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Improving Salesperson Performance: Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Motivation

Valerie Good, PhD, Douglas E. Hughes, PhD, Ahmet H. Kirca, PhD, and Sean McGrath, PhD Candidate

Navigating Technostress and Entitled Employees

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INSIDER: I Love it Here: How Great Leaders Create Organizations Their People Never Want to Leave

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Improving Salesperson Performance: Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Motivation

Valerie Good, PhD, Douglas E. Hughes, PhD, Ahmet H. Kirca, PhD, and Sean McGrath, PhD Candidate

Year after year, companies allocate extensive resources toward developing and tracking incentive programs to effectively motivate sales employees. Though motivation has been studied for decades, it remains a key concern for many organizations today. Salespeople typically have a significant amount of discretion as to time management. They make daily decisions about who to call, how to communicate, and what strategies to implement. The role of a salesperson, many times, offers great autonomy. With that, salespeople must often adjust to changing circumstances, be it an external change for the customer such as a change in funds, or an internal company change such as a change in supply. The process of altering individual sales strategy due to such dynamic changes in the marketplace has been coined “self-regulation.”¹



call, how to communicate, and what strategies to implement. The role of a salesperson, many times, offers great autonomy. With that, salespeople must often adjust to changing circumstances, be it an external change for the customer such as a change in funds, or an internal company change such as a change in supply. The process of altering individual sales strategy due to such dynamic changes in the marketplace has been coined “self-regulation.”¹

Self Determination Theory (SDT), which has been widely used in sales research, addresses the process of self-regulation and lays out the foundation for our study. SDT differentiates between the drivers of salesperson motivation. Autonomous motivation is when a person’s actions are driven intrinsically, while controlled motivation is driven by extrinsic sources, such as rewards or incentives. Despite the practical relevance of the two types of motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic), previous research lacks clarity with respect to the relative impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on salesperson performance. Another consideration is how motivating factors may be impacted by different moderators, such as the salesperson’s age or career stage. Our aim was to address these questions through a comprehensive meta-analytic review of previous studies conducted in this domain to provide insight into the managerial implications of our findings.

The findings of our analysis indicate that motivation is significantly associated with salesperson performance and that intrinsic motivation is more significantly associated with performance than extrinsic motivation. While external motivators, such as increased compensation, bonuses, and time off, are associated with performance, the correlation between intrinsic motivators and performance is even stronger. This is a crucial finding since managers most frequently turn to extrinsic rewards when trying to motivate salespeople, and such motivation can be extremely costly to companies while carrying other downsides. At some point, once a salesperson has a

stable income stream—no matter how configured—the salesperson can become less susceptible to increases (particularly modest increases, which is usually the case) in extrinsic rewards. Stimulating intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, may be not only less expensive but also more effective. With the findings from our research, real estate agents and managers can evaluate current incentive programs and tailor future incentive programs to effectively motivate salespeople.

Background

When intrinsically motivated, a real estate salesperson will be moved to show houses, call clients, and perform tasks for the fun, challenge, or meaningfulness entailed rather than because of external prods, pressures (like quotas), or rewards. SDT suggests intrinsic motivation results when people feel that they have control over the activities they perform (*autonomy*), feel competent performing them (*self-efficacy*), and feel a sense of belonging or relatedness as they perform them (*connection*). Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is defined as doing something because it leads to a separable outcome. This type of motivation has been called “controlled motivation” because workers are expected to act according to what is rewarded by their employers. When motivation is controlled, the focus on financial incentives or praise can produce short-term gains on targeted outcomes but may have negative spillover effects on subsequent effort and performance.

We predicted that when working conditions and compensation are deemed 'good enough' by salespeople, other needs become more salient and thus stronger motivators. Indeed, most salespeople feel entitled to fair wages and decent working conditions, and thus these factors are only really noticed if they are missing or fall beyond an expected distribution (on either side—far greater or far less than expectations). On the other hand, focusing on meeting the internal needs of your sales force (once sufficient external motivators are in place) should lead to better performance.

Findings

Using information from 77,560 total salespeople from 127 studies, our findings show that intrinsic motivation is more strongly associated with salesperson performance, even when analyzing the data in multiple ways with all control variables. However, when scrutinizing the data with a ‘magnifying glass’ on certain relationships, we find that while the relationship between intrinsic motivation and performance was higher than extrinsic motivation and performance for all age groups (and those with longer job tenure and experience in sales), the relationship was significantly stronger for older samples than younger samples. On the other hand, the relationship between extrinsic motivation and performance was significantly stronger for younger samples than older samples. With regard to industry, salespeople who worked in a role where sales were made directly to consumers showed a stronger relationship between extrinsic motivation and performance than was seen in business-to-business (B2B) sales. For

B2B sales roles, the relationship between intrinsic motivation and performance was significantly higher than both extrinsic motivation and performance as well as intrinsic motivation and performance in the business-to-consumer context. The strength of the relationship between motivation and performance did not significantly differ between men and women; however, in samples that were more skewed toward having a population with a greater number of females than males, the relationship between intrinsic motivation and performance was higher than that of extrinsic motivation and performance.

Real Estate Implications

When thinking of ways to incentivize employees, external motivators, such as monetary incentives, are typically what come to mind. While there is a positive association between extrinsic motivators and performance, this research provides evidence that intrinsic motivators are even more important to long-term salesperson performance. We are not advocating for the dismissal of extrinsic motivators; rather, we suggest that relying entirely on extrinsic motivators to motivate employees may lead to suboptimal performance, given the stronger association between intrinsic motivation and salesperson performance.

