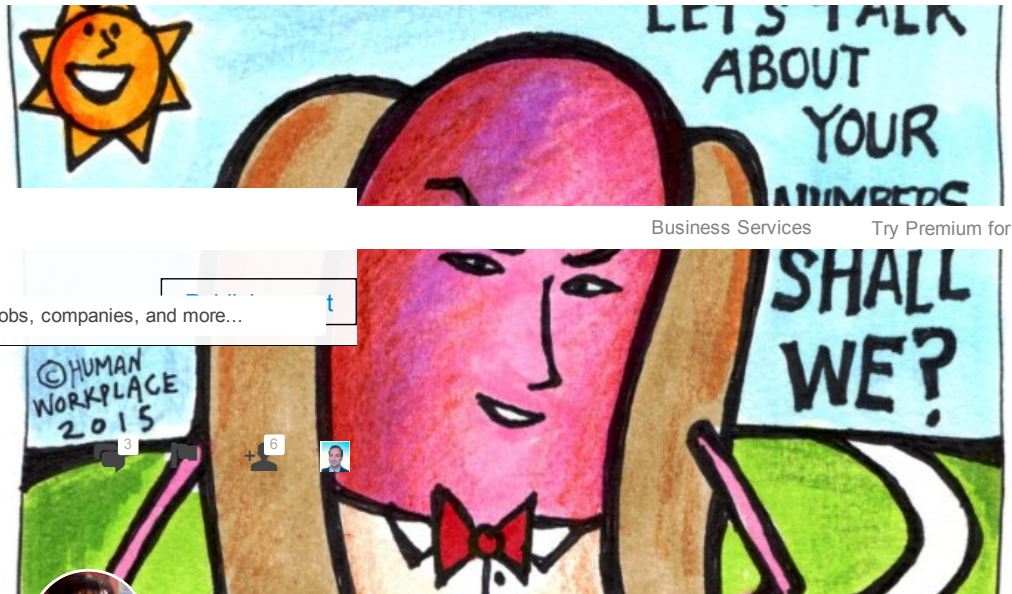


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When Your Manager Doesn't Want You To Succeed



Liz Ryan

CEO and Founder, Human Workplace

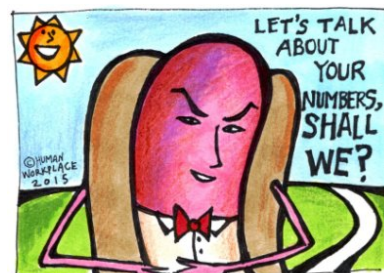
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The Truth About KPIs and Other Corporate Bullsh*t

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If you don't have KPIs to hit on the job, you can say a little prayer of thanks in your head right now. KPIs are Key Performance Indicators. They are yardsticks. They are idiotic, but weenie organizations love them. Measuring things is a lousy manager's favorite pastime!

In our quest to make business and work as mechanical and inhuman as possible over the past hundred years, every position in many large organizations has been sliced and diced into tiny pieces so that each piece can be measured and evaluated against a chart posted on the wall.



Some employers use software that tracks their employees' every keystroke and tracks the length of every phone call.

Other organizations track the number of minutes their teammates spend in the restroom. The more fear-based an organization's culture is, the more things

they measure and count.

We treat people at work like production machines, which is not only unethical but stupid, too.

People are capable of much more than machines are, because people synthesize what they learn and come up with ideas every day if they are plugged into their personal power source at work.



They transcend their desk and their job description, especially when a group of people is energized around the same mission.

The only catch is that if people are constantly poked and prodded and measured and yammered at, they stop winning. They stop collaborating. They stop caring.

The goose stops laying the golden eggs.

Every single living person knows this about people, but at work we pretend it's not true. In real life, we know that people are at their best when they're excited about what they're doing. At work we stick our fingers in our ears and say "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it!" like blithering idiots.



When people are jointly committed to a big goal that excites them, they are unstoppable. That's why it is stupid to shackle and burden employees by measuring their every move so that nearly all of their focus goes to reaching their daily and weekly goals. Forget about your mission, then!

How does our obsession with individual performance measurements help a customer or help the world? KPIs spring completely from fear. They have no business purpose at all except to assuage the fear of higher-ups who don't trust themselves enough to trust other people.

