility, creativity, supply chain efficiency, and Internet visibility and access. As complexity continues to infiltrate every aspect of business, a fifth P—people—has become increasingly important as a competitive factor.

As complexity continues to infiltrate every aspect of business, a fifth P—people—has become increasingly important as a competitive factor.

Consider the last time you interacted with a sales representative, whether at a retail store or on the telephone. More than likely, your decision to buy, not to buy, or even to buy more than you had planned was influenced by how engaging the representative was. Did he or she greet you promptly, ask about your needs, and offer to help you meet your needs? Did he or she solve a problem for you, make an observation about you, find a topic of common interest for discussion, and so on. In addition, 70 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product comes from services and information, generated and delivered by *people*.¹

Bottom line: people buy from people, not from companies. This means that your people—and their performance—are your organization's defining, competitive advantage.

U.S. workers, or workers in any country for that matter, come in three varieties:

- *Engaged employees:* They love what they are doing, and they look forward to coming to work. They are passionate about what they do, feel that they are an important part of the big picture and that their energy and inno-

vation make their companies not only successful but competitive, as well.

- *Disengaged employees:* They are punching the clock, but if you look into their eyes, you'll find that their hearts and minds are elsewhere. They're at work, most of the time, but they left their energy and their passion at home.
- *Actively disengaged employees:* These employees are not only just putting in their time and feeling unhappy about being there, but they're also spreading the gloom as they demonstrate how much they're unhappy with their boss, coworkers, or the company in general. While their engaged counterparts are working passionately, the actively disengaged are feverishly sabotaging every positive accomplishment.²

When people are fully engaged in their work and have a deep connection with what they do, they deliver "Passionate Performance." Passionate Performers demonstrate a strong, sustained intellectual and emotional attachment to their work.

What percentage of employees do you think are engaged?

According to an extensive survey conducted by the Gallup organization, 74 percent of employees are either indifferent to their work or actively disengaged. This leaves 26 percent

Passionate Performers demonstrate a strong, sustained intellectual and emotional attachment to their work.

of employees who are engaged. The actively disengaged group is characterized as employees intentionally acting in ways that negatively affect their organizations.³

The Business Case for Engagement

Let's turn our focus to Passionate Performance—the main reason you have satisfied customers and, ultimately, the basis for your team's success.

Research by Hewitt Associates, the human resources outsourcing and consulting firm, indicated that companies with double-digit growth:

- Had senior leaders who were 25 percent more engaged than their employees and more engaged than leaders in single-digit growth organizations.
- Were passionate about creating a positive work environment and culture.
- Instilled pride and engendered a growth mindset in their employees.

- Provided greater opportunities for support and development.⁴

By emphasizing employee engagement, the leadership of Molson Coors Brewing Company was able to save \$1,721,760 in safety costs in 2002. A survey that same year found engaged employees to be five times less likely to be involved in an accident at work and seven times less likely to have a lost-time safety incident than their disengaged counterparts.⁵

In a 2007 study, two professors from Manchester Business School in the United Kingdom interviewed 4,700 customers and employees of 63 businesses. At the conclusion of their study, one thing was clear—**companies were more likely to be growing if employee satisfaction exceeded customer satisfaction.**⁶

Additional research found that employee and customer views are usually similar, indicating that employees' attitudes strongly influence those of the customers. As a result, year-on-year sales growth shows that the more the employees' view of the company outshines the customers', the more the sales grow. Why? Because employees' views tend to transfer to customers.

Nordstrom's legendary customer service is a perfect example. Its service is epitomized by the story of the Nordstrom

employee who allowed an unhappy elderly customer to return a set of automobile tires for a refund, even though Nordstrom is a high-fashion retailer that doesn't sell tires!⁷ All in the name of trying to deliver superb service. Would you go back to Nordstrom's if this happened to you?

The Customer Value Chain

Think of the times you've gone shopping or to a restaurant and dealt with people who were visibly happy to be in their jobs—and to have the opportunity to serve you. Their words were from their hearts, rather than the mandatory, "Can I help you?" They probably surprised you with the extra effort and thoughtfulness they displayed in satisfying your particular needs, answering your questions, or offering suggestions. They actually seemed delighted to do it!

How did you feel when you left these businesses? Did you buy more and did you spend more time than you initially planned? Are you likely to return? Have you recommended these businesses to friends?

