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Competitive Advantage in the Nonprofit Funding Market:

*Engaging the Workforce to Drive
Organizational Growth at S4KF, Inc.*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Human services nonprofit agencies in the U.S. are facing significant challenges to sustainability as a result of continual reductions in government funding, uncertainty in the face of short contract time frames that require competitively bidding for renewal, the presence of for-profit companies in the human services funding market that have significant cost- savings advantages, and increasing demands for performance measurement and reporting that are not supported by additional funding for administration. Given these market forces, maintaining the status quo is no longer a viable option for nonprofits. Long-term sustainability will require the ability to adapt quickly to an ever changing environment, identify trends early in order to capitalize on opportunities, and build sources of competitive advantage that can set an organization apart from its competitors and attract multiple funders.

Success 4 Kids & Families is a nonprofit providing behavioral health services to low income children and their families in Tampa, Florida. Faced with these market challenges, the agency determined through its strategic planning process that the organization will need to grow in order to remain sustainable. While they have identified strategic goals and objectives in order to further organizational growth, their ability to successfully achieve them is dependent on their capacity to successfully compete for new funding. Nonprofits are at a significant disadvantage in a market that requires continual competition since there are rarely discretionary funds or available staff hours to invest in building competitive advantage. In order to help address these challenges, the purpose of this study was to identify human resource strategies with the potential to help drive organizational growth with a minimal investment of resources. Based on the significant body of research linking employee engagement to organizational success, this concept provided the framework for the study.

The methods used to carry out the study included reviewing the agency's strategic planning documentation to identify areas where strategies could have the greatest potential impact, and reviewing the relevant practitioner and academic literature to identify sources of competitive advantage in the current market and determine the potential for aligning engagement strategies with the organization's strategic goals. In addition, S4KF utilizes a remote workforce model that will provide the primary means for expanding the agency's service area, so particular attention was paid to understanding the impact of this work style on engagement in order to identify potential challenges associated with greater distances and means for addressing them through program design prior to initiating a geographical expansion.

In order to better understand the current state of engagement in the agency, a web based employee survey was created, drawing on the literature and the agency's main priorities, and distributed via an email invitation. The survey included questions requiring both quantitative and qualitative responses and was designed to assess their perceptions of the key drivers of engagement in their workplace, their self-reported attitudes and behaviors associated with engagement, and the primary factors impacting engagement from their perspective. In addition, the survey was designed to identify employees based on their work style so the analysis could include identifying factors presenting challenges for specific work groups. Sixty surveys were returned which represented 50% of the agency's staff, so enough data was obtained to provide a good overall picture of engagement in the agency.

The survey results were analyzed within the chosen framework to identify workplace factors that were potentially serving to enhance or inhibit employees' experience of the conditions that drive engagement. The findings highlighted significant strengths that engagement strategies can potentially leverage into competitive advantage, including a strong belief in the organization's mission and values, a passion for the work and strong relationships with coworkers and supervisors. The areas identified as weaknesses did not reflect significant problems, but rather areas where practices may be presenting barriers to full engagement. These were a lack of effective communication channels, a perceived lack of opportunities for professional development and, specifically regarding the remote workforce, feelings of isolation the lack of a sense of team.

An analysis of the results overall and between workgroups, highlighted areas where engagement could potentially be enhanced through changes in practice, as well as areas where employee needs and organizational needs are strongly aligned, presenting opportunities to enhance employee well-being while simultaneously building the competitive advantage needed to drive organizational growth moving forward. Based on these findings, and the literature reviewed, the following recommendations are those which offer the greatest potential return on investment in the form of competitive advantage for the organization and well-being for employees. .

Recommendation 1: Establish Clear Channels of Communication

Effective communication in all areas was identified as an issue throughout the survey and the potential negative impact on engagement was highlighted by the number of staff who did not have a strong awareness or understanding of the agency's strategic vision and goals or perceive their role in achieving them to be important. In addition, one of the strongest factors contributing to employee engagement from their own perspective was participating in opportunities such as strategic planning discussions and round tables where they felt that leadership valued their input. Creating formal structures to support communication could have multiple benefits through enhancing staff's perceptions of perceived organizational support as well as ensuring that engaged employees with a strong desire to help the organization succeed understand the needs and goals of the organization.

Recommendation 2: Facilitate Opportunities for Remote Workers to Connect

The survey results indicated that there are some remote workers with a desire to be more involved and connected to the organization. Including a representative from this group on a committee such as the one indicated above is one way of ensuring this group has the same access to information as other parts of the organization. Other suggestions for enhancing engagement in this group from the survey findings and literature on remote workers include maintaining a regularly updated web based calendar to enable remote workers to stay better connected to what's happening in the agency, facilitating social opportunities and creating informal virtual teams.

Recommendation 3: Performance and Outcomes Management

The final recommendation is to engage staff in the organization in action learning to begin the process of creating a performance and outcomes measurement system in the agency. The COA standards, SOC and nonprofit literature (Lynch-Cerullo & Cooney, 2007; Lyons, Epstein & Jordan, 2010) emphasize the need to include staff in the development of the measurement system in order to make it meaningful, encourage adoption of the processes that result and ensure that it effectively represents the strengths and needs of the agency's consumers.

Action learning provides a framework for including staff in the process and can potentially contribute significantly to creating the conditions for engagement in the agency. By creating a learning culture, feelings of safety can be increased if employees understand that areas of weakness are expected and viewed as opportunities for learning and improvement rather than seen as reflecting poor performance. In addition, by including employees in the process, leadership can demonstrate that they value the skills and contribution of staff and provide informal professional development opportunities, resulting in increased perceptions of organization support. Finally, meaningfulness can be enhanced by providing staff, both individually and as a team, with greater opportunity to see the results of their work and through measures that are meaningful to them, rather than simply dictated by contractual requirements.

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INTRODUCTION

The human services sector in the U.S. has undergone substantial changes over the past two decades that pose significant challenges to the operation and sustainability of nonprofits. Privatization of government services, reductions in government funding, a shift to short term contracts requiring a competitive bidding process, increasingly complex reporting and administrative requirements and the introduction of for-profits into the market for human services provision, have resulted in an increasingly competitive environment in which securing funding is a constant process requiring continual change and the ability to identify and adapt quickly to market trends. In addition, the continual cuts to funding and rigid service guidelines have made it increasingly difficult to provide services in accordance with best practices, requiring nonprofits to either find innovative ways of doing more with less, or risk compromising their mission and values in order to remain operational. Under these circumstances, simply maintaining the status quo is no longer an option for nonprofit human service agencies. The ability to continue fulfilling their mission requires continually looking forward, identifying opportunities for growth and determining ways of gaining competitive advantage in the market without compromising their organizational values.

Success 4 Kids & Families (S4KF) is a nonprofit agency that provides behavioral and preventative health services to low-income children and their families in Hillsborough County, Florida. In 2012, leadership and the board of directors renewed their five year strategic plan and identified the following potential threats reflecting the instability and increasingly competitive nature of the environment in which they operate: potential loss of contracts, reduction in size and loss of staff, changes in funding, susceptibility to takeover, new organizations entering the market and large funders contracting with fewer agencies. As a result, they determined that organizational growth was necessary in order to achieve long-term sustainability. While the agency has set clear goals and objectives for expansion over the next five years, achieving them is contingent upon successfully competing for new revenue streams which will rely in large part on their ability to set themselves apart from their competitors in a manner attractive to funders and other stakeholders.

Given the budgetary restrictions of nonprofits, building competitive advantage must be achieved through strategies requiring a minimal investment of resources. In light of this, the current study aims to identify means of leveraging the agency's greatest resource, the skills, abilities and talents of its employees, to build sustained competitive advantage that can set the agency apart and maximize their capacity to take advantage of identified opportunities and successfully expand the agency. The concept of employee engagement was chosen to frame the exploration of potential means of building competitive advantage based on a growing body of literature correlating high levels of engagement with both employee well-being and organizational success.

The primary purpose of this study is to develop a better understanding of employee engagement at S4KF, identify areas where organizational characteristics and practices may be serving to inhibit the full engagement of the agency's workforce, and provide recommendations for practices with the potential to enhance engagement while simultaneously building competitive advantage within the organization. The current state of engagement at S4KF is assessed

through employee responses to a survey designed to elicit their perceptions of the extent to which the key drivers of engagement are present within the organization and their self-reported involvement in behaviors associated with an “engaged” state.

The report begins by providing background on the challenges the organization is facing and their strategic vision, goals and objectives in order to identify needs with the potential to be effectively addressed through employee engagement. This is followed by a brief analysis of the growing trends in nonprofit funding in order to identify key sources of competitive advantage going forward, and a review of the research linking engagement to organizational success in order to demonstrate the rationale for determining that a focus on employee engagement offers a significant potential return on investment for the agency in the form of sustained competitive advantage.

An overview of the conceptual framework for engagement used in the study follows, drawing on supporting literature from a variety of fields including psychology, social work, organizational behavior, business and public administration and human resource management, to provide an understanding of how workplace characteristics and practices can either enhance or inhibit employee engagement and how they can be designed to better meet employee needs while also contributing to specific organizational goals. The remaining sections of the report present an overview of the research methodology and findings from the employee survey, followed by a discussion and analysis of the central themes identified, and concluding with recommendations for workplace engagement strategies that require minimal financial investment but have the potential to provide significant positive returns for both staff and the agency as a whole.

Background

Current Challenges to Nonprofit Sustainability

The privatization of government services in the U.S. has created considerable challenges for nonprofits. The goal of reducing costs and increasing accountability has resulted in a competitive bidding process for short-term funding that requires nonprofits not only to compete with one another for scarce resources, but also with for-profit companies that have increasingly entered the market (Weerawardena, McDonald & Sullivan- Mort, 2010 p.346). For-profits come with significant competitive advantages in the form of capital funds, greater expertise in business practices, large administrative infrastructures, and the capacity to easily move into emerging markets enabling them to provide services at costs significantly lower than most nonprofits (Ryan, 1999 p.131). More importantly, most for-profits do not operate with a mission primarily focused on the recipients of their services which allows them to concentrate on the bottom line and focus only on those outputs and outcomes required by their contract (Ryan, 1999 p.131; Skwiot, 2007 p.20). This lack of a human services oriented mission poses an additional challenge to non-profits in that for-profits can compensate for tight budgets by choosing only to provide services with the greatest profit margin and screening out clients with chronic and complex needs, leaving non-profits to serve the most difficult populations with fewer resources, causing them to look less efficient and effective than their for-profit counterparts (Alexander, 1999 p.64; Skwiot, 2007 p.20-21).

In addition to the increased competition and perpetual financial uncertainty posed by frequent cuts to funding and privatization, the process has also imposed burdensome reporting and administrative requirements on nonprofits that often lack the resources and experience to effectively implement them. While the government has increased its demands for data collection and reporting, contracts rarely include funding to cover the additional costs of implementing these requirements, imposing an additional financial burden on nonprofits (Lynch-Cerullo & Cooney, 2011 p. 376). The Urban Institute recently conducted a nationwide study of nonprofits receiving government funds and found that over half had experienced reductions in government funding, causing 42% of nonprofits to end the year in a deficit (Boris, De Leon, Roeger, & Nikolova, 2010a, p. vii-viii). In addition to reductions in funding, they found several common problems experienced by nonprofits contracting with the government that negatively impacted their ability to operate programs. Table 1 shows the percent of nonprofits nationwide, and in Florida, experiencing the problems identified in the study.

Nationwide Results		State of Florida Results	
Key Problem Reported	%	Key Problem Reported	%
Payments do not cover full cost of contracted services	68%	Payments do not cover full cost of contracted services	65%
Government changes to contracts/grants	57%	Government changes to contracts/grants	67%
Complexity of/time required for reporting on grants/contracts	76%	Complexity of/time required for reporting on grants/contracts	78%
Limit program admin./overhead costs	62%	Limit program admin./overhead costs	65%
Limit organization admin./overhead costs	58%	Limit organization admin./overhead costs	68%

Table 1. Percent of nonprofits in the U.S. & Florida reporting contracting problems
Source: Boris, De Leon, Roeger, & Nikolova (2010a, p. 13, 31-32; 2010b, p.27).

An additional challenge is posed by licensing and Medicaid enrollment requirements, often necessary to be eligible for contracts, that require staff performing certain services to have higher credentials than otherwise expected, but do not provide reimbursement rates sufficient to provide salaries high enough to attract and retain the most highly qualified people (Alexander, 1999 p.63). Severely restricted budgets also leave most nonprofits unable to provide regular pay increases or financially reward superior performance. This leaves them vulnerable to losing talented staff, especially with for-profits in the market that offer the same type of work for significantly higher salaries. In addition, unexpected funding cuts or loss of contracts force organizations to lay off staff and reduce services, causing low morale among remaining employees faced with job insecurity and significant barriers to effective service provision. Figure 1 shows the most common strategies human service nonprofits indicated using to cope with the challenges discussed above.

A final challenge is the lack of autonomy organizations have in determining how to best serve their clients. The restrictions dictated by contracts and managed care reimbursement policies and procedures determine admission eligibility as well as the amount and type of services an organization can provide. Since these restrictions are based on cost saving rather than best practice, they can often leave nonprofits in the position of choosing between operating in a manner that compromises their mission or absorbing the cost of providing additional services that are not eligible for reimbursement (Alexander, 1999 p.64-65).

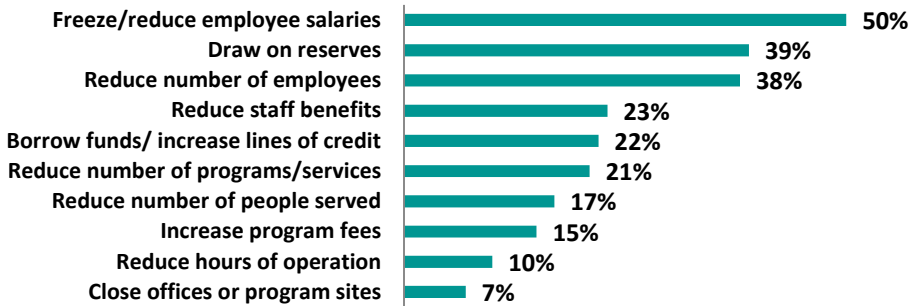


Figure 1. Strategies employed by human service nonprofits to cope with financial challenges.
Source: Boris, De Leon, Roeger, & Nikolova (2010a, p. 19)

The overall result of these negative external influences is that nonprofit leaders who are dedicated to their organization’s mission and values are increasingly unable to devote attention to programming due to the substantial amount of time required to continually pursue funding opportunities and manage the administrative and regulatory burdens associated with reporting requirements and managed care reimbursement. It also means that in order to survive, nonprofits have to adopt a more business-like approach to succeed in a market that increasingly reflects that of the private sector.

Success 4 Kids & Families’ (S4KF) Current Position in Relation to Market Challenges

S4KF was founded in 2005 with five full-time staff, four contractual employees and an operating budget of \$600,000 to provide intake, assessment, case management and therapeutic services for children and youth with complex mental health issues and their families. Over the past eight years, it has grown substantially through the acquisition of additional contracts and grants and currently has an operating budget of over \$5,500,000, over 90% of which comes from government revenues. In addition to expanding their intake, assessment, case management and therapeutic services, the agency now provides educational liaison support to child serving systems, Healthy Start services to pregnant women and their infants, therapeutic intervention to families with children at high risk of removal from their homes, and juvenile justice diversion services. The agency also generates independent revenue by offering fee for service training and workshops for professionals and organizations on system of care service provision and recently became licensed to provide substance abuse treatment services, opening up potential new funding streams.

Figure 2 shows a breakdown of the funding the agency receives to provide these services. The agency’s programs offer the same array of services (intake, assessment, case management, therapy) to different populations based on the source of the contracts. For example, Healthy Start funding is specifically designated for new mothers and their infants while contracts through HKI, Inc. fund services for children and families involved in the child welfare system. While in the past, the majority of revenue coming from government may have reflected a certain degree of stability and simplicity, Figure 2 also demonstrates the complexity and instability inherent in the current system of contracting in Florida. Within and between each of the agency’s funding streams, each entity imposes its own rules and procedures with regard to service provision and has its own reporting requirements, resulting in a significant administrative burden, including

multiple audits by various agencies. In addition, unexpected cuts or changes to funding and changes in contracting entities can occur at each stage in the process. When the managing entities change, often with little notice, this can mean the loss of a contract if the new entity requires all of the agencies with contracts to re-bid and/or an entirely new set of regulations and administrative requirements requiring changes to program policies and procedures. The unpredictable nature of this funding environment requires nonprofits to be continually planning for the future and seeking opportunities for the kind of growth that offers greater security in the marketplace.

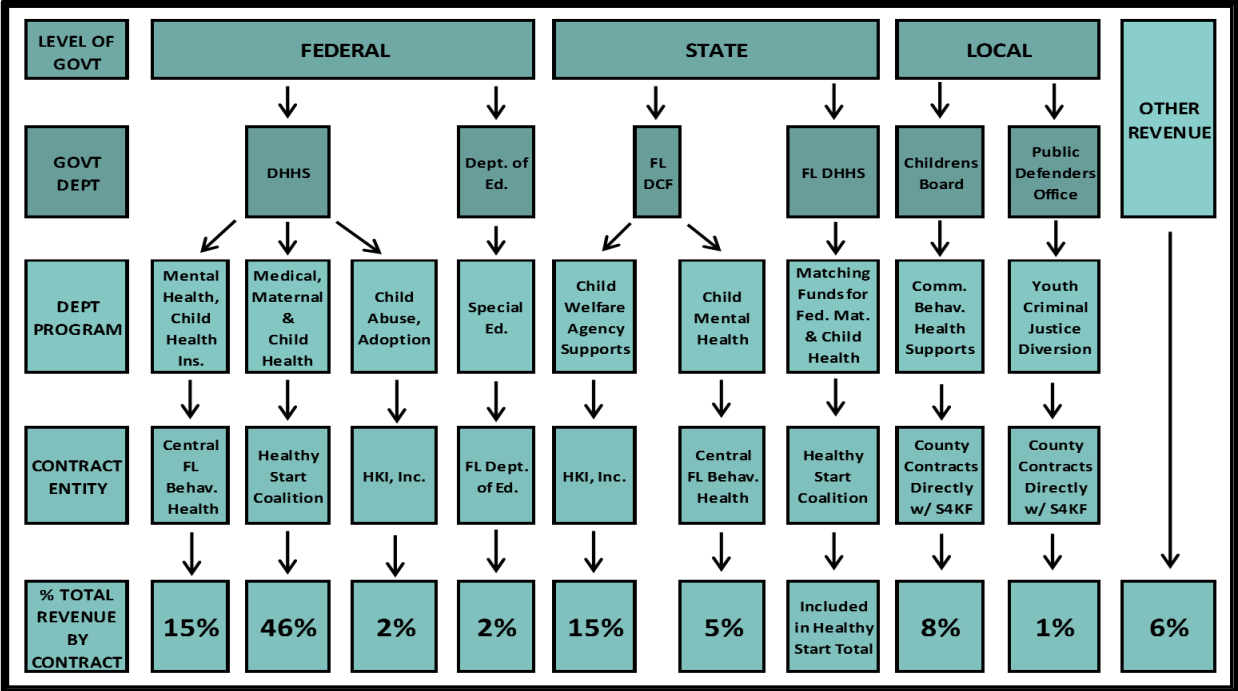


Figure 2. Funding streams comprising S4KF's current revenue

One such opportunity is to move up a level in the funding streams depicted in Figure 2, to become a regional contracting entity, which includes subcontracting out and overseeing service provision for a particular field for the whole region. S4KF’s strategic vision for the next four years, as seen below in Table 2, is to acquire this position for youth mental health services. Also displayed in Table 2 are the strategic goals and objectives identified during the strategic planning process as necessary steps to achieving the vision. The agency also assessed its current state of preparedness in relation to pursuing these goals during the strategic planning process. The results, summarized in Table 3, indicate that while the agency has weaknesses to address in order to facilitate a successful expansion, they are more reflective of the need to build on current strengths, rather than overcome significant deficits in their current operations. For example, a weakness is their lack of exposure in other counties which will require an investment of time devoted to networking and relationship building. However, because they have a strong and positive reputation within their community, this is a relatively easy weakness to address, as opposed to having to overcome a damaged reputation for example.

Agency Vision

S4KF, Inc. will become the Care Management Entity (CME) for Complex Youth in the Suncoast Region

Strategic Goals & Objectives, 2012-2017

Goal: Prepare for Health Care Reform

Objectives:

- ❖ *Expand current services through the acquisition of additional Medicaid contracts and increased referrals from local agencies*
- ❖ *Successfully demonstrate the agency's ability to perform the required functions of a CME*

Goal: Increase Services to Children, Youth and Families

Objectives:

- ❖ *Expand services to include treatment for substance abuse and co-occurring disorders*
- ❖ *Expand services by acquiring contracts and grants to provide services in neighboring counties*
- ❖ *Expand services by identifying unmet needs in Hillsborough County and securing funding and developing programs to meet those needs*

Table 2. Success 4 Kids & Families: Strategic vision, goals & objectives, 2012-2017

SWOT ANALYSIS: Horizontal Expansion	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Knowledge & Experience (child & family populations) ❖ HMO Contracts easy to expand to other counties ❖ Positive reputation ❖ Infrastructure mostly developed ❖ Flexible In-Home Service Model/Use of Contractors ❖ Ability to adjust quickly to changing conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Lack of knowledge (resources, partners, systems in other counties) ❖ Lack of expertise re: substance abuse/adult population ❖ Funding/infrastructure of new Ventures ❖ Not well known in other counties/No relationships ❖ Unexpected challenges
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Substance abuse contracts ❖ Transitional age & adult populations ❖ New Funding Streams ❖ Health Care Reform CME Model ❖ Merge into medical field ❖ Able to expand without new FTE's due to contractor model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ New competition ❖ Potential to be taken over ❖ Funders & political winds can change ❖ Start-up costs/fast growth w/ expensive support services ❖ Changes in health care system that leave out local agencies ❖ Oversight of expanded remote workforce (Ensuring Quality and Values driven service)

Table 3. Summary of SWOT analysis, S4KF strategic plan, 2012-2017

In addition to the factors identified in the SWOT analysis, the agency's mission, values and service model will influence the actions taken to achieve their strategic goals.

