

## ECLO Conference Prague

22 – 23 May 2006

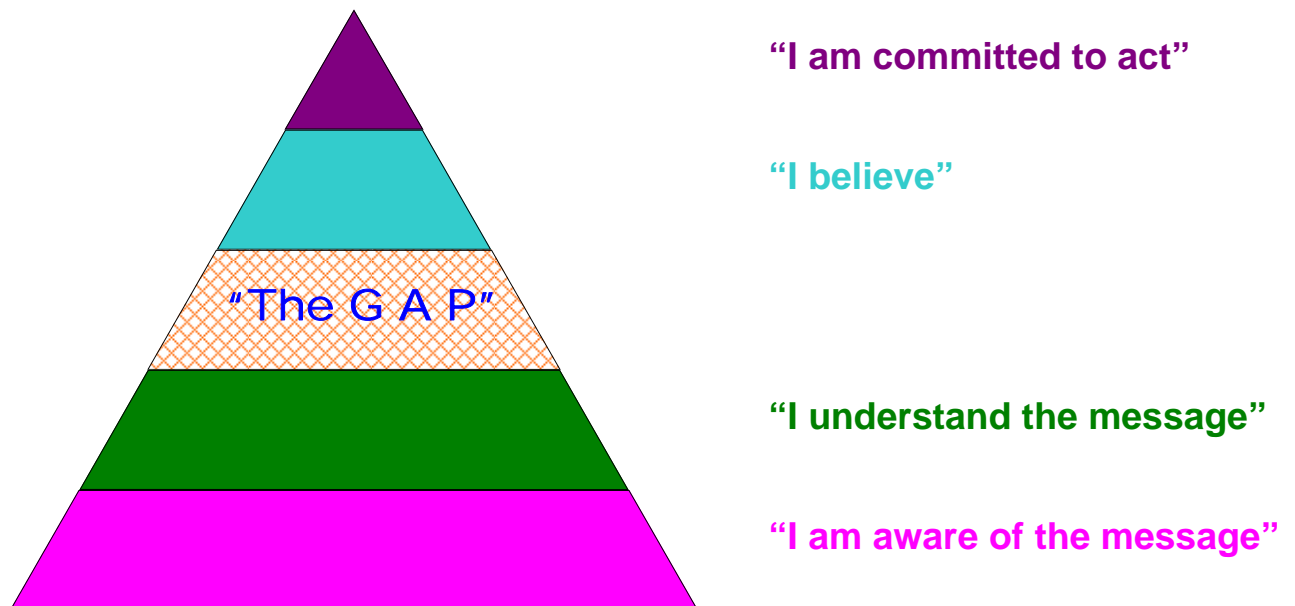
Engagement Forum – Tim Andrews B.A. (Hons.) P.S.E. (Oxford) Cert.Ed.

### Narrowing the Gap on Employee Engagement

Engagement – a ‘buzz word’ for the New Millennium? It is often over used. “Coalition forces are **engaging** groups of enemy forces”, “Managing, sustaining and **engaging** the workforce”, to give two examples of common usage.

More and more employers are finding that their employees are either actively engaged or dis-engaged depending on the individual, their role, their department and the company outline as a whole.

The Chrysler Group came out of the merger between Daimler-Benz AG and Chrysler Corporation in 1998. They wanted to achieve new levels of performance. They began to develop a new strategy to engage employees to be more knowledgeable about business targets. It took the form of this pyramid to help convert employee’s understanding into commitment using a dialogue approach.



