

BRINGING HAPPINESS RESEARCH TO LIFE AT WORK

Report on findings of joint research between
Training magazine and the
Institute for Applied Positive Research
in partnership with International Thought Leader Network.

February 2014



Bringing Happiness Research to Life at Work

Report Prologue.....	Lorri Freifeld Editor-in-Chief, <i>Training</i> magazine
Our Positive Intentions.....	A Report Abstract
Introduction.....	Shawn Achor
The Training Industry Speaks.....	Survey Results from over 1900 Professionals
Selected Comments from Participants.....	Reports on the Impact of Adopting New Positive Behaviors
The Research and Findings.....	The Research Conducted and What it Revealed
Bringing Happiness Research to Life.....	Case Study Overviews from KPMG, UBS and Nationwide
The Bottom Line on Happiness.....	Conclusions
A Final Note from Shawn Achor (parts excerpted from <i>How to Be a Positive Leader</i>)	

BRINGING HAPPINESS RESEARCH TO LIFE AT WORK

Report on findings of joint research between Training magazine and the Institute for Applied Positive Research in partnership with International Thought Leader Network.

Primary and ongoing analysis of the data is provided by Karl Haigler (a recognized leader in connecting research to business outcomes).

Report Prologue



Lorri Freifeld
Editor-in-Chief, *Training* magazine

When I started my first full-time job out of college 22 years ago, no one asked me if I was happy (my parents, of course, were deliriously happy that I landed a job, one that miraculously even put my journalism degree to good use). But even if someone had asked, I don't know what I would have responded. I was challenged. I was productive. I was learning. I was also frustrated, overworked, and a bit disillusioned. I figured that was all part of the first-job experience. I didn't really think happiness was a factor when it came to work.

That changed when I joined *Training* magazine as editor in 2007. Suddenly, I was bombarded by press releases and research about employee engagement—or rather employee *disengagement* as it appeared most employees were not whistling happy tunes while they worked. In fact, *Forbes* notes unhappy employees outnumber happy employees by two to one. Being new to the training industry, my initial reaction was, “So what does this have to do with training?”

A lot, I found out. Engaged employees—a.k.a. happy employees—want to learn. They want to hone their skills, improve their performance, and further their careers. They are eager to be trained and enthusiastic about helping to train and coach others. They believe in their organization's mission and values, and they are secure in the knowledge that their organization believes in them.

Pretty powerful stuff. And today's companies know it (even if they haven't yet figured out how to make it happen). You only have to look as far as the latest consumer ad slogans to see that happiness is job one these days: Coca-Cola (open happiness), Walgreens (at the corner of happy and healthy), Cheerios (be

happy, be healthy), PetSmart (happiness inside), Volkswagen (get in, get happy), and Zappos (delivering happiness).

So, clearly, the \$64,000 question is: How can we increase happiness, engagement, and positive performance in the workplace?

In an effort to answer that question, *Training* magazine partnered on a joint research project with positive psychologist Shawn Achor, the Institute for Applied Positive Research, and International Thought Leader Network. The author of *New York Times* best-selling books *The Happiness Advantage* and *Before Happiness*, Shawn is a leading expert on the connection between happiness and success. An initial survey was conducted with over 1,900 professionals responding, primarily from the training industry. They participated in a two-week assignment to incorporate a new positive habit into their daily work routine. Then we assessed multiple variables about perceived well-being, social support, productivity, stress, creativity, optimism, etc.

The findings of our research are detailed below, but here's the big takeaway in a nutshell:

Those who successfully created the positive habit for two weeks during the experiment with *Training* magazine showed a 20 percent decrease in stress, had 12 percent higher energy, and were twice as likely to rate themselves as higher on the happiness measure.

Here's to being happy—*especially* at work!

