

---

# GiLE Journal of Skills Development

---

## Wellbeing and Engagement in Hybrid Work Environments – Coaching as a Resource and Skill for Leaders to Develop

**Ute Franzen-Waschke**  
Business English & Culture

---

### Abstract

This paper explores how working from home has impacted leaders and the workforce in corporate environments during the pandemic, how these experiences might influence the workplace of the future, and what role coaching could play to foster skill development in the 21st century workplace. Before the pandemic, plenty of research had already been done on what factors influence well-being and engagement in the workplace. Models explaining the elements of well-being and engagement, as well as, tools to measure their existence or the lack of have been reviewed, tested, and validated. We know little at this point about what combinations of factors caused the decline in well-being and engagement during the pandemic, and what skills in leaders, or requirements for the workplace would be necessary to hone and implement, to improve the situation of well-being and engagement in future work environments. This paper explores how coaching could support leaders in the 21st century workplace. The business world is facing challenges while moving into post-pandemic workplace scenarios. The plurality of interests increases the complexity of the topic. The literature on well-being and engagement has been reviewed. Data that was collected during the pandemic by different organisations and conclusions drawn from these were compared with what the literature says and it was combined with experiences the author made in the field while coaching leaders and their teams in corporate environments during the pandemic. This paper concludes with a recommendation on how to enhance coaching skills among leaders and to build their knowledge and literacy in the field of coaching, to result in positive effects on workplace well-being and engagement in contemporary work environments.

**Keywords:** wellbeing, engagement, hybrid work, leadership, coaching, 21st century skills

### 1. Introduction

This paper expands on the author's previous publication in the GiLE4Youth Conference Proceedings (Franzen-Waschke, 2011), namely, how the pandemic impacted engagement and

---

well-being for leaders and the workforce while working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. This paper touches on how controversially the return to normal office scenarios was discussed in the first half of 2021 by both the workforce and employers. Different stakeholders with different needs and interests perceive how and from where work in the office can be done in different ways. The focus of this paper will be on the role of coaching and how coaching and facilitated conversations could help leaders and the workforce of the 2020s to transition with less opposition into the new work era. Additionally, this paper will explore how to maintain and re-establish well-being and engagement in contemporary work environments by building on existing and obtaining new knowledge and skills in those fields. This paper will end with a recommendation for future research to be conducted to produce more reliable data to underpin the positive effects coaching and facilitated conversations can have on leaders and their workforces in the corporate world.

This topic is of growing importance, as a lack of well-being and engagement was reported in various articles published by researchers around the world (Bernstein et al., 2020; Singer-Velush et al., 2020; Campbell & Gavett, 2021). The repercussions of the biggest experiment of our time as Bernstein et al. (2020) called it can be felt throughout the corporate world and across hierarchies (Bernstein et al., 2020). The ripple effects become visible in what is known in the US as “The Great Resignation” (Kane, 2021; Hempel, 2021), and in Europe as a widening of the gap of inequalities across countries, firms, and workers whose possibilities to work from home vary to a great extent (Milasi et al., 2020). The plurality of interests, demands, and needs will not allow for a one-size-fits-all solution (Kowalski & Loretto, 2017; Kossek et al., 2020). Evidence-based practices can support organisations and the workforce to build the workplace of the future, whether it be on-site, remote, or hybrid.

In the summer of 2020, we were in the midst of an experiment, and at that time, it seemed we were on the precipice of something new, something big, a shift in an old paradigm (Franzen-Waschke, 2020). Namely, the changing corporate viewpoints on employees working from home. Before 2020, often enough battles had been fought in organisations around who was given access to and could benefit from the privilege of working from home (Desilver, 2020). Then the pandemic hit, and it seemed as though sceptics – among staff as well as among corporate leaders – were prepared to admit that neither productivity nor effectiveness had suffered during the working-from-home period, and that the necessity that had once again been the mother of invention had shown that working from home does indeed work (Bartik et al., 2020; Desilver, 2020).

Since the pandemic hit employees have become experts on the remote work front. They manage Zoom and MS Teams calls, have increased their resilience towards technical challenges, and have become more understanding of each other when kids, cats, dogs, and spouses are on camera during work meetings (Singer-Velush et al., 2020). The most important thing was and remains that the job gets done, and so far, in most cases, it has gotten done!

Moving slowly and cautiously out of the pandemic, employers and staff are facing new issues and it feels like we are traveling back in time. Back to square one with a mind-set from pre-March 2020 (Mortensen & Gardner, 2021). As vaccination rates are rising, Covid-19 restrictions are loosening up, company rules and regulations are tightening again, mandating people return to their office work places in a rather harsh tone (Kelly, 2021). To the surprise and dread of some and to the joy of few. Working from home was successful as a change

---

initiative from the corporate point of view, as business was kept afloat and even flourished (Bernstein et al., 2020; Singer-Velush et al., 2020). From a human point of view, the success rate was not as indicative: depending on job tasks, household composition, living situations, and internet bandwidth, the transition was more or less stressful for staff, and thus the readiness to return or not to return to the workplace varies to the same extent (Anders et al., 2021; Campbell & Gavett, 2021).