Mission, Values & Service Model Considerations

Success 4 Kids & Families' (S4KF) was founded on System of Care (SOC) values and principles and these are embedded in their mission statement which guides all service provision and decision-making about future directions for the agency:

“Success 4 Kids & Families embraces system of care values and principles to provide children and their families with a comprehensive array of services. This value system means that a strength-based, culturally competent, consumer and family driven approach is used when working with children and their families”.

These values are evident in their emphasis on providing wrap-around service provision to clients through collaboration with other agencies and community partners and their flexible in-home service model. The ability to provide in-home services during flexible hours is a significant source of competitive advantage due to the rarity and desirability of these services within the community. However, the staffing structure that allows for the flexibility that promotes the mission, also poses challenges to ensuring that direct services are delivered in a manner that reflects SOC values and principles.

S4KF's workforce has grown substantially over the past eight years in step with revenue growth and now consists of 71 full-time employees and an additional 49 case managers and therapists who the agency sub-contracts with to provide its services. These case managers and therapists are hired on per client basis, and they work remotely, coming into the main office only once a month for case review and supervision. Of the full-time employees, approximately half are located in S4KF's main office and work primarily on-site and the other half work in the Healthy Start Program which is located in a nearby office. Within this group, some are in their office daily while others work primarily based out of their home and check in at the office only once a week. Although the agency's service model offers many benefits, it also presents certain challenges related to the ability to supervise service provision, gauge the quality of the therapeutic relationships staff form with their clients and ensure that system of care values are being incorporated into practice. Since these challenges will grow significantly if the agency succeeds in geographical expansion, the survey used in the current study was also designed to identify potential issues attributable to work style in order to address them prior to expansion.

Overall, the current position of the agency in relation to its strategic goals indicates several organizational needs that reflect the following themes: acquire new knowledge and expertise; build flexibility and adaptability within the agency; prepare for and successfully manage change; address potential issues related to supervising remote staff; and build competitive advantage in order to minimize threats and capitalize on identified opportunities.

The following section begins by reviewing conceptual models of nonprofit competitive advantage and current trends in the nonprofit human service market in order to identify the organizational capabilities most likely to be key sources of competitive advantage going forward. Following this, the attitudes and behaviors of engaged employees are discussed in terms of their ability to contribute to competitive advantage. The section concludes by reviewing the literature linking employee engagement to organizational success and demonstrating the rationale for determining that a focus on engagement has significant potential to drive organizational growth.

RATIONALE FOR ENGAGEMENT AS THE KEY TO SUSTAINABILITY

Conceptual Models of Competitive Advantage in the Nonprofit Context

Competitive advantage is generally discussed in a private sector context in relation to factors that enable companies to produce higher profits than their competitors. However, due to the increasingly competitive and “business-like” environment of the nonprofit funding market today, the concept has assumed greater relevance in this context. Over the last decade, the concept of competitive advantage in the nonprofit sector has appeared in the literature as the superior ability to attract funders and gain a superior market position through the creation of superior social value to its multiple stakeholders (Kong & Prior, 2008 p.125; Weerawardena & Sullivan-Mort, 2001 p.57). Kong and Prior (2008) proposed a conceptual model of nonprofit competitive advantage that positions intellectual capital gained through organizational learning and the ability to use that knowledge effectively, as the primary source of competitive advantage for nonprofits. Their model is summarized below.

Primary Source of Competitive Advantage: Intellectual Capital gained through a continual cycle of learning, knowledge creation and application, comprised of the following three interrelated components:

- ❖ **Human capital** (*attitude, competencies, experience, skills, tacit knowledge, innovativeness and talents of its people*);
- ❖ **Relational capital** (*reputation & influence over funders and other stakeholders*); and
- ❖ **Structural capital** (*non-human sources of knowledge such as databases, process manuals, strategies, organizational culture, publications and copyrights which create value*) (p.120).

In their model, the value of an organization’s intellectual capital will depend on the degree of learning that takes place through the exchange of knowledge within the organization and between the organization, external stakeholders and professional networks. They propose that a virtuous cycle occurs when investments in human capital increase the knowledge, skills and abilities of staff which then contributes to the creation of structural capital. Both of these in turn create additional relational capital by increasing the expertise and quality of services the organization has to offer stakeholders, ultimately attracting funders, which results in additional resources to invest in the organization (p.124).

Similarly, Weerawardena and Sullivan-Mort (2001) propose a model whereby strategic leadership in the form of social entrepreneurship drives organizational learning which results in the innovative services and processes that comprise competitive advantage. In their model, social entrepreneurial organizations are driven by their mission to create social value and pursue this goal by identifying and pursuing opportunities, taking risks, engaging in a continuous cycle of learning, adaptation and innovation and exhibiting a high degree of accountability to the persons they serve and for the outcomes created (p.60). The importance of learning in nonprofit organizations is also espoused by Prugsamatz (2010). She promotes sustained organizational learning as an essential element in successfully meeting the challenges

currently faced by nonprofits. She suggests that fostering a culture of learning contributes to an enhanced ability to develop, implement and refine programs, improve individual and organizational performance, adapt to change, develop entrepreneurial capacity and innovation and ultimately promote better decision-making and strategies that support organizational growth (p.244).

There is very little research set in the nonprofit context looking at organizational factors that predict organizational success, however one recent study of 398 small to medium nonprofits in Detroit found that the strongest predictors of growth were program development activities, such as needs assessment, continual learning about best practices and program planning and evaluation activities, positive attitude toward change including commitment to growth and adaptability, and stronger fund development infrastructures including fundraising staff and action plans (Trzcinski & Sobeck, 2012). Although only one study, it does support the assertion that organizational learning and knowledge creation play a central role in building competitive advantage and driving organizational growth. Additional support for learning capabilities as a primary source of nonprofit competitive advantage is evident in current funding trends in both government contracting and foundation grant-making.

Supporting Evidence from the Market

A review of the current literature suggests that the competition for funds in the human service market will only continue to grow. Lynch-Cerullo and Cooney (2011) provide an overview of several trends contributing to this competitive environment including the growing shift in the focus of performance based government contracting from process and output measures to accountability based on outcomes (p.368-369), the limiting of government funding to programs using evidence based best practices and the growing practice of providing larger grants with less restrictions to fewer organizations based on demonstrated effectiveness (p.365), and the increasing use of return on investment models by leading nonprofit foundations to monetize past and current impact, as well as to predict future impact of the nonprofits they consider funding (p.374). Kaplan and Grossman (2010) provide additional examples of private foundations and emerging “Social Venture Capital Funds” that are providing larger, longer-term grants to a smaller number of nonprofits that demonstrate the greatest potential return on investment, based on evidence of strong results and the capacity to scale-up service provision to maximize impact (p.114-117).

The introduction of private investors into social service provision is one of the most prominent themes throughout the current nonprofit literature. A variety of “Pay for Success” models involving variations of partnerships between government, business and nonprofits are currently in the pilot stage. The widespread enthusiasm for these models is evidenced by the by the fact that the first pilot was only implemented in 2010 and projects can now be found in the U.S., Germany, Australia, Canada and the U.K. (Galloway, 2013 p.2; Rothschild, 2013 p.103). The attraction of these models is largely due to the fact that, if they perform as intended, they have the potential to provide significant social impact with little or no cost to government, provide a return to their private investors, and improve the lives of program recipients. Although they are still in the pilot stage for the most part, the literature suggests that, should they produce the intended results, these models will likely become the chosen

means of addressing social problems that fit the model. In light of this, an overview of some of the models, current projects and participating nonprofits are provided in Appendix A.

The ability to demonstrate social impact in social services is beyond the capabilities of most nonprofit agencies themselves, and in some cases not possible depending on the type of services in question. For this reason, the projects currently underway involve an outside organization with expertise in measurement to help design and implement the measurement and evaluation systems and ultimately perform the final evaluation of the project. For a discussion of the challenges associated with these models and measuring social impact of programs in general, see Appendix A. Although there are significant challenges to overcome, the trend seems likely to continue as the scarcity of resources causes funders to increasingly focus on directing government and private dollars to those organizations demonstrating the greatest potential return on investment.

While nonprofits cannot conduct evaluations or impact studies with the rigorous design required by these models, they will need to demonstrate some basic abilities data collection and analysis as well as internal program evaluation in order to be competitive moving forward. The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation (EMCF) indicates that most nonprofits do not currently meet even their most basic measurement standards of collecting and comparing baseline and outcomes data (Lynch- Cerullo & Cooney, 2011 p.381). Additionally, a recent survey of 725 grant-making foundations found that expected impact and past performance information were rated as the most important information to decision-makers and also their greatest unmet information need (Hope Consulting, 2011 p.20).

Overall, four distinct but interrelated sources of competitive advantage were identified in the literature, all of which have at their core, an organization's ability to continually learn and apply that knowledge, as proposed by both conceptual models of nonprofit competitive advantage. The extent to which a nonprofit can achieve growth and sustainability is likely to become increasingly contingent upon their ability to demonstrate the following capabilities to funders:

- ❖ Innovative approaches/ service models;
- ❖ High quality service grounded in evidence-based best practices;
- ❖ A basic understanding of performance and outcomes measurement and the ability to collect, track and analyze data in order to evaluate the effectiveness of programs as measured against these intended outcomes; and,
- ❖ The ability to demonstrate that the organization applies the knowledge gained to enhance program effectiveness through a continual quality improvement process.

In addition to their relevance as general trends, these capabilities are directly related to Success 4 Kids & Families' (S4KF) strategic vision and their mission and values. In order to successfully acquire a regional CME contract, an organization must be able to demonstrate their capacity to perform ten core functions (FL Department of Children & Families, 2009). Of the ten, four require demonstrated capabilities in collecting, tracking and analyzing data, creating measurable indicators for organizational performance and client outcomes, and effectively evaluating programs and using the knowledge gained to inform continuous quality improvement. In addition to the capacity to perform these functions internally, CME's are

responsible for creating systems to accomplish these goals across all organizations they oversee. A more detailed overview of the ten core functions and whether they currently reflect agency strengths or weaknesses is presented in Appendix B.

Initially, the introduction of performance and outcomes measurement into the nonprofit context was both presented, and received, from a perspective of oversight and accountability. For human service professionals, measurement is often resisted and resented as an interruption to otherwise important work. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that it is still rare to see effective systems being used in nonprofits. The recent literature suggests that the focus has shifted slightly to the benefits of measuring outcomes, namely improved outcomes for clients. The idea of outcomes measurement as best practice in serving clients, rather than sign of distrust on the part of funders, is evident in the System of Care (SOC) literature. In 2010, the original creators of the system of care model published their recommendations for updates to the philosophy and principles based on the experience and knowledge gained in the 25 years since it was originally published. Among their recommendations is the addition of the following guiding principles to the system of care model, which also reflect the trends in nonprofit funding (Stroul, Blau & Friedman, 2010 p.6):

“Ensure that services and supports include evidence-informed and promising practices, as well as interventions supported by practice-based evidence, to ensure the effectiveness of services and improve outcomes for children and their families”.

“Incorporate continuous accountability and quality improvement mechanisms to track, monitor, and manage the achievement of system of care goals; fidelity to the system of care philosophy; and quality, effectiveness, and outcomes at the system level, practice level, and child and family level”.

In light of the importance of the SOC value system in guiding both service provision and agency decision-making, the alignment of the current sources of competitive advantage with SOC values may provide significant benefits in terms of garnering staff support for strategies designed to further the agency’s strategic goals.

Overall, the agency’s needs, goals and potential sources of competitive advantage suggest that organizational growth and sustainability will rely in large part on the skills, abilities, and discretionary efforts of the agency’s workforce. While the agency’s workforce has almost doubled since 2010, their leadership team has not grown along with it, and in light of the challenges the current market presents, leadership alone is unlikely to be able to successfully turn the organization’s goals into a reality. Axelrod (2000) suggests that in the current environment, it is no longer possible for leadership alone to manage organizational change, preserve the mission and values and achieve the strategic goals they set for the organization. He highlights the need to develop the commitment of the whole workforce in order to turn strategic initiatives into reality and argues that without an agile, flexible, engaged workforce who care about the outcomes and have the commitment and will to implement them, even the most brilliant strategies are unlikely to be successful (p.2). In addition, he emphasizes that addressing complex problems and implementing solutions in the rapidly and constantly changing environment organizations are operating in today, requires the knowledge, skills, input and

commitment of the entire workforce to be directed at successfully transitioning an organization through times of change (p.15).

In the current context, the concept of engagement offers a promising approach to building competitive advantage within S4KF for several reasons. First, there is a growing body of literature linking levels of employee engagement to external measures of organizational success in the private, public and nonprofit sectors. Second, there is a behavioral component to engagement, so in addition to being positive in and of themselves, “engaged” behaviors can be directed towards, and positively impact, all of the activities identified above through strategic design. Finally, inherent in the notion of competitive advantage is the understanding that it requires something more than just the status quo, and this defines behavioral engagement, in that it is self-initiated, discretionary, (or not an expected part of one’s job description), and is directed at helping the organization succeed. Rather than being focused on improving HR problems to bring employees up to “meeting expectations”, or increasing general satisfaction, engagement has as its goal a workforce that exceeds expectations, not only in their individual roles, but through exerting discretionary effort in support of organizational goals. The following section presents the evidence demonstrating the potentially significant impact an engaged workforce can have on driving organizational growth.

The Case for Engagement

Engagement and Organizational Success

Over the past decade, the concept of employee engagement has assumed a prominent place in the business, management and human resources literature pertaining to organizational performance. The growing acceptance of employee engagement as a powerful tool for promoting organizational success is based on a substantial body of research linking employee engagement to important indicators of organizational success. Since the current study is set in the nonprofit context, and there is very little research conducted in the sector, summaries of the few studies located are provided here. The bulk of the research, which is set in the private sector, and more recently the public sector, is briefly reviewed here with individual summaries of studies from each sector summarized in Appendix C.

One of the primary sources of evidence comes from large scale studies linking levels of engagement, as measured by employee surveys, to organizational outcomes such as productivity, service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty, reduced employee turnover and absenteeism, and financial indicators such as increased sales, profitability, market share, operating income and company growth. (Baumruck , 2006; Blessing White, 2011; Corporate Leadership Council, 2004; Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002; Harter, Schmidt, Killham & Agrawal, 2009; MacLeod & Clarke, 2009, 2012; Towers Perrin, 2008). Taken alone, studies of this kind could warrant skepticism as they do not provide evidence of a causal relationship and they are primarily conducted by consultancy firms who also design and implement engagement programs, giving them a personal stake in the study findings (Scottish Executive Social Research, 2007 p.36). However, taken together, this body of research includes millions of employees, tens of thousands of business units in thousands of organizations from approximately fifty different industries in over forty countries worldwide, providing a

compelling case for a link between engagement and organizational success.

In addition, there is substantial evidence in the literature in the form of endorsements of a leadership focus on engagement as a primary contributor to competitive advantage by CEO's of highly successful corporations such as Microsoft, Toyota, Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencer (MacLeod & Clarke, 2009) and the Royal Bank of Scotland and the BBC (Scottish Executive Social Research, 2007 p.2). They attribute similar outcomes to a focus on engagement, such as improvements in productivity, quality, customer satisfaction and financial performance to a focus on engagement, as well as receiving business excellence awards, successful accreditations, reputation as a desirable employer resulting in long waiting lists of applicants, and the improved ability to make decisions, leverage opportunities and take informed risks

Studies linking higher levels of engagement to better performance in the public sector show equally significant improvements and demonstrate that, although the performance indicators may differ somewhat, the benefits of enhanced engagement are equally as relevant in this sector. The results linked to higher levels of engagement in government organizations include "excellent" ratings from external auditing bodies, increased employee advocacy, higher patient satisfaction and lower mortality rates (U.K.) and higher scores on results and accountability in annual program performance evaluations and significantly lower rates of sick leave, time lost due to injury and the number of employees intending to leave their agency (U.S.). (MacLeod & Clarke, 2009; MacLeod & Clarke, 2012; U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB), 2008).

Leadership in governmental organizations that have implemented employee engagement initiatives are equally as convinced as their private sector counterparts of the link between engagement and positive outcomes. The outcomes they attributed to increased employee engagement in their organizations include increased consumer satisfaction, increased numbers of employees proud of where they work, "Excellence" ratings by external auditors in use of resources, value for money, high ratings on comprehensive performance assessments and service provision, achieving the highest clinical performance indicators in their field, improved problem solving and the generation of innovative solutions to solving process problems as well as public awards of excellence (MacLeod & Clarke, 2009; Rivera & Flinck, 2011). In further evidence of government support for investing in engagement, the U.K. Civil Service identified securing high levels of engagement as a top workforce priority for 2012 (MacLeod & Clarke, 2012) and after conducting system-wide survey and analysis of employee engagement in the U.S. federal government, the MSPB (2008) concluded that a focus on strategies to promote engagement in the federal workforce was critical to enable agencies to improve operations within budget constraints and attract and retain top talent in an intensively competitive labor market.

A comparison of private and public sector research offers a strong basis for concluding that the concept would be equally as relevant and beneficial in the nonprofit profit sector, especially considering that nonprofits operate in a context that combines the competitive aspects of the private sector with the public service ethos of governmental organizations. To date however, there is still a significant gap in the literature linking engagement directly to organizational success indicators in the nonprofit sector. Although there is no indication in the literature of

why this is the case, it is unlikely due to a lack of relevance. It is more likely a reflection of the fact that most of the companies and government agencies in the literature have hired consultants to assess engagement and implement programs in their organizations, which the vast majority of nonprofits would not be able to afford. Despite this gap however, the few studies located indicate employee engagement is equally as relevant as a source of competitive advantage for nonprofit organizations. In light of the fact that only three examples were found, and of their greater relevance to this study, more detailed summaries of the results of the individual nonprofit studies are provided below.

- **Empirical Research - Sainsbury Center for Mental Health, U.K.**
Alimo-Metcalfe & Alban-Metcalfe, (2008) conducted a three year longitudinal study of mental health crisis teams consisting of over 740 clinicians, nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, social workers and support staff that provide 24/7 in home crisis support in order to reduce hospital admissions. Results showed significant correlations between engaging leadership practices and both productivity and performance as measured by clients served and number of hospital admissions.
- **Case Study - Julia's House Children's Hospice, U.K. Charity with 125 staff**
Over the four years following leadership's decision to focus on enhancing employee engagement, the organization achieved the following outcomes that they attribute to their engagement efforts: quadrupled income; increased output (number of hours of care for children) 20-fold with only a three-fold increase in staff; reduced sick leave by one-third; reduced staff turnover by more than half; reduced the management and administration expenditures from 26% to 9%; 98% of staff in an anonymous survey rated Julia's House either "excellent" (66%) or "good" (32%) as an employer; and the achievement of the following awards:

Best Employer at the UK Third Sector Excellence Awards
South West Chambers of Commerce Award for Excellence in People Development Best Management Team and Best Employer at the Dorset Business Awards
CEO of the Year at the Wessex Charity Awards
Three years on the Sunday Times list of "Best 100 Public/Charity Organizations"
(Edwards, 2012).
- **Case Study - Broadway Homeless Services – U.K. Charity with 180 staff** Similar to U.S. nonprofits, Broadway's leadership cited significant challenges posed by fierce competition for service contracts and talent in the human services sector. They attribute their highly rated quality services, 81% client satisfaction rate, reputation as an employer of choice and correspondingly high demand for jobs over other charities to their focus on engaging their current staff and a recruiting process designed to identify applicants willing to be engaged (MacLeod & Clarke, 2009).

Given the consistency in the results of studies linking engagement to organizational success across all three sectors, the evidence suggests that enhancing employee engagement has the potential to produce significant benefits for any organization. Although an organization's purpose, definition of "success", size and characteristics of the sector in which they operate may influence the design and focus of engagement strategies, the fundamental components of

the construct and potential impact of enhanced engagement appear to be highly generalizable across the workforce. The reason engaged employees can make such a difference in organizations is discussed in the following section.

Profiles of Engagement in the Workplace

Table 4 contains profiles of engaged, disengaged, and ambivalent employees as described by some of the major consultancy firms conducting engagement research in the workplace. Their profiles share in common the observation that engaged employees are not just good employees in terms of being reliable and performing their roles as expected, but rather go out of their way to contribute to the organization’s success.

PROFILES OF ENGAGEMENT			
FIRM	Engaged employees...	Ambivalent employees...	Actively disengaged employees...
Gallup. Inc. (2013)	... work with passion and feel a profound connection to their company. They drive innovation and move the organization forward.	...are essentially "checked out." -sleepwalking through their day, putting time—not passion—into their work	...aren't just unhappy at work: they're busy acting out their unhappiness. Every day, these workers undermine what their engaged co-workers accomplish.
Corporate Leadership Council (2004)	...exhibit strong emotional and rational commitment to, their job, team, and organization. - higher performers, help others, volunteer for duties, look for ways to do their jobs better.	...may be committed to either their job, team or organization but are not committed on all levels. They neither go to great lengths in their jobs, nor do they shirk their work.	...exhibit very strong emotional and rational non-commitment to day-to-day work, the manager, the team, and the organization. They are poor performers who frequently put in minimal effort.
Towers Perrin (2008)	... “go the extra mile” and put discretionary effort into their work — contributing more of their energy, creativity and passion to creating a better product, service or customer experience.	...are capable but not committed - may perform as expected but they bring no energy or passion to their work - those closer to disengaged underperform, doing the minimum to get by.	...are completely disconnected on every level - rationally, emotionally and motivationally. Bring nothing positive to their organization and can potentially have a negative impact.
Blessing White (2011)	...personal interests align with those of the organization, they are known for their discretionary effort and commitment, find great satisfaction in their work- want to stay for what they can <i>give</i> rather than for what they can <i>get</i>may or may not be causing problems but don’t contribute to competitive advantage – don’t go the extra mile & would leave if a better offer came along. Lower on scale - trying to do as little as possible while getting a check	...might be bitterly vocal about management making bad decisions, or coworkers not pulling their weight and their constant negativity can be contagious, bringing others down with them. They are also likely to stay but will always be looking for another job

Table 4. Profiles of engagement from leading consultancy and research organizations

As can be seen in these profiles, engagement is primarily a state in which an employee is passionate, motivated and willing to spend discretionary effort in support of the organization, rather than a set of specific behaviors. This is likely the reason engagement has been shown to have a positive impact in such a wide variety of organizations, industries, sectors and countries with significant cultural differences. If employees experience psychological engagement, their attitudes and performance are likely to be positive, however the key to building competitive advantage is to determine where the discretionary effort of engaged employees will most benefit

the organization and have strategies in place to align behaviors with the organization's strategic goals.