If you answered yes to at least one of these questions, you began a value chain that was based on employees who were actively engaged.

If you search the Internet for the term "engaged employees," you'll come up with about 2 million hits including many examples. Most of these examples are of companies

If you search the Internet for the term “engaged employees,” you’ll come up with about 2 million hits including many examples. Most of these examples are of companies where employees are actively engaged. Interestingly, they are the same companies known for superior service.

where employees are actively engaged. Interestingly, they are the same companies known for superior service such as Walt Disney, Audi, and GE.

The philosophy of these companies centers around the idea that if employees are happy, they’ll be engaged, they’ll deliver Passionate Performance, and their customers will be happy too. In other words, they understand the customer value chain.

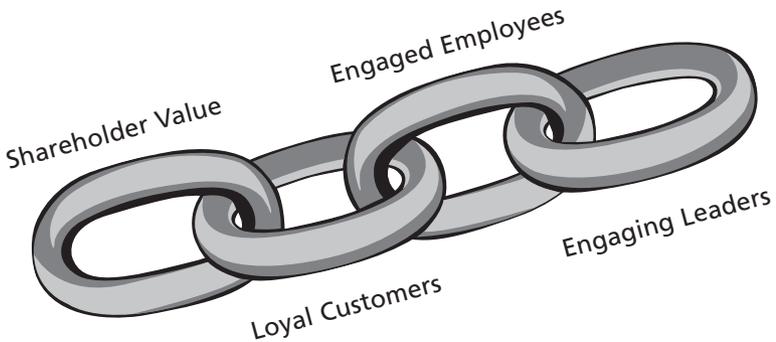
Here’s the reality. Some people are naturally engaged in their work. They are energized and positive, and they consistently deliver Passionate Performance. Even those who are not as energized or passionate can be led to deliver Passionate Performance. Remember, leaders are the first link in the customer value chain. Engaging leaders invest their time and

Leaders are the first link in the customer value chain.

energy into their teams because they know that engaged employees are more likely to:

- Stay with the organization.
- Perform at high levels.
- Influence others to perform well.
- Promote the organization externally.
- Deliver unparalleled customer service.

These outcomes illustrate the customer value chain, which is illustrated below.



The Customer Value Chain

The customer value chain starts with an engaging leader. Engaging leaders ignite a fully engaged worker. Fully engaged workers create loyal customers. We know that gaining additional business from an existing customer is five times less expensive than acquiring a new customer. A loyal customer base is the grand slam of business. It creates higher profit margins and better returns for shareholders. There are no shortcuts in the customer value chain. We can't just hope for more loyal customers. We can't just hire engaged employees and stop there; **hiring effectively is necessary but is not sufficient to build an engaged team.**

With enough time and resources, your competitors might be able to replicate your products, distribution channels, and technology. However, they will not be able to easily duplicate Passionate Performance. **Passionate Performance creates a rock-solid wall of differentiation between you and the rest of the pack.**

Tom Peters, the renowned management guru and author once said, "If your company is going to put customers first, then you must put employees more first."⁸ That's because your employees are a key link in the customer value chain.

Maximizing Your ROIT

This book provides 12 practical strategies to ignite Passionate Performance in your team. Applying these strategies will

begin a powerful and self-reinforcing cycle that builds value within your team and reaches out to your customers and shareholders.

I hope you will use these strategies to inspire your own heart and mind with ideas that help you bring out Passionate Performance in every member of your team!

To maximize your ROIT—return on invested time—here are a few tips on how to use this book. The key is to *interact with this book* by:

- Underlining or highlighting points that help you.
- Taking time to work through the “Pulse Points” (sidebars sprinkled throughout the book that include exercises, actionable tips, or reflection questions).
- Reflecting on each chapter and writing down one simple action you can take to improve. Look for the heading “Fulfilling the Need” at the end of some chapters.
- Taking the two-part Passionate Performance leadership profile assessment in the Appendix to help you prioritize which areas will help you most quickly elevate your leadership skills.

Read, enjoy, apply, and engage!

PART I

Getting Your Head (and Your Heart) around Engagement

The Anatomy of Passionate Performance

Management guru Peter Drucker advises leaders to, “Accept the fact that we have to treat almost anybody as a volunteer.”⁹ When you see this concept—employees as volunteers—it reminds you as a leader of your responsibility to continually engage your people.

