

Organic Commitment: Grass Roots Employee Engagement

Creating Shared Success at Your Organization



Introduction

This document describes a grass roots, organic approach to building sustainable workforce commitment. Our goal is to provide a fresh perspective on the traditional subjects of employee engagement and alignment, and to introduce an approach to help you better understand what we believe it takes to be a highly successful leader [and employee] that fully anticipates today's reality.


Employee Engagement

In 2006, The Conference Board published "Employee Engagement, A Review of Current Research and Its Implications," a study of studies that summarized research efforts by such firms as Gallup, Towers Perrin, Blessing White, and others. The Conference Board developed a blended definition of engagement as 'a heightened emotional connection that an employee feels for his or her organization, that influences him or her to exert greater discretionary effort to his or her work.' An engaged employee is one who is fully involved in, and enthusiastic about, his or her work, and thus will act in a way that furthers their organization's interests. One key theme of all the studies: the direct relationship with one's manager is the strongest of all drivers of commitment and engagement.

In 2009, the Corporate Leadership Council published "Improving Employee Engagement and Performance in the Economic Downturn," reporting results from a study of 60+ companies. Key results included:

- ▶ Employee engagement is the extent to which employees commit to something or someone in their organization, how hard they work, and how long they stay as a result of that commitment.
- ▶ There are two types of commitment: Rational Commitment, the extent to which employees believe that managers, teams, or organizations have their self-interest in mind (financial, developmental, or professional); and Emotional Commitment, The extent to which employees value, enjoy, and believe in their jobs, managers, teams, or organizations.
- ▶ The outputs of commitment are discretionary effort [employee willingness to go "above and beyond"] which leads to performance [in theory – what about alignment?] and intent to stay which leads to retention.

There are dozens of other recent studies about engagement, commitment, motivation and other related topics. Many focus on measurement approaches to and the business benefits of engagement. Some focus on definitional issues of these concepts. Others provide data to support key engagement drivers, while emphasizing the idea that best practices most likely vary by organization.



Another Perspective

Today, there remains significant attention on measuring engagement, and on organization wide effort to generate or enhance it. We believe much of this work, while on the surface helpful to overall business performance, misses a great opportunity to create a platform to transform business performance. How do you really build engagement, in a sustainable way, with employee's today? Is engagement enough? Whose responsibility is it? Where does it start?

Contemporary insight into and practices about engagement is available all over the web. One blog string (thanks to RiseSmart) summarizes a different point of view:

"HR departments fired up about employee engagement scores...eesh. I think the results would be similar to teachers fired up about...standardized test scores. That's a huge disconnect in encouraging, allowing, inspiring lifelong learning in the latter and interest, motivation and engagement in the former."

"The problem seems to be that executives see "employee engagement" as the next great initiative or program that HR departments should implement across the organization as a quick fix. World class companies like Southwest Airlines make employee engagement a way of life and it's something that they've taken the last 30 years to build into their culture. It's not a strategy or program to them, it's just part of their corporate DNA."

"Ok, I know I am going to face a lot of flak for this, but I am going to blurt it out anyway. HR people who think their holy grail is increasing their employee engagement score are sorely mistaken. Employee engagement is important, no doubt. However what it does is create energy for discretionary effort by the employees for the organization. What then? How should HR people leverage that enormous source of discretionary energy towards the really important things? Unfortunately, not too many people think about that. Not HR people. Not business heads. In my opinion they all aim low."

"I can't take it anymore. I need to tell you something. I don't believe in employee engagement. I know, I know. You're shocked. Let me tell you something simple: I don't think it's the responsibility of an organization to ensure that the employees are engaged. This isn't preschool. We're all adults. We have college degrees, mortgages, and children. Responsibilities. Companies have a responsibility to be profitable, respectful to their workers, and to behave in a fiscally prudent manner. Employees get paid to work. They make choices about their level of engagement based on all sorts of factors including values, personal beliefs, and faith in the organization and products/services that are being offered."

While we at BPI group continue to believe in the wisdom of organization focus on engagement, we also believe most approaches fall far short of the results desired.

Engagement vs. Alignment?

Employee alignment is a distinct concept from engagement, although it is often described in ways that overlap with engagement.

Alignment is ‘effort directed to actually working on the right things, consistent with business strategies, in the right way, from the manager’s and organization’s perspective.’ Being aligned is usually meant to mean that the individual also buys-in to an organization’s purpose, values and vision.

From an organization’s perspective, engagement is about capturing discretionary effort, while alignment occurs when effort is directed to actually doing the ‘right’ things.

Engagement without alignment does not guarantee performance. Common sense dictates that any effort related to employee engagement must be closely linked with efforts at alignment, for the investment and effort to be fully leverageable. Engagement is necessary but not sufficient for sustained performance.