In addition to a consensus regarding the positive impact of engagement, the findings of practitioner research exhibit a high degree of consistency with regard to the proportion of the workforce that is engaged. While the individual percentages differ, the average proportions in the overall workforce are similar across studies with approximately 20-30% engaged, 10-15% disengaged and the greatest proportion neither engaged nor disengaged (also referred to as not engaged or ambivalent) (Blessing White, 2011; Corporate Leadership Council, 2004; Towers Perrin, 2008; MSPB, 2008). What makes an engaged workforce such a significant source of competitive advantage is that the percentage of variation between demographic categories varies far less than it does between organizations. Studies in the private and public sector have shown similar results with about 1-5% of variation found between demographic categories such as age, gender, marital status and occupation compared to 20-25% between companies and federal agencies, suggesting that employers have a substantial influence on levels of engagement in their workplace (Corporate Leadership Council, 2004; MSPB, 2008).

In weighing the costs, in terms of staff time or financial resources, it is important to note that even minimal increases in engagement survey scores have been linked to substantial returns. Companies that have created statistical models to determine quantifiable measures of the *employee engagement - customer service - profit chain* have found that even incremental increases in engagement survey scores can be linked to significant improvements in customer satisfaction and substantial increases in annual revenues and profit margin growth (Gelade & Young, 2005; MacLeod & Clarke, 2009 p.12; Rucci, Kirn & Quinn, 1998). Another important finding to be aware of is that there is a lag time between investments in employee engagement and impact on organizational performance outcomes but companies that commit to an engagement program see significant gains over the long term which can result in a feedback loop of continual investment and improved performance (Evanschitzky, Wangenheim & Wunderlich, 2012).

The substantial evidence of a link between engagement and organizational success, the wide variations in the proportion of engaged employees between organizations, and the fact that most of the workforce in general is not engaged, when taken together, present a strong case for an engaged workforce as a significant source of competitive advantage. The next section reviews the literature supporting the conceptual framework for engagement used to guide the assessment of employee engagement at S4KF. This section is focused on providing an understanding of the pathways from workplace practices to the engaged behaviors that are the target of engagement strategies. Few nonprofits have the resources to bring in external consultants to design engagement initiatives for their organizations, or the discretionary funds to implement broad, organization-wide programs addressing all aspects of engagement at once as seen in some large corporations. In light of this, the intent of the review of the academic research supporting the framework is to provide a thorough enough understanding of how the workplace impacts engagement for the organization to continually assess their organization and target initiatives as strategically as possible to promote the outcomes most important to them as circumstances change over time.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND SUPPORTING LITERATURE

Defining and Measuring Engagement

While the practitioner literature provides a strong case for engagement as a source of competitive advantage and ultimately, growth and sustainability, the definition and measurement of the concept varies widely among researchers. This is likely a reflection of the equally great disparity in definitions, measures and theoretical models found in the academic literature related to the subject. A thorough review of this aspect of the literature and the significant debate within the academic community as to the nature of engagement is not possible within the scope of this study however, in short, the engagement debate centers primarily upon whether it is actually a unique construct, interchangeable with other constructs such as organizational commitment or employee satisfaction, or a unique higher order construct that includes aspects of, but is distinguishable from, other well-known constructs. For a comprehensive review of these issues, see MacLeod and Clarke (2009), Macey and Schneider (2008) and the Scottish Executive Social Research (2007), which taken together, provide thorough review of the evolution of the construct, the extensive variation in defining, measuring and operationalizing engagement, a critical analysis of the practitioner and academic literature, as well as a good picture of how engagement is conceptualized and operationalized within the businesses that actively use employee engagement as a tool to enhance performance.

Ultimately, from a practical standpoint, the validity of engagement as a construct is not necessarily important in terms of achieving organizational outcomes. In validating their measure of the motivational nature of engagement, Rich, Lepine and Crawford (2010) cautioned practitioners to select a measure of engagement that has shown evidence of being linked to a specific outcome of interest, noting that measures based on other conceptualizations may not have the same correlation to performance they found using their measure (p.631). The emphasis on an individualized approach was also a theme in the practitioner literature which indicated that in order to maximize the benefits of a focus on engagement, each organization should tailor their approach to the specific nature of the work they do, the characteristics of their workforce, the organizational culture, the market in which they operate, and the unique basis for competitive advantage within that context (Lockwood, 2007 p.2; Robinson, (n.d.) p.1; Towers Perrin, 2008 p.9; MSPB, 2008 p.39). This approach seemed particularly relevant in light of the fact that very little of the research on engagement takes place in a nonprofit, human services context, so an understanding of multiple models offered greater insight into how workplace characteristics may enhance or inhibit engagement in human service professionals working in this particular operating context..

Ultimately, it was concluded that the best way to handle the conflicting literature was to focus on engagement not as a specific construct, but rather use the advice offered by Rich et al. (2010) to start with the outcomes of interest in choosing a measure. For the purpose of designing strategies to build competitive advantage, what is important is that they are based on relationships between variables for which a strong evidentiary base can be found in the literature. For example, if a strong relationship is found between perceived organizational support and the likelihood an employee will advocate for their organization, it is not relevant that there is disagreement among academic researchers as to whether this is actually engagement or commitment, if employee advocacy is an outcome of interest. In light of this,

the definition used by MacLeod and Clarke (2009) was chosen to guide the conceptualization of engagement and the design of the survey used in the current study. They reconciled the problem of varying definitions, models and measures by choosing to define engagement in practical, rather than theoretical terms, as “a workplace approach designed to ensure that employees are committed to their organization’s goals and values, motivated to contribute to organizational success, and are able at the same time to enhance their own sense of well-being”(p.9).

Since there are no standardized measures that encompass the multiple facets of engagement of interest in this study, the model employed to understand engagement at S4KF is based on a theoretical model proposed by Macey and Schneider (2008) that conceptualizes engagement as a unique, multi-dimensional construct reflecting a higher order psychological state that includes aspects of, but is distinguishable from, other well-known constructs. They define the behavioral expression of a psychological state of engagement as “adaptive behavior intended to serve an organizational purpose, whether to defend and protect the status quo in response to actual or anticipated threats or to change and/or promote change in response to actual or anticipated events”(p.18) and therefore includes “innovative behaviors, demonstrations of initiative, proactively seeking opportunities to contribute, and going beyond what is, within specific frames of reference, typically expected or required”(p.15). The other models that inform the conceptual framework will be discussed throughout the literature review.

The conceptual framework for engagement at S4KF is presented in Figure 3 below.

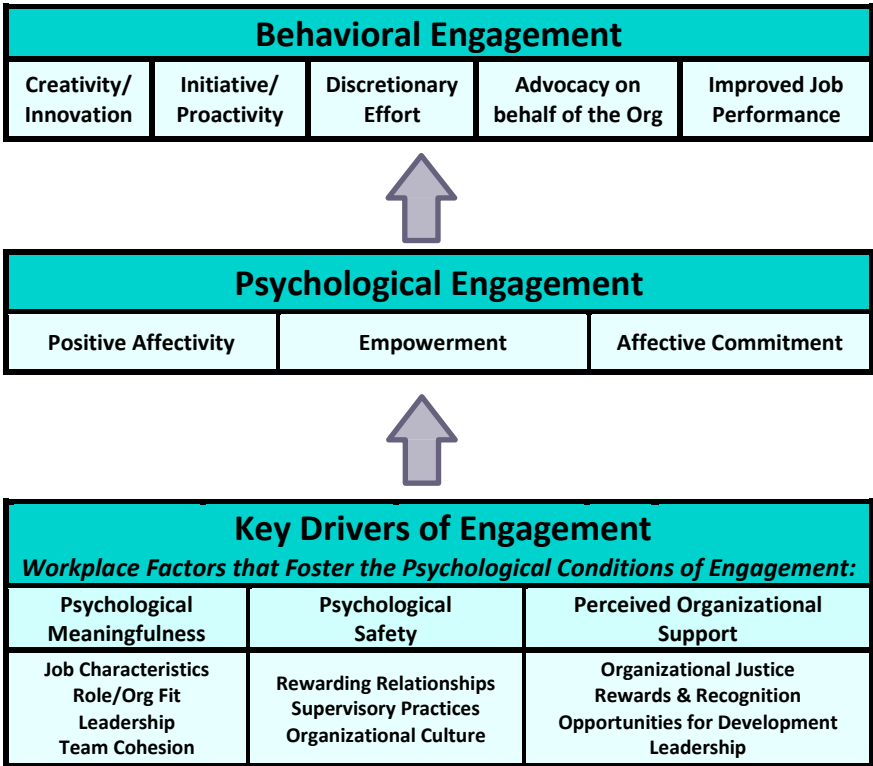


Figure 3. Conceptual framework for employee engagement at S4KF

The Psychological States of Engagement

Engagement as Positive Affectivity

The meaning of positive affectivity (PA), when used in reference to psychological state engagement, differs from that of a natural positive disposition or level of general happiness. Macey and Schneider (2008) proposed that PA related to the job or workplace, and indicating feelings of persistence, vigor, energy, dedication, absorption, enthusiasm, alertness, and pride, comprises an important facet of psychological state engagement and that the aspects of positive affectivity relevant to engagement are only those which contain an active or motivational component that, when experienced, are likely to translate into behavior (p.12). These feelings are reflected in both Schaufeli, Salanova, González-romá and Bakker 's (2002) definition of engagement as feelings of vigor, dedication and absorption related to one's job and Watson, Clark and Tellegen's (1988) definition of positive affect as "a state of high energy, full concentration, and pleasurable engagement" that reflects the extent to which a person feels "enthusiastic, active, and alert" (p.1063), as well as Kahn's conceptualization of engagement as the investment of one's emotional, cognitive and physical energies in one's work.

Central to Kahn's (1990) conceptualization of engagement was also the subjective "experience" of the workplace as the key driver of state engagement and the ultimate expression of engaged attitudes and behaviors on the part of employees. He identified three psychological conditions that, together, drive the extent to which employees become "fully engaged", emotionally, cognitively and physically, in their role: meaningfulness, safety and availability. He described psychological meaningfulness as a feeling that one was receiving desired benefits in return for investing physical, cognitive and/or emotional energy in their work. He found that people experienced meaningfulness when they perceived their work as challenging and contributing to personal and professional growth, felt their contribution was valued by the organization and believed it had a significant impact that they personally believed to be important (p. 704). Psychological safety was experienced when one believed that investments of their true "self" in their roles would not result in negative consequences. People felt safe when their interpersonal relationships were positive and supportive, and in non-threatening work contexts that promoted trust through consistency, predictability and clarity so that one fully understood expectations and consequences of behaviors in the workplace (p. 708). Psychological availability was experienced when one felt they had the physical, emotional and psychological resources necessary to invest energy in their work roles (P.714). Kahn emphasized personal traits and circumstances as factors impacting availability but also included the impact of work related demands and stresses on a person's emotional and cognitive resources.

Although Kahn (1990) did not operationalize his model, May Gilson and Harter (2004) validated his model using a measure of engagement including most of the same items found in Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova's (2006) Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (See Appendix D) and demonstrated that the impact of workplace factors on engagement was fully mediated by meaningfulness and safety. While availability did not fit the mediation model, it was found to be impacted by perceived resources. In addition to the similarities between the definitions of these concepts, the UWES measure of engagement is almost identical to the version of Watson et al.'s (1988), Positive Affect Scale (PAS) used to measure PA in the workplace, containing identical items such as the extent to which one feels proud, inspired,

enthusiastic and strong, as well as measures closely related to other PAS items (attentive, active, determined), such as the degree to which one is immersed in work, feels vigorous, and perseveres in the face of difficulty. (See Appendix D) These two scales, in addition to many other variations on this theme are used throughout the literature as a measure of engagement, and have been linked to the same workplace antecedents and consequences. In light of this, work engagement measured as a cognitive affective motivational state is considered PA for the purposes of this framework, as proposed by Macey and Schneider's (2008) model.

PA has been linked to a wide variety of engaged behaviors important to organizational success including job performance & discretionary effort (Bakker & Bal, 2010; Christian, Garza & Slaughter, 2011; George, 1991; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Heuven, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2008), sales performance (George, 1991), job performance as rated by self, coworker and supervisor (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008), customer ratings of employee performance & customer loyalty (Salanova, Agut & Peiro., 2005), innovative behaviors - idea generation, promotion & realization (Agarwal, Datta, Blake-Beard & Bhargava, 2012), intent to turnover (Alfes, Shantz, Truss & Soane, 2013; Agarwal et al., 2012; Saks, 2006), organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) (Alfes et al., 2013; Saks, 2006), and supportive and creative behaviors aimed at making organizational change successful (Seo et al., 2012).

Of additional interest is research conducted outside of the workplace context. Although these results were obtained through experimental research in a controlled laboratory setting, they provide insight into the relationship between PA and performance that is not apparent in engagement literature. In these studies, brief exposure to positive stimuli that increased subjects' level of PA had a significant positive impact on creative problem-solving, reduced contentiousness in negotiations, increased integrative capacity and the promotion of innovative solutions to problems (Carnevale & Isen, 1986) as well as capacity to process information and make evaluative judgments and greater efficiency in decision-making (Herr, Page, Pfeiffer & Davis, 2012). The striking thing about these experiments is the fact that the state of PA was induced, and that minimal exposure to positive stimuli (from seconds to 5 minutes) had a significant impact on performance. Considering the significant impact on performance resulting from such a brief exposure to positive stimuli, it may be that even small measures to simply increase moments of general PA throughout the day could have subtle benefits on job performance and well-being, unrelated to the motivational factors of focus in the engagement literature.

Engagement as Empowerment

An empowered workforce is possibly the greatest asset a nonprofit can have today. The crisis oriented nature of behavioral health services, the potential for funding to be reduced or cut with little warning and the tendency for nonprofit leadership to be functioning in many roles as a result of tight budgets, creates an operating environment where it is not uncommon for strategic plans, or any work that doesn't demand immediate attention, to sit in a drawer and be forgotten until it's time for the next annual review. If an organization can successfully create a culture of empowerment, with a workforce that understands the organizational goals and their role in achieving them, strategic planning can become a continual process, in which everyone plays a role, rather than something "apart" from the regular work performed that inevitably takes the back burner to more pressing issues.

Macey and Schneider (2008), propose that feelings of empowerment that indicate an inclination to action in relation to one's job are another important facet of state engagement (p.10). Empowerment as a facet of psychological state engagement in the current study is based on Thomas and Velthouse's (1990) conceptualization of empowerment in the workplace, as a motivational construct reflecting an individual's assessments of themselves in relation to workplace variables experienced through four cognitions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact (p.671). (See Appendix D for common measure). They posit that an individual will experience empowerment to a greater or lesser degree depending on the extent to which each of these components is internalized. Their conditions for empowerment are based on concepts almost equivalent to Kahn's (1990) meaningfulness and safety conditions, largely due to the fact that they both drew from Hackman and Lawler's (1971) core job dimensions model that demonstrated intrinsic motivation could be enhanced when people felt their tasks were meaningful, they had autonomy, and they felt their work had a significant impact of personal value. Due to the similarity, they are not discussed separately but rather subsumed into Kahn's meaning and safety dimensions.

When conceptualized in terms fostering discretionary effort toward meeting organizational goals, employees will experience psychological empowerment to the fullest extent when a work goal has meaning and value to them, they believe they have the skills and abilities required to perform the associated tasks well, they have some degree of freedom in determining how to accomplish the tasks and they believe their work can have a significant impact on ultimately reaching the goal.

A state of psychological empowerment, as measured by some or all of these components, has been positively correlated with several employee behaviors important to building competitive advantage as it relates to S4KF's identified goals. Empowered employees have been found to exhibit significantly more innovative behaviors, such as idea generation, promotion and realization (Lari, Shekari & Safizadeh, 2012; Seibert, Wang & Courtwright, 2011; Spreitzer, 1995), enhanced job performance and discretionary effort directed toward tasks outside of one's role (Koberg, Boss, Senjem & Goodman, 1999; Seibert et al., 2011; Salanova et al., 2005; Tuuli & Rowlinson, 2009), significantly more proactive behavior related to idea implementation and problem-solving (Parker, Williams & Turner, 2006) and managerial effectiveness (Spreitzer, 1995), as well as significantly less intention to leave their organization (Avolio, Zhu, Koh & Bhatia, 2004; Koberg et al., 1999; Seibert et al., 2011). By fostering the conditions necessary to elicit these behaviors and designing initiatives in a manner that channels the passion and energy of engaged employees into building competitive advantage for the organization, the potential benefits to both the employees and the organization could far outweigh the initial investment.

The concept of empowerment has even greater significance in the human services context where advocating for clients, who often do not have a voice, is a fundamental part of the job and empowering them to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives and understand and advocate for their rights is crucial to achieving successful client outcomes. This is particularly true for Success 4 Kids & Families (S4KF) as empowerment is at the core of the System of Care value system that holds client voice in making decisions about their treatment as central to achieving positive outcomes. In their study of 22 human services programs, Gutiérrez, GlenMaye & DeLois (1995) found that organizations committed to empowering their

employees are also more effective in empowering their clients and the disadvantaged communities they worked with, suggesting that employee empowerment should be a significant component in any human service organizations' engagement strategy.

Engagement as Affective Commitment

Part of any strategy to invest in the workforce should include initiatives that foster attachment to the organization to prevent the loss of valuable skills, knowledge and talent to competitors. In a recent study of the nonprofit sector, Opportunity Knocks (n.d.) found that 45% of employees planned to leave their current organization within the next two years, and of those, 38% were planning to go to another nonprofit. Given the increasingly competitive nature of the nonprofit sector, organizations can not afford to lose valuable staff to competitors. If an organization's turnover rate is not outside what is normally expected, it can be easy to make the assumption that employees are committed to the organization. However, these results speak to the need to go deeper than actual turnover in assessing the level of commitment within the workforce. Research conducted by Meyer and Allen (1991) provide insight into the potential risks of using only turnover rates as an assessment of commitment levels in the workforce. They found that there are three distinct types of organizational commitment, experienced to varying degrees in individuals, that characterize one's relationship with their workplace and inform their decision to stay or leave: Affective Commitment; Continuance Commitment; and Normative commitment.

Affective commitment refers to an employee's "emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization" and reflects a decision to stay with an organization because they want to stay. Continuance commitment on the other hand, refers to "an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization" and reflects a decision to stay because they need to stay. The third component, normative commitment, refers to "a feeling of obligation to continue employment" and reflects a decision to stay because they feel they ought to (Meyer & Allen, 1991 p.67). (See Appendix D for their measure of affective commitment) In terms of competitive advantage, only affective commitment is likely to promote the will and desire to expend discretionary effort in support of the organization that characterizes behavioral engagement.

Macey and Schneider (2008) proposed that affective commitment comprised a facet of employee engagement if it is conceptualized as "positive attachment to the larger organizational entity and measured as a willingness to exert energy in support of the organization, to feel pride as an organizational member, and to have personal identification with the organization" (p. 9). The psychological condition that most influences affective commitment is perceived organizational support (POS). Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison and Sowa (1986), conceptualized POS as the global belief that one's organization cares about their personal well-being, values their contributions to the organization and considers their personal goals and values (p.500). POS is closely related to Kahn's (1990) concept of psychological safety, but adds to his framework the dimension of engagement to the larger organization, in the form of affective commitment, based on reciprocity. While safety is primarily concerned with the conditions that allow a person to engage in their work, or role, and express their true selves in the workplace, perceived organizational support is more concerned with what conditions contribute to a person's sense of desire and/or obligation to exert discretionary effort towards

organizational goals, or to remain with an organization even when they may have opportunities to gain greater extrinsic rewards from another organization.

Unlike the obligation felt by those who are normatively committed, the obligation felt as a result of POS is based on the feeling that loyalty is owed out of appreciation for support received from the agency. Affective commitment is also fostered through a strong identity with the organization's mission and values when it enhances their sense of meaningfulness. When employees identify strongly with the organization's mission and values, feel proud of where they work, and genuinely care about what happens to the organization, they are not only much more likely to stay, but they are also more likely to want to expend discretionary effort directed at achieving the organization's strategic goals. Because normative commitment is based on one's own sense of duty or moral obligation, these employees are not likely to have a negative impact on the organization, rather they are just not as likely to proactively look for ways they can contribute to organizational success.

Employees who intend to remain due to continuance commitment however, can be a significant risk to the organization, especially if they are also actively disengaged. The importance of promoting organizational commitment based on engagement is emphasized in the key findings of the Scottish Executive Social Research (2007) review of engagement, that concluded if organizations fail to engage their workforce, they not only risk losing key staff to other organizations, but they are potentially retaining a large body of unproductive, disengaged employees who have no intention of leaving (p.43). This conclusion is confirmed by Towers Perrin (2008) who found that half of all disengaged employees had no plans to leave their organization and were not even looking for other opportunities. Providing support for the importance of including affective commitment in engagement models when competitive advantage is the ultimate goal of strategies, 39% of all engaged employees indicated that although they had no plans to leave, they would consider other offers. They point to the need to not only ensure that engaged employees, stay engaged, but to create effective strategies for identifying disengaged employees that do not respond to strategies to enhance their engagement and let them go in order to minimize the corrosive effects they have on their colleagues (p.6).