The key to turning volunteers into “owners” is found within the hearts and minds of your employees. When their basic human needs are fulfilled, you can achieve full engagement with a simple but powerful formula: When my needs are fulfilled, I am engaged and I perform at my peak ability.

When employees’ needs are met, they will be motivated to help those who meet their needs. When their needs are

When my needs are fulfilled, I am engaged and I perform at my peak ability.

not met, they become frustrated, out of control, unfocused, and disconnected—in a word, disengaged.

We all have these basic human needs, and they have remained the same, in spite of the tumultuous changes of today’s business environment. Yes, times have changed, our world has changed, and the ways we do business have changed, but people have not changed.

To become a more engaging leader, make it a priority to get to know your employees. By knowing who they are, as people, you can better fulfill their needs to keep them fully engaged. If you can see your employees as people, you can identify six basic needs—three emotional and three intellectual are listed here.

Six Basic Needs of Employees

Intellectual (Mind) Needs	Emotional (Heart) Needs
Achievement	Purpose
Autonomy	Intimacy
Mastery	Appreciation

As you study these needs, you’ll see that they are interdependent. For example, to engage the hearts of your employees, you’ll need to fulfill all three of the emotional needs. And the same is true to engage their minds; you’ll need to fulfill all of their intellectual needs.

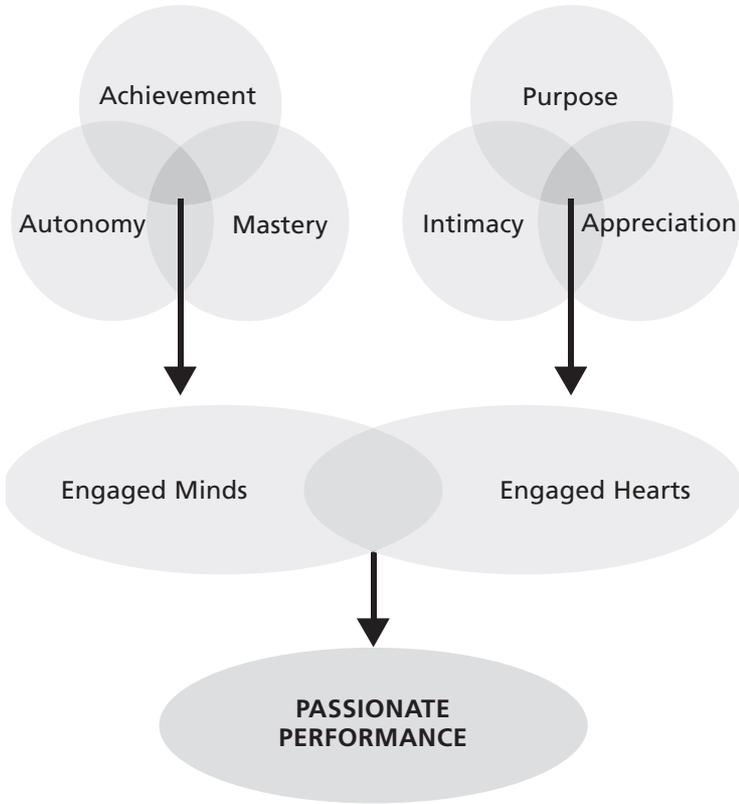
Engaged minds build employee performance, and engaged hearts ignite employees' passion.

Therefore, achieving Passionate Performance is a two-sided challenge: emotional and intellectual. To be successful, you must be able to engage the hearts and the minds of your employees.

In encouraging Passionate Performance, you'll find that the heart and mind must work together. Engaged minds build employee performance, and engaged hearts ignite employees' passion.

Performance without passion tends to falter during tough times or in the face of challenges that require sacrifice, significant extra effort, or unusually creative solutions. Conversely, passion without performance results in watered-down and unfocused efforts. The diagram on page 16 illustrates these concepts.

Some people are naturally wired to give everything they can to do their jobs and to help the business grow, wherever they are. These people are not the rule. In fact, the majority of employees require skilled leaders who nurture and guide them along, welcoming their ideas, asking for their feedback, and making them feel valued. Engaging leaders ultimately help their employees see and realize their potential. The real competitor for each of us, individually, is our own potential.



This critical leadership role reminds me of a powerful line from a favorite movie of mine, *The Lion King*. After Simba has walked away from the kingdom his father, Mufasa, left behind, he hears his father’s thundering voice beckon, “Simba, you are more than what you have become.”