Although extrinsic motivators are often managers' first solution for motivating salespeople, intrinsic motivation can also be influenced by managers. Some of the contributors to intrinsic motivation based on Self Determination Theory include autonomy, competence, and relatedness.² Real estate brokers can influence agents' intrinsic motivation by providing training to improve employee competence and confidence. Management can also



increase autonomy within teams and roles, as long as agents and employees are meeting goals, in order to intrinsically motivate and drive performance of the team. Overall, the findings from our research indicate that intrinsic motivation is critical to reaching optimal performance from employees.

Recommended Reading

Good, Valerie, Douglas E. Hughes, Ahmet H. Kirca, and Sean McGrath (2022), "A Self-Determination Theory-Based Meta-Analysis on the Differential Effects of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation on Salesperson Performance," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 50, 586-614.

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About the Authors

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Dr. Valerie Good (PhD – Michigan State University) is a well-published researcher with an active pipeline. Her dissertation was distinguished as the top in the field of sales, earning her the American Marketing Association Sales SIG Dissertation Award in 2020. She also received the 2023 Distinguished Early Career Scholar Award from Grand Valley State University and the 2019 Taylor Research Award from Michigan State University in recognition of research excellence. Her research has been published in *Harvard Business Review*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, *Journal of Service Research*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Industrial Marketing Management*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Journal of Service Research*, *European Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, and *Marketing Letters*, with several additional papers currently under advanced review in top-tier marketing journals. She is dedicated to research with practical impact, and media mentions of her research include *Harvard Business Review*, *Forbes*, *Thrive Global*, *Selling with Noble Purpose*, *The Conversation*, *EconoTimes*, the *National Interest*, *Broad College of Business News*, the *Sales Scholar* podcast, as well as additional newspaper and radio outlets.

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Dr. Douglas E. Hughes (PhD – University of Houston) has a rich academic and professional background in marketing and sales. His well-cited research focuses on how firms may maximize performance through sales organization effectiveness and through the accompanying management of internal and external relationships. Dr. Hughes served as Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management* and Area Editor at *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* and has published articles in the *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal of Retailing*, *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, *Marketing Letters*, *Industrial Marketing Management*, *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, and *Journal of Service*

Research. He was honored for the best doctoral dissertation (2009) and best published articles on a sales topic by the American Marketing Association (2011, 2016) and is also the recipient of the 2013 Withrow Emerging Scholar Award, the 2016 Emerald Citation of Excellence Award, and the 2021 and 2016 James M. Comer Award for the Best Contribution to Selling and Sales Management Theory. He was featured on the cover of *Top Sales Magazine* in 2015 along with an article about his research on salesperson motivation. Prior to his academic career, Dr. Hughes served as CEO of a business services firm, as a senior executive in both marketing and sales at Fortune 100/500 consumer products firms, and as a consultant to a variety of companies across multiple industries.

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Navigating Technostress and Entitled Employees

Kenneth J. Harris, PhD, Ranida B. Harris, PhD, Matthew Valle, PhD, John Carlson, PhD, Dawn S. Carlson, PhD, Suzanne Zivnuska, PhD, and Briceön Wiley, PhD

The impact of technology on the workplace has been a growing concern in recent years, particularly with the increasing use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in organizations. While technology has undoubtedly brought many benefits to the workplace, it has also brought a new form of stress known as "technostress." Technology plays a crucial role in the day-to-day operations of real estate professionals, who are constantly using ICTs to manage work and communicate with clients. Agents are at a high risk of experiencing technostress, which can negatively impact work and family life. By understanding how technostress negatively influences employee turnover, work-family conflict, and family burnout, agents and firms can better manage potential stressors and create a more positive and productive work environment.

In this research, we explored the impacts of two different types of technostress—techno-overload and techno-invasion—on the work domain, family domain, and the relationship between the two. Furthermore, we shed light on the moderating effect of employee entitlement on these relationships.



Techno-Overload and Techno-Invasion

Techno-overload refers to the stress caused by an excessive use of technology, such as constantly checking emails, social media, and notifications. Techno-invasion refers to the intrusion of technology into an individual's personal and private life, disrupting the work-life balance. Our findings indicate that both techno-overload and techno-invasion are positively related to employee turnover intentions, work-family conflict, and family burnout. This suggests that the stress associated with technology use in organizations can spill over into non-work domains, impacting both the employee's professional and personal life.

Real estate professionals often experience high levels of stress, burnout, and conflict, which can, in turn, impact job satisfaction, productivity, and ultimately, turnover. As a result, it is important for real estate agents and managers to be mindful of the potential negative effects of technology use and take steps to mitigate them before they become a problem.

Organizations that ignore the impact of technology on employees risk creating a toxic work environment, which can lead to costly consequences, such as decreased job satisfaction,

increased turnover, and decreased productivity. Addressing technostress and techno-invasion can help improve the well-being of employees, promote a positive work-life balance, and create a more productive and engaged workforce.

The Entitled Employee

A general increase in entitlement has been noted in the popular business press and substantiated by published research findings. This is increasingly the case among younger cohorts. Entitled employees can be found within many organizations, and, sadly, can have negative impacts on their organizations. Psychological entitlement is a personality trait—and a generally unwarranted belief—in which individuals have a tendency toward favorable self-perceptions and have reward or benefit expectations, even when there is little or no justification for the beliefs. When entitled employees do not receive what they feel is deserved or fair, they may act out in anger or seek remedy to being “wronged.”