The need to determine the form of commitment underlying relatively stable turnover rates can be seen in the results of studies relating the three forms of commitment to attitudinal and behavioral outcomes. In a meta-analysis of 155 studies, Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch and Topolnytsky (2002) found that all three forms of organizational commitment were positively correlated with retention, but that affective commitment had the strongest positive correlation with attendance, job performance, and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) while continuance commitment was either unrelated or negatively related to these behaviors. Confirming the importance of fostering affective commitment, Meyer, Stanley and Parfyonova (2012) separated subjects into groups based on which component of commitment dominated their relationship with the organization, and found that individuals with strong affective commitment scored significantly higher on measures of happiness, satisfaction, self-directed behavior, work engagement, and willingness to exert discretionary effort on behalf of the organization, even when combined with strong continuance commitment.

Also of importance in terms of the need for nonprofits to be able to successfully transition through significant and frequent periods of change, Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) created

similar commitment scales for change initiatives and found that affective commitment to change predicted supportive behaviors such as going along with the spirit of the change and making modest sacrifices, as well as “championing” change behaviors (requiring considerable personal sacrifice or intended to promote the value of the change to others inside or outside the organization).

Engendering feelings of affective commitment in the workforce is also important in light of the fact that S4KF’s reputation and ability to attract highly qualified staff will be important factors in determining the ultimate success of the organization’s planned expansion. When employees are affectively committed, they are also more likely to become advocates for their organization. Schweitzer and Lyons (2008) suggest that this willingness to “market” the organization through positive word of mouth interactions outside of the workplace can be highly beneficial in acquiring new consumers as well as in recruiting high quality employees (p.563). In S4KF’s case, this word of mouth can contribute to new referrals, funding streams or partners, as well as build a reputation as a highly desirable place to work, leading to increased job demand.

The danger of retaining disengaged staff is the risk of the opposite impact of word of mouth if they are speaking poorly of management or staff in the community. In addition, they can have significant negative effects internally through shirking their work, putting an extra burden on high performing staff, and delivering poor quality service. If they have no intent to leave, (or aren’t able to) and they remain on staff, they can also erode the engagement level in their teammates through constant complaining and negativity. In light of the important role staff play in building competitive advantage, ensuring that organizational practices enhance the ability to develop and retain high performing staff, while encouraging the departure of those with no desire to improve, can contribute significantly to the ultimate success of the organization.

The three facets of psychological state engagement included in this framework are presented as distinct from one another for the purposes of clarity however, in practice they are interrelated. Like all components that comprise aspects of engagement models, they have primary antecedents and consequences but can also impact several other conditions, states or behaviors. The following sections review the literature demonstrating correlations between the key workplace drivers of engagement and the psychological states and behaviors they can influence.

Meaning, Safety & Support in the Workplace: Creating the Conditions for Engagement

In order to better understand the primary pathways from workplace driver to the desired outcomes in terms of attitudes and behaviors, the remainder of the literature review concerned with the workplace drivers of engagement is organized by the psychological conditions of engagement they are most closely associated with in the literature, as presented in Table 5.

The impact workplace factors can have on engagement is well supported in the literature, but what is not always as clear is *why* they have such a significant impact. Kahn (1990) found that in order for workplace practices to contribute to engaged attitudes and behaviors, they need to be designed in a manner that fosters meaningfulness and perceptions of safety.

KEY DRIVERS OF WORKPLACE ENGAGEMENT		
Psychological Meaningfulness	Psychological Safety	Perceived Organizational Support
<i>Employees feel their work is valuable & valued, challenging, has significant impact and contributes to personal growth</i>	<i>Employees feel they can express their true selves in their roles and the workplace without negative consequences</i>	<i>Employees believe the organization cares about their personal well-being, values their contributions and considers their goals and values</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Job Characteristics ❖ Role/Organizational Fit ❖ Transformational Leadership ❖ Team Cohesion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Rewarding Relationships ❖ Supervisory Practices ❖ Organizational Culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Organizational Justice ❖ Rewards & Recognition ❖ Professional Development ❖ Transformational Leadership

Table 5. Key drivers and the psychological conditions of engagement

Perceived organizational support is also included because it has been shown to play a similar mediating role between workplace factors and engagement and in addition, helps provide better insight into engagement with the organization itself, rather than just the specific job or role one occupies. By better understanding how the workplace enhances or inhibits engagement, management can design more effective strategies and better identify the source of problems when they arrive. The first section reviews the literature related to the key drivers that most impact the experience of meaningfulness, followed by psychological safety and concluding with perceived organizational support.

Key Drivers of Psychological Meaningfulness

Job Characteristics

One of the central sources of meaningfulness is the nature of an employee’s job or role itself. Hackman and Lawler (1971) proposed that if the outcomes of one’s work are intrinsically meaningful, they are responsible for an identifiable portion of the outcomes, and they receive positive feedback regarding their performance, a cycle can occur whereby the harder and better one works, the more they satisfy their higher order needs (e.g. learning and growth), creating an incentive to continue working harder and better (p.263). They identified five core job dimensions that, if present, had a positive impact on employee motivation and performance, ultimately contributing to this cycle: *task identity* (the degree to which a job involves doing a whole piece of work so that one can see the results of their labor); *skill variety* (the ability to use and enhance skills and abilities important to a person); *autonomy* (having control over how one completes their work leading to ownership of the results); *task significance* (the degree to which one’s job is personally meaningful and seen as having some impact of significance); and, *performance feedback* (the knowledge that one achieving the impact important to them) (p.264).

Kahn (1992) incorporated this model into his early conceptualization of engagement, proposing that when these aspects of work are perceived to be present, they would foster the experience of psychological meaningfulness he found necessary for individuals to bring their full emotional, cognitive and physical selves into performing their role (p.333). This relationship was later validated by May et al. (2004) who found that these job characteristics have a significant impact on employee engagement, and that the relationship is fully mediated by the

experience of psychological meaningfulness. These same core job dimensions have also been identified as a key driver of engagement in multiple models throughout the literature and research has demonstrated consistent, strong links to positive affectivity, empowerment and affective commitment (Bakker & Bal, 2010; Christian et al., 2011; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Opie et al., 2010; Saks, 2006; Salanova et al., 2005; Towers Perrin, 2008), and discretionary effort (Shuck, Reio Jr., & Rocco, 2011).

In addition, Gould-Williams and Davies (2005) found that the freedom to make decisions about how to do one's job and the opportunity to use personal judgment were significant predictors of motivation, over and above external rewards, and Parker et al. (2006) found that autonomy was strongly correlated with self-efficacy, proactive problem solving, and generating, promoting and implementing ideas for improvement. The primary role played by challenging work in fostering engagement is also evident in the results of large-scale engagement research that found challenging work and opportunities to improve one's skills and capabilities over the past year to be among the top ten drivers of engagement in the U.S as well as globally (Towers Perrin, 2003, 2008). While it is clear most people desire opportunities for learning, skill development and growth, in order to foster meaningfulness and promote engagement, opportunities must align with individual desire, interests and perceived competency.

In terms of feedback, jobs also vary in the extent to which an individual is aware of whether or not they are performing well and achieving outcomes important to them. For example, within the context of S4KF, case managers and therapists may get positive feedback from clients and other professionals and they have objective measures of success to draw on, such as whether or not clients meet their goals or show improvement on measures of mental health. On the other hand, employees such as administrative assistants will likely be much more dependent on their supervisors to provide them with positive feedback. Regardless of position however, the likelihood that an employee will experience meaningfulness can be enhanced through a performance feedback system that has learning and development as its focus and reinforces the perception that an individual's contribution is valued.

The significance of effective performance feedback systems can be seen in research conducted by Selden and Sowa (2011), who found human services employees who received a formal performance evaluation annually, received ongoing informal coaching and feedback, training to address identified weaknesses, and felt evaluations were conducted with development in mind, were more satisfied with their job, enjoyed work more, had higher levels of affective commitment to the organization and significantly lower actual voluntary turnover than staff who scored lower on these performance feedback measures. In addition, their research offers an excellent example of the importance of measuring employee perceptions rather than just using an objective measure of the presence of key drivers. They surveyed both staff and management about whether or not training was tied to the individual's performance appraisal, and while 95% of management said "yes", only 46% of staff felt that training was tied to their appraisal.

Employee perception is also a particularly important factor to consider in assessing the effectiveness of recognition practices because individuals can also differ in terms of their need to receive external positive feedback about their role, making this an area where conflicting

perceptions are common between management and staff. It is possible for two employees with the same supervisor to receive equivalent amounts of recognition objectively speaking, and yet have very different perceptions of the amount and adequacy of the recognition they receive.

Role/Organization Fit

Another important source of meaning is the degree to which one's job/role or organization "fits" their self-image, which is strongly related to the alignment of the organization's mission and values with their personal values and sense of what is meaningful, important work. May et al. (2004) also confirmed that work/role fit has a significant relationship with engagement, fully mediated by meaningfulness, as proposed by Kahn (1990). In addition, degree of job fit is strongly correlated to measures of engagement as both positive affectivity and affective commitment (Opportunity Knocks, n.d.; Rich et al., 2010; Shuck et al., 2011). Shuck et al. (2011) also found that through affective commitment and positivity affectivity, job fit positively impacted the expenditure of discretionary effort and intent to stay with the organization.

This is an area where the nonprofit sector differs significantly from the private sector. In a Towers Perrin (2003) workforce study, the percentage of engaged employees in the nonprofit sector exceed that in the other six private sector industries included in the research by 25%. This is well above the average throughout the literature, but not surprising if the composite engagement score is based in part on questions related to belief in organizational mission and values, or feelings of passion regarding one's work. One of the only studies this author located solely focused on the state of engagement in the nonprofit sector, supports the argument that nonprofit staff would likely display higher levels of engagement in general due to the nature of the measures. Opportunity Knocks (n.d.) found that the organization's mission was the number one reason employees had chosen to work at their current organization. Not surprisingly, on their nine question engagement survey, the four that tapped into belief in the mission and values and identity with their role, received high ratings from over 80% of staff.

Although the increased likelihood of role fit is positive, this provides a good example of the importance of distinguishing between job and organizational engagement. It is not uncommon for human services staff to be highly passionate and committed to their work with clients while being unhappy or ambivalent towards their workplace (Barak, Nissly & Levin, 2001). In addition, within human services it is important to distinguish between alignment of personal values and the general mission of helping those in need and the specific values inherent in service models. Substance abuse presents a good example of this since an area where values can often conflict is with regard to harm reduction vs. abstinence approaches. While employees may believe passionately in helping people struggling with substance abuse, they might experience significant internal conflict regarding the methods the organization, or external bodies, require them to use in pursuit of this goal.

Transformational Leadership

There are three decades of research supporting the powerful effects of transformational leadership on employee attitudes and behaviors as well as organizational outcomes. Transformational leadership is defined and measured along four dimensions of influence:

inspirational motivation (conveys an inspirational mission or vision, confidence in the ability to achieve them, is seen as passionate and enthusiastic and focus' followers on higher order, collective goals); *idealized influence* (admired and respected by followers for high performance expectations, ethical and moral behavior and confidence); *intellectual stimulation* (challenges assumptions, seeks alternative views, encourages creativity and innovative approaches to problems); and, *individual consideration* (cares about followers' individual well-being, needs and goals, focuses on strengths, teaches and coaches followers) (Avolio, Bass & Jung, 1999 p.450).

Like job characteristics and role fit, transformational leadership exerts its influence in part by increasing employees' perceptions of their work as meaningful and important, resulting in enhanced intrinsic motivation. In terms of psychological and behavioral engagement, research has demonstrated strong links between transformational leadership and meaningfulness (Aryee, Walumbwa, Zhou & Hartnell, 2012), positive affectivity (Avolio et al., 2004; Aryee et al., 2012; Salanova et al., 2005), affective commitment (Avolio et al., 2004; Salanova et al., 2005), job performance (Aryee et al., 2012; Christian et al., 2011; Salanova et al., 2005), discretionary behavior (Christian et al., 2011; Salanova et al., 2005), innovative behavior (Aryee et al., 2012), speaking positively about the organization in the community (Avolio et al., 2004) and, employee service performance, customers' intent to continue using their services, and the number of long term customers nine months later (Liao & Chuang, 2007).

Piccolo and Colquitt (2006) refer to inspirational motivation as the "management of meaning" role of transformational leaders and demonstrated that a significant part of the impact transformational leaders are known to have on performance is due the elevated sense of meaning and level of intrinsic motivation their followers experience in relation to their job characteristics. Bono and Judge (2003) confirmed this relationship, demonstrating a positive correlation between transformational leadership and self-concordance (commitment to work goals due to personal belief in their importance and enjoyment of the work itself, as opposed to external pressure or potential guilt of not pursuing goals). In addition to enhancing meaning related to specific jobs, transformational leaders can foster engagement by articulating an inspirational vision for the organization.

In a 2003 engagement study by Towers Perrin, a clear vision from senior management about future success was one of the top ten drivers of employee engagement. Spreitzer (1995) also found that the extent to which managers agreed that they understood top management's vision and strategic goals for the organization, and had access to information regarding their unit's performance, were positively correlated to managerial effectiveness and innovative behavior through psychological empowerment. Also of particular relevance in terms of S4KF's needs and goals, transformational leadership has been shown to have a significant impact on organizational knowledge creation (Hoon Song, Kolb, Hee Lee & Kyoung Kim, 2012), supportive behaviors toward helping ensure success during periods of change and restructuring (Seo et al., 2012), and adaptive behaviors including creative problem solving, handling unpredictable situations and emergencies, learning new tasks, technologies and procedures, handling work stress, and demonstrating interpersonal adaptability (Charbonnier- Voirin, El Akremi & Vandenberghe, 2010).

Team Cohesiveness

Kahn (1990) also proposed interactions with coworkers as a factor with the potential to either enhance or inhibit the experience of meaningfulness. He found that individuals were more likely to engage when they felt a sense of connectedness with coworkers that transcended the superficial nature of many workplace relationships. Different than simply positive and supportive relationships (to be discussed in relation to psychological safety), meaningful connections were described by participants as those that arise out of shared beliefs, or for those whose work involved emotionally charged interactions with clients, the emotional bonds that arise out of the shared experience of extraordinary circumstances (p.707).

In their qualitative interviews of employees in human service agencies, Gutierrez et al. (1995) found that greater levels of teamwork and collaboration, and perception of a shared philosophy and commitment, were factors subjects felt enhanced empowerment, both individually as well as in the team as a whole, and in addition, acted as an antidote to burnout (p.254). Shared leadership, where challenges and goals are approached in a collaborative fashion and the entire team takes ownership of the outcomes, has also been shown to promote team cohesiveness as well as to predict innovative team behaviors (Hoch, 2013).

Additional studies have demonstrated a strong correlation between perceptions of group worth and effectiveness and empowerment (Koberg et al., 1999), coworker trust (confidence in their skills and commitment to the job) and proactive problem solving (generating, promoting & implementing ideas for improvement) (Parker et al., 2006), and between team-working and both motivation to perform well and affective commitment (Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005). The contagious effects of engagement in teams can also be seen in a recent study by Gallup, Inc. (2006) which found that not only were highly engaged individuals much more likely to suggest or develop innovative ways to improve internal processes, solve customer problems, and involve their customers in creating innovative service solutions, but over 60% of engaged employees strongly agreed that they feed off of the creativity of their colleagues compared to only 9% of disengaged employees.

Fostering Meaningfulness in Remote Teams

The impact of cohesiveness can be particularly significant in remote teams. Kirkman, Rosen, Tesluk and Gibson (2004) studied the impact of team empowerment (perceptions of team effectiveness, team autonomy to make decisions together without management, team impact on consumers, etc.) on process improvement (defined as a team's ability to continually learn, refine processes and develop innovative solutions to address problems or achieve goals) and customer satisfaction in remote teams. They found that for teams who rarely met face to face, empowered teams had significantly higher process improvement results, and for customer satisfaction, highly empowered remote teams had significantly higher customer satisfaction ratings regardless of the number of face to face meetings.

For organizations that employ remote workers, these findings demonstrate the importance of designing engagement strategies that foster meaning, competence, autonomy and a clear understanding of impact on organizational goals in remote teams. For example, it is possible that current practices designed to promote awareness of organizational goals are not as effective in reaching employees who only physically travel to the office once a month.

Additionally, they may not be as familiar with the organizational culture in terms of management's receptiveness to new ideas or the expected boundaries of a particular role. Creating an environment in which remote teams feel supported and empowered to make decisions, and where innovation is encouraged in improving processes and achieving goals, an organization can reap the full benefits of the skills and expertise of their remote teams.

The influence of interpersonal interactions discussed here highlights the important role played by leadership (at the top as well as supervisory level) and coworkers, in an employee's ultimate experience of meaningfulness in relation to their work. The following section focuses on the aspects of these relationships that promote the psychological safety necessary for individuals to fully engage at work.

Key Drivers of Psychological Safety

In his proposal of a multidimensional model of engagement, Kahn (1992) notes that the bulk of research has focused on experiences of meaningfulness as the driver of the intrinsic motivational aspect of engagement, and asserts that this alone is not enough to fully explain why individuals choose to engage or disengage in the workplace. He offers the example of organizational efforts to "empower" employees to invest more of themselves, such as participatory decision-making and opportunities to share ideas, and notes that the likelihood of these efforts actually resulting in feelings of empowerment, would rely not only on a belief that one's efforts will be meaningful, but also the degree to which they perceive this sharing of themselves to be safe (p.340). He proposed that positive, supportive interpersonal relationships in the workplace, a supervisor perceived as clear, consistent, trustworthy and competent and a perception of the organizational culture as one supportive of sharing ideas and making suggestions, would create conditions where employees felt safe to express their opinions, and engage more of their "true selves" in their role. May et al. (2004) confirmed this relationship, finding that rewarding supervisory and coworker relationships have a significant influence on psychological safety and that safety, in turn has a significant impact on engagement.

Rewarding Interpersonal Relationships

At the most basic level, the experience of psychological safety will rely upon being treated with dignity and respect in the workplace. The responsibility for creating a safe overall environment falls upon upper management who must ensure that all employees are held accountable for attitudes and behaviors that disrespect others in the workplace. The importance of fostering an environment in which staff feel they are treated with dignity, respect and courtesy in enhancing engagement, is evident in the results of a study conducted by Reio Jr. and Sanders-Reio (2011) that found being subjected to behaviors from coworkers or supervisors such as showing little interest in their opinion, ignoring or excluding them, doubting their judgment, cutting off conversation, not turning off cell phone, or snapping at them, had a negative impact on perceptions of psychological safety. Relationships with coworkers that are perceived as supportive and trusting have been shown to promote positive affectivity (Xanthopoulou et al., 2008), motivation and affective commitment (Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005), and empowerment (Gutierrez et al., 1995).

Supervisory Style & Practices

The importance of a positive, supportive, supervisory relationship is highlighted in the Towers Perrin (2008) global workforce study findings, in which a good relationship with one's supervisor was found to be one of the top ten drivers of engagement worldwide. Academic research supports this relationship showing strong links between supervisor support and positive feedback and positive affectivity (Bakker & Bal, 2010), leader approachability and empowerment (Koberg et al., 1999), and a supportive supervisory relationship and psychological safety, as well as the ability of supervisory support to predict discretionary effort (Shuck et al., 2011). In addition to generally supportive, friendly and open relationships, May et al. (2004) also confirmed Kahn's (1990) findings that specific supervisor attitudes and behaviors, including keeping subordinates informed, communicating clear expectations, encouraging participation in important decisions, encouraging the expression of true opinions, and behavioral integrity or "doing what they say they will do", fostered the experience of psychological safety and promoted greater engagement in one's role (p.37).

In their 2011 global engagement study of nearly 11,000 employees in seven countries, Blessing White found that the most significant supervisory drivers of employee engagement were encouraging subordinates to use their talents, recognizing and rewarding achievements, and building team cohesiveness, followed by effective delegation, treating subordinates as unique individuals and asking for and acting upon employee input. In additional large scale engagement studies, Towers Perrin found input into decision making and decision making authority to be in the top ten drivers of engagement (2003, 2008). In their study of nonprofit engagement, Opportunity Knocks (n.d.) also found that input into decision-making had a significant impact on engagement and additionally, that employees with a greater understanding of what was expected of them in their jobs were both more engaged, and less likely to be experiencing burnout.

Organizational Culture

In addition to creating a culture in which employees know they will be treated with dignity and respect, leadership can also foster psychological safety by ensuring that all employees understand the HR policies and procedures governing ethical and interpersonal conduct within the organization, as well as in the community and with program participants, so they are aware what attitudes and behaviors are expected as well as what the consequences are for crossing these boundaries. Leaders can also gain the respect and trust of followers by having, and following, clear policies and procedures for employee grievances and "whistle blowing" in cases where ethical boundaries are believed to be breached.

In promoting the importance of employee engagement, Kahn (1992) also emphasized the increasingly competitive business environment and the need to be increasingly adaptable and innovative in order to remain sustainable. He posited that a workforce simply performing expected tasks is no longer sufficient for organizational success but rather, organizations need to promote self-expression, questioning of norms, creativity and innovation by empowering employees in order to ensure that the organization successfully adapts to the rapidly changing environment (p.323). If employees feel that supervisors or leadership are not receptive to ideas or suggestions, or if they have the impression that voicing their true opinions could result in

negative consequences, they will be much less likely to risk investing themselves in creative processes. Perceived supervisor and leadership support for innovation (perceived as encouraging creativity, adaptable, flexible and open to change, and rewarding innovation) and leader's rating of how innovative they expected a subordinate to be in their role, have both been positively correlated with behaviors such as searching out new technologies, processes and techniques to improve performance and the generation, promotion & implementation of new ideas (Scott & Bruce, 1994).

The importance of consistent perceptions at all levels of the organization can also be seen in a study by Aryee et al. (2012), that found although transformational leadership at the top had a significant impact on experienced meaningfulness and positive affectivity, the likelihood of this engagement manifesting itself in the expression of innovative behaviors was significantly related to the relationship with one's direct supervisor, with a negative supervisory relationship having a direct negative impact on the expression of innovative behaviors. In addition, organizational encouragement for innovative thinking was one of the top ten global drivers of engagement in the 2008 Towers Perrin global workforce study, suggesting that increasing opportunities for learning, creativity and innovation, and reward systems that encourage these behaviors, may be a particularly relevant example of a situation in which the organization can simultaneously achieve employee satisfaction and increased efforts toward achieving organizational goals, as originally proposed by Hackman and Lawler (1971).