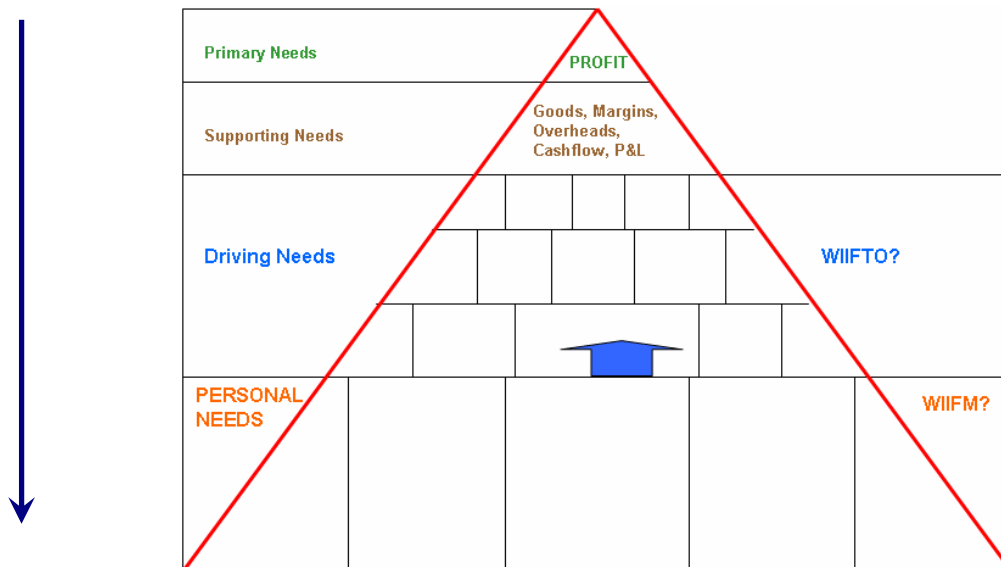
(adapted from Houtman T, 1998)

Houtman, who created the pyramid model shown on Page 1, wanted to demonstrate the need to close this gap, however it requires employees to firmly believe:

- “My work matters”
- “I am respected and appreciated”
- “My voice is heard”

This is similar, yet far removed, from the Triangle of Needs created for Stretch Learning’s clients by myself and my associate Peter Brook, from REL Sales Consulting.

Peter and I firmly believe that to truly engage PEOPLE as human ‘beings’, rather than human ‘doings’ will challenge Houtman’s model of engagement:

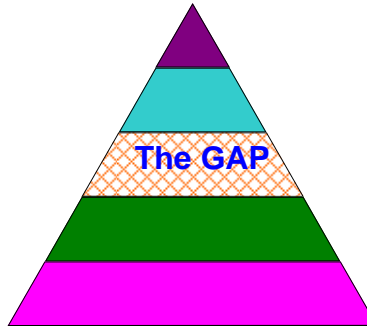


If you look at the shape of our model you will see that people connected to the roles / areas within their sphere of influence, ie: CEO / Board Member at the top of the triangle, and their understanding of the other areas of the organisation, following down the arrow, becomes more disconnected the deeper it goes.

Our Gap is where the blue arrow is, in the centre of the model itself. This is created by the mis-match of what the business is excited and engaged by – What’s in it for the Organisation (WIIFTO), and what excites and engages the individual – What’s in it for Me (WIIFM?).

This gap is where I have been operating my consultancy for organisations over the past 20 years.

So, to take the Houtman model of “converting understanding into commitment” (from an employee standpoint), there needs to be a shift in top down commitment and thinking, particularly when cascading key messages throughout the organisation.



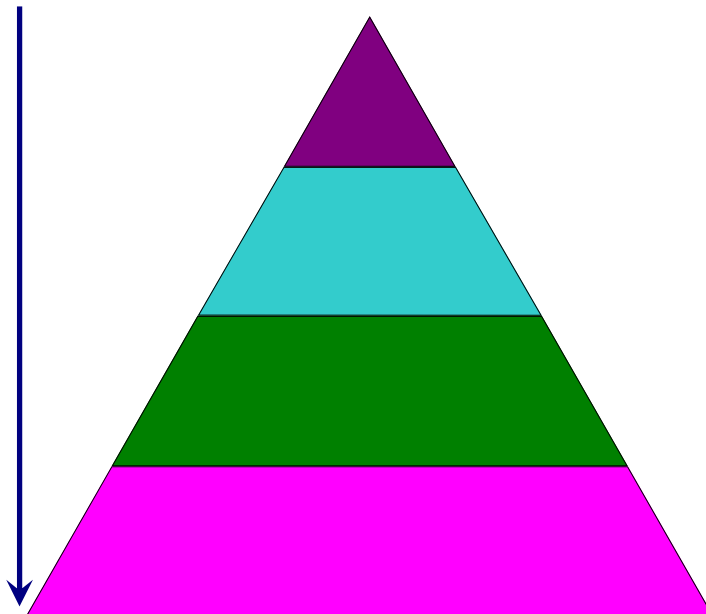
**“I am committed to act”**

**“I believe”**

**“I understand the message”**

**“I am aware of the message”**

From a Senior Manager standpoint, perhaps it should read:



**“I am committed to engage”**

**“I believe I can deliver**

**“I have simplified the message”**

**“I can help people to buy into this”**

This firmly puts the emphasis on senior people in the business to **easily** convert complex messages into meaningful chunks for employees. The more WIIFM? questions that are answered by our employees themselves, the higher the chance of a more highly engaged workforce.

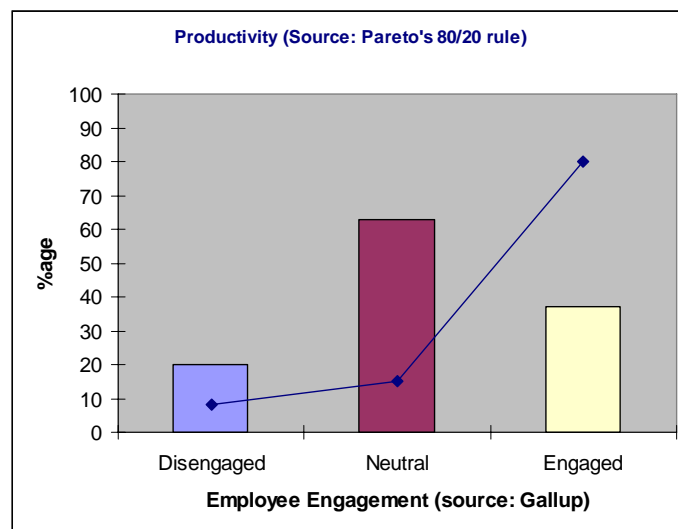
You may also notice that the new model has no gap section. If a senior manager, or subject matter expert, models this approach as part of their engagement cascade methodology, this helps to reduce the 'gap' and increase receiver 'buy in' to the key messages being received.

## How Important is this to you and your Organisation?

Let's consider some facts about Employee Engagement from The Gallup Organisation.

A survey by the Gallup Organisation showed that disengaged employees cost British business between £37.2 billion and £38.9 billion per year — due to low employee retention, low productivity and high absentee levels.

***The question is what could poor employee engagement be costing your business?***



- Across two surveys, 2 years apart, the Gallup Organisation found that over 80% of the employees they questioned lacked any real commitment to their jobs.
- Research shows that organisations with higher employee engagement ratings can have staff turnover rates of between 4% and 20% lower than similar businesses with poor levels of employee engagement
- Research also shows that higher employee engagement impacts on Customer Loyalty, raising this between 2% - 4%, and on Profit Margins, raising them from between 2% - 5%.
- Disengaged employees miss twice as many days of work per year, on average, as their fully engaged colleagues and many of them would not recommend their company, or its products, to others.

***Moving people into a more engaged position positively impacts your business – at no additional people cost!***

How do you decide who needs to be moved?

How do you re-engage those that are delivering nothing?

How do you move people from a neutral stance to a positive one?

## **So What..... does Engagement mean to Me?**

Engagement – a social process by which people create a sense of purpose for themselves, especially when linked to:

- Change initiatives
- New strategy
- Transformation
- Higher output and performance

A sample group of Learning Practitioners, academics and senior managers, attending the ECLO Conference 2006 in Prague, were challenged to answer the above question: So What ... does Engagement mean to me?

Below are the responses:

### **Group 1**

<p><b>Attitude</b>  <b>Context</b>  <b>Respect</b>  <b>Presence</b>  <b>Energy</b></p>	<p><b>Liking and Attraction</b>  <b>Positive Emotions</b>  <b>Concentration</b>  <b>Immersion</b></p>
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## So What ... does Engagement mean to me?