One key organization tool to drive alignment is a performance management process. However, we also all know that most efforts at traditional performance management serve to *reduce* engagement and commitment. What can organizations, managers and individuals do to drive engagement and alignment together?

Organic Commitment

We believe commitment is a key word in this dialogue. Organizations need commitment from the people who work there, and individuals want to be committed to something. It’s a strong, more relevant and energetic word than engagement (overused) or alignment (a word absent of passion). Also, commitment is a two way concept at its core – organizations can choose to commit to individuals, and individuals can choose to commit to organizations. The terms engagement and alignment feel less mutual, and in ways are more weighted to what individuals have to do for the organization.

Organic means grass roots, starting with employees and managers. The term organic in this context anticipates that best practices approaches to engagement vary by organization, by situation, and by individual. We believe commitment is best built at the grass roots, by individuals.

Organic commitment is a contemporary concept that fuses several important, related concepts – free market, shared success, engagement, alignment, communication, personal commitment, and respect – to provide the platform for sustainable, successful relationships between organizations and individuals into the future.

or·gan·ic *-adjective*

... arising as a natural outgrowth; **grass roots**

... basic, natural, underlying

...complete, total, not lacking, exhaustive

Changing Context Requires Changes in Thinking and Behavior

Most people and organizations understand there have been significant marketplace changes caused by changes in technology, globalization, government regulations, demographic swings, world politics, and financial markets. Plus our difficult and dynamic economy. And people in the workforce are changing so much we are assigning labels to ourselves.

These changes, which taken together define a new reality for each of us, require significant adjustment for leaders and for individuals to be effective and achieve their goals. It's not just our difficult economy that mandates changes in thinking about success and sustainability. There are bigger forces at play.

Do you believe you need to adapt? Have you changed how you lead and develop your people? What are you doing differently to manage your own success? Or, are you thinking, 'I'm fine, I don't really need to make any adjustments, it's our employees who need to change...'

Our Reality

What's changed? Just about everything:

- ▶ Leaders have to sort through much more information...there's almost too much to know, even in your own niche
- ▶ Economic, social, and political events in one part of the world impact the entire world marketplace...and your business
- ▶ Jobs are broader and not as well defined...creating uncertainty
- ▶ The job market has invaded your company....it may be easier for people to look for new roles on the outside than on the inside
- ▶ Social networking connects everyone, all the time...the idea of control in the workplace is becoming quaint
- ▶ Younger people have different attitudes about work, they're smarter, and there is significantly more diversity in the workplace...different people need different leadership
- ▶ Innovations and technology improvements impact operations almost every day... requiring us to learn faster to keep up
- ▶ Complexity leads to confusion, and reduces real communication because leaders don't know the answers...and there's no time
- ▶ Continued economic challenges drive significant job changes...each of us must make more decisions
- ▶ Cost pressure and competition require regular business adjustments...faster
- ▶ The workplace is more like a free market...with more balancing of power between organizations and individuals

Free Market = Organic Change in the Workplace

We believe that, these changes are indicators of the emergence of traditional free market factors into the labor market and workplace.

In the US and other countries, there is a 'mega trend' movement within organizations, as well as within labor markets, to a more free system than a controlled system. These organic changes in our market require basic changes in behavior for organizations, leaders and individuals.

A key element of a free market is free will and choice, based on business realities: 'We agree to work together as long as it makes sense for each of us to do so.' There is a balancing of power between the buyer and seller [employer and employee], driven more by supply and demand, and not as much by artificial restraints like loyalty, security, fear, complacency, poor information, tradition, or even regulation.

Many companies have adapted in part to this new marketplace. Examples include more open job posting systems, Intranets, more movement of poorly matched talent out of the organization, more pay for performance, more career self management tools, and more alternate work arrangements. These realities enable and even promote free market – the free movement of talent to where it needs to be, when it needs to be there – in response to current, rapidly changing realities. Even the concept of engagement is a concession that individuals have voluntary decisions to make about how to apply their energies, to the benefit of the organization.

And the world outside the organization, in many ways, is adjusting faster. Examples includes sophisticated job boards and technology that provides quick, almost universal access to the market, social networking, younger people focused more on their career than on their employer, and globalization and outsourcing.

