The Success Scale Interpretive Report
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Overview

The Science of Happiness

How can you use science to help people become happier and more productive at work?

In 2010, Shawn Achor’s book, *The Happiness Advantage*, sparked a revolution in how companies think about work performance and job satisfaction. His research from Harvard and from Fortune 500 companies revealed that we have long had the success formula backwards. We assumed that if you work hard, your success rates will rise, and that will eventually lead to greater happiness. But our brains do not work in that order. Every time we have a success, our brain pushes the goal post of success out farther. And if we tried to work while unhappy, our success rates actually plummet.

If you want to see what your brain’s potential is, you have to reverse the formula. If you develop a positive mindset and raise your level of happiness, then nearly every business and educational outcome follows.

Researching the Link Between Mindset and Success

In *The Happiness Advantage*, Shawn Achor describes how only 25% of your job success is predicted based upon your intelligence and technical skills.

That is amazingly small given how we how we hire, what we teach in school, and how we train. Why are we ignoring 75% of your potential?

Based upon new research, we are now able to effectively assess where you stand on these other Success Scale measures, which are predictors of success that lead to the 75% of your long term job success.

Achor and the research team at the Institute for Applied Positive Research have discovered the three main predictors of your job success: work optimism, provision of social support, and positive engagement.
How do we know the Scale works?

We used thousands of employee responses to calibrate which questions are best at ascertaining your score on the three measures. But a score that is not predictive is useless. We then compared how well these measures predict a host of business outcomes: work satisfaction, engagement, burnout, likelihood of promotion, depression, perceived success rates, etc.

Excitingly, the three scales are actually significantly more predictive of your job performance than any previous measure for their given dimension. And some of the previous scales would have required you to answer more than 240 questions. In short, these three scales are one of the most efficient and most accurate ways of predicting your work performance and job satisfaction.

The following analytical report will help you understand your scores and provide researched strategies to improve them so that you can be both happier and more effective at work.

The Key: Change is Possible
Here is the most exciting part about this research: these scores can change. In *The Happiness Advantage*, Achor writes, “Happiness is not just something that happens to us, we must cultivate it. Happiness is a work ethic.” Over the past decade we have devoted ourselves to studying how we can raise people’s levels of optimism, happiness, productivity and energy.

If you received a high score for one or more of the scales, you are not done! Do not rest on your laurels. That’s like saying, “I have a high IQ so I’m not going to college.” The exact same strategies that help improve low scores can be used by high scorers to create what we call “expert specialization.” By training your brain you can magnify the amount that these traits can positively change your life.

Let’s begin…
Analysis of Your Score

Work Optimism Indicator

The Science of Work Optimism

What is your brain doing at work all day long? Are your brain’s resources focused on work and creating a positive future, or is it stuck scanning for the negative? When you go in to work, do you expect good things to happen or are you dreading the worst?

Some people seem to be optimists at home, but when they get to work, they operate like pessimists. That is why the older ways of testing optimism are flawed. They assumed that your general optimism could predict work performance. What we discovered is that your optimism at work is a much better predictor of your success at work.

Thus, the first survey assesses your Work Optimism. The goal is to try to predict the likelihood of your engagement, promotion, and burnout at work.

What Does Your Score Mean?

Based upon our research on work optimism, there are four types of people at work: extreme work pessimists, work pessimists, work optimists, and visionary work optimists.

EXTREME WORK PESSIMISTS:
People who score 18 or below are "extreme work pessimists". Extreme work pessimists do not expect anything good to happen at work. Extreme work pessimists are 5X as likely to burnout as optimists. It is rare for an extreme work pessimist to be highly engaged at work and even more rare for them to perform well. They do not get along well with co-workers nor their supervisors. Extreme pessimism can be a result of personality, but it can also be a result of a toxic work environment or the brain over-learning that our behavior does not matter, such as during prolonged economic downturn.
WORK PESSIMISTS:
People who score between 19 and 21 are “work pessimists.” They are just as likely to burnout as extreme work pessimists. They also do not get along well with co-workers, and feel low engagement at work. However, moving into this category seems to improve relations with supervisors. Work pessimists get along with supervisors just as well as optimists. Similarly, work pessimists tend to perform their duties better than extreme work pessimists.