A close look at great companies reveals a common theme: They have leaders who engage the hearts and minds of their

employees and, therefore, are able to evoke Passionate Performance from their teams.

“Empty pockets never held anyone back. Only empty heads and empty hearts can do that.”

—NORMAN VINCENT PEALE

You’ve just walked through the door of your office? What’s happening?

Do you hear the excitement and feel the rhythm of people who love what they do and are happy to be there? Or are you greeted by a down-spirited, lifeless environment where folks are gathered but only in body because their minds and hearts are elsewhere?

As you look around, do you see people who are actually enjoying what they do? Is anyone “on fire”? Anyone excited about a project or a specific challenge? Are people loving Mondays and hating Fridays? If you’ve been greeted by a humdrum vibe, chances are there’s no passion.

Remember the Gallup poll and the actively disengaged employees? The Gallup organization, over a period of three years, surveyed more than 1.5 million workers, and, according to the Gallup research found that “disengaged” workers tend to be significantly less productive, are less loyal to their companies, less satisfied with their personal lives, and more stressed and insecure about their work than their “engaged” counterparts.¹⁰

Gallup also found that actively disengaged employees miss an average of 3.5 days per year more than other workers, or, 86.5 million total days each year.¹¹

So how do you know if your employees are demonstrating Passionate Performance? The test is simple. First, you'll feel their enthusiasm and see their results. Your team will have more fun creating better outcomes. Team members will be fully present at work, in the moment, in the flow.

Passionate Performance also looks like people performing at higher levels and being motivated to do more. They'll feel like kids in a candy store.

How often have you heard someone say, "I can't believe they pay me to do this"? That's what engaged people say as they deliver Passionate Performance. Why? Because their work actually feels like play.

There are organizations that have taken this element of passion and play and embedded it into their culture.

From its founding, Southwest Airlines' former CEO Herb Kelleher created a culture of fun that began with new employees' orientation. New hires walked into a room filled with balloons, confetti scattered over the tables, bright, colorful posters on the walls, and music blaring.

Lorraine Grubbs-West, a Southwest employee for two decades, vividly remembered her first day on the job: "It was hard not to be excited. There were games and several videos, including one that showed various employees describing

their departmental functions in rap rhythms, capped off by none other than the CEO, introduced as ‘chairman and chief DJ.’”

Kelleher appeared, dancing and rapping, “My name is Herb, Big Daddy. You all know me. I run the show! But, without your help, there’d be no love . . . on the ground or in the air above.”

Grubbs-West said that there also were serious messages offered during the orientation, but as soon as new employees walked through the door of Southwest Airlines, Kelleher and his team gave them reason to believe they had found a home away from home. “We wanted to provide a bonding experience as quickly as possible so they would begin embracing the Southwest Airlines culture,” Grubbs-West said.

If you have ever flown on Southwest, you’ve probably seen evidence of the culture Kelleher created. On most flights, Southwest employees seem to really like what they do. They’re passionate about your comfort and your safety—and their job is to have fun serving you. But Kelleher knew, like many polls show, that most employees tend to be less engaged the longer they’re with the company. So to combat the inevitable loss of interest and loss of focus, this innovative CEO maintained the fun of orientation throughout the years as his company grew.

With a consistent environment that emphasized passenger safety, personal development, and fun too, Kelleher’s vision

was carried beyond the walls of the corporation's headquarters, into every airport Southwest serves and every flight that takes off from a Southwest ramp. It even reaches the company's passengers.¹² You can see the customer value chain at work when you watch Southwest employees interact with their customers.

The Google Corporation is another company where employees love coming to work and where Passionate Performance is the rule rather than the exception.

Cofounder Larry Page explained that the goal of every worker who comes through the door was creating the perfect search engine for the Internet. "The perfect search engine," said Page, "would understand exactly what you mean and give back exactly what you want."

Though acknowledged as the world's leading search technology company, Google's goal is to provide an even higher level of service to all those who seek information, whether they're at a desk in Boston, driving through Bonn, or strolling in Bangkok.

When named "America's Best New Company to Work For" by *Fortune* magazine, Google pulled back the curtain to reveal a campus where beach volleyball is an option, as are video games, roller hockey in the parking lot, and Foosball. It's a company that offers free cafeterias and snack rooms where new Google employees, called "nooglers," are

all predicted to put on the “Google 15” (as in pounds) their first months on the job.