Within the technology realm, those with entitlement may resist learning new technologies or systems and may become frustrated when experiencing technical difficulties. These frustrations can lead to decreased productivity and job satisfaction, higher turnover rates, and decreased work-life balance among employees, which can negatively affect the overall success of the organization.

We found that employee entitlement significantly moderated the relationship between the technostress dimensions and employee turnover intentions, work-family conflict, and family burnout. Employees with high levels of entitlement are more likely to experience higher levels of turnover intentions, work-family conflict, and family burnout as a result of techno-overload and techno-invasion. Our study also provides evidence that as entitlement—a growing trend among younger generations—is becoming more prevalent in the workforce, organizations must be aware of the potential impact on employees.

Mitigating Technostress Within the Firm

Organizations can mitigate the impact on employees by offering support and training on how to manage technology-related stress, such as workshops, online resources, one-on-one counseling sessions, or even just daily or weekly email reminders. In addition, organizations should set clear boundaries around technology usage, such as clearly defining boundaries on work hours that may fall outside the norm.

Employees can also take steps to reduce their own techno-overload and techno-invasion. This may include setting limits on technology usage, such as turning off notifications outside of work hours, practicing self-care activities, such as exercise, mindfulness, and disconnecting from technology.

Real Estate Implications

In real estate, the increasing reliance on technology can lead to techno-overload and techno-invasion, resulting in stress, burnout, and decreased work performance, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. It can also spill over into agents' personal lives, leading to work-family conflict.

Firms must also consider the impact of technology on clients. Excessive use of technology within real estate transactions can lead to information overload, confusion, and mistrust. Hence, it is important to strike a balance between utilizing technology and maintaining the human touch in agent-client interactions. This human touch can help build strong and long-lasting relationships, leading to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty.

It is vital for both agents and firms to recognize the potential impact of technology on work and personal life and to take steps to offset its effects. By doing so, a more positive and productive work environment can be created and a healthier work-life balance can be maintained.

Recommended Reading

Harris, Kenneth J., Ranida B. Harris, Matthew Valle, John R. Carlson, Dawn S. Carlson, Suzanne Zivnuska, and Briceön Wiley (2022), "Technostress and the Entitled Employee: Impacts on Work and Family," *Information Technology & People*, 35, 1073-1095.

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Dr. Kenneth Harris (PhD – Florida State University) has developed a national and international reputation for his groundbreaking research in the areas of leadership and abusive supervisory behaviors, and he is shaping the course and development of research in these areas. His work focuses on the effect that abusive supervisory relationships have on job performance, coworkers and the workplace as a whole. His research is published in major journals of his field such as *Leadership Quarterly* and *Journal of Social Psychology*, and his work has been cited not only in scholarly publications but also in popular media, such as *Forbes*.

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Influencing Negotiations: Salesperson Favor Requests

Veronica L. Thomas, PhD, Stephanie M. Mangus, PhD, and Dora E. Bock, PhD

Consumers have numerous negative stereotypes toward salespeople and often actively avoid sales environments because of these stereotypes. People often believe that salespeople do not have consumers' best interests in mind and, thus, dread the idea of engaging in negotiations with a salesperson. In a business-to-consumer setting, consumers often avoid negotiations, are skeptical of the salesperson from the start, and go into the situation thinking it will be a bad experience. These negative views on negotiation have adverse effects on both the salesperson and the consumer, when in fact, negotiation can be a mutually beneficial tool for each party.

About our Study

In our research, we focus on the interpersonal relationship between the consumer and the salesperson. We take the idea of a favor request from a salesperson to a consumer to encourage engagement and the idea of negotiation. In our research, we define a favor as one that is requested by a salesperson and is an act of kindness unrelated to the negotiation process. This could be



as simple as, for example, asking the consumer's opinion on the newly renovated showroom at a car dealership. These favor requests, however, are not sales requests. A sales request is an ask by the salesperson to move the negotiation forward. Favor requests are entirely unrelated to the act of negotiation.

We conducted five separate studies to see the effectiveness of a favor request in influencing final negotiation outcomes. We used these studies to examine three hypotheses for our research. Our first hypothesis was that if a salesperson requests a favor before the negotiation, this will positively affect negotiation expectations. The second hypothesis was that the effect of a salesperson's favor request on the consumer's expectations of the negotiation process would be mediated by the customer's perceptions of the salesperson's motives. In the test condition involving no ulterior motives on the part of the salesperson, participants were told that the salesperson did not earn a commission. The outcome showed that only in the favor-absent condition did the "no commission" stipulation improve outcome expectations. The final hypothesis states that as apprehension levels increase, the effectiveness of a salesperson's favor request on motives and expectations of the negotiation will be more pronounced.

Our Findings

Through our research, we concluded that there are positive impacts of a favor request being present. When a favor request is present, there are more positive expectations of the negotiation process. This simple favor request that is not related to a request for the product purchase also changes how a consumer views the salesperson. As a salesperson asks the consumer for a favor, the consumer then believes that the salesperson has positive motives and will offer the consumer a better deal. The benefits of a favor request even impact how a consumer feels when leaving a negotiation. Our study shows that when a consumer leaves a negotiation with a favor request present, the consumer has a positive feeling about the negotiation that just occurred. There are many benefits of a favor request that impact the negotiation process and the consumer's outlook on the salesperson and the negotiation.

We then conducted two additional studies examining the effects of a favor request when a motivation prime is present, as well as when apprehension is high or low. The motivation prime is a statement that suggests more trustworthy motives on the part of the salesperson. In the second study, we added a motivation prime that was designed to bolster perceptions. In this case, the motivation prime was a statement that the salesperson did not earn a commission for successfully closing the sale. When the prime was present, participants who were in both the favor absent and favor present conditions had similar expectations for the negotiations.