Key Drivers of Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

POS was conceptualized by Eisenberger et al. (1986) as the global assessment of the degree to which an organization cares about an individual's well-being, values their contributions and considers their individual goals and values (p.500), and has been found to strengthen affective commitment and enhance employee performance as a result of felt obligation on the part of employees to reciprocate for perceived benefits they receive from the organization (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch & Rhoades, 2001). While the primary source of meaningfulness is one's work, and that of safety is interpersonal relationships in the workplace, the primary source of POS is in the perception of reciprocity with the organization itself. The focus here is policies, procedures and practices that are ultimately controlled by upper management, and they are therefore central to employees' experience of organizational support.

The significance of POS is evident in the fact that the degree to which senior leadership is believed to genuinely care about the well-being of staff, was the number one driver of employee engagement in the Towers Perrin (2003) U.S. engagement study of over 35,000 employees, as well as in their 2008 global engagement study of 90,000 employees in eighteen countries. POS has been strongly correlated with affective commitment (Meyer et al., 2002; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Laschinger, Purdy, Cho & Almost, 2006; Saks, 2006; Wayne, Shore, Bommer & Tetrick, 2002) and engagement with both job and organization (Rich et al., 2010; Saks, 2006; Shuck et al., 2011) as well as with several behavioral outcomes such as job performance and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) (Alfes et al., 2013; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Rich et al., 2010), discretionary effort, offering ideas to improve team and organizational functioning, proactively seeking out ways to improve the effectiveness of one's work; taking action to protect the organization from potential problems, and defending the organization when criticized (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Saks, 2006).

Although the impact of the relationship with one's immediate supervisor is significant, Blessing White (2011) found that while an extremely negative supervisory relationship might motivate an employee to leave an organization, a positive relationship will not necessarily make them stay. Similarly, Gould-Williams & Davies (2005) found that trust in upper management had a significant impact on organizational commitment and intent to remain with organization, while supervisory support did not. This supports the need to include affective commitment, and employees' global assessments of the organization in an engagement model, especially when the focus of enhancing engagement is to increase competitive advantage. While employees may find the work meaningful and their relationships with supervisors and coworkers supportive and rewarding, this may not be enough to make them choose to stay with the organization in the event they are offered other opportunities.

Organizational Justice

Organizational justice, often referred to as "perceptions of fairness" in the engagement literature, includes three distinct types of justice important to employees: interactional, procedural and distributive. Interactional justice refers to the fairness and quality of interpersonal treatment employees' experience. In addition to being treated with dignity and respect, as discussed in the previous section, interactional justice will be perceived when employees feel that upper management is open and transparent and provides satisfactory explanations for why certain procedures were used to distribute outcomes. Procedural justice is concerned with the fairness of the procedures used to determine the distribution of outcomes (eg. performance evaluations) and will be experienced if employees believe that organizational procedures are applied consistently, without bias, based on accurate information, and feel they are in alignment with their personal standards of ethics. In addition, perceptions of procedural fairness will be enhanced if employees feel everyone affected by a decision was able to be heard, either directly or through a representative. Distributive justice refers to an employee's perception of whether or not rewards (eg. pay, promotion) are consistent with their perceived level of skill and effort.

Organizational justice has been positively correlated with POS (Biswas, Varma & Ramaswami, 2013; Wayne et al., 2002), affective commitment (Meyer et al., 2002; Wayne et al., 2002), engagement with the organization (Biswas et al., 2013; Saks, 2006), job engagement (Alfes et al., 2013; Biswas et al., 2013; Opportunity Knocks, n.d.) and organizational citizenship behaviors (Wayne et al., 2002). The emphasis on consequences associated with the larger organization points to the importance of assessing both job and organizational engagement. If an employee is passionate about their work and dedicated to their clients, using measures that only tap into feelings and cognitions about work could result in an inaccurate picture of overall engagement.

Rewards & Recognition

Distributive justice is concerned with the financial "rewards" one receives for their work. This can be particularly challenging for nonprofits due to their often limited ability to offer financial compensation in recognition of superior work. In light of this, the perception that one's salary does not "fairly" represent their performance is a common sentiment in the nonprofit sector.

These assumptions are confirmed by Opportunity Knocks (n.d.) who found that only 31 % of nonprofit employees were satisfied with their compensation in relation to their skills and effort. In addition to low salaries, 42% of nonprofit employees in the Opportunity Knocks' (n.d.) study felt that performing well did not improve one's chance of being promoted. The results of a Blessing White (2011) study indicate that this is a significant challenge beyond the nonprofit sector as well. Only 52% of employees surveyed globally agreed with the statement "I have career opportunities in this organization", and a lack of growth or advancement opportunities was the number one reason people gave for considering leaving their current employer. In addition, excellent career advancement opportunities were among the top ten drivers of employee engagement in Towers Perrin (2003) U.S. engagement survey as well as their 2008 global engagement survey.

While nonprofits are limited in the manner they can recognize superior performance in their employees, the impact on POS will be less substantial if staff believe that salary increases and promotions are distributed fairly within the constraints imposed by external factors. For example, if salary increases are distributed in an across the board fashion, higher performing employees may experience reduced POS if they see their underperforming counterparts receiving equal compensation. Although organization-wide cost of living increases are standard practice, any additional funding available for salary increases should be distributed in a fashion that rewards superior performance in order to reduce potential negative effects on POS. Similarly, if promotions are perceived to be awarded based on criteria other than performance, education or experience, such as favoritism, POS is likely to be reduced.

One of the ways leadership can prevent negative perceptions of fairness is to ensure that they have clear HR policies and procedures outlining how performance evaluations will be carried out, the criteria upon which they will be based and the process by which decisions regarding salaries and promotions are determined. Selden and Sowa (2011) also suggest that since there are few financial rewards available in nonprofits, it is even more important to recognize employee accomplishments through regular performance evaluations (p.258). Ultimately, with financial restrictions limiting an organization's ability to reward employees financially or create additional positions facilitating advancement, nonprofit leadership must be creative in designing recognition schemes that foster a sense that employees' contributions are valued.

Opportunities for Training & Professional Development

Employee perceptions of the availability of opportunities for training and professional development are a significant driver of engagement. In their study of engagement in the nonprofit sector, Opportunity Knocks (n.d.) found that opportunities for training and development were one of the most important factors nonprofit employees took into consideration in choosing where they would like to work. In addition, survey respondents in Blessing White's (2011) engagement study indicated that opportunities for career development were the number one benefit that would increase their job satisfaction.

The link to engagement is also supported in the academic research, demonstrating a strong correlation between employees' perceptions of opportunities for training and development and both PA and empowerment (Bakker & Bal, 2010; Gutierrez et al., 1995; Salanova et al., 2005). These findings indicate that strategies that support learning and development are

another area where employee needs align strongly with those of the organization.

Transformational Leadership - Individual Consideration

The most important factor contributing to POS is the perception that upper management cares about employees as individuals. When leadership regularly sees employees in the hall or the break room, it is easy to get to know them on a personal level and form natural relationships that contribute to POS. However, when an organization is large enough to have multiple sites, or utilizes remote workers such as in the case of S4KF, conveying genuine concern for employees from the top will necessarily rely more heavily on formal structures and practices that foster the belief that one's contribution to the organization is valued.

Wayne et al. (2002) found that perceptions of "inclusion", measured by the extent to which employees felt they were kept informed about important organizational news, given opportunities to voice opinions on important issues, informed about decisions that would impact them, and received recognition from upper management, were positively related to POS which was in turn, positively related to organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behaviors. Another way in which leadership can align the satisfaction of employee needs with effort toward organizational goals is through their communication of the organizational vision and strategic goals, and the provision of opportunities for employees to be involved in discussions about the future of the organizations. This can increase perceptions of "inclusion" and enhance POS as demonstrated by while simultaneously ensuring that engaged employees are aware of what is needed to secure organizational success.

In addition to ensuring awareness of the organization's strategic plan, employees must understand their individual role in achieving those goals in order to feel that their contribution is valued. By communicating the manner in which each role within the organization contributes, and by ensuring that the importance of each individual is regularly reaffirmed, the experience of both POS and meaningfulness can be enhanced, while also promoting the expenditure of effort toward organizational goals by the expanding the scope of outcomes employees feel intrinsically motivated to achieve, from those related to their job itself, to those of the organization as a whole. As noted by Shuck et al. (2011), when employees believe their contribution has a meaningful impact on their workplace, they are more motivated to expend discretionary effort aimed at continually improving performance.

Fostering POS in Remote Teams

Research exploring commitment in remote workforces highlights the importance of ensuring that physically disconnected workers also feel supported. In a series of in-depth interviews with field-based engineers, Jacobs (2008) found that these workers considered their intent to remain with the organization as a completely separate issue to their willingness to expend discretionary effort or make choices in the organization's interest. While their intent to stay was based largely on factors such as convenience, ambition and benefits, their inclination to expend discretionary effort in support of the organization was dependent on how well they felt the organization treated them. Additionally, they found that going the extra mile in their job was not necessarily related to organizational commitment, but rather commitment to their clients or their own sense of professionalism, and that this did not necessarily translate into

behaviors outside of that role or indicate dedication to the organization's interests or loyalty to the organization.

Additional insight into the factors contributing to commitment in remote workforces is gained through Mulki, Locander, Marshall, Harris & Hensel's (2008) study of the effects of isolation on a remote sales force. They found that both employee performance and commitment to the organization were strongly correlated to their perception of the degree to which they could depend on their supervisors, coworkers and the overall organization for support and collaboration. Importantly, the trust gained through consistent support and collaboration was not related to the amount of face to face interaction but rather the availability of support, and opportunity to collaborate through any means of communication. Both of these studies offer suggestions for reducing isolation and increasing commitment in remote employees based on using multiple modes of communication that allow for interactive participation, opportunities for collaboration and including remote workers in a continual learning, evaluation, change and improvement system (Jacobs, 2008 p.51-52; Mulki et al. 2008 p.75).

Conclusions

A focus on enhancing employee engagement in the human service nonprofit context has potential benefits that far outweigh the costs. Whether the workforce is generally engaged or not engaged, incremental increases in employee engagement can have a significant impact on organizational success. The specific needs of S4KF and their particular sources of competitive advantage also seem to be well aligned with the top drivers of engagement identified in the research suggesting that there are many ways strategies can be designed to simultaneously increase employee well-being and build competitive advantage for the organization.

Nonprofits also seem to have a particular advantage in approaching engagement, in that the work itself has a great deal of personal meaning for employees. Arguably, meaning is the most difficult aspect of engagement for an organization to address, especially if the work is by nature not likely to inspire meaning. For S4KF, the dedication of human service staff to their clients is a significant advantage in relation to organizational goals since strategies that serve to improve services can also potentially increase intrinsic motivation as the outcomes are personally meaningful to employees. Therefore, to the degree that strategies are designed in a manner that will potentially benefit employees, clients and the organization as a whole simultaneously, the potential ROI for nonprofits is significant. The remaining sections of the report provide an overview of the methodology used for the study, a review and discussions of the findings, and recommendations for Success 4 Kids & Families based on the literature reviews and the results of the employee engagement survey.

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to better understand employee engagement at Success 4 Kids & Families, Inc. and identify areas where agency practices may be serving to enhance or inhibit engagement in the agency overall, as well as specifically within the remote workforce. The goal of the research report is to situate employee engagement within the context of competitive advantage in the current non-profit operating environment and provide recommendations for designing human resource practices with the potential to promote organizational growth and sustainability through strengthening employee engagement.

Research Design

A combination of primary and secondary research was used to accomplish the objectives of the study. For the primary research, an online employee engagement survey was created and distributed to agency staff via an email invitation with a web link on January 10th, 2013. Staff were given a one month period in which to complete the survey and received two reminders by email during this period.

For the secondary research, a review of the practitioner and academic literature on engagement and the nonprofit sector was conducted in order to develop a conceptual framework for understanding engagement in the agency and assessing the potential benefits of utilizing an employee engagement approach to building competitive advantage in the nonprofit sector. An initial search was conducted through University of Victoria Library databases, Google Scholar and general internet searches using a combination of a variety of key words and phrases such as “employee engagement”, “human services”, “nonprofit sustainability”, and “remote work/virtual teams” and then followed up with additional searches of sources identified in reference lists of the relevant research.

Sample

The survey was distributed to all staff at the agency (n=120) via an email invitation with a link to the web based survey. They were provided with a one month period in which to complete the survey and received two email reminders during the survey period. The overall response rate was 50%. The distribution and response rates by group are summarized in Table 6.

RESPONSE RATES	TOTAL	REMOTE	OFFICE	MIXED	UNKNOWN
Total Surveys Sent Out	120	49	33	38	n/a
% of Surveys Sent Out by Work Group	n/a	41%	28%	32%	n/a
Total Respondents	60	18	28	10	4
Response Rate by Work Style	42%	37%	85%	26%	n/a
% of Total Respondents	n/a	30%	47%	17%	6%

Table 6. Survey distribution and response rates by work group

For the purposes of the study, employees were categorized according to work group as follows:

1. Office – These are employees with office-based positions and are all located at the main S4KF administrative offices.
2. Mixed – These are employees who work primarily with clients in the community but are in and out of their office regularly. They all work in a program located in an office across the street from the main office and have less contact with leadership.
3. Remote – These are contracted case managers and therapists who work remotely, physically checking in at the office with their supervisor once a month to submit documentation and review cases. This group has little to no contact with anyone in the agency other than their supervisor, except for quarterly contractor meetings.

Due to the demographics of the workforce, identifiers such as age, gender, education level and position would have resulted in some staff being relatively easy to identify so, it was determined that ensuring anonymity would result in more valuable information for the purposes of the study than would a comparative analysis of demographic groups.

Survey

The survey included 42 questions with responses in the form of 5 point Likert scales anchored by unique descriptors related to the nature of the measure (eg. *Never* 1 2 3 4 5 *Always*, *Poor* 1 2 3 4 5 *Excellent*). While the response options were designed for consistency in the survey and do not replicate other measures, the quantitative questions were all drawn from validated measures used throughout correlation studies in the literature in order to ensure the validity of the questions themselves. In addition, the survey contained 7 open ended questions requiring narrative responses that provided staff with the opportunity to comment further and/or offer suggestions and 2 additional open end questions asking staff to describe a time they felt “engaged” and “not engaged” and the circumstances that led to those feelings. Finally, respondents were asked 5 questions specific to their work group. Remote workers were asked about positive and negative aspects about working remotely and its impact on engagement while office and mixed groups were asked about how they would feel if their position were to change to a remote work design, and what management could do to support employees should they choose to increase the number of positions that work remotely. The full survey is provided in Appendix E.

Method of Analysis

The quantitative results were compiled and the means, standard deviations, and % response rates for each point on the Likert scale were calculated for each question as well as the overall mean for each category of questions. After analyzing the results, it was determined that reporting the responses according to the % response rates from 1 – 5 would provide greater insight into areas of strength, where practices are likely to enhance engagement, and those where practices may be either actively inhibiting engagement or could be improved in order to strengthen engagement.

The scales from 1-5 were designed with a response of 1 indicating the lowest possible rating and a response of 5, the highest. Responses of 4 or 5 were considered to reflect a positive perception of the key driver in question and responses of 3 or below to reflect a perception of

the key driver as potentially problematic in terms of fostering engagement. For each driver, the percent of respondents choosing 4 and above was calculated and these results were broken down into quartiles. The key drivers representing the top quartile received positive responses from between 93% - 98% of staff while the bottom quartile received positive responses from 71% - 83% of staff. These were considered the drivers likely having the strongest enhancing and inhibiting influences on engagement respectively.

The results for key drivers in the bottom quartile were then broken down by work group to identify any differences in perception that may be related to a remote work style. The same response rates were calculated for each group. Where the percentage of staff choosing a positive response for each group fell within the same quartile, the low score was considered to reflect an overall issue with the key driver and where the response rates were spread across different quartiles, the issue was considered likely to reflect an issue related to the work style.

The qualitative responses were analyzed and grouped according to themes reflecting areas of strength and weakness and discussed along with the related quantitative responses. Suggestions for improvement were also grouped according to the particular subject they related to. Based on the fact that responses were at times more relevant to other questions, or referenced multiple topics, it was determined that the qualitative responses would provide a better indication of strengths and weaknesses if analyzed in total and presented according to themes rather than grouped by the specific question asked.

Study Limitations

One of the main limitations to the study was the voluntary nature of the survey. Although the response rate was relatively high overall, the results may reflect the perceptions of employees who are currently the most engaged in the agency, since they would also be the ones most likely to voluntarily participate. This is most problematic with regard to the validity of the findings within the Mixed and Remote work groups given that their response rates were much lower. These are also the groups that were anticipated to have lower engagement rates potentially due to less physical connection to the agency. In light of this, their lower response rates may in and of themselves be a reflection of lower engagement and therefore the results comparing work groups should be viewed with caution.

Another significant limitation is the lack of statistically valid results due to the use of a survey created specifically for S4KF rather than a validated measure of engagement. Based on the literature review, it was determined that none of the standardized models and corresponding measures of engagement would meet the needs of the study as they were too narrowly focused to explore all areas of interest in the current context. In light of this, the conceptual framework was created by drawing on validated models as well as more recent theoretical models in the literature in order to provide a more broad analysis of engagement in the agency. This prevented the ability to provide statistically valid findings of the level of engagement in the agency. The ability to compare results to benchmarked data would have been valuable, however the lack of research conducted in a nonprofit setting would still have rendered the validity of the findings questionable. Should the agency choose to continue to monitor and evaluate engagement moving forward, the validated measures provided in the appendixes could be considered for the purpose of comparing survey results against benchmarks.

FINDINGS

In order to better understand current employee engagement at Success 4 Kids & Families (S4KF), employees were asked questions about their perceptions of workplace practices and about their feelings related to their work, their colleagues, leadership and the overall organizational culture in order to provide insight into the degree to which the conditions for engagement are experienced in the agency. The findings related to overall engagement in the workplace are presented first, followed by the findings related to individual drivers presented and discussed under the headings for meaningfulness, safety and perceived organizational support as they were in the conceptual framework review. The section concludes with the findings related to self-reports of participation in engaged behaviors and an overview of insights gained from the narrative survey responses.

The results are presented for all staff combined, as well as by work group where relevant. Four respondents did not indicate which work group they belonged to so their responses are only included in the overall results. All questions under each condition are presented in a graph showing the highest through lowest rated drivers based on the percent of respondents choosing 4 or 5 on a scale from 1 to 5. Drivers explored further by work group are also presented graphically showing a comparison of the percent of high responses (4 or 5) for each group. In addition, tables containing each question in the survey with their means, standard deviations and % responding 1 through 5 for each question are presented in Appendix F.

The Overall State of Employee Engagement at Success 4 Kids & Families (S4KF)

Due to the fact that the survey used in the study was not a standardized measurement tool, it was not possible to categorize employees according to level of engagement based on a validated measure, however in order to provide a picture of the current state of engagement, categories were created based on the means across all survey questions. In addition, the overall means for each condition of engagement were calculated for agency as a whole and the three work groups in order to identify any significant differences between them. These results are presented in Tables 7 and 8 respectively.

Estimated Level of Engagement	Avg. Response	% of Staff
Engaged	4.6-5.0	52%
Ambivalent	4.1-4.5	30%
Disengaged	3.1-4.0	18%

Table 7. State of individual engagement

Conditions of Engagement	All Staff	Office	Mixed	Remote
Total Mean	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.4
Total SD	0.4	0.8	0.3	0.4
Meaning	4.4	4.4	4.6	4.5
Safety	4.7	4.6	4.8	4.8
POS	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.4

Table 8. Overall means by work group and condition

Employees were considered likely to be engaged based on a mean score greater than 4.5

which indicates the majority of their responses were a 5 which is the highest possible rating. A small group of staff had means of 4.0 or lower with a significant number of responses of 3 or less. Considering the overall high scores, these were considered outliers indicating potential disengagement. The remaining respondents were considered neither engaged nor disengaged for the purposes of the study. Using this method of categorization, the proportion of employees potentially disengaged falls within the average found across studies in the literature and, while 52% of engaged employees is significantly greater than the general workforce average, this proportion falls in between those found in the only two studies located that specifically addressed the nonprofit sector. So although not statistically valid, these results provide a reasonable picture of levels of engagement in the agency overall.

Within the workgroups, the office-based staff showed the largest standard deviation and the narrative responses provided in the survey suggest that a few employees in this group are potentially disengaged. Since the only identifying data included in the survey was workgroup, in order to encourage honesty, it is not possible to determine potential causes of this variation with certainty. However, based on the literature demonstrating higher engagement in employees who provide clinical services, the higher overall scores for the mixed and remote groups which are comprised of all clinical staff, and an analysis of narrative responses, it is likely that the lower engagement scores in the office group belong to administrative staff.

Indicators of Psychologically Meaningful Work Conditions

In order to tap into employees’ experience of meaningfulness in the workplace, respondents were asked to rate the degree to which key drivers of meaningfulness are present in the workplace, and the degree to which they experience feelings and cognitions that reflect the condition of meaningfulness. Figure 4 presents the questions ranked from highest to lowest number of positive responses (% of employees choosing 4-5 out of 5).