Varying interests and considerations lead to more questions, and to questions to which we do not yet have any answers, or to which we do not yet have the final answers, if there are going to be any final answers at all in such a fluid and multi-dimensional environment. The experiment of 2020 continues with a different focal point. In 2020 it was **survival**, both of the individual (making a living) and of corporations (staying in business). In 2021, it will be about finding the **best way forward** to a sustainable future workplace scenario which also incorporates what was learned in 2020 (Bernstein et al., 2020; Berinato, 2020; Griffin, 2021).

Some employees enjoyed working from home more or less – depending on their personal lives and work situations. **Managers and leaders** in companies also look back in different ways: some have seen good results, productivity, and engagement at high levels; others have seen their staff suffering and longing for a way back into the office (Bernstein et al., 2020; Vogel & Breitenbroich, 2020). Managers and leaders have also seen limitations in their own spheres, e.g. their sphere of influence and control while their teams were working fully remote and from home (Rothbard, 2020). **Governments** are facing demands from organisations and trade unions to take a stance as well, and to provide a legal framework and tax policies to allow for a global masterplan to emerge (Vogel & Breitenbroich, 2020). It is still heavily debated in different countries, industries, and organisations what the best model might be going forward while also ensuring equal rights for different job types and workers. During the pandemic the gap between those types of jobs that could allow remote work and those that could not have become more apparent (Milasi et al., 2020). Those types of jobs and workers who have benefited from the change in mind-set regarding where work can be done have already decided that a hybrid model would be their preferred model, albeit they are not united about what exactly that hybrid model should look like (Milasi et al., 2020; Vogel & Breitenbroich, 2020). According to one survey conducted by Vogel and Breitenbroich (2020) employees would prefer a flexible model which allows them to work between one to three days per week in the office (Milasi et al., 2020; Vogel & Breitenbroich, 2020).

How to lead, connect with colleagues – especially new hires – and to remain engaged as a team and as individuals will change. Human Resource processes, such as on boarding and off boarding, learning and development, as well as career planning in a hybrid world will need adapting (Bernstein et al., 2020). Microsoft’s 2021 Work Trend Index Annual Report “The Future of Work is Hybrid” (Anders et al., 2021) identifies seven hybrid work trends business leaders need to be aware of in 2021; those relevant for this paper are as follows:

- a) Employees want the best of both worlds.
- b) Leaders are out of touch with employees and need a wake-up call.
- c) Digital overload is real and climbing.
- d) Talent is everywhere in a hybrid working world.

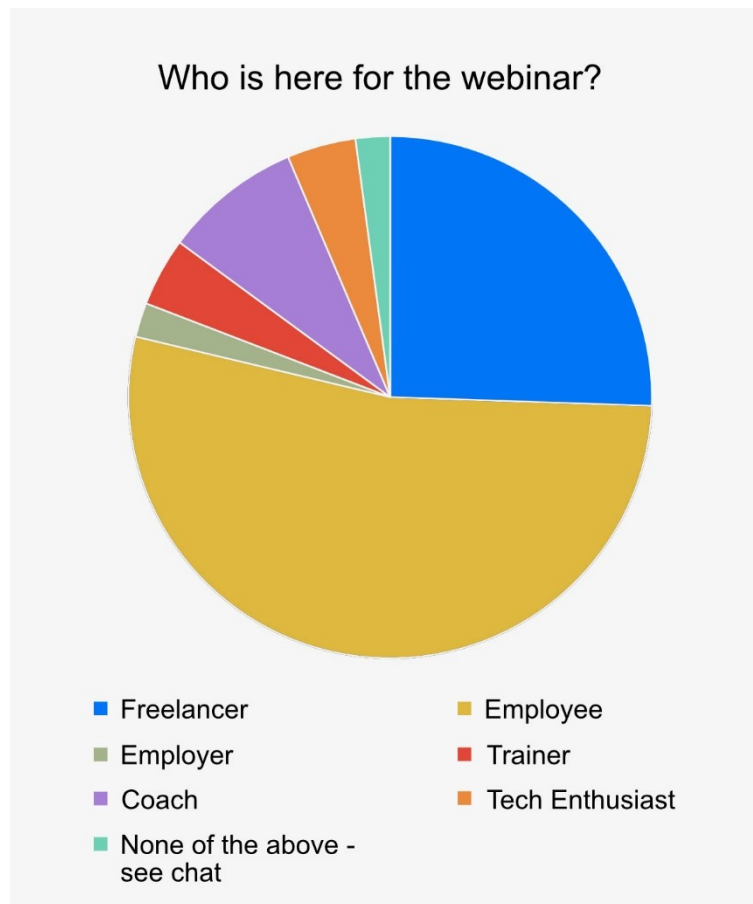
---

Already in 2020, Smith and Garriety (2020) pointed out in their research that organisations need to become more agile and flexible in their approaches in order to cater to the different needs their employees might have if they want to remain a popular and in-demand employer of the 21st century. Truss, Delbridge, et al. (2014) found a correlation between well-being and engagement in the workforce with recognition and next-level leadership skills long before the pandemic. Hence the question is: what impact will there be on leadership, work culture, connection, and engagement with these new and diverse approaches of working together? The co-created hybrid model seems to be the most popular among the workforce, and it will be a more complex construct for organisations and leaders to make it work in a sustainable way (Bernstein et al., 2020; Globalization Partners, 2021). Autonomy and self-determination – both factors that drive motivation and performance – which would allow employees to decide how often they would like to work from home and from the office, respectively, could positively correlate with employee motivation, engagement, as well as employee performance (Manganelli et al., 2018). The extent of self-determination and autonomy, however, seems to bear challenges for some leaders, even more so when leading a hybrid workforce that can no longer be seen while at work (Mortensen, 2021). Bernstein et al. (2020) have also voiced concerns that highly-skilled workers could see a devaluation of their work when ‘locked away’ in a home office – so how can visibility and equality be kept in a hybrid working world?