### Group 2

<b>Mutual understanding and action</b>	<b>Respect for Differences</b>
<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Responsibility and more work</b>
<b>Attachment</b>	<b>Love</b>
<b>Passion</b>	<b>Enthusiasm</b>
<b>Connecting with others</b>	<b>Having fun</b>
<b>Empathy</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
<b>Sharing</b>	<b>Emotions</b>
<b>Desire</b>	<b>Involvement</b>
<b>Participation</b>	

### Group 3

<b>Meeting of spirits</b>	<b>Fulfilment</b>
<b>Passionate commitment</b>	<b>In deep</b>
<b>Promise</b>	<b>Valued</b>
<b>Preparation Time</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>Partnership</b>	<b>Trust</b>
<b>Listening and hearing</b>	<b>Inspiration</b>
<b>Contractual</b>	<b>Power</b>
<b>Connecting</b>	<b>Emergence and Immersion</b>
<b>Presence, connecting, be there</b>	<b>Learning</b>

### Group 4

<b>Willingness</b>	<b>Stability</b>
<b>Working conditions</b>	<b>Engagement</b>
<b>Emotion</b>	<b>Invest the energy</b>
<b>Try to understand</b>	<b>Reflect</b>
<b>React</b>	<b>Involvement</b>
<b>Interaction</b>	<b>Dialogue</b>
<b>Action</b>	

## So What? .... does Engagement mean to me?

### Group 5

<b>Hard work and fun</b>	<b>Interaction</b>
<b>People and organisations</b>	<b>Attention</b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>Reflection</b>	<b>Start and end</b>
<b>Involvement</b>	<b>Attitude</b>
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>Marriage</b>
<b>Friendship</b>	<b>Business</b>

### Group 6

<b>Learning from others</b>	<b>Ideas for later</b>
<b>Open minded</b>	<b>Paying attention</b>
<b>Fun</b>	<b>Involved</b>
<b>Positive</b>	<b>Too engaged</b>
<b>Active participation</b>	<b>Connected</b>
<b>Committed</b>	<b>Contributions</b>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Defences down</b>
<b>Whole greater sum of parts</b>	

### Group 7

<b>Personal and professional development</b>	<b>Better contribution to the service of society</b>
<b>Contact with others with warmth</b>	<b>Listening</b>
<b>Challenge, fun, interest, useful</b>	<b>Adjust with others</b>
<b>Curiosity</b>	<b>Growth, evolution</b>
<b>Freedom</b>	<b>Ideas</b>
<b>Values</b>	<b>Conversation, change</b>

## So What? .... does Engagement mean to me?

### Group 8

<p>Questions, understanding and empathy</p> <p>Joint sense of direction</p> <p>Commitment and loyalty</p> <p>With others for specific outcome / purpose</p> <p>Absorbed concentrated, forget time, place and self</p> <p>Diamond ring</p> <p>Active not passive</p>	<p>Discourse with people</p> <p>Having energy</p> <p>Organisation's emotional ties</p> <p>Channel view – being in flow</p> <p>Frustration with others who are not engaged – why – Because passion!</p> <p>Additional ideas – synergies</p> <p>Its about giving and receiving</p>
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As you can see, what is engaging for one person, may be a different experience for others around them.

This is also brought to attention when the same set of learners were asked: What does Engagement mean to an Organisation I am connected with?

### Organisation Benefits

<p><b>Loyalty to Organisation</b></p> <p>Keen to promote the organisation's products / services</p> <p>Sharing and wanting to implement organizational visions</p> <p>More research output</p> <p>Better Performance</p> <p>More fun = more innovation</p> <p>More quality in work and services</p> <p>Marketing</p>	<p><b>Proud to work for organisation</b></p> <p>Your success = my success</p> <p>Your problem = my problem ↓</p> <p><b>Mutual Ownership</b></p> <p>Enhanced customer service</p> <p>Better customer service = customer loyalty and trust = €€€</p> <p>Engagement is the necessary condition for all production</p> <p>Publicity</p>
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## Organisation Benefits / Contd...