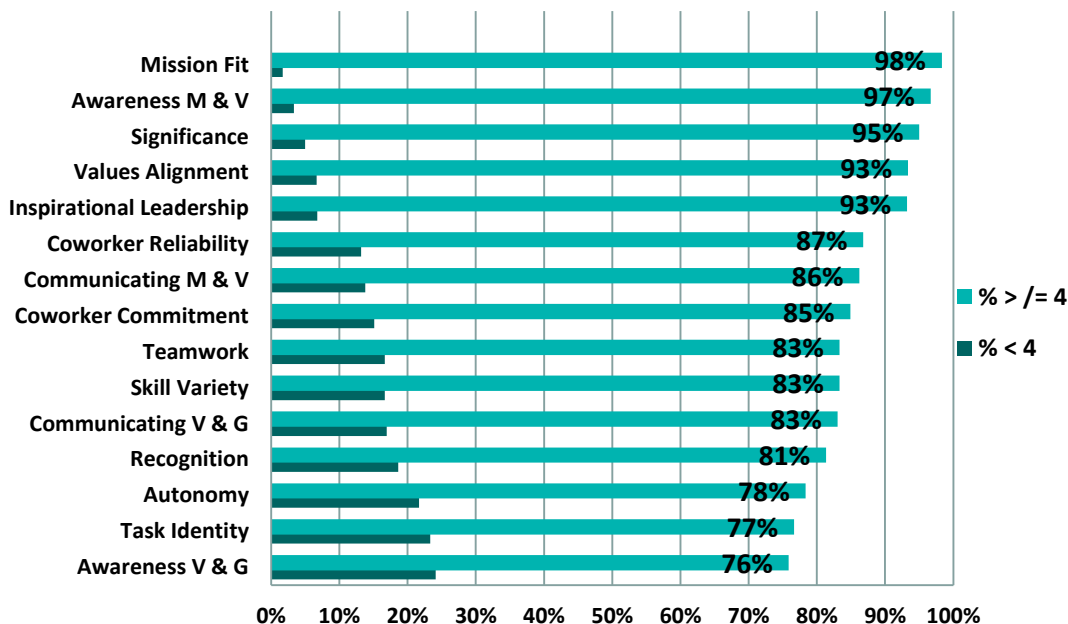


Figure 4. Key factors influencing meaningfulness ranked by the percent of positive responses received, measured as scores of 4 or 5 out of 5

The results confirm expectations that human services professionals would show a strong fit with their work and S4KF’s mission and values, with the drivers directly related to the importance of the organization’s mission, alignment of personal and professional values, the perceived significance of the impact their work and the inspirational motivation of leadership, all receiving positive response rates in the top quartile of all engagement drivers. This also supports the data from large scale engagement surveys finding that nonprofits have significantly larger proportions of engaged employees when the measure used contains questions assessing the value of the work and identification with organizational mission and values.

In addition, participants were asked if they had difficulty performing any aspects of their job in a manner that aligns with the organizational values, in order to assess potential conflicts more specifically related to service models or treatment methods. All participants answered “No” this question and none offered narrative comments in the space provided, suggesting that the strong alignment of personal and organizational values extends to the specific values of various treatment approaches as well as the more general values of human services work.

The meaningfulness questions with the percentage of positive responses falling in the bottom quartile included four of the five core job dimensions. In order to explore potential reasons for the lower scores, the responses are broken down by work group in Figure 5.

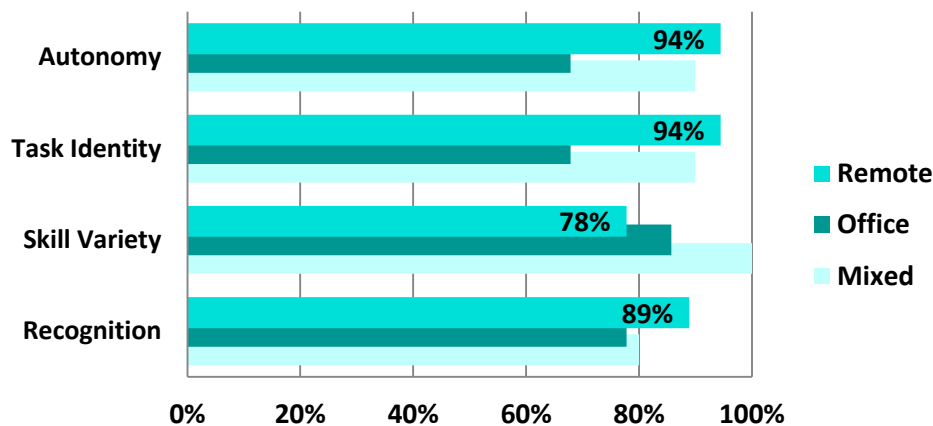


Figure 5. Proportion of each group indicating positive perceptions of the core job dimensions

With regard to autonomy and task identity, the positive response rate of the remote group is in the top quartile and the office group, in the bottom quartile with a difference of 26% in the number of staff indicating a positive perception of these drivers. The difference in perceptions of autonomy was expected since the remote and mixed groups spend the majority of their time in the community and set their own schedule for work. Except for supervision once a month, the remote group works completely autonomously unless they choose to seek out support or direction. In terms of how they experience this, open-ended responses indicate this is a significant source of job satisfaction for this group. When asked what were the most positive aspects of working remotely, all 17 respondents gave answers related to autonomy including, “freedom”, “flexibility”, “ability to manage one’s own schedule”, “autonomy”, “greater responsibility”, and “empowerment” The other likely cause is difference in position,

since the remote group represents clinical staff who work with clients and would see the results of their work over time, while the work of administrative assistants, who are only found in the office group, is generally assigned and prioritized by a supervisor and would rarely include whole pieces of work on their part or visible results of their efforts.

The other job dimension receiving lower responses from staff was related to receiving recognition or praise for good work. It was anticipated that this may be another area in which remote employees scored lower due to their physical distance however, the results were in fact opposite of the predicted outcome. The questions asking employees to rate the frequency of recognition they receive and the importance of recognition in relation to their job satisfaction, had the largest standard deviations of all the meaningfulness questions, suggesting that individual differences play an important role in the results. In addition, supervisors vary in the way they recognize employees so these factors may play a larger role in staff perception of recognition than the amount of actual contact does.

Staff awareness and understanding of the organization’s strategic vision and goals received the lowest rating, with almost a quarter of respondents selecting a 3 or below, suggesting an important area of focus for engagement strategies. The work group responses for the questions related to the strategic vision and goals are presented in Figure 6. There does not appear to be a substantial difference based on work group, as positive response rates for all groups fell within the bottom quartile, and the remote group rated their awareness and understanding of the goals slightly higher than the other two groups which, given their lack of a physical connection to the agency, was actually anticipated to be somewhat lower. This could potentially be related to a difference in the degree that supervisors discuss the strategic goals with their staff, or possibly just reflects individual differences in efforts to keep informed. The results also suggest that although communication of the vision and goals was considered effective, this did not always translate into a clear understanding of the goals.

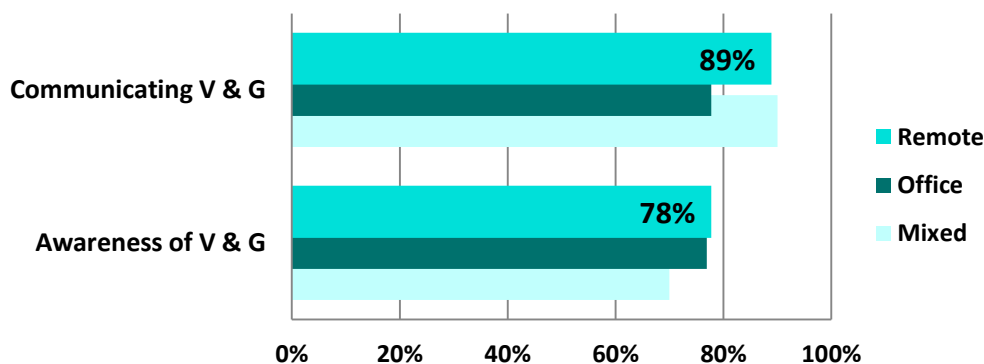


Figure 6. Proportion of each group indicating a high degree of awareness and understanding of the organization’s strategic vision and goals

Another area thought to be challenging for staff who work largely in isolation was that of teamwork. To assess perceived levels of team cohesiveness, respondents were asked to rate their coworkers’ reliability in completing program tasks, their commitment to quality service, and their experience of working as a team toward shared objectives. The results, shown in

Figure 7 support the expectation that remote workers would rate their perception of working as a team lower than the other groups. In addition, a response option of “I don’t know” was provided for questions related to reliability and commitment to quality in light of the fact that some remote workers have little or no contact with their coworkers. Four respondents from the remote group chose “I don’t know” in response to the reliability and commitment questions.

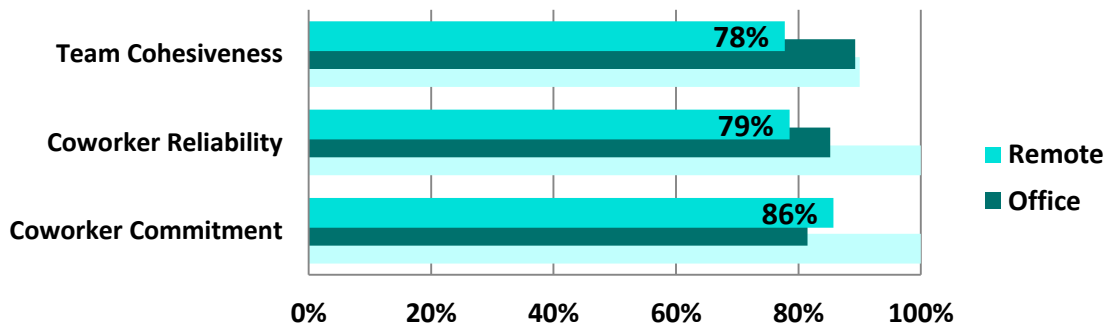


Figure 7. Proportion of each group indicating high perceptions of team cohesiveness

In addition to their perceptions of work characteristics, respondents were asked to rate the degree to which they experience the feelings and cognitions that comprise the psychological condition of meaningfulness in the context of engagement (the degree to which they feel their work is challenging and allows for personal and professional growth, believe their work has value and a significant impact on the lives of others, and feel motivated by their work). The results are presented in Figure 8. Overall, it appears likely that S4KF staff derive substantial meaning from their work. All respondents attributed a high degree of importance to their work and believe it has a significant impact on people’s lives. The degree to which work is felt to be challenging and conducive to personal growth is somewhat lower, likely reflecting the lower ratings on the other job dimensions, primarily by office based staff. Similarly, only 80% of staff reported starting the day feeling motivated by the tasks ahead of them much of the time (% selecting 4-5 on a scale from 1 (never) to 5 (most of the time)) which was anticipated to be higher based on the perceptions of importance, impact and value congruence. This result could also potentially be due to lower rating of perceptions of challenge and in the remote group, could possibly reflect the lower ratings on perceptions related team cohesiveness.

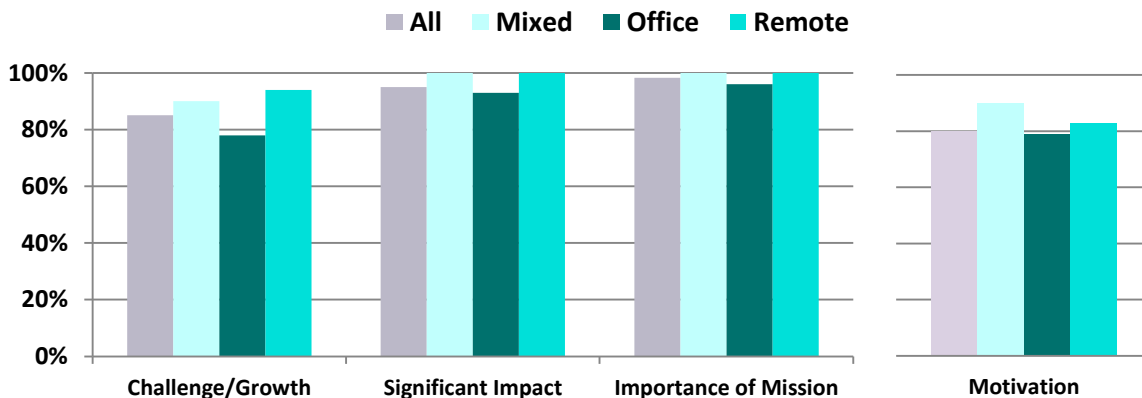


Figure 8. Proportion of respondents indicating experienced feelings and cognitions that contribute to meaningfulness

Indicators of Psychological Safe Work Environment

In order to assess the “safeness” of the workplace environment, respondents were asked to rate the degree to which key drivers known to enhance the expression of one’s true self are present in the workplace. Figure 9 presents the questions ranked from highest to lowest number of positive responses (% of employees choosing 4-5 out of 5).

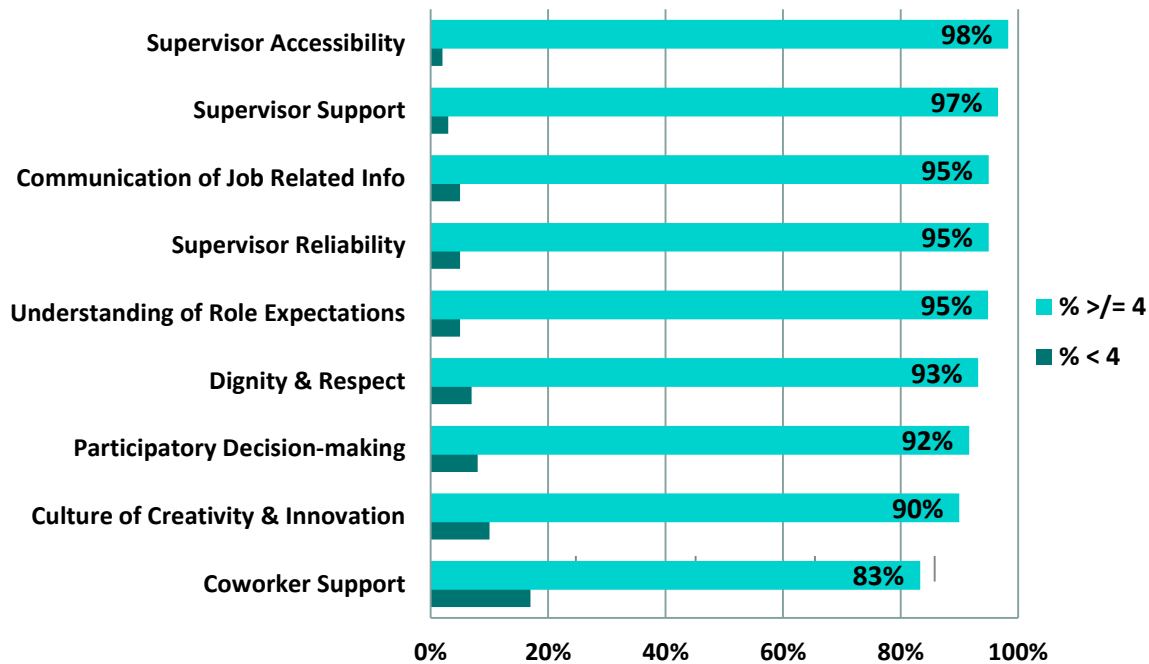


Figure 9. Key factors influencing psychological safety ranked by the percent of positive responses received, measured as scores of 4 or 5 out of 5

The drivers of psychological safety were rated very highly overall, particularly with regard to employees’ perception of their supervisors, and psychological safety as a whole had the highest average responses of the three conditions. Almost all of the questions related to supervisor supportiveness and practices had positive response rates in the top quartile, suggesting that supervisors at S4KF are likely having an enhancing influence on engagement. In addition, when asked about circumstances contributing to experiencing a state of engagement, four respondents provided specific examples of support, direction and encouragement of supervisors their supervisors. Over 90% of staff also reported feeling they are treated with dignity and respect in the organization and that management is supportive of creativity and innovation contributing further to the likelihood that staff, for the most part, feel safe enough to express themselves and share true opinions in the workplace.

The only question receiving a positive response rate in the lowest quartile was related to feeling one could go to their coworkers for support. Figure 10 shows the percent of responses of 4 or 5 out of 5 broken down by work group.

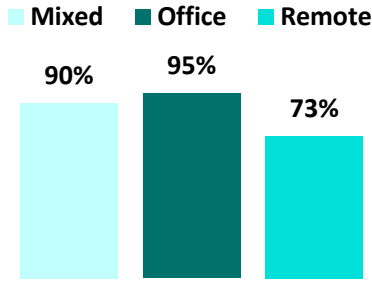


Figure 10. Proportion of each group indicating coworkers are supportive

As with their experience of teamwork, remote workers’ perceptions of their ability to go to their coworkers for support if they were struggling were rated lower than were those for the other two groups. However, narrative responses to open-ended questions suggest that this low score is related to a lack of connectedness to one another, rather than negative impressions of coworkers. When asked what the most negative thing about working remotely is, 5 out of 11 total responses included disconnection of non-remote employees, lack of support, isolation, loneliness, not knowing other staff, and not having anyone to share with.

Indicators of Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

In order to gain insight into employees’ global assessments of the extent to which they supported by the organization, respondents were asked to rate the degree to which key drivers known to enhance POS are present in the workplace. Figure 11 presents the questions ranked from highest to lowest number of positive responses (% of employees choosing 4-5 out of 5).

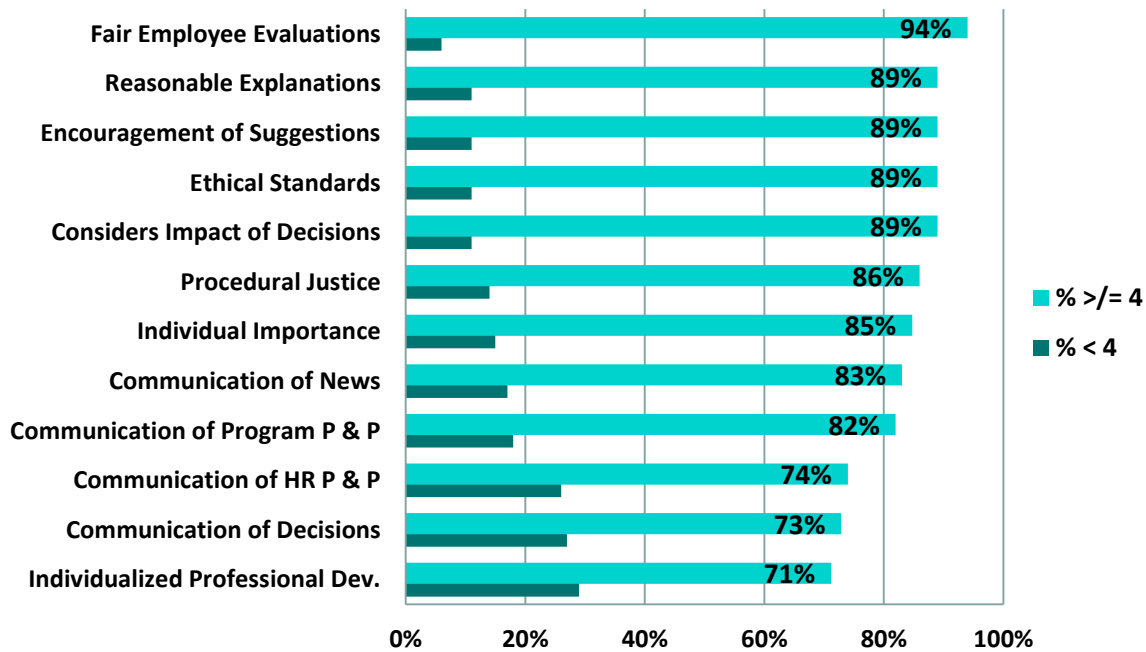


Figure 11. Key factors influencing psychological safety ranked by the percent of positive responses received, measured as scores of 4 or 5 out of 5

The question receiving the highest positive response rate, was related to the perception that employee evaluations are carried out without bias and based on accurate information, however eight respondents selected “I don’t know” in response to this question. Remote workers are provided with feedback on their work but do not receive formal evaluations and, given that 6 out of the 8 “I don’t know” responses were provided by this group, this is likely due to lack of knowledge rather than a perception of unfairness of the process. With regard to the fairness of the process used in determining outcomes such as pay increases and promotions, a considerable number of participants also indicated they did not know however, in this case, the number of “I don’t know” responses was spread out relatively evenly across groups. There were approximately 10% of staff however, whose responses were quite low on this question and narrative responses also suggest a perception of unfairness by some. When asked to comment on any unfair practices they perceived in the agency, four responses were provided that indicated perceptions that review boards show bias, problems are “swept under the rug”, the belief that if they did speak up about the issue, nothing would be done to provide a remedy, and one respondent indicated they felt it was unfair that exceeding performance expectations was not reflected in financial compensation but rather, superior and poor performance received equal compensation.

Similar to perceptions of communication of the strategic goals and vision, questions related to leadership’s communication of agency news, reasons for decisions and policies and procedures had positive response rates in the bottom quartile. There was also little difference between work groups, with all response rates falling in the bottom quartile. This suggests that the lower scores are not a result of remote work styles, but more likely reflect overall top down communication issues within the agency.

The degree to which employee’s felt they had opportunities for professional development based on their individual needs and goals, received the lowest positive response rate under POS, as well as for the survey as a whole. This is consistent with the nonprofit literature suggesting that professional development is an issue in the sector as a whole. The breakdown of all responses across groups is shown in Figure 12 in order to further explore perceptions of opportunities for growth in the organization. While there is some variability between groups, the response rates for all groups fell in the bottom quartile indicating low perceptions overall.

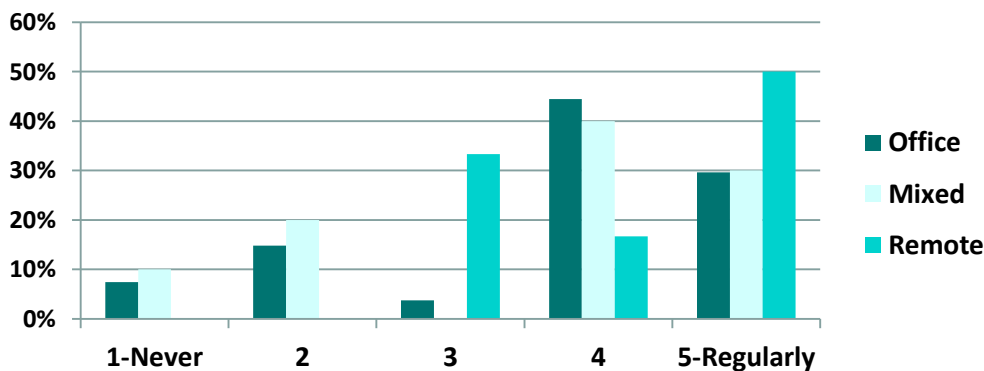


Figure 12. Responses by group when asked to indicate how often they have opportunities for professional development based on their individual needs and goals

A lack of resources necessary to perform one’s job well can be an inhibiting influence on both meaningfulness and perceived organizational support so respondents were also asked to indicate their perception of the adequacy of job related resources. Responses are shown in Figure 13 by work group.