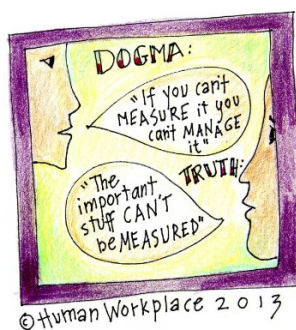


When employees are treated like machines whose only value is to answer forty customer calls a day and get each caller off the phone within three minutes, they will never give a fig about your company's success. How can you blame them?

They will never give you anything better than grudging compliance with the rules and standards. Who ever got excited about hitting someone else's yardsticks -- goals that were shoved down his or her throat?

What happens in most organizations when you hit your goals for a quarter or for the year? When you hit your goals, they get bigger for the next reporting period and you don't get a "Great job!" or a pay raise to acknowledge your success.

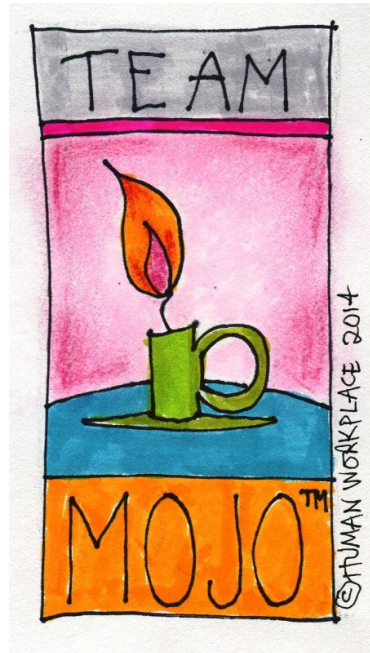
Work is broken and it is time for us to tell the truth about that. We have foolishly tried to apply junk science to work, and KPIs and the cult of measurement in general are testaments to that foolishness.



What makes an organization successful? The effort of its team on behalf of the organization's mission and their own missions is the obvious answer.

That momentum - what we call Team Mojo - is not hard to build. It only takes trusting the people you hired, meaning that you have to trust yourself first.

You have to talk about fear and trust at work to begin to build the Team Mojo level. You have to be honest about things that are going well and things that aren't. You have to name the elephant in the room and stop pretending that you can make your organization successful by hitting little numbers in little cells in spreadsheets.



What puts those numbers in those cells, after all? Conversations do. Trust puts the numbers in the cells. That's where your leadership energy should go - toward building the trust level at work, and getting rid of pointless yardsticks that impede the energy flow.

Sadly many leaders can't trust themselves to lead, so they install layers upon layers of rules and measurements, instead.

We lead stupidly and then we're surprised when survey after survey tells us that employees don't give a dang about their employers' goals. What person with three functioning brain cells would? We have made

it impossible for our employees to care.

We've told them that if they cared more than they do about their work, they'd be squandering their flame and wasting their effort, because we don't care about them beyond their production capacity.

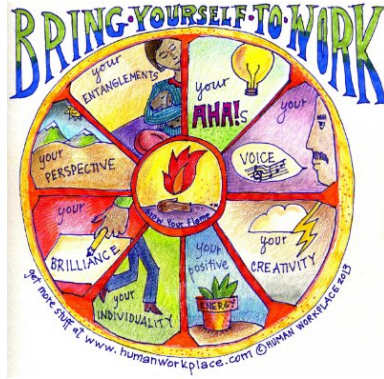


The organizations that will win both in the talent marketplace and in the marketplace for their services or products are the ones who see the connection between passion and performance.

They'll get rid of KPIs and other bureaucratic systems and they'll talk about the mission and the roadblocks in their way to reaching it.

They'll talk about those things every day, and they'll be human with one another at work every day, too. It's very easy to begin. Anyone can start the chain reaction, and the more people who do, the better!

There is a lot of bullsh*t and wasted effort in corporate and institutional everywhere but the good news is that every organization gets to choose for itself how to navigate in this new-millennium workplace. Every individual gets to choose how much of him- or herself to bring to work.



You get to be as human or machine-like as you want to be. Working people get to choose where to invest their precious talents, time and flame.

We are stepping out of the old religion of data and measurement as keys to the kingdom of success.