Other factors to consider are how to ensure that leaders’ trust levels are high enough towards their workforce that employees make the best decisions not just for them as individuals, but also that employees would be willing to put their entrepreneurial hats on in relation to what is best for the type of work they do, the team(s) they work with, and the customers/products they are responsible for or working with. How can leaders also ensure that the trust within the team does not erode and doubts creep in in terms of: is everyone really doing what they are supposed to be doing, namely working on job tasks to achieve project and business goals? Is everyone actually working and not chilling (Mortensen & Gardner, 2021; Campbell & Gavett, 2021)? What specific skills do leaders need in remote work environments to maintain high levels of trust and to maintain an engaged workforce that feels well at work? There is no comprehensive list of skills to check off which leaders of hybrid workplaces need to hone to make sure everyone at work feels equally appreciated and seen by their contributions, regardless of staff working on-site or working from home or anywhere. It is unlikely that a universally applicable list can be provided because matters are too complex and too pluralistic.

The author hosted a webinar in June 2021 on the topic “Entering the Hybrid World”. The participants came from a variety of backgrounds as can be seen in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1. WHO IS HERE FOR THE WEBINAR



Source: Own & Howspace, 2021

When the participants were asked in a poll about what the biggest challenges were for them in their remote workplaces, the following **top three** challenges were mentioned:

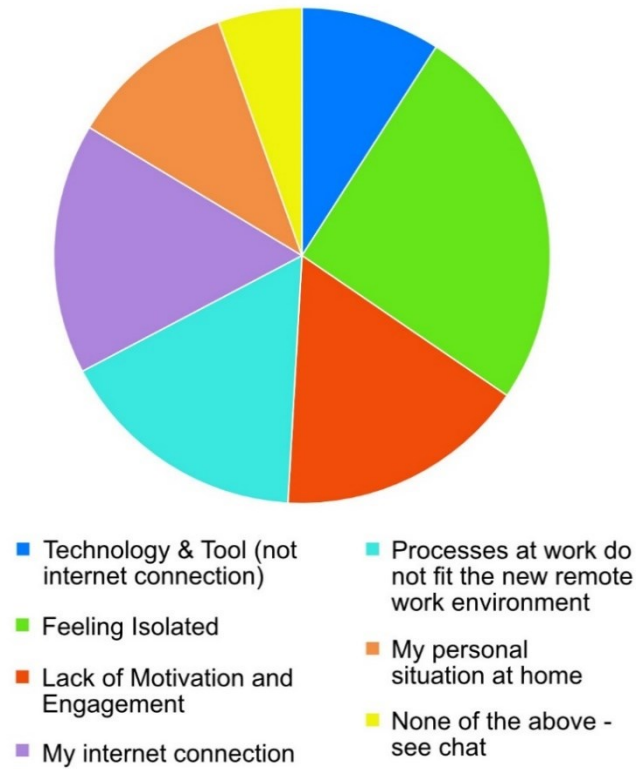
1. Feeling isolated
2. Lack of Motivation and Engagement
3. Processes are not fit for a remote environment

Figure 2 shows all the challenges participants could choose from.

---

FIGURE 2. WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FOR YOU WORKING REMOTELY

What are the biggest challenges for you working remotely?



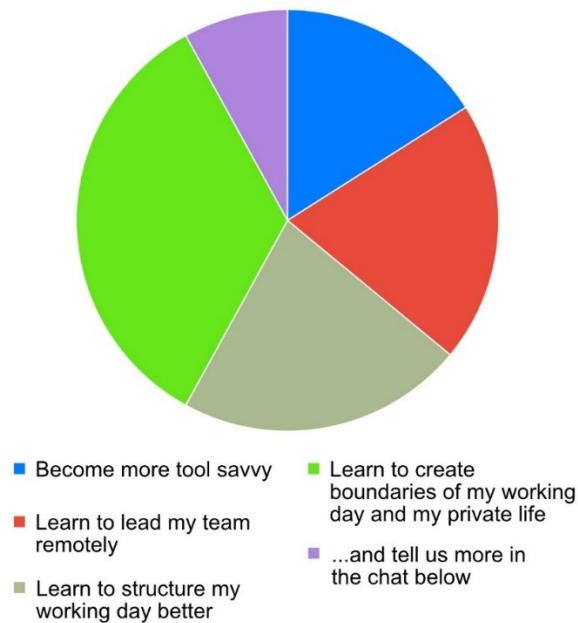
Source: Own & Howspace, 2021

In the same webinar in a different poll, participants were also asked which skills they felt they needed to develop and build on. Figure 3 provides an overview of the skills highlighted. The top three areas for skill development were identified as follows:

1. Learn to create boundaries of my working day and my private life.
2. Learn to structure my day better.
3. Learn to lead my team remotely.

FIGURE 3. WHICH SKILLS DO YOU NEED TO DEVELOP GOING FORWARD?