Finally, we examined how consumers who are apprehensive towards negotiations are affected by favor requests. We find that when consumers are more apprehensive toward negotiating, they are more positively affected by a favor request. Thus, those who have a negative view or attitude toward the negotiation process will be positively influenced by a favor request.

Real Estate Implications

Negotiation clearly plays a significant role in real estate sales, suggesting that improving consumers' views of negotiations could improve outcomes in the field. A consumer who is interested in a home may be hesitant to fully engage in negotiations due to a preconceived and negative perception of negotiations. Asking for a favor can create a bond and relationship between the two parties. In our study, we show that a simple favor request can change the trajectory of the negotiation as a whole, as it can change the buyer's anticipation of getting a better deal. Not only will a favor request improve the negotiation process for an agent, but it will also enhance the buying experience for a customer. Asking for a favor allows for the opportunity to build rapport and strengthen the relationship, fostering a more collaborative and mutually beneficial outcome.

Recommended Reading

Thomas, Veronica L., Stephanie M. Mangus, and Dora E. Bock (2023), “Would You Do Me a Favor? How Salesperson Favor Requests Positively Affect Consumers’ Perceptions of Negotiations,” *Journal of Business Research*, 155, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.113455>.

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Dr. Veronica Thomas’ (PhD – Kent State University) expertise is in the area of consumer psychology, and her research focuses on social influence in the context of consumer-brand relationships and advertising. Her research appears in the *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *Journal of Advertising*, *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Marketing Letters*, and other prestigious peer-reviewed journals. Dr. Thomas has received national media coverage for her expertise in outlets such as *MarketWatch*, *Forbes*, and *Cosmopolitan*. She is also an Associate Editor for the *Journal of Advertising Research* and the *International Journal of Advertising* and sits on the Editorial Review Board for the *Journal of Advertising*, the *Journal of Marketing Theory & Practice*, and *Psychology & Marketing*.

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Dr. Stephanie Mangus’ (PhD – Louisiana State University) research focuses on buyer-seller dyads in sales and the sales and service interface, including service recovery and the emotions driving salesperson and customer behaviors. Her research has been published in the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, *Industrial Marketing Management*, and *Psychology & Marketing*. She serves on the Editorial Review Boards for the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* and the *Journal of Business Research*. She is the abstract editor and Editorial Review Board member for the *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*. Her work has been presented at conferences by the American Marketing Association, the Academy of Marketing Science, the Association for Consumer Research, the National Conference for Sales Management, and the Thought Leadership in the Sales Profession Conference. Dr. Mangus’ research and expertise have received international media coverage, including outlets such as *The Huffington Post*, *CJAD Radio*, *WLNS-TV*, *The Art Newspaper*, *The Speaker*, and *KIJK Magazine*, among others. She teaches personal selling and sales management for the Center for Professional Selling at Baylor and has received numerous teaching awards at the university and international levels.

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Connecting with Clients: Best to Be Funny or Clever?

Holly S. Howe, PhD, Lingrui Zhou, PhD, Rodrigo S. Dias, PhD Candidate, and Gavan J. Fitzsimons, PhD

Humor has been a popular marketing strategy for many brands throughout the years. In our research, we argue that if a brand wants to use humor, they benefit more from using clever humor versus merely being funny. We define clever as a humor attempt where the audience has to make a mental connection to understand the joke. This might include wordplay, making a pop-culture reference, or jokes that require people to “read between the lines.” When a brand uses clever humor, it is better able to connect with the audience. This connection can lead to more positive brand attitudes and greater brand engagement.



About our Study

We performed multiple studies to assess the impact of and to compare humor and cleverness. In our first study, we assessed the engagement of a tweet depending on whether it was clever or simply funny. Study participants rated these tweets on a scale of 1-10 on how funny and how clever they perceived them to be. After participants rated the tweets, we looked at the engagement of each tweet—the likes, retweets, and replies.

For study two, we showed our participants one of two separate advertisements for a single brand. The first was purely humor while the second was viewed as cleverly funny. The cleverly funny ad elicited significantly more positive brand attitudes than the merely funny ad.

In study three, we showed participants ads using a variety of different humor styles (e.g., absurd humor, physical humor, teasing) as well as different clever humor styles. We then asked participants to rate these ads on seven-point scales with respect to brand warmth, brand competence, and brand attitude. The clever ad elevated consumers’ brand attitude because the brand seemed warmer (e.g., friendly, nice, warm, sincere) and more competent (e.g., able, skillful, confident).

Our Findings

Our findings for study one show that cleverness is a significant predictor of replies, retweets, and engagements. In study two, participants had a more positive brand attitude toward the brand if they were exposed to the cleverly funny ad rather than the purely funny ad. For study three, we

found that cleverness was a significant predictor of warmth, competence, and brand attitude. We then demonstrated that clever humor improves brand attitude *because* it makes the brand seem warmer and more competent.

Overall, we found that being clever is more effective than simply being humorous. Using cleverness, brands can tap into the intelligence of the target audience and create more positive impressions of their brand. As found in other literature on this topic, we find inconsistent effects of “funniness” in our studies. For example, we find that the effect of humor on brand attitudes is dependent on the brand, the characteristics of the brand, the humor attempt, and the audience.