In a letter to prospective stockholders before its 2004 IPO, Google founders Page and Sergey Brin wrote: “Google is not a conventional company. We do not intend to become one.”¹³

But Passionate Performance is *not* just about having fun with zany orientations, regular parties, Foosball tables in the break room, and concerts in the company parking lot. Remember, Passionate Performance is defined as strong, sustained intellectual and emotional attachment to one’s work. **The way Passionate Performance can be ignited in your team can be as unique as your team’s culture.** We tend to think of the fun loving companies when we envision Passionate Performance—Starbucks, Google, and Southwest Airlines. However, Passionate Performance is about passion *and* performance; other firms like Texas Instruments, NASA, The Container Store, TD Industries, and Crosstex Energy Services have found their unique balance between results and relationships to ignite passionately performing cultures. It’s easy to focus on the passion side of Passionate Performance,

Passionate Performance is about passion *and* performance.

but those companies that have ignited its flame understand that it requires a dual focus-on passion for work *and* performance toward goals.

Can you remember a job or a time in your career when you felt that you worked for a great company and that your job felt like play rather than work? Maybe that feeling came when you worked on a special project where everything came together perfectly or, it could have been a team you were on where everyone did what was best for the team, thus creating a rare synergy.

Most of us can remember a work situation in which we felt that the best of our skills and talents flowed easily and naturally—and where our efforts made a real difference. Undoubtedly this was a unique experience that left us feeling special and satisfied—no, euphoric—with the results we were able to achieve. It may have been a lot of hard work, but we frequently describe it as “fun.” That’s because our hearts and minds were fully engaged.

Kenneth Freeman, the founding chairman and CEO of Quest Diagnostics, started from square one. When Freeman took the helm in 1996, the laboratory, which had been hastily cobbled together, was having problems with the government because of Medicare billing. There were also disgruntled customers and unhappy employees. Many of the employees were unsure of the name of their employer and

referred to the company by its name before it had been acquired by another company.

Under Freeman's leadership Quest Diagnostics went from chaos to the largest medical testing firm in the world. How did he do it? "We had to get the hearts and minds of the employees—give them something to believe in, to help them understand whom they were working for, to understand their role, to take ownership for what they had to get done, and to feel excitement about what the company could become," said Freeman shortly before he handed the company's reins to his successor in 2004.¹⁴

I Quit, but Forgot to Tell You

Most people initially begin their jobs as engaged employees. They come to work wanting to give 110 percent. They're passionate about what they're doing and want to become a significant part of the organization. Effectively selecting engaged employees is necessary but not sufficient to achieve Passionate Performance. Even the most engaged employees can have their passion for work diffused if their leader doesn't know how to elicit Passionate Performance.

Our world of work is largely influenced by our direct leader. If I work in a crummy place but my boss is terrific, then I feel good about work and give everything I have to my team. On the contrary, I might work for a world-class organization, but my boss is not so hot. As hard as I might try, it becomes very difficult for me to give 110 percent to the team. Bottom line: We work for people, not companies . . . and employees generally leave people, not companies.

We work for people, not companies.

As a leader, the challenge is that an employee departure is only the most visible and final phase of disengagement. It's a gradual process. It's more like a dimmer switch than an on-off switch that regulates our engagement. The danger in this gradual process is the interim phases—the ones I call, “I quit but forgot to tell you.” It's there where disengagement is a silent killer, a cancer that is growing under the skin of your team.

I remember a retail client who experienced first-hand the silent killer nature of disengagement. It revolved around a high-performing region. This region was numero uno among eight regions for three straight years. One quarter, it dropped to number two. The regional leader assumed that it was an anomaly and waited for the next quarter. Second again. With three years at the top slot the leader figured, “Well, every good run comes to an end.” The next quarter down, to third place. Now it was time to really dig in and figure out what was going on. After two more quarters of slicing and dicing numbers, he was not much closer to the root cause of fall of this region. While he spent time trying to figure out what the problem was, the region had slipped to eighth place—the bottom of the barrel!

Finally, after talking with employees at every level, the cause was revealed. Over a year earlier, one of the store leaders had begun down the path of disengagement—he did not feel that retail was a good fit for him. But like most people, did not initiate a discussion about a mutually beneficial change. He just stayed there and festered. Over time, his attitude filtered throughout his store and was ultimately felt by the store’s customers who did not return. But it did not stop there. Since this particular store leader had a magnetic personality, he negatively influenced his peers during regional staff calls and occasional meetings. This seed of negativity grew into a cancer of disengagement over the next several months—pulling the entire region into an intensive-care mode.