The advantage of an 'internal free market' for organizations is the encouragement of innovation, efficiency and entrepreneurship, which are classic positive outcomes of a free enterprise system. The key is to gain these advantages without some of the potential disadvantages of free enterprise including lack of fairness, the 'rich getting richer' and the wrong people getting ahead for the wrong reasons. What organization solutions do you have in place to help leverage the positives? Mitigate the negatives? How are managers and employees adjusting to this new reality?

free mar·ket *-noun*

... a term that describes the exchange of services, where each exchange is undertaken as voluntary between parties

- people undertake a business exchange because each expects to gain from it (win – win)
- people will repeat the exchange next time (or refuse to) because the expectation has proved correct (or incorrect) in the recent past
- barriers to free market include coercion, poor information, tradition, and laws. Some are needed, others are hindrances to achieving shared success

This graphic provides a snapshot of how organizations are adapting to changes in the market and workplace. In the past, organizations were much more top down in their thinking. Because the overall market was slower, this approach worked, although it created dependency in employees. More recently, organizations have valued the input of employee, encouraging and welcoming participation. Into the future, individuals and organizations must work together to achieve shared success in response to the requirements of the market, although the balance between organization and individual in a specific situation may fall out of balance at a point in time [for the short term], based on current market conditions.



For the foreseeable future, we should be prepared for more free market impact on our careers and workplace. Efficiency and global competition demand it. While there may be more government regulation related to employee rights under our current U.S. administration, these changes will most likely in the short and midterm, further the critical free market concept around balance of power between the individual and the organization.

Shared Success: Basic Rule of Any Marketplace

Because relationships are voluntary in a free market, organizations and individuals need to adapt both thinking and behaviors to be effective.

The first, most important adjustment is best summarized by the term— **shared success**.

Shared success and free market thinking concede that win-lose relationships are not sustainable, especially when information and opportunity are readily available.

shared suc·cess *-concept*

...a fundamental tenant of any free market, where people and organizations work together as long as both parties benefit (win-win), or if there is a believed promise of future benefit

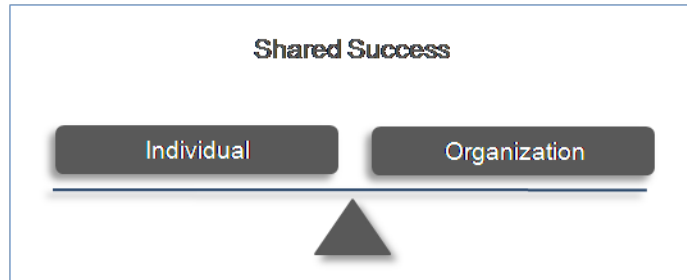
... a contemporary philosophy of work that maximizes **both engagement and alignment at the same time** for an individual and organization

Shared success must occur, or at least be promised, for relationships to be formed, to be effective, and to last. Shared success occurs when organizations, managers and employees actively work to understand and then meet each other's needs. The result is a balancing between individual needs and organization needs, to create shared success.

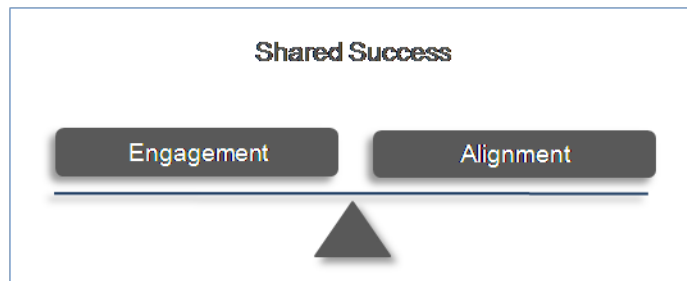
Many would argue that during the economic crisis of 2009, this scale on the left fell significantly out of balance because the organization has become too dominant, forcing individuals to be compliant rather than committed.

In addition, shared success combines the traditional concepts of engagement and alignment. One without the other doesn't make any sense in any marketplace.

What does the free market concept of shared success really mean for organizations and individuals? The implications are far reaching, especially related to more traditional, top down management and engagement initiatives. How will you build shared success?



Shared Success requires a balancing of individual and organization requirements.



Shared Success occurs when there is a balanced consideration of both engagement and alignment

Organic Commitment

We all understand the world has changed, and this white paper sets forth the proposition that organizations, managers, and employees must adapt significantly to achieve their goals in this new world. And these adjustments start with a way of thinking – a philosophy of shared success.