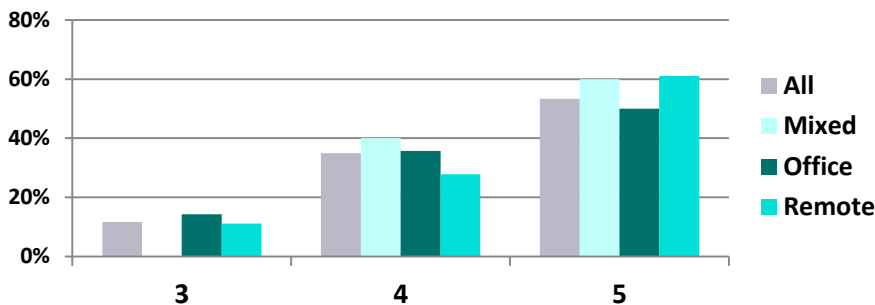


Figure 13. Responses by group when asked if they felt they were provided with the resources necessary to perform well in their job. *There were no responses of 1 or 2 on a scale from 1-5.

In addition, respondents were asked whether there were any resources they lacked that would help them work more efficiently or effectively. Overall, there was no indication of substantial deficits in resources perceived by employees, however several respondents indicated specific resources that would improve their work experience. Of the specific resources cited, the most common were laptops and tablets, with nine responses, and administrative assistance (either from admin staff or through enabling remote submission of documentation), with eight responses. Although these suggestions were anticipated by the remote group, the responses were actually equally distributed between the office based and remote groups.

Self-Reported Behavioral Engagement

The survey also asked respondents to rate the level of their participation six behaviors known to be indicators of engagement. The results are presented in Figure 14.

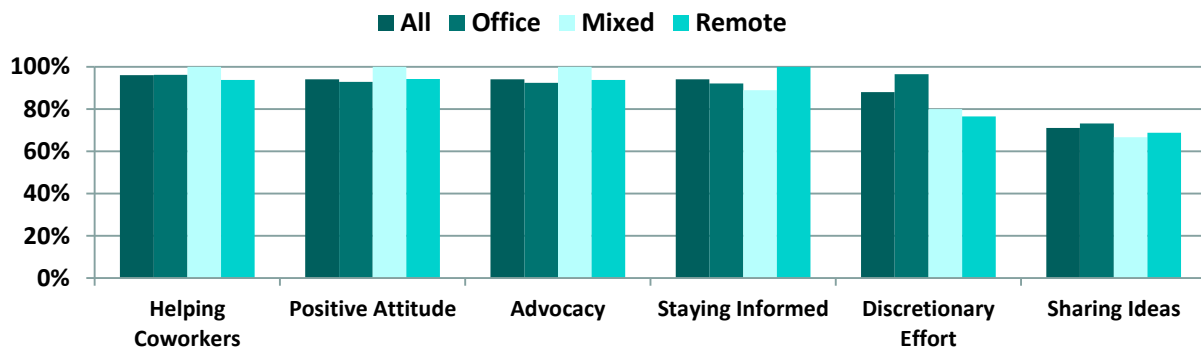


Figure 14. Staff's self-reported frequency of participation in engaged behaviors

The overall results suggest a relatively high level of participation in engaged behaviors. The response rates for discretionary effort were the only ones that included results in the top and bottom quartile suggesting a difference potentially related to the physical disconnection of remote workers. This would be expected to some degree since remote workers would be unlikely to be exposed to opportunities to the same degree as office employees. Sharing ideas

to help improve organizational performance was anticipated to receive a higher positive response rate given the high positive response rates for encouraging staff input, suggestions and creativity and innovation. This outcome is similar to that of motivation, with a positive response rate in the bottom quartile despite response rates in the top quartile for important drivers of meaningfulness. This suggests that other influences may be inhibiting full participation in behaviors directed at innovation and helping the organization achieve its goals.

In order to assess commitment to the organization, respondents were also asked how often they think about seeking a position elsewhere. The results are presented in Figure 15.

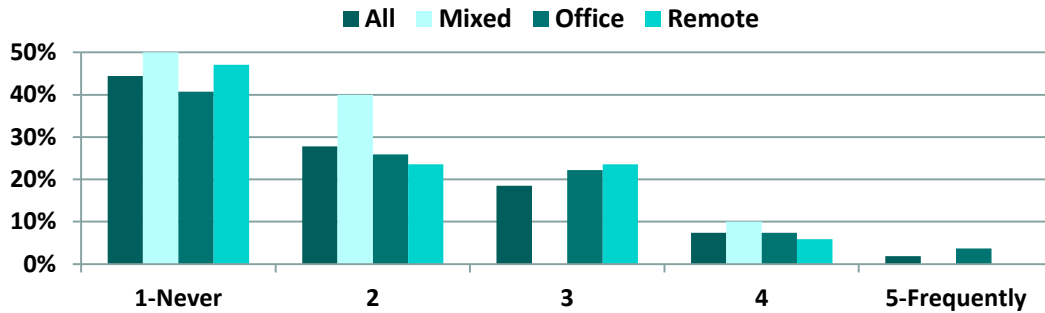


Figure 15. Responses by group when asked how often they consider seeking a position elsewhere

Approximately a third of all employees indicated thinking about leaving the organization some of the time. Although the narrative responses in particular suggested a high degree of affective commitment in some employees, this outcome is consistent with the nonprofit literature indicating that nonprofit employees are often thinking about leaving their organization long before they actually do (Barak et al., 2001; Opportunity Knocks, n.d.).

In order to understand what engages employees at S4KF from their own perspective, respondents were also asked to describe a time they felt engaged as well as disengaged and if I they had any suggestions for enhancing engagement in the agency. The narrative responses describing circumstances that make employees feel engaged are summarized in Table 9 by common themes from the greatest to lowest number of responses per theme.

<i>Please give an example of a time at S4KF that you felt engaged (e.g. passionate and committed to helping ensure organizational success).</i>	# of Responses
Having opinions and input solicited and feeling trusted & valued by leadership	7
Feeling proud of the agency's work, mission, values	5
Feeling agency cares about/supports its employees	5
When performing work with children & families/clinical work	5
Always feel engaged/feel that way every day	4
Opportunities to use valued skills/support for professional development	4
Positive, supportive relationship with supervisor	3
Working as a team to successfully overcome an organizational challenge	1
Participating in organizational celebrations/events	1

Table 9. Key drivers of engagement at S4KF as indicated by staff's narratives describing times they felt highly engaged

The situations employees described that made them feel engaged at work reflected the results of both large scale workplace studies as well as those looking at nonprofit employees specifically. Most of the top ten drivers found in the practitioner literature are also found in the top drivers described by S4KF employees, with perceived organizational support being identified most often in terms of feeling that the leadership cared about their input and wanted to hear their opinions about organizational decisions as well as feeling like S4KF cared about their employee's well-being. The pride felt at being a part of an organization with mission and values they believed to be important aligned with this emphasis found in the results of the nonprofit engagement study conducted by Opportunity Knocks (n.d). Opportunities for development and a positive relationship with supervisors were also emphasized as they are in general workforce surveys.

Of the 18 participants who responded to the question asking them to describe a time they felt disengaged, over half responded by stating they had never experienced feeling that way at S4KF. Of the remaining respondents, five indicating feeling that leadership did not care about them or value their input, suggesting that leadership has the potential to significantly impact engagement, both positively and negatively within the agency. In terms of suggestions to enhance engagement, only five participants responded. Of these, three suggested more opportunities for staff to get together socially, one suggested education benefits and the other suggested making more positions in the agency remote. The overall responses to the questions that were specific to work groups are presented in the next section.

Benefits and Challenges of the Remote Work Model

In light of the decision to expand the agency's services, leadership was also interested in identifying any current issues related to the remote model as well as gaining an impression of the potential response of office based employees in the event the organization chose to increase the number of positions working remotely. Remote workers were asked to share the most positive and negative aspects of working remotely and to offer suggestions for improving the experience. The most common responses are summarized below:

- The most commonly cited positive aspects of working remotely were the flexibility of being able to manage your own schedule (14 responses) and autonomy (8 responses) including freedom, empowerment and greater responsibility.
- The two most commonly cited negative aspects of working remotely were the lack of compensation for work related expenses including gas, mileage and supplies (6 responses) and a lack of connection to coworkers including feelings of loneliness, isolation and disconnectedness from the agency (5 responses).
- Suggestions for improvement included having informal social events, keeping an updated calendar for remote workers on Big Tent and providing remote access to documentation necessary to perform job duties.

The office and mixed groups were asked whether, if offered, they would accept a remote work position, and what impact it would have on their overall job satisfaction if they had to change to that work model. In addition, they were asked the reasons they would like to work remotely, concerns they might have and how management could address those concerns. Finally, they were asked how often they thought they would need to meet as a team in order to feel engaged

with the organization. The responses are summarized below:

- 80% of respondents indicated that they would accept a remote position and 75% indicate this would have a positive impact on their job satisfaction.
- The most commonly cited reasons for finding the idea of working remotely appealing were the level of distraction in the office (6 responses) and increased flexibility (4 responses).
- The most common concerns cited were the same negative aspects reported by remote workers, isolation from coworkers and the “pulse” of S4KF (8 responses) and barriers to accessing charts and other job related documentation (6 responses).
- Suggestions for addressing these concerns included facilitating fun, informal gatherings for staff and web meetings. Four respondents also suggested that the best model would provide a combination of working in the office and remotely.

In terms of engagement, the noted desire for combination of office and remote work is reflected in the results of Gallup’s (2013) most recent report on the state of engagement in the work force, which found that working remotely had a positive impact on engagement but that the group of employees with the highest rates of engagement as well as the lowest rates of disengagement overall, were those who spent approximately 20% of their time working remotely, and 80% based in the office. The benefits of a balance are also clear from the responses of remote workers who enjoyed the freedom and flexibility of remote work but missed the interpersonal connections of the workplace. The importance of regular contact was also clear in that all respondents indicated that they would need to meet once a month or more to feel connected to the agency.

The following section brings together the central themes identified in the survey results and discusses them in terms of their enhancing or inhibiting influences on engagement. They are also analyzed in relation to strengths and weaknesses identified in behavioral engagement in the agency in order to understand how the key engagement drivers can potentially influence the ultimate expression of the engaged attitudes and behaviors that can drive the agency forward.

DISCUSSION

Overall, the results of the survey suggest that the majority of S4KF staff derive significant meaning from their work, perceive their environment as safe and supportive, and feel appreciative and proud of being a part of the organization. While significant differences were expected between the remote group and those with greater contact with the organization at the outset, the results did not indicate lower levels of overall engagement in this group. While there were specific drivers related to the lack of physical proximity to the office that impacted this group to a greater degree, ultimately, the group means were almost identical, suggesting that work style did not, in and of itself, have the greatest impact on engagement at S4KF. One noted difference between the groups was related to the individuals with the lowest average scores. Although this is an intuitive, rather than evidence based assertion, an analysis of the variables receiving low scores and the narrative responses, gives the impression that low scores in the remote group reflected a lack of knowledge or connection while in the office based group, they reflected the negativity associated with active disengagement.

In terms of the conditions for engagement, there were no significant deficits noted in any one area. The findings indicated that there are some specific drivers that may be inhibiting full engagement and some that are significant advantages in terms of building competitive advantage through engagement strategies. Figure 16 shows the balance between drivers identified as strong enhancing and inhibiting influences of engagement at S4KF based on the survey results and analysis.

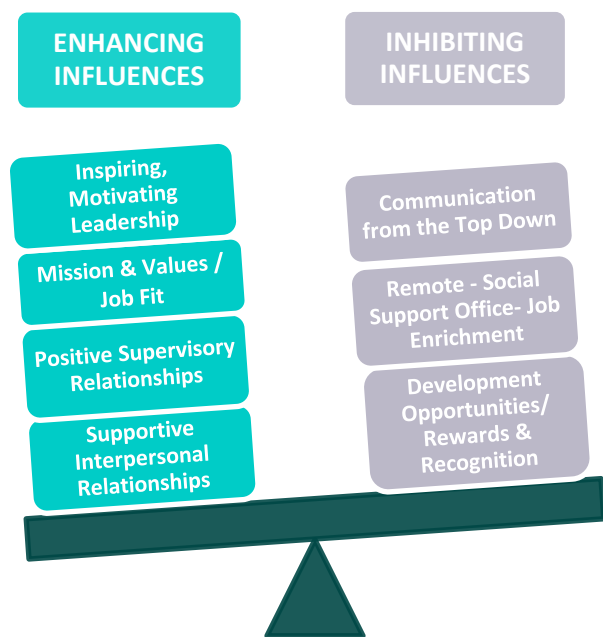


Figure 16. Overall impression of the current workplace environment in terms of the factors potentially enhancing or inhibiting the experience of the psychological conditions of engagement

The overall results indicate strongly that levels of engagement in the agency are high, likely as a result of employees' strong belief in the mission and values of the agency, a passion for their work, positive, supportive relationships between staff and strong supervisory relationships. Given the strengths in these substantial areas, it would be expected that attitudinal and

behavioral engagement indicators would reflect this. However, the responses related to some of these variables were lower than expected. In order to provide a better picture of engagement in the agency, these variables are also viewed in terms of strengths and weaknesses in Figure 17 in order to explore the practical implications of the perceptions of the drivers identified as having enhancing or inhibiting influences.

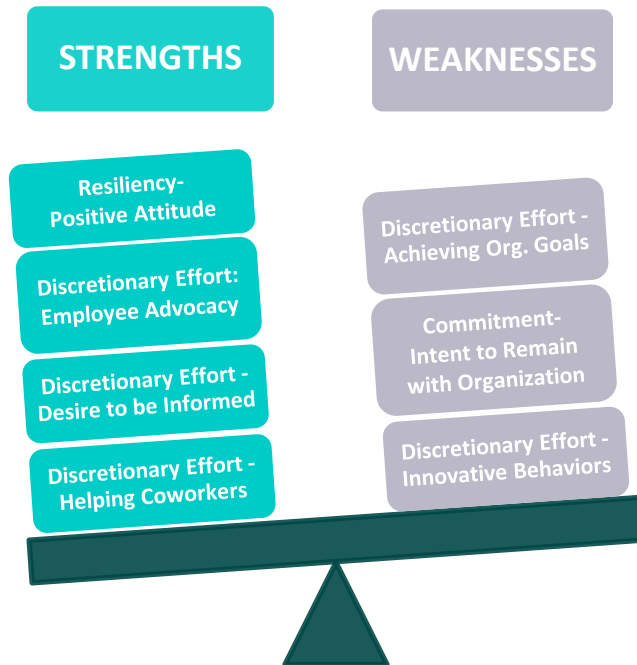


Figure 17. Behavioral engagement at S4KF in terms of areas of strength and weakness in the potential to build competitive advantage

The attitudes and behaviors receiving the highest scores are strongly correlated to the psychological states of positive affectivity and affective commitment in the literature, and the drivers identified above as the strongest enhancing influences on engagement in the agency are found frequently in the literature as the antecedents of these two states. These indicators combined with the pride and passion for their work, the mission and values, and the people they work with, expressed in the narrative responses, strongly suggest experienced positive affectivity and affective commitment. Taking advantage of opportunities to share ideas for improving the agency and taking on extra tasks to promote organizational success have also been associated with these states however, the participation rates were lower in these areas. If one looks at the drivers identified as potentially inhibiting engagement however, possible reasons for this can be identified.

The literature suggests that one of the most important drivers of empowerment is access to information about the direction and goals of the organization. While perceptions related to the meaningfulness of work and levels of autonomy are high at S4KF, awareness and understanding of the agency’s strategic goals and individuals’ perceived level of their importance in achieving them were lower. One of the primary conditions required for empowerment is the belief that your efforts will have a significant impact. If employees aren’t aware of the organization’s needs, or don’t think their ideas will be considered seriously, they

are unlikely to see a connection between potential discretionary efforts and positive outcomes. In order to reap the full benefits of engagement in terms of building competitive advantage for the organization, employees have to feel empowered to contribute their ideas and discretionary effort.

The lower scores on all questions related to communication from the top down, and the fact that this was found across all workgroups, suggests this is a factor potentially exerting a general inhibiting influence across the organization. While survey responses did not suggest this is creating a negative experience for staff, the low participation in sharing ideas and exerting extra effort to help the organization succeed, highlight the potential negative impact inhibiting factors can have in terms of unrealized benefits. In addition, the survey responses indicated a high degree of respect and admiration for leadership, and situations where staff felt that leadership valued their input seemed to have the most significant impact on engagement, suggesting that channels allowing for two-way communication at all levels could have substantial benefits in the form of engaged attitudes and behaviors on the part of staff.

In order to prepare the agency for change and build the competitive advantage that can mean long-term sustainability, staff will need to understand the agency's needs and direction and leadership will need structured means of accessing the ideas, innovation, passion and discretionary effort of an engaged workforce in order to achieve the multiple objectives identified in the strategic plan. If information isn't reaching everyone in the organization, the agency may miss out on the significant benefits of a workforce empowered to contribute their full efforts to organizational success.

The other factor potentially inhibiting overall engagement is a perceived lack of professional development opportunities. The literature suggests this could be a central factor in the agency's ability to compete in the market. The emphasis on learning and innovation as the means to nonprofit sustainability requires a workforce that is highly skilled and keeping up with changes in the field. In addition, according to workforce studies this is one of the most important factors influencing employees' decisions to stay with, or leave their organizations. The survey of nonprofit staff conducted by Opportunity Knocks (n.d.) found that professional development was the most important factor for nonprofit employees in determining whether or not to accept a position and Blessing White (2011) found that a lack of opportunities for career development or advancement was the number one reason people cited for leaving their job. In light of the indicators of strong affective commitment to S4KF, the fact that a third of the workforce does not indicate a strong commitment to stay with the organization is a potential example of the unseen negative influence of the inhibiting forces on engagement. Even if employees are passionate and believe strongly in the work and the organization, a perception that they won't be able to grow professionally or progress in the organization could ultimately be enough to cause them to seek other opportunities.

The other two inhibiting influences identified are group specific. There was a clear desire on the part of some remote employees to be more connected to the agency and to have opportunities to meet their coworkers and create a greater sense of belonging to a team. Here again, the responses did not indicate that this was a threat in terms of causing disengagement or a desire to leave, but rather indicated that the agency is not benefiting fully from the potential contribution of this population. The final factor that may be inhibiting engagement is the lack of a meaningful work experience suggested by the job dimension scores in the office group. As noted in the introduction to the findings, an analysis of the quantitative and narrative responses

strongly suggests that these are connected to non-supervisory or leadership administrative staff. These are also the employees showing the strongest indication of being disengaged. These two results suggest that creative approaches to increasing the perceived meaningfulness of their work may have the effect of enhancing engagement and reducing the potential negative impact on coworkers and the organization as a whole that can result if indicators of engagement are not addressed.

These results highlight the most positive overall finding from the survey in terms of the potential for using engagement strategies to build competitive advantage. A common theme throughout the narrative responses and identified in the self-rated behavioral questions was that the majority of respondents *want* to be more engaged with the organization. They feel proud of the work they do and of the agency's impact on the community and one of the things they most valued was being given the opportunity to be involved in the process of helping the organization succeed. This suggests that engaging employees to further organizational success has a strong potential to both increase employee well-being while simultaneously building competitive advantage in the organization. The fact that knowledge acquisition, high quality service and the ability to demonstrate continual program evaluation and improvement are the strongest sources of competitive advantage in the nonprofit market place, and opportunities for learning and development and seeing positive outcomes for their clients are some of the most important outcomes for staff, suggests that an engagement approach is particularly well suited to furthering the organizations goals and achieving the organizational growth necessary for long-term sustainability.

CONCLUSION

Generally speaking, the drivers of engagement can be categorized in terms of those that require structural redesign, systems or material investments to address identified issues and those that require changing people's feelings, beliefs, attitudes or behaviors in order to enhance engagement. The state of engagement at S4KF represents the best possible situation in the sense that the factors inhibiting full engagement require creating systems and facilitating opportunities. While this may require an investment of time and effort, these are actually relatively easy to address and are highly likely to achieve the intended results of one's efforts. The most significant areas strength for S4KF are those drivers that are arguably the most difficult to manipulate. Trying to create a sense of meaning in the face of uninspiring work or trying to change supervisory or coworker behaviors are significantly more challenging endeavors. The overall picture of engagement at S4KF suggests that as the agency moves forward, strategies to maximize engagement and direct the passion and energies of engaged employees toward building competitive advantage, offer the potential to reap significant benefits for the agency from relatively small investments of agency resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the literature review and results of the engagement survey, and are those with the greatest potential to provide multiple benefits to the organization, staff, and program recipients with a minimum investment of resources.