This situation underscored the importance of *preventive leadership* because once the disengagement process begins, it hogs our time and resources to reengage. Like cancer itself, there are no guarantees that your after-the-fact interventions will cure the disease. Proactively managing our health and our teams yields significant cost savings and productivity improvements. The landmark Gallup study estimated that the annual cost of disengaged employees was \$300 billion— that’s *billion* with a B!¹⁵

A Gallup poll found only 26 percent of U.S. employees are fully engaged at any time. At the other end of the spectrum, 19 percent of employees are actively disengaged, meaning they intentionally act in ways that negatively impact their organizations. **The annual cost, nationwide, to employ this actively disengaged group exceeds \$300 billion.**

—Gallup Management Journal, 2001

As the landmark Gallup survey, and others, has found, most employees are not engaged at work. Their bodies may show up every day, but their minds and hearts do not. If Passionate Performance ignites the light for your team to follow, disengaged team members can create a slippery slope toward the dark side.

Think of the last time you had to deal with restaurant servers who made it crystal clear that they had more important things to do than serve you. How did you get this impression? Possibly because it took forever for them to come to take your order—and even longer for them to bring your food. In the meantime, you were in need of a drink refill and, after looking around for a moment, discovered that your server had vanished into thin air. You finished your meal without anything to drink, and you waited for the check until you had to leave. Then you made your way to the hostess station and pleaded for your tab so you could get to your next appointment.

If you remember such a situation, you probably didn't have to think much farther back than last week.

That's where our challenge as leaders comes in. The minute, the very second, we see an engaged employee teetering on the brink of becoming disengaged, that's the time we need to act—not tomorrow or the next day, but right then.

So how do you know when employees are beginning to disengage? Here are some symptoms of disengagement:

- Increased turnover
- Missed deadlines
- Low morale
- High burnout rates
- Complacency
- Finger-pointing and name-calling
- Lack of accountability and responsibility
- Increased absenteeism

Since proactive leadership is the key to igniting Passionate Performance, our awareness of these and other symptoms is critical. Look for a relationship that is disintegrating. We might not see a particular team member around the office as much, his once enthusiastic spirit disappears, and the only time he'll talk is when you call a meeting. In fact, that once vibrant relationship diminishes to the point that neither of you is getting your needs met.

Another sign to watch for is when the employee becomes unhappy with her sales territory, her assigned projects, and/or

her overall contributions. She doesn't feel like you're using her to her full potential. And, worse, she doesn't think you're doing enough to help her move to the next level.

Does any of this sound familiar? If you've answered yes, that's a sign that you have the cancer of disengagement growing in your team.

Some disengaged employees will choose to leave. That's unfortunate, but an even worse case scenario is if they stay on the job, just to put in time and be destructive.

That employee who quits? He'll no longer affect your organization. However, the actively disengaged employees who stay will have a toxic effect on everyone around them, and that includes your customers.

In fact, Gallup's survey also found that employees who are actively disengaged spread toxic mistrust and doubt in the organization's management and on the company's future.¹⁶

As a leader, this disengagement picture may seem pretty bleak, but don't take it too hard. Disengagement is simply the result of unfulfilled needs. These are basic human needs that leaders either forget to, choose not to, or simply don't know how to fulfill.

Disengagement is simply the result of unfulfilled needs.

100 Percent Commitment

Now that you've read about the challenge of igniting Passionate Performance in the last section, let's discuss the commitment that is required to make it a reality for your team.

As we have all learned through some of life's harder lessons—whether it's helping a friend through a tough time, coaching a little league team, or working on a critical project—**giving our best always gets the best results.**

The moment we totally commit ourselves and begin giving 100 percent, a certain momentum develops. People naturally gravitate to those who are committed and start working in the same direction. Total commitment results in a certain magical boldness—a boldness that has genius and power.

Total commitment results in a certain magical boldness—a boldness that has genius and power.

Andrew Carnegie said, “The average person puts only 25 percent of his energy and ability into his work. The world takes off its hat to those who put in more than 50 percent of their capacity and stands on its head for those few and far between souls who devote 100 percent.” **We compete against our own potential every day.**

I personally experienced the power of 100 percent commitment (and lack thereof!) when I wrestled with publishing a book for two years. I was consulting and writing leadership articles, and so I thought it might also be time to write a book. I went through all the motions, from working with agents to sending proposals to writers’ conferences, but I never seemed to turn the corner from aspiring writer to a published author. There always seemed to be an obstacle, although I now realize it was a result of my less-than-full commitment to my goal.

