

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

Positive Psychology in Project Management Communications

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Project
Management
Institute

Understanding positive psychology
and
positive communications
will enhance
project management effectiveness.

Communications are the Lifeblood of Project Management

Research on project failure suggests that projects fail for these reasons....of ten critical success factors*

- | | |
|------------------|---------|
| • Communications | 8 of 10 |
| • Team | 6 of 10 |
| • Process | 4 of 10 |

Communications and teaming are people issues at base....

* *Quoted in Building Effective Project Teams, Robert K. Wysocki, from Standish Group, Chaos Report*

Communications and Managers

- Managers spend 75% of their time in communications activities
- The majority of employees don't leave companies; they leave managers.

Overview



- What is positive psychology?
- Highlights of business case for positive psychology in the workplace
- Key concepts of positive psychology
- Application to the project management workplace

What is Positive Psychology?

- Scientific study of the strengths and virtues that enable individuals and communities to thrive

- Founded on the belief that people want
 - to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives,
 - to cultivate what is best within themselves,
 - and to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play.

- Three central concerns:
 - positive emotions
 - positive individual traits
 - positive institutions

Source: Website of the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania

Core of Positive Workplace

- Focused on creating and sustaining a working environment in which individuals have the opportunity to do their best everyday
 - ❖ Work is felt to be meaningful and important
 - ❖ People have the resources they need to do their jobs
 - ❖ People know clearly what is expected of them and receive regular, constructive feedback on performance
- Organizations in which individuals flourish will thrive.

Summary Business Case for Positive Psychology in Workplace

- 30 million employee shortfall expected as Boomer's retire
- Employees will have choice of employers
- Gallup reports that U.S. businesses lose \$1.4 trillion annually due to employee disengagement; 10% of GDP

Summary Business Case for Positive Psychology in Workplace

- Engagement measured by 12 questions
- Higher levels of engagement are correlated with increases in positive KPI and decreases in negative KPI:

Positive KPI		Negative KPI	
Sales	Profitability	Theft	Absenteeism
Productivity	Customer loyalty	Turnover	Safety incidents
Life satisfaction		Stress	Mortality, morbidity

Gallup Organization Research



Employee Engagement – Measurement – Q 12

- Do you know what is expected of you at work?
- Do you have the materials and equipment you need to do your work right?
- At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?
- In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?
- Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?
- Is there someone at work who encourages your development?
- At work, do your opinions seem to count?
- Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?
- Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?
- Do you have a best friend at work?
- In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?
- In the last year, have you had opportunities at work to learn and grow?

Gallup Organization Research

- Engaged employees average 27% less absenteeism
- Disengaged employees average 5,000 lost days per 10,000 employees
- \$600,000 in salary for no work performed per 10,000 employees
- 51% more turnover for disengaged employees
- 25-80% additional salary needed to replace front-line or entry-level employees
- 75-400% additional salary needed to replace a specialists (engineer, nurse, salesperson, etc)
- Respondents in the bottom quartile averaged 62% more accidents than the top quartile

From 12: Elements of Great Management

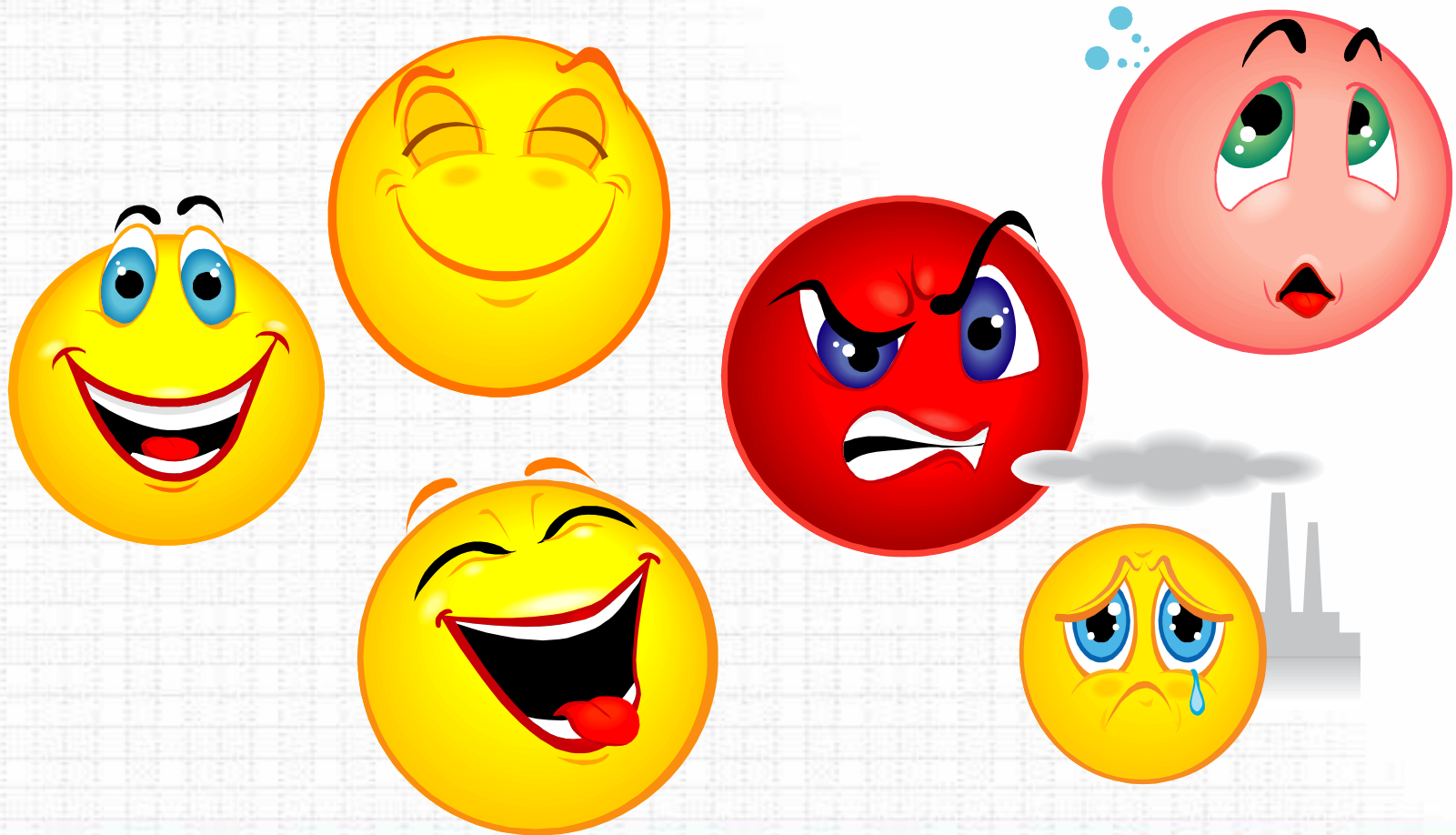
Gallup Organization Research



**	US Overall	Weakness-Correction	Strength-Based
Engaged	28%	45%	61%
Not Engaged	54%	33%	38%
Actively Disengaged	17%	22%	1%

** From *Managing Human Differences*, presentation by the Gallup Organization at the 2004 International Positive Psychology Conference, Washington, DC.

Positive and Negative Emotions



Emotions at Work



- High performance teams: communications dynamics impact performance
- Bad is stronger than good
- Approach versus avoidance goals
- Active/constructive responding
- Best self
- Supportive communications
- Signature strengths



Thank you!

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