WORK OPTIMISTS:
People who score between 22 and 24 are “work optimists.” They are 5X LESS likely to burnout than pessimists, 3X MORE likely to be highly engaged in their jobs. They are also significantly more likely to get along with co-workers. As with work pessimists, this group is more likely to perform their duties well compared to extreme work pessimists.

VISIONARY WORK OPTIMISTS:
If you scored above 24, you are a "visionary work optimist." Like work optimists, visionary work optimists RARELY burnout, perform their duties quite well, and get along well with co-workers and supervisors. Yet even compared to normal work optimists, visionary work optimists are 2X as likely to be highly engaged at work and 3X as likely to be extremely satisfied with their jobs.

The Importance of Work Optimism

It might be surprising to hear, but new research shows that only 10% of our long term happiness at work is based upon our external world. That means that what happens around us has less of an impact on our happiness than how we perceive our life. 90% of our long-term happiness depends on how our brain processes the world. As a result, no matter where we are, if we work at it, we can raise our levels of optimism and happiness. And boosting our happiness raises our success rates at the same time.

In previous research, we have found that optimistic sales people outsell their negative counterparts by 37%. Doctors in a positive state of mind perform diagnoses 19% faster and more accurate than doctors at neutral. Positive employees are 31% more productive than negative employees. In other words, optimism is crucial to the business outcomes we actively pursue: productivity, intelligence, creativity, endurance, and engagement.

Work optimism is not just about us. When people are sick with a cold and contagious, we want them to stay home from work so they don’t get everyone else sick. What we often
forget is that our mental outlook at work is just as contagious. We know that extreme work pessimism dramatically decreases the effectiveness and happiness of the person experiencing it, but that is not the end of it. Extreme work pessimism can actually lower the work optimism scores of our co-workers. When we feel extreme work pessimism we literally become toxic and people can pick up on our pessimism like second-hand smoke. Remember, you don’t have to be the one smoking to get the negative health effects.

On the other end of the spectrum, visionary work optimists are also contagious. Positive psychology research reveals that when we are in contact with visionary work optimists, we start to feel more positive, engaged and hopeful at work. When visionary work optimists are leaders, they can actually raise the entire productivity of their team. Whereas extreme work pessimism is a disease, visionary work optimism provides enhanced health to a team. Smiles have been found to be 10X more contagious than frowns. In this research we found that visionary optimists are over 5X more likely to be engaged with their work in an effective way.

**Research Based Solutions**

Even if your score is high, we can improve. It is not good enough to be optimistic, we want to create optimism which works in all conditions and spreads to everyone we are in touch with.

When you read the descriptions of the different types of people at work, it is easy to think either a) I have a high score so I wish all the low scoring people around me would change, or b) I have a low score so I wish all the people at work would stop making me feel this way. Both responses miss out on the most important part: we have the greatest ability to change our own mindset at work.

Here are two suggestions to improve your Work Optimism:

1) **Optimism Training:** For the next 21 days in a row, every morning when you wake up, write down three things you are grateful for on a notepad you keep by your bed. It is important to come up with unique entries each time, which is best done by scanning the previous 24 hours for three new things. Also, be as specific as possible. Don’t just write, I’m grateful for my health or my spouse. Instead, also include the reason why. At the end of the 21-day period you will have 63 things you are grateful which will help balance out anything negative that you experience. But even better, those 21 days will transform at least the next SIX MONTHS of your
Researchers have found that this strategy increases your long-term optimism.