Organic commitment is the ‘how’ people work together to balance engagement and alignment considerations, to achieve shared success in organizations. The **ten principles of organic commitment** are:

1. The primary outcome of organic commitment is shared success.
2. The most effective road to shared success is through a set of integrated activities (organic commitment) practiced by an individual and his or her manager.
3. The specific definition of shared success, and the best organic commitment activities to be implemented in a situation, has as many variations as there are people. Organic commitment accounts for these differences by focusing on grass roots issues and approaches.
4. Organic commitment is fluid and dynamic. The balance between individual and manager [organization] needs and priorities often fall out of balance. Organic commitment works to restore and maintain a balanced consideration of both individual and organization needs, to sustain shared success for the individual and the organization.
5. Meaningful, regular and balanced communication about important needs of individuals and managers [and the organization and marketplace] is necessary for organic commitment. At its core, organic commitment provides a clear link between individual and organization outcomes that create shared success.
6. People have changed. Our next generation is smarter, adapts faster, and puts up with less than ever before. We have taught them to trust themselves first, the organization second. Any serious effort for successful engagement and alignment of our next generation must be through organic commitment and shared success thinking.
7. Central control of engagement and alignment is ill advised, if not impossible. People don’t want to ‘be engaged’, nor do they want to ‘be aligned.’ From an individual’s perspective, being aligned or engaged feels like something is being ‘done to me.’ Today, people want their needs to be met, to accomplish their goals, and they understand to do so they must also meet the organization’s needs. Organic commitment accomplishes this result.

or·gan·ic com·mit·ment

–concept

... grass roots, integrated practices by people in organizations that promote shared success, most importantly of which is sustainable shared success behaviors by individuals, with support from their direct managers

....the state where individuals are engaged, aligned and able to sustain performance focused on shared success

8. Efforts to achieve alignment in our new world needs to dramatically change. Top down alignment is too slow in a rapidly changing marketplace. More focus needs to be on people aligning themselves, through organic engagement.
9. Engagement and alignment efforts should not serve to create dependency by individuals. Organic commitment involves active participation by the 'grass roots' which is necessary for sustained performance in a rapidly changing world where initiative and out-of-the-box thinking are no longer nice to have, but critical price of entry requirements.
10. Organic commitment is founded on the concept of respect. While the definition of respect varies by culture and by individual, respect is necessary to achieve shared success.

Fundamentally, organic commitment is not about the big things you say, it's about the little things that you do. Our marketplace no longer allows a disconnect between words and action. As an individual, manager or organization, your brand is transparent.

Why is Organic Commitment Important to Business Success?

Extensive research, both in the academic and business communities, has shown clear links between highly engaged employees and the following: bottom line performance, customer satisfaction and loyalty, employee absence and turnover, organizational citizenship, and creativity and innovation.

Some noteworthy data around engagement and commitment include:

- ▶ "Actively disengaged" workers are costing US businesses \$300 billion a year in productivity losses. The current percentage of employees who are actively disengaged at 17%. That's about 22.5 million US workers. Each one of these angry and alienated workers is causing their employers roughly \$13k in yearly productivity losses on average [Gallup]
- ▶ Employees with the highest level of commitment perform 20% better and are 87% less likely to leave the organization, which indicates that engagement is linked to organizational performance. For example, at the beverage company of MolsonCoors, it was found that engaged employees were five times less likely than non-engaged employees to have a safety incident and seven times less likely to have a lost-time safety incident [HRMagazine]

- ▶ The results of Hewitt Associates annual employee engagement survey of 1500 global companies shows that for every 10% improvement in employee commitment to the organization there is a corresponding 6% increase in their discretionary effort, and as well, reduces their likelihood departure by 9%. [Hewitt]
- ▶ Analysis of research across 200 organizations shows that moving a workforce of 10,000 employees from low to high engagement can have a \$35+ million impact on the bottom line. [DDI]
- ▶ A study of 664,000 employees from around the world when compared to key business ratios showed a 52% gap in one year performance improvement in operating income between companies with highly engaged employees versus companies with low engagement scores. [ISR]
- ▶ Watson Wyatt 2001 research across 750 companies showed that total return to share holders over a 5 year period:
 - Companies with strong engagement + 64%
 - Companies with weak engagement + 21%
- ▶ Engaged employees generate 43% more revenue than disengaged ones [Hay Group]
- ▶ Engaged employees take an average of 2.69 sick days per year; the disengaged take 6.19 [Gallup]
- ▶ 70% of engaged employees indicate they have a good understanding of how to meet customer needs, while only 17% of non-engaged employees say the same. [(Manpower)]
- ▶ Engaged employees are 87% less likely to leave the organization than the disengaged [Corporate Leadership Council]
- ▶ Companies with engaged employees boosted operating income by 19% compared with companies with the lowest percentage of engaged employees, which saw operating income fall 33%. For S&P 500 companies, significant improvement in employee engagement increases revenue by \$95 million. [Watson Wyatt]
- ▶ DDI's research reveals that only 19 percent of employees are highly engagement. The Corporate Executive Board, looking at levels of engagement across 50,000 employees around the world, placed only 11 percent in what they dubbed "true believer" category. Towers Perrin's recent report is slightly more optimistic, finding just 17 percent of the 35,000 employees surveyed to be highly engaged.
- ▶ Moving from low to high engagement can result in a 21 percent increase in performance [Corporate Executive Board]

Organic Commitment Starts with People – One Individual and One Manager

To drive organic commitment and achieve shared success, managers and employees each need to start by efficiently asking and answering these five questions.

