Positive Psychology@Work  
*Meaningful or Masquerade?*

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About Pl...

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Mental Health Spectrum
(Well-being Institute, University of Cambridge, 2011)
Positive Psychology
15 years on....

KEEP CALM
it's only
FIFTEEN YEARS!
Mythbusting!
It’s NOT...
It’s NOT...

It's all about ME
It’s NOT...
It is about...
Well-Being
It is about...
Strengths
It is about...
Resilience
It is about...
Making a Difference!
It’s Positive Health

Positive Health

Biological

Functional

Subjective
It’s Positive Ageing
It’s Positive Communities
Positive Public Policy?

“The future calls us to measure and then make policy around well-being rather than just around money. This measurement will be part of our gift to our prosperity”

Dr Martin Seligman
Flourish (2011)
AND
Positive Workplaces!
Wealth & Well-Being
People & Profits
Feeling Good & Functioning Well!
Positive Psychology@Work

Why?

Because we spend a third of our lives at work!
Why?

- Mental health prevention/promotion
- Languishing & Presenteeism
- Engagement
- Productivity

Languishing: Definition

- lacking of vigor or spirit.
Why?

- Positive Emotions Broaden Mindsets
- Positive Emotions improve Immune Functioning
- Strengths Knowledge & Use increase Goal Attainment, Energy and Productivity
- Positive Relationships improve Well-Being & Create Positive Emotional Climates
- High Hope predicts a wide range of positive outcomes!
Current State of Play...

- Fragmented Literature - No integrated synthesis
- Broad theoretical support ie B&B, Hope Theory
- Research on constructs relevant to organisations eg resilience, psyCap, mental toughness, gratitude, compassion, positive teamwork, positive leadership
- Uptake of micro-interventions eg PsyCap, MTT
- Some pioneering strategic applications ie Knox Grammar, Loreto Kirribilli, Lion
Where to from here?

HASTEN SLOWLY
Next Steps?

- Create a Common Understanding
- Select the Early Adopters
- Create Pockets of Success
- Share Stories Across Boundaries
- Adjust Across Boundaries

Source: Mroz & Quinn, 2010
Conclusions!

• Tens of billions of dollars are spent worldwide every year on employee training, but often the long-term ROI remains questionable.

• A recent study found that a single training session on the principles of positive psychology was shown to improve the overall well-being, energy and stress management skills of 250 managers (Achor. 2011).
Conclusions!

- Do your Homework;

- Read More - “The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology & Work” by Linley, Harrington & Garcea or “The Happiness Advantage” by Shawn Achor;

- Engage Experts – Not Snake Oil Salespeople!
A final note...

If the nature of work is properly appreciated and applied, it will stand in the same relation to the higher faculties as food is to the physical body.

It nourishes and enlivens the higher man and urges him to produce the best he is capable of.

It directs his free will along the proper course and disciplines the animal in him into progressive channels.

It furnishes an excellent background for man to display his scale of values and develop his personality.

J C Kumarappa
Thank You!

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