Which skills do you need to develop going forward?



Source: Own & Howspace, 2021

Rothbard (2020) confirms that setting boundaries has been a particular challenge during the pandemic. Leaders can encourage and support the workforce in learning to create these boundaries and can lead by example. Yet, boundary setting might be a skill whose importance has grown now that the lines between work and private lives have become more blurred, and especially with Gen Z moving into the workplace as the Microsoft Workplace Trend Index Report (Anders et al., 2021) emphasises. As pre-Covid research confirms, engagement and well-being have been highly correlated with the leadership skills of the next-level supervisor (Wilmar, 2014). According to Oades et al. (2021), the lack of skills and knowledge about how to lead a remote or hybrid workforce could be compensated by an increase in literacy around well-being and engagement. O'Connor and Cavanagh (2013) say that Coaching could be one way of eliminating these shortcomings among corporate leaders.

## 2. Well-being & Engagement

Well-being and engagement are well-researched topics in academia (Wilmar, 2014). Litchfield et al. (2016) say that well-being is based on how every individual perceives their health, happiness, and sense of purpose. Well-being is a very subjective matter, and prone to sudden changes that are not necessarily related to the immediate work environment of the individual but could also have their origin in the individual's private environment. These influencing personal aspects of well-being make it much harder for a corporate leader to manage and work with these factors in the workplace. In view of the benefits that higher levels of well-being and engagement have for employers, regardless of the plurality and complexity of these fields, it seems to be an area worth the effort of learning more about for both emerging and seasoned leaders alike (Ladyshevsky & Taplin, 2017). The information in Table 1 was synthesized from

Arcidiacono & Di Martino (2016) and focuses in a condensed manner on what is relevant for this paper here, and at the same time, aims at highlighting the extensive research that has been done in the field of well-being. Table 1 provides a good starting point for those readers who would like to explore the various concepts in more detail at their convenience using the resources stated in the bibliography. Seligman's PERMA model (2018) was chosen to show how well-being and engagement might be connected from the perspective of the author.

TABLE 1. THEORIES AND MODELS OF WELLBEING

<b>Model Name &amp; Author</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>
Subjective Wellbeing According to Diener (2009); Diener, Scollon & Lucas (2009)	Pleasant emotions Unpleasant emotions Global life judgement Domain satisfaction
Psychological Wellbeing According to Ryff (2014, 1989)	Self-Acceptance Environmental mastery Positive relations Purpose in life Personal growth Autonomy
<b>PERMA Model</b> According to Seligman (2011, 2002)	<b>Positive Emotions</b> <b>Engagement</b> <b>Positive Relationships</b> <b>Meaning</b> <b>Accomplishment</b>
Self-determination theory According to Ryan & Deci (2008, 2002)	Competence Relatedness Autonomy
Social Well-being According to Keyes (1998)	Social Actualisation Social Acceptance Social Integration Social Contribution
Happiness in Economics According to Frey & Strutzer (2010, 2002)	Pleasant Affect Unpleasant Affect Life Satisfaction Labour Market Consumerism Family and Companionship Leisure Health
The Four Qualities of Life Model and Happy-Life-Years Index According to Veenhoven (2013)	Life chances Life results Inner qualities Outer qualities
Wellness Theory and ICOPPE Model According to Prilleltensky et al. (2016); Prilleltensky (2012)	Interpersonal well-being Community well-being Occupational well-being Physical well-being Psychological well-being Economic well-being

Source: synthesised and adapted from DiMartino, Arcidiacono (& Eiroa-Orosa), own compilation, 2021



Shuck (2011) conducted an integrative literature review of the years 1990–2010 on engagement, and cited Christian and Slaughter (2007), who concluded that from an academic perspective none of the various models were more respected than the other. Furthermore, Shuck (2011) critiqued that none of the engagement models were fit for use in the corporate world. Shuck describes a disconnect between the academic view of engagement and how this view translates into practical applications for those outside of academia and he invites researchers and practitioners to continue to work on building bridges to connect these two worlds. Shuck (2011) explored in his integrative literature review the following four leading approaches by Kahn (1990), Maslach (2001), Harter et al. (2002) and Sak (2006). Table 2 provides an overview of these four leading approaches and was complemented with Bakker and Demerouti’s (2001) Job-Demands-Resources Theory (JD-R) and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2006). The JD-R Model has seen a lot of popularity in organisations. The core principles of Bakker and Demerouti’s (2017) theory speak the language of the corporate world. Furthermore, the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), a measurement tool for engagement, was developed from Bakker and Demerouti’s theory and has been used in corporate environments. The JD-R theory indicates that employees who have access to the necessary resources to do their jobs, such as skills, material, and time, will experience lower levels of stress and higher levels of engagement.