A clever advertisement, however, may make your brand stand out among others, as cleverness often makes the audience think or have an “Aha!” moment. Tapping into the audience’s intelligence makes you seem friendly (because you made a joke) while maintaining your professional competence (because you made a *clever* joke).

While our research indicates that clever marketing is superior in building a long-lasting connection with customers, the benefits of clever humor are more pronounced with consumers who have a high need for cognition—that is, those who enjoy an intellectual challenge. Firms must understand their target audiences, as clever marketing will likely be more effective for a sophisticated brand, while other forms of humor may be more effective for a rugged, outdoorsy brand.

Real Estate Implications

Clever humor in advertising can be an effective means of marketing to current and prospective clients. Creating brand engagement and lasting impact is vital in customer retention, but it is not just as easy as cracking a funny joke. The first step in an effective clever marketing campaign is to know your target market: consumers who enjoy thinking tend to respond more positively to clever ads than consumers who do not. Knowing and understanding who you are targeting is the best way to ensure effectiveness. Next, craft your clever advertisement by making a joke that requires your consumers to think. This can include making a pop-culture reference, using wordplay, or letting consumers “fill in the blank” to complete the joke. Funny humor can be effective for some groups, but our research shows this effect is shorter lived and does not make as deep an impact as a cleverness. By using clever writing and wordplay that resonates with your clients, you can create a sense of intellectual satisfaction that makes you seem friendlier and smarter, leading to more positive outcomes for your brand.

Recommended Reading

Howe, Holly S., Lingrui Zhou, Rodrigo S. Dias, Gavan J. Fitzsimons (2022), “Aha over Haha: Brands Benefit More from Being Clever than from Being Funny,” *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 33(1), 107-114.

About the Authors

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Dr. Holly Howe (PhD – Duke University) studies conversation and, specifically, how brands can communicate to consumers through the use of humor. Dr. Howe has published in *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *Journal of the Association of Consumer Research*, *Psychology and Marketing*, and *Psychological Science*, among others. Dr. Howe is also a co-founder of an open-science online grocery store, which is a free-to-use space where researchers can study consumers habits while they shop.

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Dr. Lingrui Zhou's (PhD – Duke University) research examines how different types of relationships, between both brands and consumers, affect perceptions and decision making. Her first stream of research investigates the impact of brand-to-brand interactions and brand-to-consumer communication on consumers. Her second stream of research examines consumer-to-consumer relationships, focusing on interpersonal connections and gift giving. She has published in the *Journal of Marketing* and in the *Journal of Consumer Psychology*.

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Dr. Gavan J. Fitzsimons' (PhD – Columbia University) research focuses on understanding the ways in which consumers may be influenced without their conscious knowledge or awareness by marketers and marketing researches, often without any intent on the part of the marketer. His work has been published in numerous academic journals, such as the *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Marketing Science*, *Management Science*, *Organizational Behavior and Decision Processes*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, and *Psychological Science*. His ideas have also been featured in many popular press outlets such as NPR, CNN, MSNBC, the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Psychology Today*, *Oprah Magazine*, and *Time Magazine*, among others.

Leader Affect Variability and Employee Engagement

Jiaqing Sun, PhD, Sandy J. Wayne, PhD, and Yan Liu, PhD

It is widely understood that a leader's daily emotional expressions can have a significant impact on employees' emotions and work performance. After observing angry or depressed leaders in the morning, employees may feel demotivated or anxious for the entire day and struggle to fully engage in their work. On the other hand, leaders who express positive emotions, such as enthusiasm and inspiration, in the morning can create a positive work mood that encourages employee performance for the rest of the day. But what about the variability of leaders'



emotional expressions across different days? Imagine there are two leaders: one whose emotions remain quite stable with limited observable changes and another who displays a variety of different emotions over time. Which leader's emotional expression has a more significant impact on employees' emotions and performance on a given day?

Our recent research suggests that leaders' positive emotional expressions on a particular day are more effective in promoting followers' work engagement when the emotions are displayed by leaders who consistently display a narrower, rather than a

broader, range of emotions. In this article, we'll introduce our study findings and discuss the implications for leadership practices and organizational outcomes in real estate.

Understanding Leader Affect and Variability

Affect is an umbrella term that captures an individual's overall emotional state over a short period of time and features two dimensions: positive affect and negative affect. Leader positive affect represents leaders' overall positive emotions at a given moment, such as happiness, enthusiasm, joy, and excitement, while leader negative affect pertains to the extent to which a leader experiences negative emotions such as anger, depression, frustration, and sadness. Employees or followers may not discern their leaders' true affect, as the leader may regulate or control his or her emotional expressions, but the affect perceived in a leader can significantly impact employees' own affect for the day. Imagine that you see your leader with a long face in the morning; you might find yourself feeling less energetic or motivated for the rest of the day.

Some leaders with high emotional intelligence (EQ) may regulate their affect on a daily basis and display appropriate emotional expressions. These high EQ leaders are more likely to build

trust and inspire employees. Leaders who display positive emotions are better equipped to provide support and guidance. Additionally, high EQ leaders also understand when and how to display negative emotions. Although the expression of negative emotions may cause employees to experience similar negative emotions, it can also serve as an important signal that the employees should remain alert to the situation.

Our study focuses on the impact of leader daily emotional expression on employees' work engagement, which represents employees' positive, fulfilling, work-related states of mind. When employees fully engage in their work, they perform better and become more creative and productive.

