

**voice
project**

improving organisations
by giving people a voice

www.voiceproject.com.au

How can we better manage employee safety within the aged care sector?

Presented at: 2014 AAG & ACS Regional Conference, Port Macquarie

Presented by: Sebastien Berlioz, Consultant, Voice Project

e: sebastien.berlioz@voiceproject.com t: 0411 399 431

voice project



- We're a research and consulting company based in Sydney, Australia
- Our purpose is **“improving organisations by giving people a voice”**
- Since 2002 we have given a voice to **over 1,000,000 people**, worked on over **700 projects** with more than **300 worldwide clients** spanning **all industries and sectors**
- We specialise in organisational surveys, delivering:
 - **Engagement** surveys
 - **Leadership** surveys
 - **Service quality** surveys for internal and external clients
 - **Fully-tailored** surveys
 - **Post-survey facilitation and planning**
- Research is undertaken through Macquarie University and consulting work is undertaken through Voice Project Pty Ltd which is a separate legal entity that pays royalties to the University

agenda

1. Brief review the traditional approaches to safety management
2. Presentation of results from case study research investigating the drivers of employee safety
3. Lessons for better managing employee safety across the sector



safety management

The most common and traditional approaches to safety management have centred around:

- **Training** – periodical and compulsory
- **Hazard identification & control** – including facilities, equipment etc...
- **Policies** – management (and government) mandating detailed work health and safety policies
- **Compliance** – employees reprimanded for not complying with policies



safety is still an issue

- **5.3% of the Australian population** report having experienced a work-related injury or illness within the past 12 months (ABS, 2010)
- **\$60 billion per year** = estimated cost of accidents and injuries to the Australian economy (Safe Work Australia, 2012)
- **\$59 million in 2012** = direct cost to the aged care sector of compensation for time lost and medical expenses as a results of injuries and diseases (ABS, 2013)

Acknowledging improvements in safety management, more can be done! It is why we asked ourselves:

“which organisational level factors are the greatest drivers of employee safety?”

research part 1:

case study into the drivers of employee safety

case study research

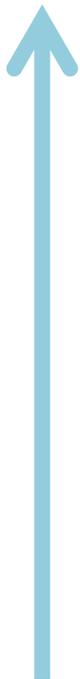
- Across 22 business units from a large (over 1800 staff) NFP aged care provider we examined changes (between 2010 & 2012) in:
 - safety incident rates
 - workers compensation claims rates
 - employee satisfaction survey results
- We calculated the probability of safety incidents and workers compensation claims occurring based on changes in the following work characteristics:
 - Processes
 - Facilities
 - Role Clarity
 - Respect
 - Staff Involvement
 - Supervision
 - Employee Wellness
 - Safety Climate
 - Staff Engagement



findings – safety incidents

Five work characteristics significantly predicted safety incidents

Greatest Predictor



Employee Wellness = how emotionally well staff feel at work, able to keep job stress at an acceptable level & feel in control at work

Role Clarity = whether staff understand what is required of them, how well they are doing & how their job contributes to the success of the organisation

Staff Involvement = staff involvement in the decision making process & whether they are encouraged to provide feedback

Supervision = Supportive supervisors who treat staff fairly, listen to & give them help & support

Respect = an organisations commitment to diversity, equal opportunities & discouraging bullying, discrimination & harassment

findings – safety incidents

The following work characteristics did not predict safety incidents

**Non-
significant
predictors
of safety
incidents**

Facilities = the condition of facilities & how regularly they are perceived to be reviewed and upgraded

Processes = efficiency & well-designed processes

Staff Engagement = How motivated, committed & loyal staff are

Safety Climate = staff perceptions of whether safety is a priority

findings – compensation claims

Only two work characteristics significantly predicted changes in workers compensation claims

Respect

Employee Wellness

Strong predictor of both safety incidents and compensation claims But what to focus on?



practically significant for the industry?

Considering Voice Project's aged care industry benchmarking database, these findings suggest that, as a sector, an increase of:

- 4.4% points (from 66.5% to 70.9%) in 'wellness' will:
 - reduce the likelihood of safety incidents by 10%
 - reduce the likelihood of workers compensation claims by 10% representing approximately 520 less claims per year and an average saving of \$6.1 million*
- 3.2% points (from 79.3% to 82.5%) in 'diversity' will:
 - reduce the likelihood of safety incidents by 6%
 - reduce the likelihood of workers compensation claims by 12% representing approximately 615 less claims per year and an average saving of \$6.9 million*

* Figures based on 2012 aged care industry data obtained through the ABS indicating that in 2012 there were 5152 serious claims at a cost of \$58.9 million

research part 2:

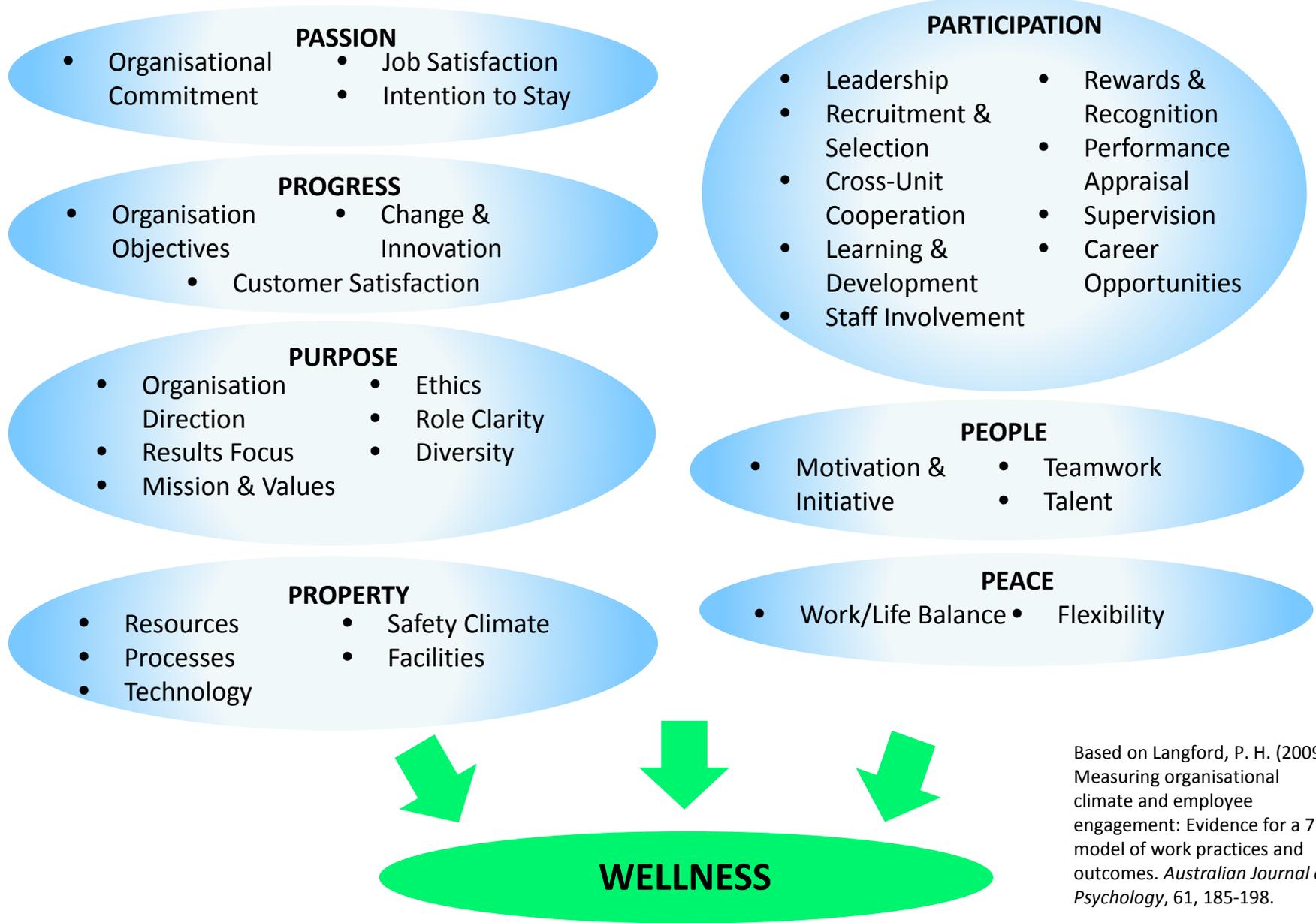
improving employee wellness in the aged care sector

improving employee wellness in the sector

- We examined survey results from 7,693 staff working in 21 aged care sector organisations who Voice Project has worked with
- We analysed which work characteristics have the greatest impact on employee wellness and what are the sectors greatest gaps (i.e. likely to provide the greatest ROI)