TABLE 2. ENGAGEMENT THEORIES

<b>Theory Owner</b>	<b>Approach &amp; Definition of Term</b>
Kahn, 1990	<b>Needs Satisfying Approach</b> “the simultaneous employment and expression of a person’s ‘preferred self’ in task behaviors that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence, and active full role performances” (p. 700)
Maslach et al., 2001	<b>Burnout Antithesis Approach</b> “a persistent positive affective state . . . characterized by high levels of activation and pleasure” (p. 417)
Harter et al., 2002	<b>Satisfaction-engagement approach</b> “individual’s involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work” (p. 417)
Sak, 2006	<b>Multidimensional approach</b> “a distinct and unique construct consisting of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components . . . associated with individual role performance” (p. 602)
Bakker & Demerouti, 2001 Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003 Schaufeli, Bakker, Salanova (2006)	<b>Job-Demands-Resources</b> theory (see within the text above) <b>Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)</b>

Source: own compilation, 2021, based on Shuck (2011)

---

When layering the factors of these engagement models, especially job resources and job demands, from the JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2001) over Seligman's (2018) well-being theory and his PERMA Model whose elements are:

1. **Positive Emotions**
2. **Engagement**
3. **Positive Relationships**
4. **Meaning**
5. **Accomplishment**

One can identify overlapping elements from both fields. For example, the elements of Relationships, Engagement, and Accomplishments, which could be linked with the JD-R dimensions in terms of: colleagues I enjoy working with, material and time, that allow me to engage in my tasks, paired with the necessary skills I have to do my job. A combination of these will lead very likely to higher levels of Meaning, Accomplishments, etc. as in Seligman's PERMA model. Goodman et al. (2017) demonstrated in a study they conducted on Seligman's PERMA model, that if one element of the PERMA model is present, e.g. Engagement, the other four elements are present as well and are thus indicators for well-being in individuals. With that connection made, the question arises, if higher levels of engagement – achieved by looking at the dimensions of JD-R in combination with the five dimensions of the PERMA model – could lead to both higher levels of engagement and well-being in future workplace scenarios.

### **3. Coaching as one means to make contemporary workplaces more sustainable**

Research conducted by Jarosz (2021) during the pandemic demonstrates that coaching enhances well-being and performance for those being coached. According to McDermott et al. (2007) and McGovern et al. (2001), who both conducted research in the field of coaching in organisations before the pandemic, they found that coaching in the workplace has become a key element of organisational learning, workplace talent management, and leadership development. Grant and Palmer (2002) also highlight that coaching does enhance well-being in personal and workplace settings. Jarosz (2021) also cites Fava et al. (2005) and Weiss et al. (2016), who showed in their research that focussing on positive psychological interventions among other interventions, successfully increase psychological well-being. Grant and Greene (2001) state that coaching is a systematic process in which coaches are guided and set their own goals and plan their actions, consequently leading to metrics for success.

In 2017 Ladyshewsky and Taplin (2017) concluded that there is considerable proof in the literature which supports the relationship between employee engagement at work and organisational performance outcomes. In their research, coaches (MBA students with work experience) received managerial coaching (by their direct managers). These managers were not specially trained coaches and their coaching skills varied and were reported as “below the midpoint.” Yet they measured a significant relationship between the perceived coaching skills of the manager and the work engagement of the employee. This leads to the assumption that more engagement and well-being in future workplace scenarios can be achieved by either enhancing coaching skills in managers, or by providing professional support from a specially trained coach, or by offering a combination of both. The concept “the manager as coach” is not new and has been widely explored, for example, by Ellinger et al. (2014). It would be a separate discussion about how coaching by a direct manager is different – in particular because of the

---

biases and role constraints – from being coached by an external and professional coach. However, budget, time, and other factors might not always allow for an optimal solution. Therefore, looking at how leaders can use models and easy-to-use guides to enhance their coaching skills in their everyday encounters with their workforce could be a powerful first step to alleviate some of the symptoms identified during the pandemic in 2020. These symptoms or shortcomings surfaced under the extreme conditions of the pandemic but have certainly been around before and will continue to influence employee commitment to their employer as well as their work engagement and well-being in the future.

The author, as a practitioner in the field of organisational coaching, has seen that there is considerable alignment with what the previously referenced researchers have demonstrated in their various and well-respected research findings: using established and validated models of well-being and engagement, and tying these in with a systematic coaching approach and facilitated conversations between leaders and their workforce could be a first attempt to bridging what Shuck described as “...theory and research can drive practical strategies for reaching employees at differing levels of being in work (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral)”. Shuck (2011) and Kowalski and Loretto (2017) invite the idea of adopting practices to best suit the specific needs of each organisation rather than copying the best practices of other organisations that might not be customised enough for different contexts, backgrounds, and industries.

#### **4. The PPAS Maturity Model® - A Systematic Coaching Process for Leaders**

Co-creating a roadmap for a successful and sustainable work culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century would benefit both organisations and employees. Whether one starts with the implementation by establishing or re-igniting a coaching approach with leaders or managers as coaches by offering coaching to leaders and use the positive ripple effects this has into the organisations as described by O’Connor and Cavanagh (2013), or by rolling out a major coaching initiative with many different streams in an organisation, depends on where each organisation stands (status quo), where they would like to go (desired future state or goal), and their budgets.

A model that provides a simple roadmap, which can be applied with a bit of training by every leader, is the PPAS Maturity Model®. The model looks at the dimensions of:

- a) **People**
- b) **Processes**
- c) **Applications**
- d) **Structure**

It allows leaders and the workforce to navigate through structured conversations in a coach-like manner around personal and workplace topics. The PPAS Maturity Model® – as depicted in Figure 4 – can be used at any stage of any change initiative, to discover what is the current situation (status quo), what is the desired future stage of each dimension (goals to achieve), how those can be reached, what next steps are necessary, and it can also be used to conduct retrospectives on lessons-learned along the way. The transition to a hybrid work environment is just one example of such a change initiative. The PPAS Maturity Model® creates awareness and is fully customisable to best suit the context of the individual or the company. Kowalski and Loretto (2017) recommended more contextual approaches, less generalisations and cookie-

cutter solutions to encourage well-being in the workplace. This is what the PPAS Maturity Model® incorporates and offers.