Our Positive Intentions

Report Abstract

The intent of this paper is to showcase the evolving nature of positive psychology as it becomes embraced formally by organizations. Much of the early research in this field was left to academicians and their favorite subjects, graduate students. This work was largely confined to labs that could at best be said to simulate “real” world experience. Fast forward to a post global financial crisis world where any competitive advantage a business could garner is sought and suddenly there is a lot of attention in the area of positive psychology in the workplace. Shawn Achor simply refers to this as the “happiness advantage”. He entitled his first book *The Happiness Advantage* intentionally, bringing squarely into focus the issue we need to confront regarding our feelings about happiness. We love it for our kids, we want it on the weekends, and we wish we had it on the job. Most of us would be willing to work harder if we were able to be happier.

This report addresses the bringing the happiness research to life at work. In the report we:

- Look at research conducted with one of the most influential groups to emerge in the field of positive psychology – the training professional.
- Showcase previous research evidencing that happiness interventions can lead to positive results.
- Review a current research in progress inside a major organization and assess the impact of current interventions.
- Suggest areas for further study and request colleagues to join us as this journey expands.

Introduction

by Shawn Achor

(Based on an excerpt from Shawn's foreword to the exciting new book *How to Be a Positive Leader* by University of Michigan's Center for Positive Organizational Scholarship, coming out June 2, available for preorder now.)

In one of my earliest attempts to bring leadership research into companies, I was invited to Europe during the economic crisis to give a lecture on "Positive Leadership in Uncertain Times." Instead of reading my short bio, a disgruntled senior leader, who had been forced by the HR department to introduce my session, came to the front of the room and said, "Hello. As you know, we don't have bonuses for everyone, but here is a talk on happiness...from a guy from America."

You can imagine the response. There was immediate nonverbal stone-walling. Honestly, I was already nervous for this talk. A green 30-year old researcher with massive educational debts lecturing on leadership to wealthy, battle-hardened 50-year old managing directors. But what happened next was a significant learning moment for me.

About ten minutes into the talk, as I transitioned to explaining the scientific research that had been done on how to create rational optimism and to deepen social support in the midst of crisis, the senior leaders imperceptibly began leaning forward. Slowly, many began quietly picking up pens and inconspicuously looking for notepads. By the break, 90 minutes into the session, I couldn't even get to the coffee machine to try one of their fancy espressos because the leaders were flooding me with questions about research that could apply to their team's specific problems. When I finished the three hour session, I was told by the global head of HR that I would be visiting all of their centers in Asia, Europe and the U.S. during the banking crisis.

Shawn Achor is the winner of over a dozen distinguished teaching awards at Harvard University where he delivered lectures in Tal Ben-Shahar's "Positive Psychology" the most popular class at Harvard. Shawn has become one of the world's leading experts on the connection between happiness and success. His research on happiness has made the cover of Harvard Business Review, his TED talk is one of the most popular all time with 6 million views, and his lecture airing on PBS has been seen by millions. Over the past seven years he has worked with a third of the Fortune 100. Shawn teaches for the Advanced Management Program at Wharton Business School and continues to conduct original psychology research on happiness in collaboration with Yale University and the Institute for Applied Positive Research. Shawn is New York Times best-selling author of *The Happiness Advantage* (2010) and *Before Happiness* (2013) as well as *The Orange Frog*, a business parable with an accompanying workshop (Happiness Advantage/Orange Frog Workshop™) designed to deliver several key lessons about the happiness advantage and serve as a rallying language for organizations and teams.

What happened? **The science came to life.** The engaged response in Zurich was not about me, it was about the power of positive organizational scholarship and the Happiness Advantage. Those Swiss bankers were willing to listen because they respected the rigor with which those researched findings were sought, and they could see the leadership value of those conclusions. Scientifically validated research and focused study of thriving leaders and organizations are the keys to opening minds to real and quantifiable positive change. Without them, we are left with vague motivational statements and a risky reliance upon faith in the author rather than in the evidence at hand.

If we want to change the way that organizations work, we need to learn deeply, embrace fully, and communicate effectively this positive research.

We hope this report fuels you as you bring this research to life.