2) **Check Your Lead:** Make sure your lead sentence in conversations or meetings at work is positive. If you start conversations with how fatigued, sick, or stressed you feel, your body follows, as does the rest of the conversation. We are taught to mimic the social patterns of others, so if someone starts a sales call with, “I’ve been swamped lately,” then both of the individuals start to feel more stressed and overwhelmed, which can oftentimes kill the sale. In our fast paced world, you might have time to relay only one piece of social information at work. If you make it negative, then you get stuck in that pattern.
Support Provision Indicator

The Science of Social Support

From previous research, we knew that social support -- how much you can rely upon and turn to your family and friends -- was a major predictor of happiness. Social support is defined by the quality, and to some extent the quantity, of the people you feel you can depend on and share your highs and lows. But after working with companies all over the globe, we found that some people, who feel immense social support at home, could feel impoverished when it came to social support at work. We needed a scale that accurately assessed your social support at work.

That is when the big discovery came.

We kept asking all the questions about how much social support you were receiving, but when we flipped around the question, suddenly, the measures we were using began providing extraordinarily high definition predictions of your success and happiness at work. In other words, how much social support you give is extraordinarily predictive of work performance and happiness.

Giving social support is much more important than getting it. For a great read on this new research, check out the Harvard Business Review article on “Positive Intelligence.”

LINK: http://hbr.org/2012/01/positive-intelligence/ar/1

Thus, the second indicator assesses how well you provide social support to your co-workers.

What Does Your Score Mean?

ISOLATORS:
People who score below 33 are "isolators." Only about 1 out of 20 isolators are highly engaged in their jobs, and 1 in 50 are likely to voluntarily make-up work for a colleague. They are 5X as likely to burnout as work altruists. They are far less likely to be satisfied with their jobs than people who provide support to co-workers. Although these people may seem to have more time to attend to their own work, selfish isolators rarely get
promotions. About 1 in 12 unsupportive workers can expect a promotion in the coming year.

RESISTANT SUPPORTERS:
People who score between 33 and 36 are "resistant supporters." They are slightly more engaged than isolators, but they still ignore the value of social support at work. Compared to isolators, resistant supporters are more than 5X MORE likely to voluntarily make-up work for a colleague. Yet, they still usually don't get along with co-workers or supervisors and are far less likely to be satisfied with their jobs than supportive workers. Even though they tend to receive more promotions than unsupportive workers, the majority of resistant supporters cannot expect a promotion in the coming year.

CONNECTORS:
People who score between 37 and 40 are "support providers." Compared to resistant supporters, they are 2X as likely to be engaged at work, 2X as likely to voluntarily make-up work for a colleague, and much more likely to get along with co-workers and supervisors. Despite these accomplishments, supportive workers are no more likely than resistant supporters to get a promotion.

WORK ALTRUISTS:
People who score above 40 are "work altruists." These individuals are especially likely to get promotions-- about 2 out of every 3 work altruists can expect a promotion in the coming year! Compared to people giving less support, work altruists are by far the most engaged at their jobs, the most likely to voluntarily make-up work for colleagues, to voluntarily contribute to the larger company, and the vast majority have extremely positive relationships with their co-workers and supervisors.

The Importance of Social Support

We all know that smoking, high blood pressure and cholesterol can all have a significant effect on how long you live. But in the past ten years, we’ve also discovered that lack of social support has an equally powerful effect on longevity.

In a study Achor did on 1600 Harvard students, he could clearly see that social support was the greatest predictor of their long-term happiness. Yet, this is often the very first thing we sacrifice during stressful times. For many of those students, when they became overwhelmed with work, they spent 18 hours in the library. They would come out bleary eyed, exhausted, depressed, hating their school, sick, and even began to see their grades
started to decline. When they asked why, Achor would explain that they had unwittingly disconnected from the greatest predictors of their work success: their social support network. Studies show that it is impossible for the brain to work at its highest potential for long without the infusion of strong positive social support and all the benefits that come with it.