FIGURE 4. THE PPAS MATURITY MODEL®



Source: Own editing, 2021

Exploring the dimensions People, Processes, Applications, and Structure, and how mature or well-established those dimensions are in the respective organisation or among the leaders and their workforces, could help to reduce complexity and bring clarity and structure to the necessary conversations to be held in the workplace. Each dimension is explored with what some coaches describe as discovery questions (Vogt et al., 2003; Glaser, 2014). Those questions are adapted by the coach or leader-as-coach as needed to find out what is relevant and important in the context of the enquiry.

#### 4.1 People

The dimension of People explores what an individual or team members think about the topic of exploration, e.g. hybrid work scenarios. How much they know, what information they are missing, how they feel about the topic, in what way they think they can contribute to the topic, what skills they either bring or think they are lacking, and so forth. After the exploration of the dimension of People there is more clarity around how ready individuals are to follow the leader in the respective matter, how urgent they think the matter is from their perspective, and what needs – information, knowledge, skills, etc. – have already been met and still need to be met to continue with the initiative at hand. With the knowledge in this dimension the next steps can be planned. Often it is recommended to start with this dimension as the factor ‘People’ is considered highly relevant for the success of any organisational (change) initiative. The awkwardness of change and discomfort that people often experience can be addressed in this dimension which is helpful and supports the process itself (Moss Kanter, 2009).

#### 4.2 Processes

The dimension of Processes starts in general with a process audit in which relevant processes for the topic at hand are identified, described, and reflected on by how important they are, what

---

is working well, what needs improvement, and what options exist to adapt or tune the process, if necessary. The identification and reflection on this dimension helps leaders to get a better understanding of the challenges and how they could be limited or eliminated when working together with the respective stakeholders. This conversation gives people a sense of importance and influence. It gives them a voice that is heard, even if it will not always be possible to change what is really needed from the point of view of the individual. This dimension speaks, for example, to “individual’s involvement” as highlighted in Harter et al.’s (2002) Satisfaction-Engagement approach.

### **4.3 Application**

The dimension of Applications also starts with an audit of all applications or tools used by the team members and how adept they are in using them, how effective the tools and applications are, and how well they match with the previous dimension of Processes. If people are required to use applications and tools, that do not work well as such, or that people (users) do not know well enough to see how those tools would support the processes they need to follow, that can cause technostress. A term that grew in importance during the pandemic and refers to stress caused among users of technical tools because the tools either do not work at all (lack of reliability), do not suit the purpose (incompatibility with job requirements), or are not user-friendly, or change too often (Bondanini et al., 2020). With these constantly changing landscapes of tools and applications in the workplace, the need to learn new things grows, and with that, people’s resilience is tested (Kuntz, 2021). When exploring this dimension, leaders will learn a lot about how well job resources and employee skills converge or diverge. Knowing more about that might increase well-being on the employee side and productivity and efficiency on the company side.

### **4.4 Structure**

The dimension of Structure looks at both the structure in the organisation and how well it serves the mission and the project or business goals, as well as, how suitable the (infra-)structures are for the employee, for example, when working from home. Does the employee have a good enough internet connection, a quiet and separated place to work from, etc.? Structure is always seen in connection with People and Processes. Clarity in what structural changes and adaptations are necessary to improve, for example, well-being or engagement help both leaders and employees. If an employee cannot work in a focused manner from home because the surroundings and family situation do not allow it, then the structures necessary for best working conditions are not given. Quite contrary, they could negatively affect well-being and cause stress for the employee (if required to work from home) and loss of productivity for the company. Engagement might also increase when structural adaptations in the workplace are made, such as, when an employee is moved from one position in the organisational chart to another, and with that the physical workplace does not change but the reporting structures do.

## **5. Conclusion**

Well-being and engagement are complex psychological constructs and are impacted by a multitude of factors that do not only originate in the workplace but whose ripple effects can be seen there. It is undisputed that well-being and engagement have suffered during the pandemic