The Training Industry Speaks

In his first book, *The Happiness Advantage*, Shawn Achor described the research on how a happy brain reaps a massive advantage in the workplace. He wrote about how, when we find and create happiness in our work, we show increased intelligence, creativity, and energy, improving nearly every single business and educational outcome. In short, that book was about how happiness comes before success. In his new book, *Before Happiness*, Shawn exposes what comes before both (happiness and success). If you want to create positive change (and outcomes) in your life, you first have to change your reality. In other words, your perception of the world. A mindset enabling you to summon all of your cognitive, intellectual and emotional resources to create positive change, because you believe that true change is possible. Shawn calls this mindset *Positive Genius*.

To begin our research, we wanted to hear from professionals in the training industry and understand the reality they saw for themselves and their organizations regarding the potential to leverage the happiness advantage to create sustainable positive change and desired outcomes. An initial survey was conducted with over 1,900 professionals responding, primarily from the training industry. What we asked and what they told us is summarized below. And it's positively genius.

We asked: To what extent do you believe organizations should help individuals increase their sense of happiness?

.....
88% believe organizations should help individuals increase their sense of happiness while only 3% while training industry professionals feel increasing happiness is not the domain of organizations.
.....

We asked: To what degree do you believe that happiness levels can be raised through professional development training?

80% believe that happiness levels can be raised through professional development training with only 7% not believing so. And for those professionals who participated in the research, their belief in the impact of training increased a full 5 percentage points after participating in the research.

We asked: What corporate objectives do you believe would be most enhanced with a happiness curriculum?

Engagement, leadership, customer service and sales are all areas where they believe corporate objectives and outcomes can be enhanced with a happiness curriculum.

We asked: To what degree do you believe increased happiness in an organization could positively improve business results?

97% believe in the link between increased happiness and improved business results; 81% strongly believe. Less than 1% believe otherwise.

We asked: At what level in the organization do you believe a happiness curriculum would have the greatest impact?

Across the board in organizations from senior leaders, to mid-level managers/supervisors and customer facing employees, industry professionals believe a happiness curriculum can have an impact.

Senior leaders	16%
Mid-level managers	20%
First line supervision	23%
Front line	24%
Customer facing employees	17%

We asked: Who in an organization has the MOST influence on creating an environment that embraces happiness?

Overall our 1900 survey participants feel that senior leaders and then those in positions of formal authority (such as managers and supervisors) have the most influence on creating an environment that embraces happiness. Only 6% feel that front line employees and 2% of customer facing employees have such influence.

This is great news regarding the impact leaders and managers can have and also equally great news for those working under those leaders who understand positive genius. In *Before Happiness*, Shawn outlines high impact strategies leaders can develop called “positive inception”. If you are successful at creating a positive reality, but incapable of sharing it with others, then that reality will be limited and short-lived. The key to mastering them, though, is to let go the myth that you cannot change other people. We can change people, but only by planting the seeds of a more positive reality.

The farther and wider you are able to spread positive genius, the more potential you’re able to unleash. Once you have amplified the collective intelligences of your teams, companies, families, and communities, there is no limit to what you can achieve.

Selected Comments from Research Participants

Q: If you were able to apply the lessons learned from your “extended research project” to your workplace what impact did it have?

“Positive actions are paid forward as easily as negativity can be spread. Spreading happiness was contagious and made everyone feel better-physically, mentally, and emotionally.”

“I felt more engaged not just with my work, but with staff. Taking more time to develop relationships which also engaged others and built trust. I felt more aligned with the mission and values at work.”

“By focusing on the people to thank for positive experiences, the rest of my day was put into focus. The things that went wrong or struggles with the office became opportunities to ‘find the positive’ and change the office mood for the better. Didn’t always work but worked a lot more often than not.”

Q: What impact in your personal life did you notice as a result of putting the “extended research project” habits into place for two weeks?

“Much greater happiness in general. Improved (positive) perspective on life. New stressed during this time had lesser negative impact. I’ve journaled before but included both positive and negative. Journaling on the positive only made a significant difference. I will continue this new habit.”

“I felt more positive and it stopped and forced me to really think about what I am grateful for versus whatever problems or issues I had to deal with that day. It really was a great way to mentally prepare for a workday.”

“After getting into the habit of listing things I was grateful for, I found myself seeking out experiences that increased my sense of gratitude. I found them easily.”