The seventh and final principle in *The Happiness Advantage* is Social Investment, which is the one in which the happiest and most successful people at work are those who actually increase their investment in their co-workers in times of stress. They provide social support instead of waiting for it to come to them. The resulting research, culminating in this Success Scale, proves that giving at the office gets you not only greater happiness and performance, but you also raise your chances for a promotion.

**Research Based Solutions**

Here are three suggestions to improve your Support Provision:

1) For 21 days in a row, every morning when you first check your email from a laptop or desktop, before reading ANY emails, write a 2 minute long email praising, thanking, or reconnecting with one person in your social support network. This does NOT have to be a co-worker, and actually works better if you do not overwhelm your own team with these emails, but rather spread them out to family members, friends, old coaches and teachers, etc. Only spend 2 minutes. Over the course of the 21 days, your brain will not only register that you have greater social support because you have provided social support to those around you, but it will transform your patterns of interacting at work. You will find that you are more likely to have high quality interactions with your co-workers as your brain has received a previous reward (dopamine, which is a feel good chemical in the body) for successfully writing those 21 emails.

2) For six weeks, pick a different co-worker each week and invite them to lunch. Do not think of this as a networking opportunity. The goal is to provide social support to the other person. Get to know more about their current work and what motivates them to work hard. Find out what led them to the profession in the first place or what they enjoy about their job. Try to learn one new piece of social information (e.g. if they have pets, where they plan on going on vacation.) This will not only make them feel happier at work, but you are the one who will reap the greatest rewards in terms of becoming a work altruist, and someone who will be
significantly more engaged at work.

3) Organize an impromptu (not overly planned) get together. Bring in donuts and coffee, or a fruit salad you made. Even small injections of social engagement at work result in higher success rates and happiness for an entire team. Do this once a month for 6 months and observe the effect on the group culture and your own happiness.
**Positive Engagement Indicator**

**The Science of Positive Engagement**

Do you believe that your behavior matters at work? Why would you work eight hours on a project if you thought that you would receive no benefit for your behavior? When challenged, do outside events control your success rates at work?

The third pillar of the Success Scale is positive engagement.

Our brain is designed to use its resources effectively. When our brain believes that our actions will not result in the outcomes we want at work, our brain provides lower energy and engagement with those tasks. Our brain shuts down to save energy for more important and efficient tasks. The problem comes when our brain starts to shut down performance at work.

The key to using our brain’s resources effectively is to train our brain to recognize that our behavior at work matters.

Thus, the final survey assesses how confident you are that you can control your outcomes at work.

**What Does Your Score Mean?**

**FATALISTS:**
People who score 11 or below are "fatalists." They frequently burnout and are, on average, 15X more likely to burnout than workers who feel more in control at work. It is rare for helpless workers to be highly engaged at work, to voluntarily make-up work for a colleague, and to get along with supervisors.

**DOUBTERS:**
People who score 12 are "doubters." They are LESS likely to burnout than helpless workers but far MORE likely to burnout than others. Uncertain workers are rarely engaged, rarely make-up work for colleagues on a voluntary basis, and rarely get along with supervisors.
ENGAGEMENT PURSUERS:
People who score 13-14 are "engagement pursuers." Compared to helpless and uncertain workers, engagement pursuers are FAR LESS likely to burnout, 3X more likely to be highly engaged, and FAR MORE likely to voluntarily make-up work for colleagues. Engagement pursuers get along well with co-workers and extremely well with supervisors.

ENGAGEMENT MASTERS:
People who score above 14 are "engagement masters." They are 15X LESS likely to burnout than helpless workers and 6X MORE likely to be highly engaged with their work. Like engagement pursuers, they are far more likely to voluntarily make-up work for colleagues than are uncertain or helpless workers. They are 200% as likely as all others to perform their assigned duties well, 3X more likely than all others to be satisfied with their jobs, and 3X more likely than all others to contribute to the company. Even with all this success, two-thirds of engagement masters get along "extremely well" with co-workers and supervisors.