---

and that organisations are struggling to design and define the workplace of the future in which employees feel well, are engaged, and thus make a positive impact on business outcomes whether this be in the office or working from home or a mix of both. Employees have made up their minds and prefer a hybrid solution. Different views around what challenges different sectors and organisations are facing and the reported “lack of skills” among leaders and in the workforce to make the preferred hybrid solution work are calling for action. To-date, there is no accurate knowledge about what the exact skills are that leaders and the workforce are missing, and what would be the cure for many issues organisations and their workforces are facing. What we do know is that well-being and engagement have suffered. And we also know – based on research – that there are means to improve well-being and engagement in the workplace. One such means could be Coaching. Not as a remedy or a cure that promises healing once applied, but as a process that could lead to alleviation, as well as, to more clarity around the complex situations both organisations and the workforce are in. Skills and competencies to build and hone vary depending on industries and also change over time. Coaching could be one method to address this plurality of interests when it comes to deciding from where to work, as well as, to reducing or structuring the complexity around what makes people feel well and engaged in what they do – no matter from where they do it. Coaching has already proven to be a good means – for a variety of reasons – during change initiatives, and there is evidence that coaching fosters engagement and well-being in the workplace, as explored in detail in chapter 3 of this article (Grant & Green, 2001; Grant & Palmer, 2002; Jarosz, 2021). Making the workforce and their leaders fit for the workplace of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in a sustainable manner is an important topic for any organisation that wants to remain competitive. Therefore, more research needs to be done to identify the exact skill gaps that leaders and the workforce are said to have and how these relate to the challenges organisations are facing. More research is also necessary to measure the impact a coaching culture makes particularly in hybrid work environments, and how models and guides could be one way to support leaders and their workforce to choose a coach-approach more often in their everyday encounters. The author, who herself is a coach, might be biased when it comes to advocating coaching in organisations. However, the concepts of a “coaching culture” or “manager as coach”, in which members of the organisation use a coaching mind-set, coaching methods and tools, do not necessarily require the paid services of external coaches and are equally considered as possibilities in this paper as the services of a professional and external coach. Furthermore, independent evidence from literature and research has been used to build the case for coaching as a resource and skill for leaders to hone and develop.

## References

- Anders, G., Amini, F., August, C., Baym, N., Cain, D., Chinnasamy, A., Donohue, M., Godfrey, M. E., Hoak, A., Jaffe, S., Kimbrough, K., Larson, J., Lorenzetti Soper, L., Martin, R., McConnaughey, H., Moutrey, G., Pokorny, L., Raghavan, S., Rintel, S., Stallbaumer, C., Stocks, K., Titsworth, D. & Voelker, J. (2021). *The Next Great Disruption Is Hybrid Work – Are We Ready?* (2021) Work Trend Index: Annual Report, Issue. <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index/hybrid-work>
- Arcidiacono, C. & Martino, S. D. (2016). A critical analysis of happiness and well-being. Where we stand now, where we need to go. *Community Psychology in Global Perspective*, 2(1), 6-35. <https://doi.org/10.1285/i24212113v2i1p6>

- 
- Bartik, A. W., Cullen, Z. B., Glaeser, E. L., Luca, M. & Stanton, C. T. (2020). *What Jobs are Being done at Home during the COVID-19 Crisis? Evidence from Firm-Level Surveys*. National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Berinato, S. (2020). What is an office for? *Harvard Business Review*.
- Bernstein, E., Blunden, H., Brodsky, A., Sohn, W. & Waber, B. (2020). The Implications of Working without an Office. *Harvard Business Review*.
- Bondanini, G., Giorgi, G., Ariza-Montes, A., Vega-Muñoz, A. & Andreucci-Annunziata, P. (2020). Technostress Dark Side of Technology in the Workplace: A Scientometric Analysis. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17218013>
- Campbell, M. & Gavett, G. (2021). What Covid-19 has done to our Well-Being, in 12 Charts. *Harvard Business Review*.
- Christian, M. S. & Slaughter, J. E. (2007, August). Work engagement: A meta-analytic review and directions for research in an emerging area. <https://doi.org/10.5465/ambpp.2007.26536346>
- Desilver, D. (2020). Before the coronavirus, telework was an optional benefit, mostly for the affluent few. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/03/20/before-the-coronavirus-telework-was-an-optional-benefit-mostly-for-the-affluent-few/>
- Ellinger, A., Beattie, R. & Hamlin, R. (2014). *The Manager as Coach* (E. Cox, T. Bachkirva, & D. Clutterbuck, Eds. The Complete Handbook of Coaching ed.). Sage Publications.
- Ernst Kossek, E., Schwind Wilson, K. & Mechem Rosokha, L. (2020). What Working Parents Need from Their Managers. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://doi.org/https://hbr.org/2020/11/what-working-parents-need-from-their-managers>
- Franzen-Waschke, U. (2020). On The Precipice Of A Culture Shift, Adaptation May Come At Warp Speed. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2020/05/19/on-the-precipice-of-a-culture-shift-adaptation-may-come-at-warp-speed/>
- Franzen-Waschke, U. (2021). *Working from home in 2020 - Lessons learned to leverage these learnings going forward as emerging leaders and a remote office workforce*. GiLE4Youth International Conference, The Development of Competencies for Employability
- Glaser J.E. (2014). *Conversational Intelligence: How great leaders build trust and get extraordinary results*. Bibliomotion.
- Globalization Partners. (2021). *How to make the hybrid model work for your team*. <https://www.globalization-partners.com/resources/ebook-how-to-make-the-hybrid-model-work-for-your-team/>
- Goodman, F., Disabato, D., Kashdan, T. & Kauffman, S. (2017). Measuring well-being: A comparison of subjective well-being and PERMA. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2017.1388434>
- Grant, A. M. & Greene, J. (2001). *Coach Yourself: Make real changes in your life*. Momentum Press.
- Grant, A. M. & Palmer, S. (2002). Coaching Psychology (workshop and meeting). *Annual Conference of the Division of Counselling Psychology, British Psychological Society, Torquay, UK*.
- Griffin, J. (2021). Key considerations for returning to offices post-Covid. *Securityinfowatch.com*, NA. <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A655073316/ITOF?u=chesterc&sid=summon&xid=57ab170d>
- Hempel, J. (2021). Work-Life Balance In *The Great Re-Norming*.
-