The Research and Findings

In our joint research 900 professionals, mostly in the field of training and organizational development, participated in a project which consisted of a two week assignment to incorporate a new positive habit into their daily work routine: writing down three gratitudes, writing a positive email for 2 minutes a day to someone you know, or journaling for two minutes about a positive experience. 436 of the participants responded in the post survey regarding their ability to sustain the positive habit.

Exploring the links between, happiness, optimism and productivity, we wanted to know, “Can a 14-day structured intervention create changes in people’s lives both at home and at work?” We assessed multiple variables about perceived well-being, productivity, stress, creativity, and optimism as well as social support. We also looked at two different sub-groups; the first was people who were most diligent in their incorporating the habit and those who were less diligent.

The very first thing we discovered was the average score for the entire population rose when they created a habit out of just one of the three activities we suggested. Every single metric showed a positive effect compared to the control group of individuals who did not create a positive habit. Then we started looking even closer; specifically focusing on optimism, productivity and stress. We also examined two sub-groups: people who were most diligent in their incorporating the habit and those who were less diligent.

This research reflects findings consistent with previous research and importantly for the first time (to our knowledge) reveals the opinions and experiences of professionals in the training industry.

We view this as important because we know that the training professional is squarely at the epicenter of opportunity when it comes to organizational interventions to raise engagement and happiness.

Those who incorporated the positive habit moved from a 3.09 to a 4.10 on a 5 point scale (with higher being lower stress). The diligent group also moved from a 4.62 on energy to 5.24. In addition, we found a significant correlation between optimism and workplace productivity, statistically significant at a 95% level ($r=.31$). In addition people who provided social support at work showed strong correlations with being happier at work ($r=.40$), confirming previous research showing that social connection is crucial to job satisfaction and life satisfaction. **All in all, those who successfully created the positive habit for two weeks during the experiment with Training magazine showed a 20% decrease in stress, had 12% higher energy, and were twice as likely to rate themselves as higher on the happiness measure.**

Our joint research project reflects findings consistent with previous research. We were not surprised to also find there was also a high degree of consensus among survey respondents (pre and post) that “increased happiness in an organization could positively improve business results”-- 83.3% of the more diligent completers and even 76.65% of the less diligent at creating their habits.

Bringing Happiness Research to Life at Work

by Shawn Achor

Previous studies from Stanford, Harvard, UPenn, and Michigan confirm that there are numerous ways that we can significantly raise our happiness baseline and adopt a more positive mindset. I have seen this first hand in my research out at companies across the globe.

KPMG managers find work less taxing after training.

One such example was at KPMG, the global accounting and professional services firm. In December 2008, I gave three hours of positive psychology training to 250 tax audit managers right before they went into one of the most stressful tax seasons in decades. Tests one week after the training confirmed these employees were significantly less stressed, happier and more optimistic after they began implementing the seven principles they were taught. However, that's a honeymoon period. Many people feel different after a training or hearing a speaker, but the effect dissipates three days later. What I was interested in is what happened four months later in the middle of the busiest tax season in recent history.

As I described in my article "Positive Intelligence" which made the cover of Harvard Business Review in Jan-Feb 2012, to determine if the ROI was short lived, I revisited KPMG four months later. Extraordinarily, the positive effects of the study held. The control group's spirit's inevitably rose somewhat as the economy crawled back from the bleak December 2008 low. However, the managers who had had the training reported a significantly higher satisfaction with life, greater feelings of effectiveness and less stress. The life satisfaction score, which is one of the most critical predictors of productivity and performance in the workplace, had improved by 5 points on average on a 25 point scale for those who had the training, and more importantly, statistical analysis revealed that the training was responsible for the positive effects. Again, we saw that positive interventions could create sustainable long term change at work.

At UBS changing to a positive mindset pays dividends.