- ▶ What do individuals need to do differently to stay up with the changing needs of their managers [organizations]?
- ▶ How can managers [organizations] effectively communicate their changing needs?
- ▶ How can individuals effectively communicate their own changing needs?
- ▶ What do managers [organizations] need to do differently to stay up with the changing needs of individuals?
- ▶ How can managers and individuals integrate answers to these questions to create shared success?

Focus on these Q&A's needs to be part of an organization's, manager's and individual's DNA to sustain success in a free market. What's required is a grass roots tool to facilitate this thinking and action to build shared success.

What's Your Plan?

As a manager, do you have a plan to enhance organic commitment of your team?
And as an individual, what's your plan to enhance your own organic commitment?

Organic Commitment Using the Q5 Framework

Organic commitment is just an interesting concept unless it can be easily operationalized and sustained. What's needed are tools that individuals and managers can use, working together to achieve shared success outcomes at the grass roots level.

The Q5 Framework is such a tool. It provides the building blocks necessary for an individual to develop and implement a plan to achieve shared success, which will benefit both the individual and organization. Q5 also serves as an integrated tool for a manager to support individual [and therefore team and organization] success.

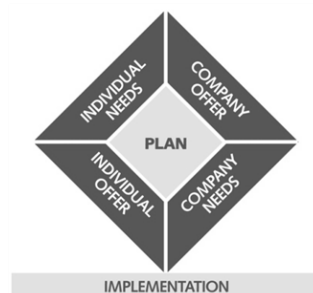
The Q5 Framework was designed to do two things:

- ▶ Help people better understand what's going on around them, and then to develop a personal action plan to achieve shared success.
- ▶ Provide a tool to be used by managers/coaches of people to help support them in achieving shared success.

Q·5 Frame·work – model

...a grass roots tool to implement organic commitment

...a structure that promotes thought and action that helps to build shared success



Q5 Helps People See Reality from a Fresh Perspective

Q5 helps people work together to enhance organic commitment. It provides a process for individuals and managers to collect, organize, and analyze information into five key components:

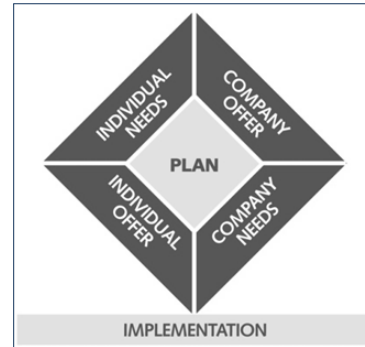
1. The individual employee's needs and aspirations.
2. The individual employee's offer to the organization.
3. The organization's needs.
4. The organization's offer to the individual.
5. An action plan to achieve shared success, which is to be implemented by the individual with the support of the manager and organization.

Each quadrant of the Q5 Framework contains a flexible set of tools to build facts that can be discussed by the individual and manager, to create and implement an action plan to achieve organic commitment. The action plan is highly situational, but is always governed by the concept of shared success.

Q5 Framework Principles

Key elements of Q5 include:

- ▶ Q5 graphically places the individual and organization on equal footing, consistent with free market realities. Q5 defines the employee – employer relationship in a contemporary way, and provides a framework for free market thinking by individual and managers.
- ▶ The picture shows a fragile balance in the relationship between the individual and the organization. The model asserts that when change occurs in one of the quadrants, there must be compensating change of some kind in one or more of the others, to maintain balance and sustain the relationship. In the short term, imbalance is tolerated [although less and less in a free market, because there are fewer artificial ‘balancers’ such as security or loyalty]. However, over the long term [which is defined by each individual and organization], imbalance ends the relationship.
- ▶ Q5 shows in one integrated picture where there are potential engagement gaps and alignment gaps for an individual. It also at the same time begins to clarify potential action to close those gaps to build shared success.
- ▶ The upper left quadrant [Q1] is also called the energy quadrant. Energy to sustain performance occurs when an individual’s needs are met in a satisfactory way. The individual has primary responsibility [with support from the organization and manager] for meeting his or her own needs through actions that create shared success.
- ▶ Q5 provides an agenda for meetings between individuals and managers, serving as a communications tool, career development approach and coaching model that helps to build engagement, alignment and trust.
- ▶ For individuals, Q5 serves multiple, important purposes. It is a framework for self discovery and development, it promotes personal adaptability and change readiness, and it helps to enhance satisfaction and performance in real time.
- ▶ For managers, Q5 provides a way to connect with people and provide feedback and support within a context of shared success, to enhance engagement, alignment and performance.
- ▶ For organizations, Q5 is a tool to help leaders define an approach to build and unify a new culture and common language that drives performance and at the same time supports individual success.