Now we know that there is a key, but it's connected to human energy, about as distant a topic as you could find from yardsticks and KPIs. We can focus on human energy the same way we have traditionally focused on numbers, and we must. We can talk about the trust level and the Team Mojo on our teams.

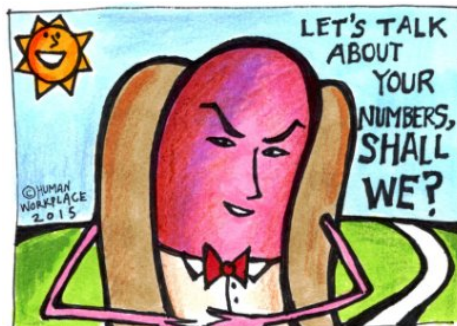


Those things won't show up on a spreadsheet until it's too late to fix whatever has gone wrong. No Employee Engagement survey is going to help an organization that doesn't know how its team members are doing without taking a survey.

Are you brave enough to get step out of the 19th-century, mechanical-business frame and

into the Human Workplace?

Everyone gets the same invitation, from the CEO's office to the loading dock. Now is a great time to take a step toward bringing yourself to work. Your flame will grow brighter every time you do!



Our company is Human Workplace. Our mission is to reinvent work for people.

Grow Your Flame in a Virtual Course Beginning December 5th, 2015!

If you're thinking about your career, check out our [Four-Week](#) and [12-Week Virtual Courses](#) beginning

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If you're looking at the culture and Team Mojo level in your organization, [contact](#)

[us here](#) to get the Human Workplace Whitepaper "How to Assess Team Mojo!" which is in production now.

[Reach us here with your questions!](#)



Questions and Answers

Liz, doesn't every job have to be measured in some way?



Not at all! Imagine that you've started a company to sell specialty chocolates, and you've called your company Angry Chocolates. You hire a salesperson named Pete. How would you know whether Pete succeeded or failed at his job during the year?

No one, not even you, can say how much Pete "should" sell during the year. If you trust Pete and you and he stay in close communication, you'll know at the end of the year (and at every other point) whether or not you're happy with his performance.

You'll count your incoming orders, of course, but you won't use a pre-set goal to evaluate Pete's performance. How could you? You and Pete will feel your way through the year together, along with the rest of the Angry Chocolates team.

Angry Chocolates keeps growing and you hire a customer support person, Rosalie. There is nothing to count or measure in Rosalie's performance, but you'll

ask Rosalie and Pete "Are our customers happy?" Without any measurement, you'll be able to tell whether Rosalie is doing her job well or not. You will trust yourself to hire great people like Pete and Rosalie as your company continues to grow.

Things work the same way in any organization, large or small. There is no reason to measure individual performance at the level of daily activities, and to do so is a waste of your most precious resources -- your team members' time, focus and energy.



Liz, I'm a CFO and I hear what you're saying. Our company is very metrics-based and I agree with you that if our culture were stronger and more mission-focused, we wouldn't need to measure everything we do. How can we take a step in that direction?

Your aim to emphasize Team Mojo over yardsticks is a good one, but you've got the causality backwards. You won't build up your culture to the point where you don't have to measure so many things. It's the opposite -- getting rid of pointless, mojo-sucking metrics will itself boost the trust level on your team! Make a project out of eliminating the KPIs in 2016 (and nuke at least half of your personnel policies at the same time)!

Take a step into the Human Workplace and watch your culture move you toward your goals faster and more joyfully than the old yardsticks ever could!

Don't you use performance measures at Human Workplace?

We don't, because we trust one another. If we didn't trust someone, we wouldn't have invited him or her to join our team! We track our sales and our expenses. We don't track anything related to individual performance.

Our CEO Liz Ryan is a performer. She has appeared in many productions. A production is like a business project. Everyone in the cast, crew and the pit orchestra has a role to play and everybody tries their best. No director ever told Liz or her fellow performers "I'm going to be counting the number of notes you hit dead on versus the number of notes you sing sharp or flat!"

No director would want to take a cast member's focus off the performance itself, or the collective mission to create an unforgettable experience for the audience.

No good leader would do that, either!



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Written by
Liz Ryan

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I wonder what is the KPI of team spirit. lol. But I agree wholeheartedly with this post.

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