<b>Reduced cost</b>	<b>Processes</b>
<b>Good product knowledge</b>	<b>Customer delight</b>
<b>Good image</b> <b>Handling speed = volume + complex questions</b>	<b>Satisfied clients</b>
<b>National security</b>	<b>Healthy work culture</b>
<b>Rejoining [conference] next year</b>	<b>De-partitioning</b>
<b>Results</b>	<b>Innovation</b>
<b>Staff sickness decreases</b>	<b>Staff turnover decreases</b>
<b>Staff proud to work there</b>	<b>Knowledge work cannot be done without engagement</b>
<b>Participation at conferences</b>	<b>Knowledge of work is nothing but engagement</b>
<b>Helpfulness to customers</b>	<b>It is part of the basic values, but still with many different levels</b>

## Team Benefits

<b>Working for the group / team</b>	<b>Making shared commitments a priority</b>
<b>Increasing cross-functional and inter-disciplinary teamwork.</b>	<b>Share values and beliefs</b>
<b>Work on same goal together</b>	<b>Team work</b>
<b>Supportive work environment</b>	<b>Sharing willing to learn and understand needs / wants of clients and businesses</b>
<b>Access to networks</b>	<b>Acting on Business Goals and activities of others</b>
<b>Connecting with a range of people for mutual benefit</b>	<b>Aware of services of whole organisation</b>
<b>Communicating and being interested in clients and businesses</b>	<b>Co-operation</b>
<b>Active participation in change programmes</b>	<b>Searching for different way to achieve goals (innovating)</b>
<b>Better network – increased sharing of knowledge</b>	<b>Commitment to the aims of the group and to the team members and stakeholders I work with</b>
<b>Personal and social support</b>	<b>Friends</b>
<b>Team spirit</b>	<b>Making allowances</b>
<b>Long term relationship contact building (networks)</b>	<b>Joint actions</b>
<b>Friendship</b>	

What does Engagement mean to an Organisation I am connected with ...

## Employee Benefits

Emotional ties	Short term personal 'sacrifice' for longer term shared gain
Increased employee satisfaction	Desire to get involved
To do my best, taking into account the available time devoted to it	Long term commitment
Make a contribution	Paying attention
Thinking about	The only way to grow
Positive energy	Thought leadership
Improving performance	Better health
Motivation	Success
Active participation	Higher activity
Positive Energy	Dealing with change
Fun at work	Communication between members outwith conferences
Real change to people's lives	More creativity and use of human potential
Loyalty	Visible enthusiasm
Caring	Inspiration
Trust	If you are not engaged nothing happens
Growth and development	

## Not Yet Achieved Engagement

<b>Feel disengaged due to poor leadership and support from board</b>	<b>Serious issue to be addressed</b>
<b>Living dead employees</b>	<b>Poor quality work</b>
<b>High absenteeism</b>	<b>Lack of energy / ambition</b>
<b>Uncompetitive</b>	<b>Difficult to recruit</b>
<b>Punishment</b>	<b>Bullying</b>
<b>Victimisation</b>	<b>Inquisitions such as that conducted in 15<sup>th</sup> to 16 centuries</b>
<b>It also means stress and several negative things</b>	<b>Not much currently – still learning how to!</b>
<b>Unproud external perceptions and relations</b>	<b>Accepting the situation as opposed to finding ways to succeed, influence, change</b>

Individuals are encouraged to develop, increase and sustain their capabilities through core principles unique to Stretch Learning:

1. Developing **PURPOSE** through thinking What's in it for Me as an individual and What's in it for the Organisation.
2. Taking **OWNERSHIP** and responsibility for their language, attitude and behaviour when communicating with others in the organisation.
3. Modelling **SAFETY** when creating an environment for others to learn more and making it OK to 'break the mould'.
4. Helping others to **ENGAGE** with key messages being cascaded within the organisation and recognising that everyone has a unique talent.

## **References**

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**Stretch Learning**

[www.stretchlearning.com](http://www.stretchlearning.com)

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