The Importance of Positive Engagement

In our research, we have found that when the economy is down, when the stock market plummets, when there is restructuring at work, our brain is tempted to believe that our behavior does not matter any more. Which to some extent is true. Unless you are a complete narcissist, you know your behavior will not alter the global economy. But the problem comes when our brains “overlearn” this—our brains can start to think that NONE of our behavior at work matters.

In the midst of the banking crisis, Achor went to work in all of the major banking centers around the world attempting to restart forward progress. Instead of finding teams scrambling and striving to create momentum, the managers he worked with described their teams as feeling helpless. They had lost the belief that in the midst of challenge they could influence the outcomes around them. That meant that many were not doing the very activities that could actually turn the company around.

It does not take a crisis to connect positive engagement to success rates. This metric that you just took helps assess how much your brain believes that you can influence the outcomes at work. You might be thinking to yourself: yes, but IN REALITY, I cannot control all the outcomes at work. No one can, not even an Engagement Master. The important part is how much you focus your brain on the activities you CAN control. As a result, instead of constantly scanning for disempowering facets of work, Engagement
Masters scan their work for every way that they could leverage their behavior to get the outcome they desire in the midst of the normal challenges at work.

**Research Based Solutions**

Here are four suggestions to improve your positive engagement:

1) Pick a large goal that you are working on and write out the first three small steps that will take you toward achieving that goal. Next, focus your brain on accomplishing the smallest possible step toward that goal. This will give your brain a “win” or a victory, which will begin to train your brain to believe that your behavior matters. It creates something called a cascade of success during which each small victory creates momentum and energy for your brain to accomplish the next task.

2) Determine something that you love doing at work and that you are very good at. Start your day doing that activity. If you are great at quantitative analysis, start with that during the day to use one of your strengths. Research shows that when people use one or more of their strengths at work on a daily basis, it dramatically improves the belief that their behavior at work matters.

3) Read the Zorro Circle chapter in *The Happiness Advantage* and begin to apply some of the strategies to several domains of your life. This will exercise your brain’s belief that your behavior will result in the outcomes you desire.

4) Every time you catch yourself dwelling on something that you cannot control, intentionally focus your brain on one concrete action you could take on something you can control. Example: I cannot control that the stock price just dropped, but I can call that client to let them know what I’ve been working on for them.
Next Steps

These three indicators represent some of the greatest measures of positive intelligence and therefore three of the greatest predictors of success and happiness that we have found while studying work performance. They should be used not to define you, but as a springboard for discovering your strengths and finding ways of improving your weaker predictors of success.

One of the greatest myths of modern society is that you cannot change. We are born with genes that make it easier to be smart, happy or successful, but that is only part of the story. The rest of the story is the important part: you can change! By improving your life habits, mindset and actions at work, you can raise all three of these scores.

We spend lots of time in the gym or at school or shopping, because we think these things might lead to greater happiness or success. Now that we are applying robust scientific research to our conceptions of happiness and success, we are finding that there are much more important predictors. Our level of positive intelligence matters. So if you were willing to go to the gym for an hour or the mall for two or school for 18+ years, why not spend 2-4 minutes a day raising 75% of your long-term success rates and impacting the 90% of happiness that is not constrained by the external world.

A few specific ideas:

1. If you are serious about making positive change in your life, the best starting place for strategies and best practices is the book *The Happiness Advantage*, which outlines 7 principles that you can use to raise your long-term happiness and success.

2. Take the *Happiness Advantage eCourse*, a sixteen week online program to learn more about the research and stories behind the Happiness Advantage.

3. Attend a *Happiness Advantage Retreat* to practice these skills in a relaxing and uplifting environment. Meet Shawn in person and learn from some of the leading researchers in the field.
Share Your Story!

This is just the beginning. As you practice these principles and begin to see changes in your life, please share your story with us. We look forward to hearing how this research impacts you, and hope this Success Scale provides a wonderful benchmark for your progress.