It is unsurprising that positive emotional expressions from leaders can enhance and encourage employees' positive affect and engagement in their work. Similarly, when leaders express negative affect, employees may experience similar negative emotions and, thus, find it difficult to engage in their work. Employees are impacted by leaders' emotional expressions on a daily basis, so employee work engagement may also fluctuate in response to changes in leader affect. Taking into account these day-to-day changes in leader affect, we further consider another important factor—leader affect variability—defined as the extent to which a leader's emotions fluctuate over time, as observed by subordinates. We hypothesized that high leader affect variability—leader affect that changes frequently—may cause employees and followers to adapt to this change and become less reactive to leaders' affective expressions.

Our Findings

The results confirm our hypotheses that a leader's positive affect influences positive affect from employees, and a leader's negative affect elicits negative affect from employees. Similar conclusions were also observed between leader affect and employee work engagement via the influence of the leader's effect on employee affect. Thus, the significant role of leader emotional state on employee emotions and work engagement is established.

Our research also shows that the higher the leader's affect variability, the weaker the influence of positive leader affect on employee work engagement. However, no matter whether leader affect variability is high or low, leader negative affect impacts employee negative affect similarly, suggesting that a leader's negative affect has a consistently lowering effect on employee affect and work engagement, regardless of how much leader affect varies day-to-day.

Maximizing Employee Engagement

To maximize employee engagement, leaders should keep in mind that their daily affective expressions are critical. For some employees, the first thing they do in the morning is to check leader's emotions. According to affect-as-social-information theory,¹ leader emotions are critical "social signals" for employees to understand their situation. Therefore, it is important for leaders

to maintain a consistent and positive emotional demeanor by setting clear expectations for behavior and emotions and by cultivating a workplace culture where leaders demonstrate emotional intelligence and positive attitudes. Encouraging open communication and feedback can also help to ensure that employees feel valued and understood, which in turn, can lead to increased engagement.

Overall, by prioritizing emotional consistency, leaders can more efficiently promote employees' daily work engagement by expressing positive emotions.

Real Estate Implications

Real estate leaders can benefit from understanding how their affect variability impacts daily employee work engagement. In a highly competitive field like real estate, where performance and results are crucial, maintaining a positive affect and avoiding emotional swings can be key to success. However, this is easier said than done. It requires leaders to improve their affect regulation abilities and express genuinely positive emotions to their followers. If a leader needs to expend significant effort in expressing positive affect to employees, it likely leads to burnout.

We highlight the importance of organizational culture in shaping leader affect and affect variability. Team collaboration is essential in real estate, so a positive organizational culture can help leaders maintain a consistent and positive affect, leading to better engagement and productivity from their teams. By creating a supportive and positive culture, leaders can also attract and retain top talent, which is crucial for success in the highly competitive industry. The mutual support between leaders and team members can thus create a positive ambiance that helps cultivate a positive mood within the team.

To improve emotional intelligence, leaders can seek feedback from their team and engage in regular self-reflection to better understand how emotions impact the team. Leaders can also prioritize building positive relationships with teams by creating supportive work environments. By implementing these strategies, real estate leaders can improve leadership effectiveness and drive sales results.

Recommended Reading

Sun, Jiaqing, Wayne J. Sandy, and Yan Liu (2022), "The Roller Coaster of Leader Affect: An Investigation of Observed Leader Affect Variability and Engagement," *Journal of Management*, 1188-1213.

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1. Van Ckeef, G. A. (2016), *The Interpersonal Dynamics of Emotion: Toward an Integrative Theory of Emotions as Social Information*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK.

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Dr. Jiaqing Sun's (PhD in Management – University of Illinois at Chicago & PhD in Social Psychology – Beijing Normal University) research focuses on emotional and attributional processes in leader-follower interactions. Specifically, her research explores how employees and leaders perceive their relationships and interpret what happens between them. Her recent research sheds light on employees' feelings of gratitude relating to leaders' behaviors, especially for the special treatment received from servant leaders. Her papers have been published in top journals, such as *Journal of Applied Psychology* and *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

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Dr. Sandy J. Wayne (PhD – Texas A&M University) has a distinguished career as an academic, with over 25 years of experience in teaching and research. She has taught courses in human resource management, organizational behavior, and leadership. She serves as the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and has been the Director of the Institute for Leadership Excellence and Development since 2003. Dr. Wayne is widely published in journals such as the *Journal of Management*, *Journal of Business & Psychology*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *Human Relations*, and *Leadership Quarterly*, among many others.

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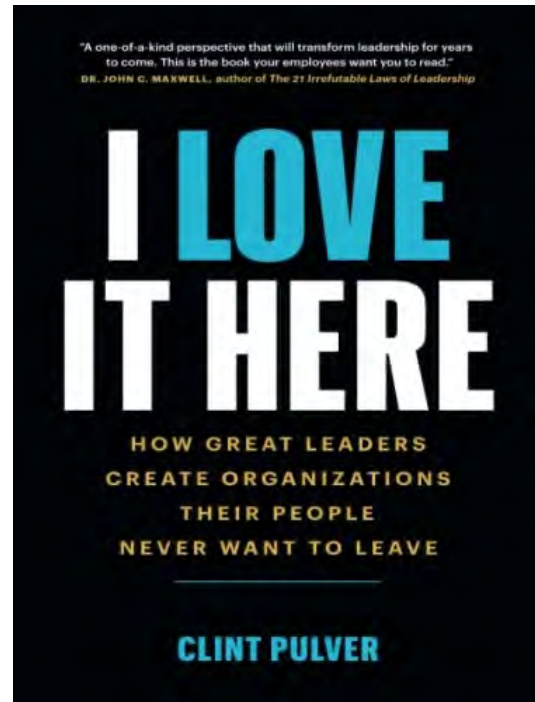
Dr. Yan Liu's (PhD – University of Macau) research areas are organizational identification, leadership, and career development. She has published research papers in various journals, such as *Journal of Management*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, and *Journal of Vocational Behavior*.