Stress is a key component of the happiness equation. In collaboration with Yale University and UBS, we demonstrated that by simply changing which facts you choose to focus on and by being taught to see stress as a challenge instead of a threat, you can significantly improve your response to stress at work and decrease your fatigue symptoms by a stunning 23 percent in one week. For example, by simply adopting a "stress is enhancing" mindset, you can dramatically reduce the effects of stress. Stress is inevitable but its affects are not

In the study which was published in one of the top psychology journals (JPSP) and described in my new book *Before Happiness*, Alia Crum, Peter Salovey, and I conducted at UBS in the midst of the banking crisis and massive restructurings, we provided training to 380 managers. We separated them into two groups. One group received training depicting stress as debilitating to performance and the second detailing the ways in which stress enhances the human brain and body. When we evaluated the employees six weeks later, we found that the individuals who had participated in the "enhancing" training scored higher on the Stress Mindset Scale-that is, they saw stress as enhancing, rather than

diminishing, their performance. And those participants experienced a significant drop in health problems and a significant increase in happiness at work. We followed this research by training hundreds of managers in a program called “Rethinking Stress” which showed employees how, instead of stressing about stress, they could actually use it to their advantage at work.

One of the most important sections in my book *The Happiness Advantage*, and one we spend a lot of time on in organization training, I call “falling up”. The more teams and organizations believe that challenges are simply a positive stress-inducing situation that will inevitably be an opportunity to get better – the more resilient they become and the fewer negative symptoms of stress they will encounter.

By developing people’s ability to see an alternate, and equally true reality, we turned stress from debilitating to enhancing.

Insuring happiness at Nationwide

If happiness is an individual choice, what can an organization do to create positive change and foster a culture of adaptive proactive leaders at all levels? To explore this question, I recently took a trip to Nationwide in Columbus, Ohio, with my partners Greg Kaiser, Kevin Karaffa and Greg Ray from International Thought Leader Network (ITLN), to visit with people involved in a large and systematic approach to elevating happiness Levels. This is one of the largest positive change efforts we have witnessed where the primary objective is to raise levels of happiness – with the goal of improving business outcomes. This effort is still in its infancy with measurable result after only nine months.



In conjunction with Nationwide we designed, wrote and customized a two day training program based on each the key principles in my book *The Happiness Advantage* and utilized a training parable designed to capture these lessons in a quick easy to read format. Nationwide called this The Happiness Advantage/Orange Frog Initiative. This initiative places Nationwide at the vanguard of Fortune 100 companies adopting positive psychology to create a more successful culture. As a bit of history, our work with Nationwide started in earnest in 2012 following a presentation the CEO asked me to deliver to their executive team. To insure this was a thorough and effective research study we first had to make sure that the intervention was more than simply training. It had to be a concerted effort to raise happiness levels alongside quantifiable business results.

To begin Nationwide brought together a team that could influence a wide variety of “touch points” in the organization. Together we planned integration efforts with multiple stakeholders across the organization. Together with this team, we devised a series of over 200 action items in eight different work streams and crystalized their intent with an “operational charter” connecting happiness to their business strategy. This last piece was considered important so that any person who came into contact with this effort could recite verbatim exactly why this effort was good for people and good for the organization. Three elements of the Nationwide strategy stood out: Strengthening Relationships, Adapting Positively to Member Needs and Embracing New Opportunities. These three strategy elements were clear targets for an increase in happiness.

An ongoing series of two-day workshops was then launched. The workshop, using a proprietary mapping methodology, aligned Orange Frog core content to leadership competencies and the Company’s objectives. Using Gallup’s Q12 and our Workplace Environment survey to measure success, two initial

business units were studied and shown to experience a significant positive shift in their associate's engagement levels and create a more positive culture.

The parable, which stood as the corner piece of the training, was a lighthearted story I wrote called *The Orange Frog*. The Orange Frog parable not only delivered key lessons from *The Happiness Advantage* but also served as rallying language for teams. At Nationwide what may have surprised me most was that people, working extremely focused and energetic on delivering business results, were doing so almost completely draped in Orange. Somehow the story had loosened up people's feelings of fun, joy and a positive expression of hard work. *The people had adopted a new social script.*

Social scripts are interesting and at the heart of what we perceive as acceptable behavior. The interesting thing is social scripts are almost never spoken and yet they exert extreme pressures on us to conform. Acting outside of the expected social script is a very difficult thing to do in most organizations.