One obstacle after another; two years and counting. Then one day I was at a client’s office. My defining moment of commitment came when I saw a big box filled with practical handbooks sitting on my client’s desk. I quickly flipped through one of them and jotted down the publisher’s name as I said to myself, “I can do this!” My moment of commitment turned into action, and with the incredibly gracious support of the publisher, I had my first book in print six months later. My defining moment helped me envision possibilities that I could see only through fully committed eyes.

Our commitment to our teams can have the same transforming effect. Committed leadership inspires committed teams. During the most challenging time in history for the airline industry, as an example, Southwest Airlines' employees voluntarily forfeited \$5 million in vacation time and \$1 million in pay to help the company stay financially viable. Employees also took over the lawn and facility maintenance at corporate headquarters. These employees were simply reflecting a deep commitment—personal and professional—they felt from their leadership. When we lead with 100 percent commitment, this is the kind of commitment to engagement we can inspire in return.

Even with 100 percent commitment, however, leadership is not always a smooth flight. If we want to pilot our teams to full engagement, we have to understand that we can't just kick back in a comfy first-class seat. Now we have responsibility for not only ourselves but also for the safety and success of our teams. Our teams are depending on us to set a good course, keep them posted on our progress, and make smart decisions.

Jumping into the pilot's seat brings many more responsibilities than privileges. But those who are defined by their 100 percent commitment to Passionate Performance reap the rewards of flying high above the rest!

The Big Payoff

The hardest thing for your competitors to match is the most unique aspect of your organization—the hearts and minds of your employees.

Truett Cathy, founder and chairman of Chick-fil-A, the second-largest quick-service chicken restaurant chain in the country, built his business by engaging his employees. He calls it “the loyalty effect.”

“As a chain, we believe that attracting great people helps create an unforgettable experience for our customers. It requires a lot of time and effort to make sure you have the right people working in the right jobs, but we believe this is time well spent. The bottom line is that our people, from our restaurant operators to the team members they hire, enjoy their work . . . and the more we can foster the feeling that we are a group of people working together, depending on each other, the more likely we are to be loyal to each other.”¹⁷

He also puts principles and people ahead of profits. “I’d like to be remembered as one who kept my priorities in the right order. We live in a changing world, but we need to be reminded that the important things have not changed,” he said.¹⁸

No doubt, Cathy understands the customer value chain and has intuitively built a culture of Passionate Performance. So, how can you identify Passionate Performance? Is it going on in your organization today?

The first clue is to look for the big payoff from Passionate Performance—discretionary effort.

Discretionary effort is people *willingly giving extra time and effort* to help achieve the team’s goals. Some people call it “going the extra mile.” You’ll know your employees are giving discretionary effort when they:

- Choose to work late to complete a project.
- Ask how they can better serve another team member or department.
- Inquire about how their actions affect another function or the customer.
- Make a connection between their decisions and the company’s financial results.
- Treat company resources like their own.

- Initiate improvements in work methods.
- Look beyond their own roles for improvement opportunities.
- Pursue self-development on their personal time.

Employees at Agilent Technologies serve as a good example of discretionary effort. Leaders throughout the organization work hard at engaging employees and helping them create strong emotional and intellectual attachment to their work.

Agilent spun off from Hewlett-Packard in 1999 as part of a corporate realignment. Its roots date back to 1939, when Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard started a company that shaped not only the Silicon Valley but the high-tech industry, as well. The founders were known not only for being ahead of the curve when it came to their products but also for their visionary approach to management, which became known as “the HP way.” Their approach involved employee input, strong communication, recognition and reward, and intellectually challenging projects.

Agilent has continued the values that made Dave Packard and Bill Hewlett’s company a success—dedication to innovation, trust, respect, teamwork, and uncompromising integrity. Agilent is also known for speed, focus, and accountability to meet customer needs and create a culture of per-

formance that draws on the full range of people's skills and aspirations.¹⁹

During an economic downturn, the company was forced to eliminate more than 8,000 jobs. Because Agilent's leaders had developed an engaged workforce, they found many laid-off employees working until ten o'clock in the evening on their last day just to leave things in good order.