INSIDER: I Love it Here: How Great Leaders Create Organizations Their People Never Want to Leave

Parker Cannon, MBA Candidate

In today's work environment, millennial and Generation Z employees are more likely to job hop than any other generations. High turnover rates mean that companies are losing out on valuable developed skills and retained knowledge. The Work Institutes *2020 Retention Report* indicates that turnover increased 88% since 2010, and by 2023, more than one in three workers will voluntarily quit their job. Forbes estimates that replacing an employee can cost a firm 50% of an entry-level employee's salary and 125% of a mid-level employee's salary.

In *I Love it Here: How Great Leaders Create Organizations Their People Never Want to Leave*, Clint Pulver leverages insights from his research program, Undercover Millennial, where interviewers posed as prospective hires and asked employees questions about job satisfaction. Pulver uses these insights to develop leadership principles that help create organizations that people "never want to leave."



THINK POINT #1: Creating Your Dream Team

Building a dedicated and engaged workforce facilitates success, and it all starts with hiring. Through research and observation of hiring processes, Pulver narrowed the keys to effective hiring practices to four basic principles.

1. Hire the right person, not the convenient person.

It's common for hiring managers to get caught up in the rush to meet deadlines. This sometimes leads to firms hiring the first candidate rather than the best candidate. People are the foundation of the firm, so remember that the first interviewee may not be the candidate with the right experience, abilities, and attitude, but waiting on the right candidate will pay dividends in the long run.

2. Hire internally if possible.

Internal candidates have existing relationships within the organization and a grasp of the culture and workplace dynamics. This often gives internal candidates the the ability to step into a role

with an advantage over any external candidate. More importantly, hiring internally promotes excitement for growth within the company and promotes engagement and loyalty.

3. Hire for the ABCs: attitude, behavior, and character.

Hiring for the ABC qualities is, at the very least, as important as technical ability. Technical skills can often be taught, but character is much more difficult to mold. Often, resumes don't effectively display these characteristics, which is why asking the right questions during interviews is imperative.

4. Let your employees focus on what they do best.

If you want active engagement from an employee, set them up for success. This isn't to say that firms shouldn't challenge employees, but using one's natural abilities will improve performance, increase engagement, and fuel development.

THINK POINT #2: Mentor Manager: Managing with Empathy and Expectations

Pulver identifies two factors as a common thread among successful managers in almost every organization: personal connection with employees and clear expectations set for employees. The level of connection is a result of consistent empathy, kindness, care, and trust displayed. In addition, employees value clear expectations and an understanding of the standards and outcomes for their roles. Some examples of what different displays of these factors may look like and lead to include:

- **Removed Manager** (low expectations, low connection): The removed manager seems removed from the organization and view leadership as a burden. This results in employees feeling undervalued and often leads to employees searching for new employment.
- **Buddy Manager** (low expectations, high connection): The buddy manager values approval and friendship more than leading and empowering employees to be better. This leadership style may result in employees taking advantage of relationship, leading to decreased productivity and lack of development.
- **Controlling Manager** (high expectations, low connection): The controlling manager is rigid and has a forceful management style. This type of management often leads to rebellion, outward defiance, and variations of deliberate rule breaking. This style results in loss of productivity and turnover.
- **Mentor Manager** (high expectations, high connection): The mentor manager is the most effective leadership style. Mentor managers create engagement and foster an environment of respect and loyalty through building trust and a genuine connection with employees while pushing them to reach their greatest potential.

As a leader in an organization, you will be watched, and others will categorize you as a supervisor or a mentor. Therefore, becoming a Mentor Manager should be an aspiration of any person in leadership.

THINK POINT #3: Sparking the Possibility

Pulver explains that great mentors can “communicate someone’s potential and worth so clearly that the person begins to recognize the potential and worth in themselves.”



Sometimes it is difficult to see what lies right in front of us. You have the opportunity to alter and mold perceptions of those who work with you and who work for you. Helping someone to recognize their worth requires 1) recognition and 2) opportunities for growth. Without these, your employees may find it difficult to find worth in their work, diminishing their potential for success. As a mentor manager, it is your responsibility to

create an environment that fosters recognition and opportunities for growth.

Recognition can be given in many ways. Bonuses are effective, but they are not the only way to give recognition. Younger employees are progressively valuing experiences of things. An alternative to cash bonuses could include tickets to sporting events, concerts, plays etc. Often, vocal praise is valued by an employee more than free food or a celebratory event. There are many ways to express praise or recognition, but the most important part is actually doing it.

Opportunities for growth start by acknowledging the *need* for growth. Through his research, Culver notes the following types of growth opportunities and results:

1. Call out potential: Look for good in others and call it out
2. Make simple investments: Offer a book or recommend an informative TED talk
3. Encourage growth: Arrange trainings, speakers, and workshops
4. Offer advocacy: “Connect people to their dreams”

By showing employees their potential and worth, you create an environment for growth and engagement, as well as [foster intrinsic motivation](#) in your team members. These acts bring humanity into the workplace while simultaneously supporting your potential as a manager.

Real Estate Implications

Creating a workplace that employees love is foundational to any successful organization, and real estate is no exception. Through effective management, you can create an environment where your employees engage, grow, and never want to leave. Hire the right candidates for the job to build a strong foundation. Be a Mentor Manager by connecting with your employees and communicating clear expectations. Foster an environment of engagement through recognition and developmental growth opportunities. Through these actions you, too, can create a workplace that will make your employees say, “I love it here.”