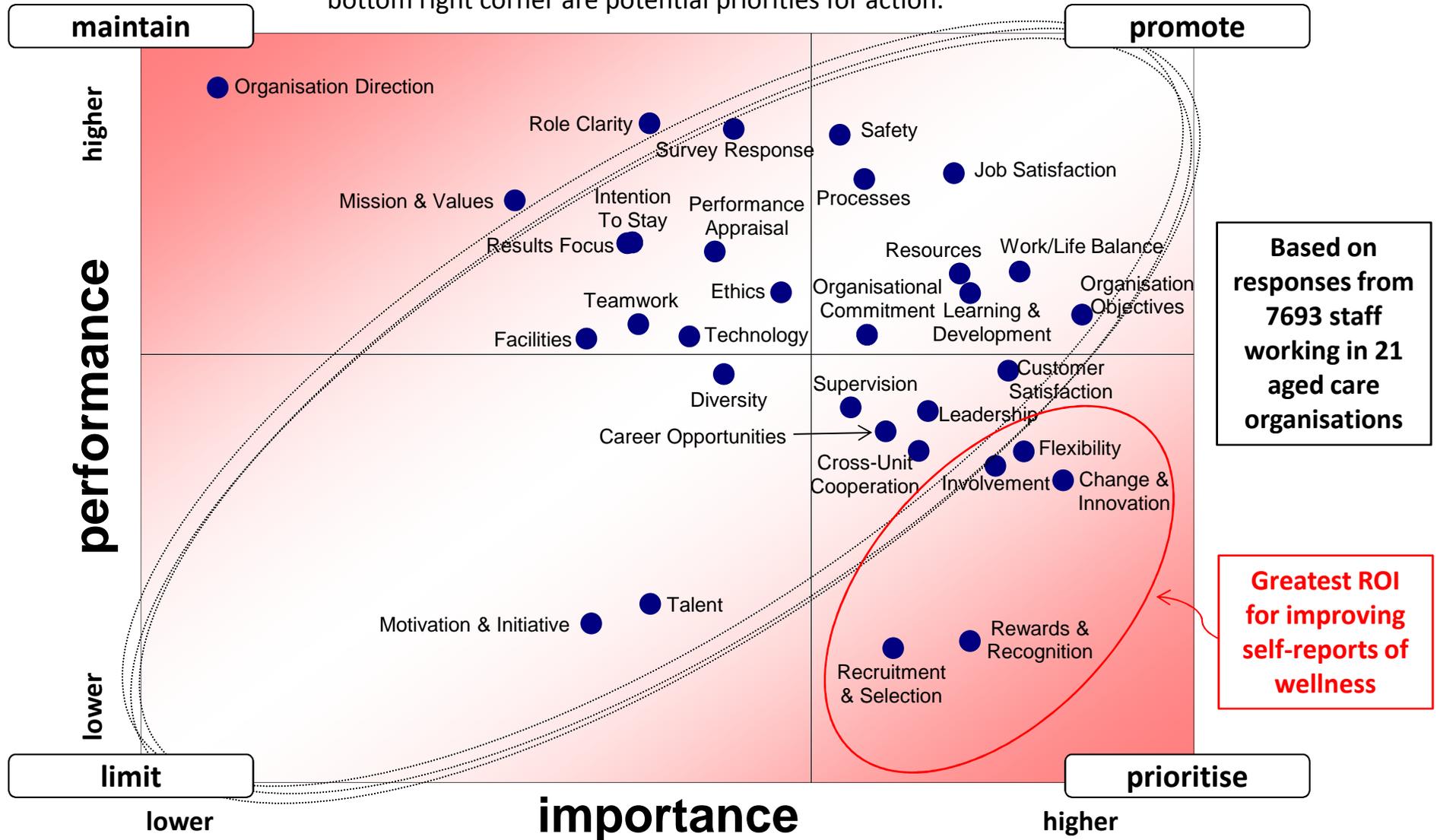
voice project organisational climate model



Based on Langford, P. H. (2009). Measuring organisational climate and employee engagement: Evidence for a 7 Ps model of work practices and outcomes. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 61, 185-198.

aged care sector wellness gap analysis

Practices towards the right (higher “importance”) have a greater impact on Wellness based on your data. Ideally, practices should rest in the oval where there is a good match between performance and importance. Practices in the bottom right corner are potential priorities for action.



take home lessons

lessons – part 1

- Industry interventions focused on upgrading facilities, processes and safety climate are not sufficient to improve safety
- In order to improve employee safety, the aged care sector ought to prioritise:
 - Maintaining work practices which **discourage bullying and harassment** and maximise equality for all staff.
 - Supporting **employee psychological wellbeing**.



lessons – part 2

- To support & improve employee wellbeing the sector should prioritise:
 - Reviewing and improving current **recruitment and selection** practices to make sure the right people are selected for the right jobs.
 - Making sure staff feel **fairly rewarded and recognised** for their hard work. Ensuring organisations are meeting their obligations to staff and rewarding them adequately is not sufficient. Organisations should also encourage the development of a recognition culture.
 - The provision of more **flexible work practices** which allow staff to have a say about their working conditions.
 - Striving for and developing a **culture of continuous improvement** in which work practices and methods are regularly reviewed, monitored and improved.
 - Promoting **staff involvement**, ensuring staff are consulted about decisions which will affect them and that feedback is valued and encouraged.



questions