Now, that's Passionate Performance, and it can shine a light for your organization, even during dark times.

Passionate Performance takes many forms, including legendary customer service.

Let's revisit Nordstrom—the store where legendary service is the norm. The store, itself, was begun by John W. Nordstrom, an adventuresome teenager from Sweden who came to the United States in 1887, landing in Minnesota with a \$5 bill in his pocket.

Working his way west, he paused briefly in Seattle before heading north to Alaska in search of gold. When he returned to Seattle two years later, he brought with him \$13,000 from his find. There, he opened a shoe store in 1901 with a shoemaker named Carl Wallin. This was the start of what would become the retail legend of Nordstrom, Inc. In 1928, when the two partners retired, they passed the business to Nordstrom's two sons. In 1929 the Nordstrom boys expanded their downtown Seattle store, and the next year, in spite of the

Great Depression, their two stores made \$250,000 in sales. Their next challenge came during World War II, when leather was rationed and each citizen could buy only three pairs of shoes per year. To fill the demand, the Nordstroms had to scrape to find enough available shoes to sell.

Once the war had ended, the Nordstrom brothers began building more stores, and by 1961 they operated 8 stores and 13 leased shoe departments. By 1980 Nordstrom was the third-largest specialty retailer in the country, operating 31 stores in California, Washington, Oregon, Utah, Montana, and Alaska.

Nordstrom increasingly came to be recognized as an efficient, full-service department store. Its leadership encouraged aggressive customer service, and this strategy plainly brought results.

In the 1980s the firm's customer service became legendary, as tales of heroic efforts by salespeople became legend: Clerks were known to pay shoppers' parking tickets, rush deliveries to offices, unquestioningly accept returns, lend cash to strapped customers, and send tailors to customers' homes.

An often-cited example of Nordstrom's legendary customer service occurred the day when a customer at the perfume counter couldn't find the bottle of perfume he wanted as a gift for his wife. Seeing the man's disappointment, the

Nordstrom employee asked if he could return in 20 minutes.

Twenty minutes later, the customer returned to find the perfume he requested, gift wrapped and ready to go. Because Nordstrom didn't happen to carry the brand of perfume the customer requested, the Nordstrom employee went to a competitor, purchased the bottle of perfume, and had it gift-wrapped and waiting for the customer when he returned.²⁰

You too, can achieve these kinds of results when you fulfill the six work-related needs of your employees. You will create a powerful competitive advantage for your organization.

Even though the engagement strategies are simple, make no bones about it—they require lots of hard work. Yet, your hard work will be well worth the rewards of Passionate Performance. The journey can be compared to the process of planting an exotic Chinese bamboo seed. When this particular seed is planted and nurtured, it can take up to two years for a sprout to break through the earth. It requires the right watering, sunlight, care, and feeding so that it can build a strong root structure and foundation for growth, none of which is visible aboveground. However, once it breaks ground, this plant can grow over 100 feet in two weeks! The benefits of sticking to it are abundant with this bamboo seed—just as they are with employee engagement.

Yes, it does take time, but it does not cost a dime to engage your employees. So, let's take a look at what you can do right now to ignite Passionate Performance on your team.

The remainder of this book describes each need and offers practical strategies you can use to fulfill each one.

The Intellectual Side: Engaging the Mind

“Thought, not money, is the real business capital.”

—HARVEY S. FIRESTONE, FOUNDER, FIRESTONE
TIRE & RUBBER COMPANY

Engaging employees’ minds tends to come naturally for many leaders. Why? Because the mind represents the intellectual aspect of an individual—the aspect based on reason, logic, and cause and effect. It requires the science of leadership, which is the focus of most leadership training and education. Engaging employees’ hearts ignites their passion, and **engaging their minds builds employee performance**. Of course, bringing them both together yields Passionate Performance.

At one company, leaders look at each employee as an investment for the company. Taking the term intellectual capital to the next level, these leaders not only engage employees' minds, but they also nurture them and reinforce them with continuing training and opportunities to broaden their creative initiatives as well as their intellectual contributions. These leaders realize that employee performance can be elevated by engaging their employees' minds.

**Engaging the Mind
the Intellectual Side
The Science of Leadership
Focuses on Cause and Effect
Based on Reason and Logic
The **BIG PAYOFF:****

**IT BUILDS PERFORMANCE
OF YOUR TEAM!**