Recommended Reading

Pulver, Clint (2021), *I Love It Here*, Page Two Books, Inc: BC, Canada.

About the Author

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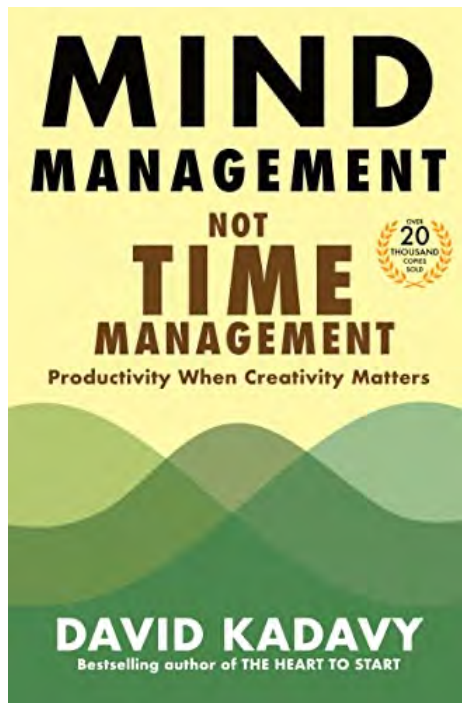
Parker Cannon is a graduate student from Waco, Texas. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from Louisiana State University. Prior to beginning graduate school at Baylor, Parker worked for three years as a chemical sales representative and operations consultant at a Chevron refinery. Parker is currently seeking an MBA degree with a concentration in finance to pursue a career in financial services.

INSIDER: Mind Management, Not Time Management

Carson Solley, MBA Candidate

We live in a fast-paced and constantly changing world. Most people have hundreds of things to accomplish in a short, 24-hour window before they must do it all over again. In his book, *Mind Management, Not Time Management*, David Kadavy proposes a new approach to productivity that encourages success by focusing on managing one's mind rather than managing one's time. Kadavy argues that traditional time management techniques are no longer effective in today's fast-paced world and that people must learn to manage their minds in order to achieve their goals.

THINK POINT #1: Time Management is a Flawed Concept



Kadavy argues that time management is a flawed and fixed concept and that time cannot be managed. He explains that individuals essentially waste the time they are trying to manage by creating schedules and to-do lists. When we try to manage our time, we simply try to accomplish as much as possible. This means we fail to prioritize, which causes problems when actually trying to accomplish goals.

Kadavy argues that many times people waste time on what they think are urgent tasks, while time could be better spent on more important tasks. When individuals try to manage time effectively, they cram different tasks into an agenda, not accounting for external factors that may shift one's entire day's plan off track. If we manage our minds rather than just our time, we can be more effective and productive throughout the day and throughout the lifecycle of a project or task.

THINK POINT #2: Managing Your Mind for Creativity

To be creative, you must be able to manage your mind rather than just your time. Creativity requires space and time for exploration, and traditional time management techniques can hinder this process by creating a rigid structure that does not allow for spontaneity or experimentation. Kadavy emphasizes the importance of managing the mind in order to be productive in a creative space. Managing the mind involves developing the ability to control one's thoughts and emotions, which can help maintain focus and motivation in the face of creative challenges. Kadavy notes that creativity often involves a process of trial and error and that failure is a necessary part of this process. Therefore, managing your mind also involves developing resilience and the ability to learn from past mistakes.

THINK POINT #3: Pay Attention to Physical and Emotional Well-Being

Kadavy also explains the importance of managing physical and emotional well-being. When at your physical and emotional peak, you are also peaking in creative areas. Sleep, diet, and exercise can have direct impact on your mind, which can either lead to enhanced creativity or can be detrimental to the creative process. When you emphasize the importance of managing physical and emotional health, you are also directly emphasizing health of the mind. These factors can affect both productivity and creativity.

Practical Applications

Managing your mind is a shift in the traditional perspective of managing your time. People are often so focused on getting tasks done that they forget the goals they are actually trying to achieve. Kadavy gives practical applications throughout his book to encourage mind management in order to achieve productivity in a creative space:

1. **Embrace uncertainty:** To be creative, you must embrace uncertainty and take risks, as creativity is a constant changing flow of ideas. This allows you to free yourself from the fear of failure and allow yourself to take creative risks.
2. **Create curiosity:** Curiosity is key when it comes to creativity. To be creative, you must explore new ideas that may lead to creative breakthroughs.
3. **Enjoy the process:** Creativity takes time. When you focus on the process rather than the result, you can free yourself from walls that you create and enjoy the creative journey.
4. **Rest:** Relaxation is essential in the creative process. When you rest and engage in activities that you enjoy, you are charging your creative batteries. Once you have rested, you can then begin to work on creative work again with a newfound energy.

Kadavy emphasizes the importance of managing your mind and your mental health. He argues time and time again that in order to be productive and successful, you must not simply have a task-oriented mindset but a mindfulness of your mind.

Recommended Reading

Kadavy, David (2020), *Mind Management, Not Time Management*, Kadavy, Inc.

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Carson Solley is a graduate student from Decatur, Alabama. Carson earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. While at Samford, Carson concentrated in data analytics and sports marketing. Carson was the Team Lead for two projects with the New Orleans Saints and interned with the Birmingham Legion and the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame. After receiving his MBA, Carson plans to work in finance.



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