Q5 was designed by BPI group and has been used with 50+ organizations and thousands of individuals in a variety of engagements to achieve defined business objectives.

Key situational uses of Q5 include:

- ▶ Supporting large scale changes such as mergers and new strategic direction, by preventing disengagement and misalignment, at the same time
- ▶ Supporting manager as coach initiatives,
- ▶ Reducing employee dependency or increasing self direction and initiative,
- ▶ Enhancing development planning within performance management systems,
- ▶ Reducing turnover,
- ▶ Building career development processes, and
- ▶ Building organization wide engagement and alignment, one person at a time.

Q5 is a fusion of thinking from several disciplines including psychology, economics, organization behavior/development, and 'self help' literature. At its core, it provides an approach for people to adapt to the overarching changes in the world of work.

How Do Individuals and Managers Use Q5 to Build Shared Success?

The next section describes Q5 from the perspective of the individual and of the manager, and introduces how Q5 is used together by individuals and managers to build shared success and achieve business objectives.

Organic Commitment – The Individual

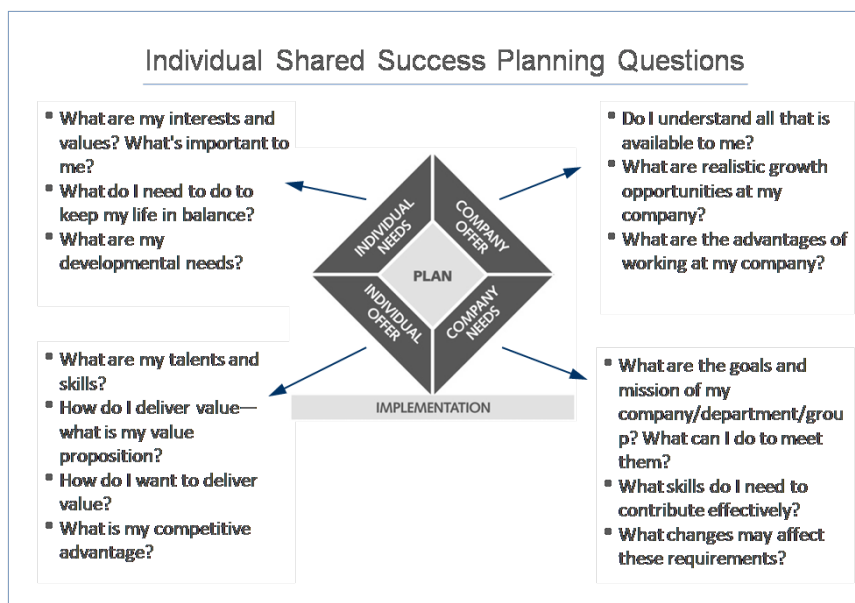
As the basic building block in the market and the organization, the individual has primary responsibility for developing an action plan to create shared success.

People need a personal philosophy and tools to understand current business reality, and to take appropriate action to ensure personal success, balanced with the success of the organization. Being out of balance results in dissatisfaction for the individual and/or the organization. And in a changing world, people need to constantly monitor the environment, to understand what is going on, and what to do.

In many ways, Q5 acts like a camera, allowing individuals to take a snapshot of current reality [“is that really how I look?”]. People can then use that understanding to develop and implement a plan. Q5 can also be used like a high-speed camera, helping take successive snapshots of the environment as it changes, so that the individual can adjust accordingly. The most effective approach to employee engagement is not just top down driven, nor just bottom up driven. Its balanced, designed to achieve shared success for all involved.

Understanding Individual Needs and Offer

Using the Q5 Framework to develop a success strategy means first taking an objective look at self and taking stock. Questions to ask: What are my values? What are the things that I care about? What motivates me? What are my goals and aspirations? What are my skills and talents? What experiences do I have? What are my development needs? How do I deliver value? How do I want to deliver value? What’s my competitive advantage?



Understanding The Organization's Needs and Offer

At the same time, it is critical to understand the organization's needs, its key strategies, how the individual's job contributes to those strategies, and the skill requirements necessary to succeed. People also need to fully understand the employer's offer. Why are you working here? What are the pros and cons? Is it really better anywhere else? How can I find out? Getting input from others is important in answering these questions effectively.

Analyzing Overlaps and Gaps

With a snapshot in place about the four most important factors regarding work, Q5 helps to take a hard look at that photo to see what's working and what is not working. Key questions include:

- ▶ What am I doing well to meet my organization's needs?
- ▶ What could I do better to meet my organization's needs?
- ▶ What is my organization doing well to meet my needs?
- ▶ What could my organization do better to meet my needs?