- 
- Jarosz, J. (2021). The impact of coaching on well-being and performance of managers and their teams during pandemic. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 19(1), 4-27. <https://doi.org/10.24384/n5ht-2722>
- Kane, P. (2021). The Great Resignation Is Here, and It's Real *Inc.Com*. <https://www.inc.com/phillip-kane/the-great-resignation-is-here-its-real.html>
- Kelly, J. (2021). WeWork's New CEO Says 'Uberly Engaged' Employees Will Return To The Office While Others Will Be 'Very Comfortable' At Home. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackkelly/2021/05/13/weworks-new-ceo-says-uberly-engaged-employees-will-return-to-the-office-while-others-will-be-very-comfortable-at-home/>
- Kowalski, T. H. P. & Loretto, W. (2017). Well-being and HRM in the changing workplace. *International journal of human resource management*, 28(16), 2229-2255. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2017.1345205>
- Kuntz, J. C. (2021). Resilience in Times of Global Pandemic: Steering Recovery and Thriving Trajectories. *Applied psychology*, 70(1), 188-215. <https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12296>
- Ladyshevsky, R. & Taplin, R. (2017). Employee perceptions of managerial coaching and work engagement using the Measurement Model of Coaching Skills and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 15(2).
- Litchfield, P., Cooper, C., Hancock, C. & Watt, P. (2016). Work and Wellbeing in the 21st Century. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 13(11), 1065. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph13111065>
- Manganelli, L., Thibault-Landry, A., Forest, J. & Carpentier, J. (2018). Self-Determination Theory Can Help You Generate Performance and Well-Being in the Workplace: A Review of the Literature. *Advances in developing human resources*, 20(2), 227-240. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422318757210>
- McDermott, M., Levenson, A. & Newton, S. (2007). What coaching can and cannot do for your organisation. *Human Resource Planning*, 30, 30-38.
- McGovern, J., Lindemann, M., Vergara, M., Murphy, S., Barker, L. & Warrenfeltz, R. (2001). Maximizing the Impact of Executive Coaching: Behavioral Change, Organizational Outcomes, and Return on Investment. *The Manchester Review*, 6(1), 1-9.
- Milasi, S., González-Vázquez, I. & Fernández-Macías, E. (2020). *Telework in the EU before and after the COVID-19: where we were, where we head to*. J. R. C. The European Commission's Science and Knowledge Service. [https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/sites/default/files/jrc120945\\_policy\\_brief\\_-\\_covid\\_and\\_telework\\_final.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/sites/default/files/jrc120945_policy_brief_-_covid_and_telework_final.pdf)
- Mortensen, M. (2021). Figure Out the Right Hybrid Work Strategy for Your Company. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2021/06/figure-out-the-right-hybrid-work-strategy-for-your-company> (H06F3Z) (HBR.org)
- Mortensen, M. & Gardner, H. K. (2021). WFH Is Corroding Our Trust in Each Other. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2021/02/wfh-is-corroding-our-trust-in-each-other>
- Moss Kanter, R. (2009). Change Is Hardest in the Middle. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2009/08/change-is-hardest-in-the-middle>
- O'Connor, S. & Cavanagh, M. (2013). The coaching ripple effect: The effects of developmental coaching on wellbeing across organisational networks. *Psychology or Well-Being: Theory, Research and Practice*, 3(2), 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.1186/2211-1522-3-2>



- 
- Oades, L. G., Jarden, A., Hou, H., Ozturk, C., Williams, P. R., Slemp, G. & Huang, L. (2021). Wellbeing Literacy: A Capability Model for Wellbeing Science and Practice. *Public Health* 2021, 118(719), 12. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18020719>
- Rothbard, N. P. (2020). Building Work-Life Boundaries in the WFH Era. *Harvard Business Review*.
- Shuck, B. (2011). Integrative Literature Review: Four Emerging Perspectives of Employee Engagement: An Integrative Literature Review. *10(Generic)*, 304-328. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484311410840>
- Seligman, M. (2018). PERMA and the building blocks of well-being. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2018.1437466>
- Singer-Velush, N., Kevin, S. & Erik, A. (2020). Microsoft Analyzed Data on its newly remote workforce. *Harvard Business Review*.
- Smith, J. & Garriety, S. (2020). The art of flexibility: bridging five generations in the workforce. *Emerald Publishing Ltd.*, 19(3), 107-110. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SHR-01-2020-0005> (Strategic HR Review)
- Truss, C., Alfes, K., Delbridge, R., Shantz, A. & Soane, E. (2014). What is engagement? In *Employee Engagement in theory and practice* (pp. 29-49). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203076965-10>
- Truss, C., Delbridge, R., Alfes, K., Shantz, A. & Soane, E. (2014). *Employee engagement in theory and practice*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203076965>
- Vogt, E. E., Brown, J. & Isaacs, D. (2003). *The art of powerful questions: Catalyzing insight, innovation, and action*. Whole Systems Associates.
- Vogel, S. & Breitenbroich, M. (2020). *Industrial relations and social dialogue Germany: Working life in the COVID-19 pandemic 2020*. <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/de/publications/other/2021/working-life-in-the-covid-19-pandemic-2020>