Here is the problem and why I delighted in my observations: In our fast-paced modern world, an insidious social script has been created that essentially says, "If you are having fun or enjoying your work – you must not be working hard enough." This creates an internal conflict with our own nature, for science has definitively shown that when we are filled with positive emotions our brains actually work much better and our results improve. And while we all know this instinctively, this negative social script puts us at odds with our most human instincts – creating stress and an epidemic of dis-engagement.

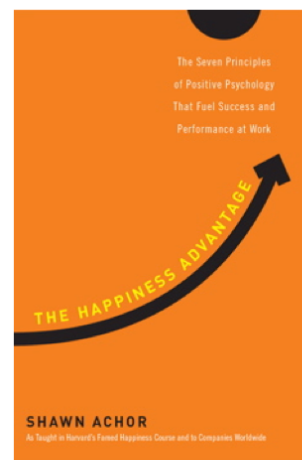
What these people at Nationwide did (knowingly or not) by wearing Orange (the color in the book associated with positive outliers) was effectively saying, "I support a new social script where **enjoying work** and **being happy** are not only compatible but a good thing." Once people see a new social script taking hold it is much easier to embrace. You could literally "see" the contagious nature of happy work.

The Happiness Advantage/Orange Frog workshop directly confronts and rewrites this social script and provides a narrative pathway for people to reach a more positive mindset, attain higher levels of optimism and deepen social connection. Through the stories of the various frogs, they also learn the

The Happiness Advantage

- 37% greater sales
- 3x more creative
- 31% more productive
- 40% more likely to receive a promotion
- 23% fewer fatigue symptoms
- Up to 10x more engaged
- 39% more likely to live to age 94

(Achor, HBR, 2012)



best practices of resilient leaders, and become more adaptable and develop a capacity to “see” more opportunities, which leads to better results.

Creating positive change impacts more than just performance and mindset metrics, it impacts the bottom line. One of the best examples of this research coming to life at Nationwide is Insurance Intermediaries, Inc. (III), an insurance brokerage company who provides insurance outside of Nationwide’s primary personal coverage lines. In 2013, the company undertook a major strategic initiative that included incorporating new lines of business, establishing bold new diversification targets for agents, innovating its entire marketing and product delivery strategy and augmenting its traditional relationship with agent’s and policyholders. III executives believed the sheer amount of organizational change, process change, and technology change required to achieve their business objectives could not be achieved without an increase in engagement and a true positive sense of urgency. This demanded a new mindset of positive empowerment, an ability for employees to be adaptive beyond current levels and a culture of positivity to accomplish these aggressive change efforts.

III completed our Workplace Environment survey where the Subjective Happiness metric went from a 5.8 to 6.0 (out of a 7.0 scale) and the Satisfaction with Life metric went from a 27.3 to a 28.2 (out of a 35.0 scale). The III data supports the theory that of the happiness advantage and the organization is experiencing growth among its competitors.

In order to sustain the happiness advantage, III began instituting changes based upon the trainings. One of my favorites, called “Huddles,” I had the opportunity to witness firsthand. Teams in the call center are brought together once a day to assess the progress made by each person, recorded on a large erase board with goals set for various business objectives and daily/weekly outcomes. There is also an emotional barometer with pictures of each of the members of the team that they move according to their positivity or negativity that day. When someone is down emotionally, the team rallies to help them accomplish their goals, return to positive, or just feel socially supported. So their hard work begins with a validation that their emotional valence is important and support is provided for those who need it.

Positive interventions like this one are working. Growth in applications at III is up 237% compared to last year with record revenues.

As III president Gary Baker said to me, “We now celebrate the power of the social scripts we believe in as an organization. They come alive generating stronger relationships internally and with our customers, too. Our positive behaviors have facilitated positive results. The Happiness Advantage/Orange Frog Workshop has given everyone a framework of seven different methods to generate positive impacts and take change head-on.”