Personal Action Plan

The next step is to map out an action plan that will help decrease gaps between individual needs and offer, and those of the organization. Any effective plan will result in an outcome that meets both the needs of the individual and of the organization, at the same time. A plan can vary from suggesting a project, changing a behavior, learning a new skill, repairing a relationship, targeting a new role, changing focus on the current job, gathering more information, asking for help, or communicating more. There are as many variations as there are people and organizations.

Support is Needed

By building a plan [asking and answering these questions in each quadrant], individuals can better understand reality, look for gaps among each quadrant, and develop and implement an action plan to close those gaps and achieve shared success. However, individuals can do all of this much more effectively with the help of a manager who understands that shared success is important to the well being of the organization and to the individual.

Supporting Organic Commitment – The Manager

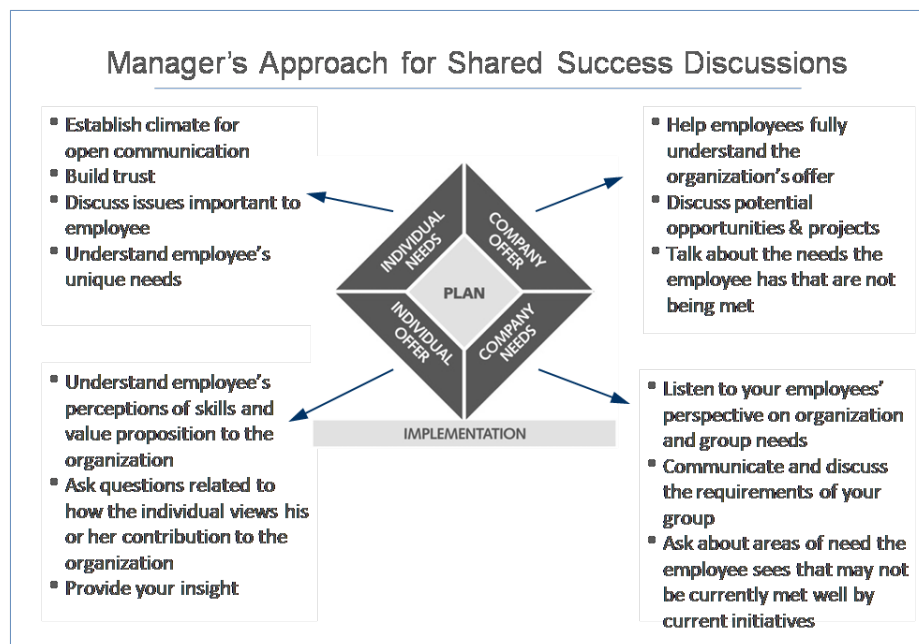
The Q5 Framework provides a shared agenda, between a manager and an employee, regarding topics that are important to each other. It also provides a straightforward system for leaders to prepare for meaningful discussions that focus on individual, team and organization success.

Shared Success Discussions

The most effective approach to employee commitment is not just top down driven, nor just bottom up driven. Its balanced, designed to achieve shared success for all involved.

The Q5 Framework facilitates effective discussions that:

- ▶ Balance individual needs (satisfaction, development) and company needs (performance, sustainability).
- ▶ Open communication about subjects important to improving individual and group performance.
- ▶ Address potential career opportunities within the organization, including in-position projects and development.
- ▶ Provide support for individuals so that they can become more effective partners in taking shared responsibility for their own development.
- ▶ Confirm an action plan for each individual that supports improved motivation, performance, and satisfaction.
- ▶ Provide a balanced context for discussion.



Role of the Manager in Building Shared Success

Q5 serves as a practical coaching model for managers. Communication about engagement, development and even alignment is sometimes avoided by managers because they have concern that the employee will be unrealistic, or because the manager is unsure about what to say or disclose.

What do managers and leaders need to do differently?

