

# The Pain of Employee Engagement

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# Definition Evolution

Kahn (1990):  
“Harnessing of  
organizational  
members’ selves  
to their work  
roles”

***Bringing my  
“self” to work***



# Kahn's Example

Summer camp and scuba dive instructor



**Passion was about the ocean**

# Evolving Definition

As economy changed, so did engagement



# From Me to My Employer

Employee engagement is the amount of “discretionary effort”, in the form of <b>extra time, brainpower or energy, that employees exhibit at work</b>	Towers Watson (2003)
The extent to which employees commit to something or someone in their organization, [and] <b>how hard they work and how long they stay</b>	Corporate Leadership Council (2004)
A positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values. An engaged employee is aware of the business context, <b>works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization</b>	Robinson, Perryman and Hayday (2004)
Employee Engagement is a heightened emotional and intellectual connection that an employee has for his/her job, organization, manager, or co-workers that, in turn, <b>influences him/her to apply additional discretionary effort to his/her work</b>	Gibbons (2006)



# Pain #1: Burnout



**Pain #2:  
What's In It  
For Me?**

WIIFM  
?



**Pain #3**  
**Direction**  
**OR**  
**Engaged**  
**in What?**



# Pain #4: How Can This Be?

According to Bersin & Associates, *engagement plans are costing \$720 Million a year in the US, and forecasts that this will soon grow to about \$1.5 billion*

PERCENT OF ENGAGED EMPLOYEES

U.S.

32%

WORLDWIDE

13%

GALLUP

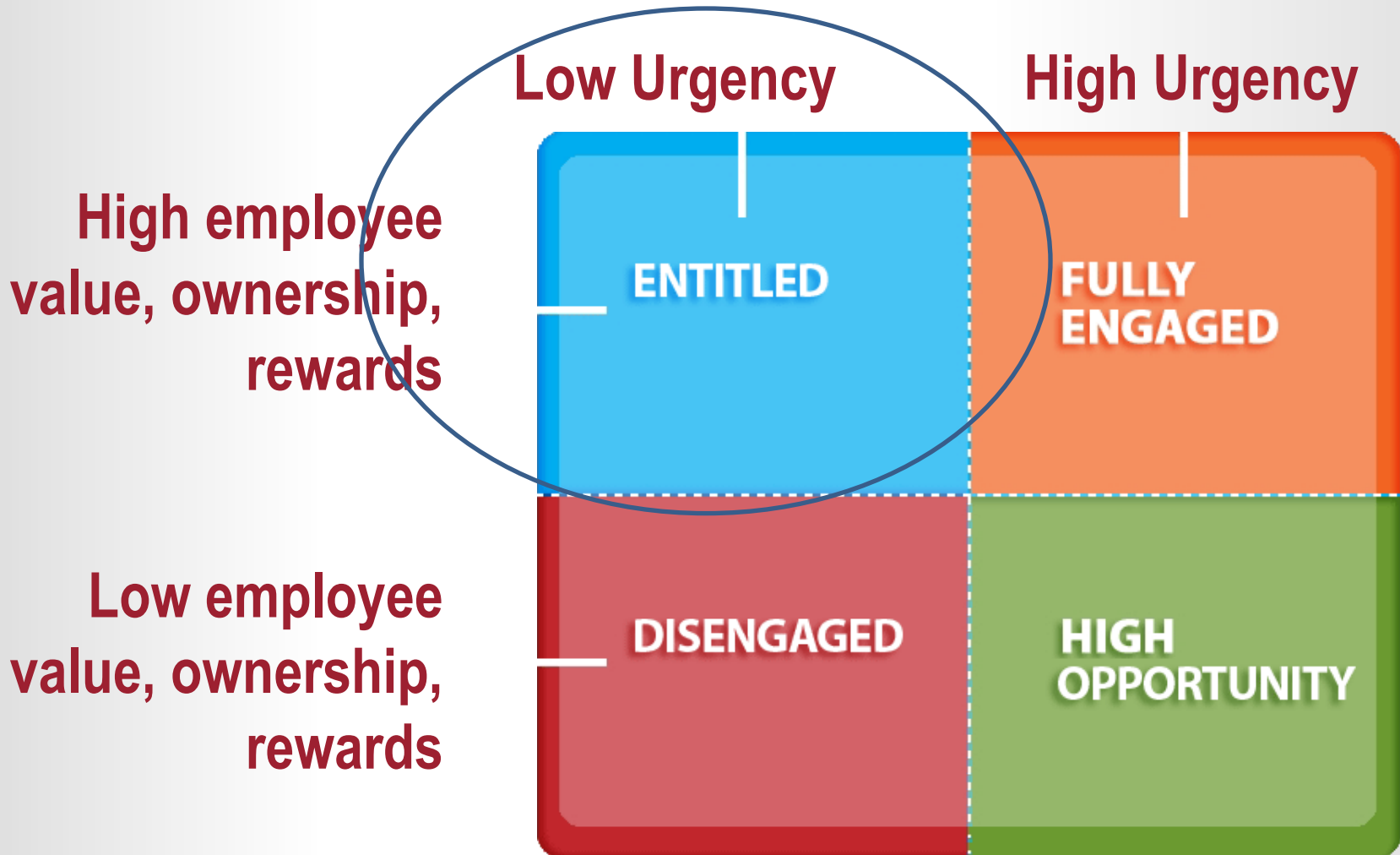
January 7, 2016 report

# Pain #5: The Evidence

Dr. Rob B. Briner, University of London and Center for Evidence-Based Management

- *Engagement is a Fad*
- *No agreed-upon definition of engagement (50 +)*
- *Evidence is not strong*
  - *Correlations weak*
  - *Engagement items same as other attitude measures*
  - *Not much explanatory value above traditional measures*
  - *Cites MacLeod and Clarke review “no studies showing predictive validity”*
- *Most studies lack adequate control variables; they are correlational OR they predict other attitudes vs. performance*

# Pain #6: Too Much of a Good Thing? Engagement Score Up; Performance Down



# Pain Reduction Strategy Needed

- Answer the BIG question
- *Engaged in what?*
- Job and Non-Core Job Approach
- Behaviors MUST match strategic needs

# Beyond Overtime and Burnout

**Doing more for the company**

**More for company and bringing self to work**

**Engaged in non-core and job roles**

**Google's 20% rule**

**ERG leadership work**

**Engaged in only core job role**

**Project management training and tools**

**Adding new customer service work I care about (Job crafting)**

# DON'T FORGET

Doing more for the  
company

Bringing more of  
my self to work

Non-core  
job roles

Core job  
role





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