As we see far too often, change efforts without true engagement is hard to sustain. Real culture change must be long term and quantifiable. As we have seen at Nationwide, continually connecting desired business outcomes with actionable positive principles and pro-active engagement can yield surprisingly impressive results.

The Bottom Line on Happiness

The more we research, the more we are convinced that while intelligence and technical skills are crucial, **the greatest competitive advantage in the modern economy is a positive and engaged brain.** Shawn’s work in 50 counties with over a third of the Fortune 100, and one of the largest studies at Harvard on happiness is further confirmed by the joint research project with Training Magazine and ITLN, and in the case studies and examples noted at KMPG, Nationwide and UBS.

One of the most powerful forces in human nature is our belief that change is possible. **We have learned that reprogramming our brains to become more positive, more adaptive and more resilient in order to gain a competitive advantage at work is not only possible, it is essential in rapidly changing environments.** But information alone is not transformation, which is why the next step is so important: cascading these findings and trainings to more organizations to create deep and sustained change so that happiness becomes not a short term, chance event at work, but a sustained lifelong practice. Happiness does not have to be short in length, it can be a continual choice. And the more we establish researched ways for individuals to make this choice, the greater the advantage we gain.

In short form, there are three main conclusions from our research: happiness is a choice, happiness spreads, and happiness is an advantage. Given the responses of industry professional surveyed in our research, our hope is that happiness will take its place among key skillsets and cultural imperatives in the corporate and professional development efforts of our organizations. Continuing to refine the correlations between best practice interventions and business result achievement will, no doubt, accelerate this reality. Join us in future research by contacting Research@iThoughtLeader.com.

A Final Note from Shawn Achor

(parts excerpted from *How to Be a Positive Leader*)

Research, of course, is not without error; it is intentionally organic, responding to new findings and rejecting mistaken ones. But with research comes the ability to extend beyond a single person's ideas to an entire latticework of intrepid scholars seeking to cancel the noise and find the signal.

It is my belief that there are two major impediments to change. We either do not know how to change, or we do not believe change is possible. With our research on happiness we attempt to solve both problems, helping individuals to overcome both the mental and physical barriers to change.

Over the past seven years, I have had the privilege of traveling to 50 countries and working with over a third of the Fortune 100. Through this, I have noticed something interesting. One and all, every company explains to me how they are going through unheard of change, stress, and workload that differentiates them from every other company or industry. The uniqueness of their situation cannot be the case. And change, stress, and workload are integral parts of work in the modern world; we should not be surprised to find them there.

What I believe *is* different is this: we have reached a unique time where no longer can we increase working hours and workloads expecting to maximize productivity. We have tripped over the top of the time management curve and now find the old way of leading, i.e. "work harder, longer and faster," is causing us to work slower, shorter, and more unhappily. We are seeing some of the greatest rates of job dissatisfaction in the history of polling, and younger generations are demanding a change. By immersing yourself and the organizations you work for (and their people) in the practical application of this research, you can help leaders at all levels to navigate to a different place by using a different leadership formula. As I wrote in *Before Happiness*, "the greatest competitive advantage in the modern economy is a positive and engaged brain." Findings like these from our joint research with *Training* magazine complements the research basis for how we can get our brains and organizations to move towards both positive and engaged.

Many of the things reported could be derived from common sense. But common sense is not common action. Companies and leaders that heed this information will be leading flourishing businesses of the future. There is a plate tectonic shift occurring in the nature of how we conceive of work, and those that attempt to reinvent the wheel or do business as usual without a focused, research-based approach to leadership will suffer the fate of the quite fearsome but also quite extinct T-rex.

Finally, in conclusion, we need you. You are the final ingredient. We need more professionals finding ways to make this research come alive and to take it beyond the walls of academia into a world that desperate could use it. **Information alone will not cause transformation.** Sometimes in life, we just do things and they manage to work out. But if you want to truly sustain positive change, you have to understand how to create it well enough to replicate it and to teach it to others.

With gratitude,

Shawn

Reprints may be obtained by contacting Research@iThoughtLeader.com. For organizations interested in participating in future research regarding happiness in the workplace, please inquire herein as well.