- ▶ **Focus on Shared Success.** There is no win-lose in today's workplace. It's either win-win, or lose-lose. If people feel they are losing and the organization is winning, they will not stay, or their contribution will begin to slide. What can managers do to help people balance an individual's Q5 Framework? Provide more information? Ask more questions? Be more flexible? Sell versus tell? Mentor more? Encourage more employee self reflection and personal development planning?
- ▶ **Plan More.** To further facilitate more meaningful communication, consider these questions before each meeting:
 - What is the employee doing well to meet our organization's/group's needs?
 - What could the employee do better to meet our organization's/group's needs?
 - What am I (or the organization) doing well to meet the individual's needs?
 - What could I (or the organization) do better to meet the individual's needs?
- ▶ **Talk More.** It's hard to build enough trust in one meeting to fully address shared success needs. The more discussions, the better. Q5 is a communications tool, helping individuals and managers talk about things important to each other.
- ▶ **Clarify Changes in the Organization's Needs.** Whenever managers sense changes in the needs of the organization, they must work on ways to communicate them to their people. Some argue that the key role of a leader is to simplify external complexities so the team can understand how those changes impact them, and how they need to adjust their offer to achieve shared success.
- ▶ **Assert Less Control.** As the free market enters the workplace, managers are less able to control everything. In fact, top down control creates significant conflict in an organization that is trying to respond to market needs in a timely basis. Delegate responsibility. Trust people to do their work. Ask people what they plan to do versus telling them what they should do. Use the Q5 Framework to communicate expectations.

Summary

Organic commitment is grass roots action by organizations **and** individuals that promote shared success. It starts with the relationship between an individual and his or her manager.

Key organic commitment concepts include:

- ▶ The world of work has changed and continues to change, consistent with free market concepts. Organizations, managers and individuals need to adapt thinking and behavior to be successful in this context.
- ▶ Shared success is a basic tenant of any free market including the employment market.
- ▶ Organic commitment focuses on achieving shared success in part by promoting a balance of individual [engagement] and organization [alignment] considerations.
- ▶ Individuals are the basic building block and are responsible for self engagement and self alignment, with support from their manager as well as the organization. These activities in total are organic commitment.
- ▶ The Q5 Framework is a tool for individuals and managers to operationalize organic commitment to achieve shared success at a grass roots level.
- ▶ By using Q5 effectively, individual employees with help from their managers are the key drivers of organic commitment, building shared success one discussion at a time.

Organic commitment activities will drive sustained performance improvement at your organization. They also help individuals and managers adapt to our dynamic workplace, building capabilities consistent with the concept of shared success.

Implemented well, The Q5 Framework directly or indirectly positively impacts the key employee engagement drivers as determined by the Conference Board's review of engagement studies:

- ▶ Trust and integrity – how well managers communicate and 'walk the talk'.
- ▶ Nature of the job –Is it mentally stimulating day-to-day?
- ▶ Line of sight between employee performance and company performance – Does the employee understand how their work contributes to the company's performance?
- ▶ Career Growth opportunities –Are there future opportunities for growth?
- ▶ Employee development – Is the company making an effort to develop the employee's skills?
- ▶ Relationship with one's manager – Does the employee value his or her relationship with his or her manager?

Implementing Organic Commitment

True organic commitment starts with one individual and one manager implementing their own unique process to create shared success. This process involves a series of activities by the individual and manager to achieve shared success: fact gathering, analysis, discussion, planning, coaching, learning, action, and ongoing shared success meetings.

BPI group supports these activities through a variety of solutions including consulting, workshops, webinars and e-learning, technology, materials, and coaching.

Successful implementation of organic commitment lays the groundwork for 'viral commitment,' where individuals want to pass on the message to others about shared success and what it means to them, creating the potential for exponential growth in the concept's exposure, influence, and positive business impact.

For viral commitment to occur, there does need to be a strong message of real shared success, respect, energy and open communication.

What's your plan to build organic commitment at your organization?
With your team? With yourself?

vi·ral com·mit·ment -

concept

... organic commitment that spreads naturally [and quickly] within the organization at the grass roots level

For More Information

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BPI group is a leading global management and human resources consulting firm with 2,000 consultants worldwide. We understand that sustainable organizational success depends, in large part, on individual success. This is why we approach our work with a sharp and balanced focus on the organization and the individual. We have 25 years of experience in North America providing customized, pragmatic solutions that drive organizational, team, leadership and individual excellence and span the entire talent management lifecycle. Through our global reach, clients benefit from innovative thinking on people practices worldwide. We team across borders, but always deliver services with a local touch to ensure organizations and their employees create shared success during times of change.

For more information, visit: www.bpigroupus.com or www.bpi-group.com.

Robyn Clark
Managing Director
BPI group US
+1-312-577-4001
rclark@bpigroupus.com

BPI Institute for Leadership



The BPI Institute for Leadership is BPI group's research and innovation arm focused on enhancing leadership and organization performance practices globally. The Institute is comprised of consultants in 40 countries, dedicated to building innovative and practical solutions for our clients focused on balancing economic and human considerations, globally.

Jay Scherer
BPI Institute for Leadership
Chicago, IL, USA
+1-312-577-4001
jscherer@bpigroupus.com
www.bpigroupus.com

Brice Mallie
Philippe Perez
BPI Institute for Leadership
Paris, France
bmallie@bpi-group.com
pperez@bpi-group.com
www.bpi-group.com