Recommendation 1: Establish Clear Channels of Communication

Effective leadership communication from the top down was identified as an issue potentially impacting psychological meaningfulness and perceived organizational support. The potential negative impact on engagement was highlighted by the number of staff who did not have a strong awareness or understanding of the agency's strategic vision and goals or perceive their role in achieving them to be important. In addition, one of the strongest factors contributing to employee engagement from their own perspective was participating in opportunities such as strategic planning discussions and round tables where they felt that leadership valued their input. Overall, employees indicated a strong desire to be involved in the organization and help achieve long-term success, so ensuring everyone in the organization is familiar with the strategic plan and understand how their role contributes to achieving the goals can help direct the intrinsic passion and motivation staff expressed for their work into specific objectives necessary to further the organization's goals. The following are suggestions for creating stronger communication channels within the agency:

- ❖ One method of potentially ensuring communication reaches everyone, is through the creation of a feedback committee with representation from all programs. This has been shown to be particularly effective in cases such as that of S4KF where programs do not operate under one roof (Robinson, n.d.). A committee can be organized around existing teams (such as a quality improvement committee) to avoid extra meeting time for staff or it can exist as a virtual committee, allowing greater flexibility for all work styles. The sole purpose of the committee members is to ensure that organizational information from leadership reaches all staff and that they have a structure in place to be able to provide feedback back up to leadership.
- ❖ Ideally, staff should be recruited based on their personal interest level and skills and talents in the use of social media and other communication technologies. In order to foster engagement, the committee should be empowered to the greatest degree possible to design and implement communication strategies.
- ❖ Initially, the committee and leadership could work together to brainstorm ideas and arrive at desired outcomes and generally acceptable communication methods. After that, it could be left largely up to the committee to determine how best to achieve the outcomes.
- ❖ Initially, monthly updates could be provided to leadership and measuring effectiveness could happen regularly. The committee's success could be measured both through pre-determined indicators such as whether proposed communications actually took place, as well outcomes such as staff awareness of organizational news and important information provided to the committee by leadership.
- ❖ It should be clear relatively quickly whether the committee can function independently or if more structure will be required to make the process worthwhile. By allowing the

committee to start off with substantial freedom, there is a greater chance of the process being perceived as meaningful. Since it is a largely creative process, the more restrictions initially in place, the less intrinsically desirable participation may seem.

In light of the fact that financial compensation in the form of salary increases would not necessarily be possible, the following are examples of incentives and recognition strategies that could be put in place to further promote participation:

- ❖ In order for participation not to feel like extra work, time should be provided during working hours for committee activities (a designated amount per week or month that will not cause a negative impact on programming).
- ❖ A small budget for training and/or additional time designated for research and self-development to enhance social media and other technology skills could be offered. Assuming volunteers will have a natural interest in this area, professional development opportunities should be an appealing prospect in addition to the opportunity to translate personally enjoyable pursuits into highly valued professional skills.
- ❖ Small incentives could also include a committee lunch once every 2 months for example, covered by the agency to facilitate designated face to face meeting time.
- ❖ Another possibility would be small rewards for success such as a small financial bonus (\$100), a gift card or extra day off for achieving predetermined outcomes.
- ❖ Assuming a high level of personal interest, small but specific means of recognition should be enough to make participants feel that their efforts are valued. Also, by measuring outcomes, they will be able to see how their efforts are positively impacting their colleagues and the organization.

Recommendation 2: Facilitate Opportunities for Remote Workers to Connect

The survey results indicated that there are some remote workers with a desire to be more involved and connected to the organization. Including a representative from this group on a committee such as the one indicated above is one way of ensuring this group has the same access to information as other parts of the organization. Other suggestions for enhancing engagement in this group from the survey findings and literature on remote workers include:

- A regularly updated web based calendar to enable remote workers to stay better connected to what's happening in the agency. This could be kept on the current Big Tent website in addition to making more forms available which was also suggested by remote workers.
- ❖ Facilitate social opportunities to enable remote workers to get to know each other as well as agency staff in other departments. The survey responses indicated that one of the most difficult things for remote workers was the lack of the natural support system provided by coworkers. Something as simple as scheduling a monthly drop in lunch at the office, or a regular happy hour, could enhance engagement in this group, benefiting the agency through potential improvements in performance and discretionary efforts directed at achieving organizational goals while requiring almost no effort on the part of leadership.

- ❖ Another suggestion is to arrange informal virtual teams. This could be done through identifying those workers with a desire for increased social interaction and creating mentoring positions. This could be even more beneficial if the agency does significantly expand its remote workforce. A virtual team with a lead position could help ensure that remote workers know each other and also have additional supports other than the program supervisor available. Rather than starting off with an actual supervisory position, mentors could be given a certain number of paid hours per week to devote to this role in addition to their direct client contact hours.

Recommendation 3: Performance and Outcomes Management

The final recommendation is to engage staff in the organization in action learning to begin the process of creating a performance and outcomes measurement system in the agency. Sophisticated models of measuring the impact of social programs are beyond the capacity of individual nonprofits, and problematic even when designed by experts due to the difficulty in quantifying outcomes in behavioral health and the variety of confounding variables potentially contributing to observed outcomes. However, the ability to perform basic performance and outcome measurement and use the information gained to continually improve programs and services is a growing expectation from funders, a requirement of the organization's accrediting body (COA) and considered best practice and a fundamental principle of the System of Care (SOC) philosophy (Lyons, Epstein & Jordan, 2010). In light of this, a decision not to engage in the process is not likely to be an option for nonprofits moving forward.

Although the cost of hiring a consultant is prohibitive, there are many free or low cost resources available to assist nonprofits with implementing outcomes measurement in their organization, as well as a variety of formal training options that could be attended by one or two staff who could then lead the process, making the cost more reasonable. In addition, the agency could consider approaching USF or UT to explore the possibility of obtaining assistance from graduate students. The COA standards, SOC and nonprofit literature (Lynch-Cerullo & Cooney, 2007; Lyons, Epstein & Jordan, 2010) emphasize the need to include staff in the development of the measurement system in order to make it meaningful, encourage adoption of the processes that result and ensure that it effectively represents the strengths and needs of the agency's consumers.

Action learning provides a framework for including staff in the process and can potentially contribute significantly to creating the conditions for engagement in the agency. By creating a learning culture, feelings of safety can be increased if employees understand that areas of weakness are expected and viewed as opportunities for learning and improvement rather than seen as reflecting poor performance. In addition, by including employees in the process, leadership can demonstrate that they value the skills and contribution of staff and provide informal professional development opportunities, resulting in increased perceptions of organization support. Finally, meaningfulness can be enhanced by providing staff, both individually and as a team, with greater opportunity to see the results of their work and through measures that are meaningful to them, rather than simply dictated by contractual requirements. An overview of action learning as well as resources related to outcomes measurement are provided in Appendix G.

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APPENDIX A An Overview of Social Investment Models and Current Pilot Projects

The following provides an overview of some of the models based on public-private partnerships that are currently in various stages of implementation in the U.S. and abroad. A primary example of emerging public-private partnerships is the Obama administration's creation of the Social Innovation Fund started in 2009, which grants approximately \$50 million dollars a year to foundations that match the funds and then provide grants of at least \$100,000 per year for up to five years to selected nonprofits (For additional information go to www.nationalservice.gov). The purpose of the fund is to support nonprofits implementing innovative service models by expanding their capabilities and impact and supporting them through rigorous evaluation of their programs. The competition for these grants is intense and in order to compete, nonprofits must be able to show strong evidence of positive program results and demonstrate the capacity to expand the program.

Other examples of public-private social investment partnerships include Human Capital Performance Bonds (HUCAP) and Social Impact Bonds (SIB). In the HUCAP bond model, the state government contracts directly with a human services provider and finances the program by selling bonds. Instead of a fixed amount, the service provider gets paid based on the financial value created by their services so the higher their performance, the more they get paid. In this model, the provider doesn't get paid until outcomes are substantiated so the government provides a separate fund from which they can borrow for operations. Rothschild (2013) provides an example of this model found in Minnesota where the government has contracted with a workforce development nonprofit. The organization gets paid only when a program recipient obtains a job paying at least \$20,000 a year, representing a change in income of at least \$10,000. The government determines the amount the nonprofit gets paid by calculating the economic value created by the individual's change in income in terms of lower public costs such as subsidized housing and incarceration costs and higher income and sales taxes (Rothschild, p.104).

SIBs are arrangements in which private investors provide the capital to operate government programs with the agreement that if the program reaches predetermined outcomes, the government will use the savings to reimburse the original investment plus a return (Butler, Bloom & Rudd, 2013; Ragin & Palandjian, 2013). The first such project in the U.S. was started in New York and involves the implementation of a cognitive behavioral therapy program for youth incarcerated at Riker's Island Correctional Facility with the goal of reducing recidivism rates in this population. In this case, the government partners are the New York City Mayor's office and the Department of Corrections, with Goldman Sachs providing the financing and Bloomberg Philanthropies providing grant support. Two nonprofit service providers were selected to run the program by MDRC, a nonprofit social policy research organization acting as the intermediary that will help implement the program, design the measurement model and provide oversight and monitoring throughout the project. Finally, the Vera Institute of Justice will provide the independent evaluation of the program (Butler et al., 2013).

Butler et al. (2013) from MDRC discuss the potential issues associated with these models and determining both what constitutes proven results going in as well as measuring the ultimate

impact. They indicate that the pool of potential programs in this category is small since even well-known social programs often have little or no solid evidence behind them, mixed evidence or evidence based on problematic evaluation design. They note that government and private funders have started to define a series of levels to describe the strength of evidence supporting social programs. Those in the highest tier, which are most desirable for the investors involved, have been validated by multiple randomized control trials which they indicate includes a very small number of programs. They also discuss the history of programs that were not successful when scaled up despite strong results in small pilots pointing to the difficulty in understanding social programs, the problems they address and the multiple confounding variables that may be contributing to measured success. Despite these challenges, they indicate that the models represent progress over previous approaches to pay for success and have the potential to produce significant benefits if success is determined through rigorous evaluation and additionally, if the definition of success is expanded beyond cost savings (p.57).

Given the increased need resulting from the recession and the fact that there are currently no indications of an upcoming increase in government funding to address social problems in the near future, these models are likely to become increasingly common if they produce the outcomes funders are seeking. The current projects are still in the early stages so there have been no evaluations to assess the success of the models, however if they achieve the designated outcomes, they offer substantial benefits to all parties involved. They benefit governments by providing a means through which they can address social problems without using taxpayer dollars, private corporations receive financial returns and positive public relations, program recipients receive high quality service and potentially improve their lives and nonprofits receive long-term funding and support for growing successful programs.

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APPENDIX B Criteria for DCF Care Management Entity (CME) Contracts

Criteria for DCF Care Management Entity (CME) Contracts	
S4KF areas of strength/Require minimal preparation	
1.	System of Care Development and Management
2.	Technical Assistance/Training
3.	Financial Management
4.	Board Development and Governance
5.	Disaster Planning and Responsiveness
6.	Planning –identifying the network’s annual goals, objectives, and improvements.
S4KF areas of weakness/Require substantial preparation	
7.	Utilization Management - Evidence: Systems to ensure cost-effective and clinically appropriate utilization of treatment services including managerial and supervisory strategies, methods and tools to ensure timely access to care, processes to promote continuous improvement to manage resources, system the provides electronic utilization management including treatment authorization and management reports.
8.	Network/Subcontract Management - Evidence: Submission of a written network management plan detailing how the CME will ensure accountability, compliance and performance of subcontractors including: Admin. and financial monitoring, outcome performance and data submission, efficiency, compliance with all laws and regulations, client and subcontractor satisfaction surveys and reporting of results to the department
9.	Quality Improvement - Evidence: A QI program that includes developing reliable and valid performance measures; making and measuring the impact of continuous and progressive improvements, identifying service problems and improvement opportunities; measuring individuals served satisfaction and subcontractor satisfaction; developing quantitative indicators, outcomes and outputs that DCF can use to objectively measure a subcontractor’s performance
10.	Data Collection, Reporting, and Analysis - Demonstrate ability and capacities of data system to track and monitor cost, utilization, quality of care, access to services, clients served outcomes within the network of subcontractors, and approaches for the future integration of appropriate data from various DCF systems

Source: Florida DCF 2009 Service System Management Plan, pp. 5-9. Retrieved from <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/samh/docs/mgmtImpPlan.pdf>

APPENDIX C Summaries of Engagement-Organizational Success Linkage Studies

Multi-Organization Studies, Private Sector

- A Towers Perrin (2008) Global Workforce Study with 90,000 employees in 18 countries found that engaged employees are much less likely to either be thinking about leaving the organization or to accept another offer and engaged employees were significantly more likely to believe they could impact quality of work/service, customer satisfaction, profitability, innovation, revenue growth and costs. In the same study, they report the results of a longitudinal study of 50 global companies over one year, that found companies with high engagement scores had a 19% increase in operating income and over 28% growth in earnings per share while those with low levels of engagement had a 32% decrease in operating income and an 11% decrease in earnings per share.
- In a study of more than 50,000 employees from 59 organizations, 30 countries, and 14 industries, the Corporate Leadership Council, (2004) found that 71% of companies with above average employee engagement also had above average company performance compared to 38 % of those with below average employee engagement.
- In a Gallup, Inc. meta-analysis of studies including 7,939 business units in 36 companies, Harter, Schmidt and Hayes (2002) found a significant positive correlation between level of engagement in business units and customer satisfaction–loyalty, safety, productivity, profitability and overall unit performance and a negative correlation between level of engagement and turnover.
- Harter, Schmidt, Killham & Agrawal (2009) of Gallup, Inc. conducted a more recent meta-analysis of 199 studies, including 32,394 business/work units in 152 organizations from 44 industries and 26 countries with a total of 955,905 employees and found differences in business outcomes between the top 25% on engagement and the bottom 25% of: 12% in customer ratings, 16% in profitability, 18% in productivity, 25% in turnover (high-turnover organizations), 49% in turnover (low-turnover organizations), 49% in safety incidents, 37% in absenteeism, and 41% in patient safety incidents.
- Hewitt Associates' work with 2,000 companies, representing about four million employees has shown that companies where 60% or more of the workforce is engaged have an average 5 year shareholder return of 20 % compared to 6% for companies with between 40-60% of engaged employees (Baumruk, 2006).

Private Sector Case Studies, Impact of Engagement Initiatives

- In case studies of Serco, Rok Building Co. and Hansen Glass in the United Kingdom, management reported that after implementing employee engagement initiatives their companies experienced significant positive changes including: increased customer

satisfaction; double-digit revenue and margin growth; 90% growth in turnover; 3X the industry average in profits; world class on time delivery rate; 250% increase in productivity; 73% reduction in customer complaints; 600% growth in workforce; reputation as desirable workplace and long list of applicants; business excellence awards and successful accreditations; and an increase in employee's understanding of how they fit into the company's vision and strategy (McLeod & Clarke, 2009).

- Similar positive results were found in a recent study of multinational corporations by the Conference Board (2013). Researchers conducted in-depth interviews management at Kimberly-Clark, Goldman Sachs, Disney, Agilent and Yum Brands, all top performing companies that use employee engagement processes and initiatives in their organizations. The organizational outcomes CEO's attributed to an effective employee engagement program included: 50% of staff outperforming expectations; increased customer satisfaction & loyalty; 54% reduction in voluntary staff turnover; improved ability to make decisions, leverage opportunities and take informed risks; improved financial performance, increased revenues, increased stock prices and performance superior to that of competitors.
- Sears implemented a company-wide employee engagement initiative with improved customer service as the focus, and through the development of a rigorous model of performance measurement and evaluation, were able to accurately predict the revenues associated with incremental increases in scores on their employee survey. Over four years of implementing, evaluating and measuring the outcomes of their strategies they saw significant improvements in customer service, increased satisfaction and a turnaround from annual losses, to experiencing some of their most profitable years. They attributed this to enhanced employee engagement resulting in higher satisfaction and retention rates, greater pride in working for sears and levels of advocating the company to friends, family and customers (Rucci, Kirn & Quinn, 1998).

Public Sector Multi Organization Studies

- There has been significant growth in engagement research in the public sector over the last five years, contributed in large part by researchers in the U.K. In 2008, the British Secretary of State for Business commissioned a review of employee engagement in the U.K. that included interviews with hundreds of individuals, organization leaders, companies and organizations, associations and professional bodies, practitioners, academics and thought leaders as well as a series of regional roadshows attended by a wide range of stakeholders, site visits to several organizations practicing engagement and an open call for submissions which generated over 300 responses (MacLeod & Clarke, 2009).
- In response to what they found to be compelling evidence that employee engagement could increase the productivity, innovation and performance required for economic recovery, the U.K. Government launched an independent Employee Engagement Task Force in 2011, with the aim of contributing to sustainable growth across the UK and informing new approaches to help people improve their wellbeing. The role of the task

force was to work with leading academics, practitioners and think tanks in order to promote best practice, generate debate and facilitate opportunities for organizations to learn about engagement (U.K. Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2011), which has resulted thus far in contributing considerable research to the body of engagement literature and the development of a central website dedicated to employee engagement, providing up to date research, blogs, a magazine, training opportunities and workshops, as well as tools and resources for managers and HR professionals (See www.engageforsuccess.org).

- Two Public Sector Studies in the UK found that Local Councils rated as “excellent” by the Audit Commission and Hospital Trusts rated “excellent” by the Health Commission had much higher percentages of staff who responded “Strongly agree” when asked if they would speak highly of the authority to others outside the organization on a staff survey (Macleod & Clarke, 2009)
- A study of the U.K National Health Service found significantly higher rates of patient satisfaction in trusts with higher levels of employee engagement. In addition they found trusts with high levels of engagement had patient mortality rates 2.5% lower than those with medium engagement levels (MacLeod & Clarke, 2012).
- In a study of 24 federal agencies, the U.S Merit Systems Protection Board (2008) found a statistically significant positive correlation between an agency’s level of engagement and their score on the results/accountability portion of the annual program performance evaluation, % of employees intending to leave the agency, amount of sick leave used and time lost due to injury.

Public Sector Case Studies

- Three local U.K. councils that implemented employee engagement initiatives achieved results including significant increases in consumer satisfaction, “Excellence” ratings by external auditors in use of resources, value for money, comprehensive performance assessments, service provision, significant reductions in absenteeism, 30% increase in staff motivation, 39% increase in trust in management and 34% increase in staff indicating they were proud to work there and awards for “Best Council to Work For” and “Council of the Year” (McLeod & Clarke, 2009).
- The London Ambulance Service went from being rated by London media as Britain’s worst Ambulance service to being rated the best in 10 years, is the only ambulance service to receive the highest rating for its services use of resources two years in a row, has the highest clinical performance indicator compliance results in England, won the NHS Innovator of the Year Award for London and achieved the best emergency preparedness independent audit results in England (McLeod & Clarke, 2009).
- The U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) launched a People First Engagement initiative and saw the following results over a

two year period: 23% increase in employee satisfaction with their job, 21% with the organization, better informed problem-solving, over 100 innovative solutions to problems of business process, personal work experience, performance management, and cross-agency communication and a 49% increase in staff's feeling of personal empowerment with respect to work processes (Rivera & Flinck, 2011).

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APPENDIX D Common Measures of the Psychological States of Engagement

Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)

The following 17 statements are about how you feel at work. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. If you have never had this feeling, cross the "0" (zero) in the space after the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you felt it by crossing the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way.

Never	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	
	Always 0	1	2	3	4	5
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every Day

1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy. (VI1)
2. I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose. (DE1)
3. Time flies when I am working. (AB1)
4. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous. (VI2)
5. I am enthusiastic about my job. (DE2)
6. When I am working, I forget everything else around me. (AB2)
7. My job inspires me. (DE3)
8. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work. (VI3)
9. I feel happy when I am working intensely. (AB3)
10. I am proud of the work that I do. (DE4)
11. I am immersed in my work. (AB4)
12. I can continue working for very long periods at a time. (VI4)
13. To me, my job is challenging. (DE5)
14. I get carried away when I am working. (AB5)
15. At my job, I am very resilient, mentally. (VI5)
16. It is difficult to detach myself from my job. (AB6)
17. At my work, I always persevere, even when things do not go well. (VI6)

Items in red comprise the Shortened version (Utrecht Work Engagement Scale–9 [UWES-9]).

Source: Schaufeli, W., Bakker, A. & Salanova, M. (2006). The Measurement of Work Engagement With a Short Questionnaire: A Cross-National Study *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 66(4), 701-716.
doi: 10.1177/0013164405282471

The Positive/Negative Affect Scales (PANAS)

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate to what extent [INSERT APPROPRIATE TIME INSTRUCTIONS HERE]. Use the following scale to record your answers.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Slightly	A Little	Moderately	Quite a Bit	Extremely

or Not at All

_____interested	_____irritable
_____distressed	_____alert
_____excited	_____ashamed
_____upset	_____inspired
_____strong	_____nervous
_____guilty	_____determined
_____scared	_____attentive
_____hostile	_____jittery
_____enthusiastic	_____active
_____proud	_____afraid

Source: Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Tellegen, A. (1988). Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect: The PANAS scales. *Journal Of Personality And Social Psychology*, 54(6), 1063-1070. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.54.6.1063

Affective Commitment Scale

1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization
2. I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it
3. I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own
4. I think that I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to this one (R)
5. I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organization (R)
6. I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization (R)
7. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me
8. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization (R)

Source: Allen, N. & Meyer, J. (1990). The measurement and antecedents of affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organization. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 63, 1-18.

Measure of Psychological Empowerment

Meaning

- The work I do is very important to me (meaning 1).
- My job activities are personally meaningful to me (meaning 2).
- The work I do is meaningful to me (meaning 3).

Competence

- I am confident about my ability to do my job (competence 1).
- I am self-assured about my capabilities to perform my work activities (competence 2).
- I have mastered the skills necessary for my job (competence 3).

Self-Determination

- I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job (self-determination 1).
- I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work (self-determination 2).
- I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job (self-determination 3).

Impact

- My impact on what happens in my department is large (impact 1).
- I have a great deal of control over what happens in my department (impact 2).
- I have significant influence over what happens in my department (impact 3).

Source: Spreitzer, G. (1995). Psychological Empowerment in the Workplace: Dimensions, Measurement, and Validation. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 38(5) Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/256865>

APPENDIX E Success 4 Kids & Families' Employee Engagement Survey

1. How would you rate the level of skill variety necessary to perform your job tasks?

Very Low 1 2 3 4 5 *Very High*

2. To what degree do you feel your job impacts the lives of others (either within S4KF or in the community)?

Very Little 1 2 3 4 5 *Significantly*

3. How frequently does your job allow you to see an endeavor through from beginning to end and see visible results?

Never 1 2 3 4 5 *Most of the time*

4. How much freedom do you have in determining how to carry out your work?

None 1 2 3 4 5 *Significant*

5. I am provided with the resources necessary to do high quality work in the time expected.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 *Strongly Agree*

6. What, if any, resources (e.g. technology, policy & procedures, documents, office space/supplies, time) would help you do your work more efficiently and/or effectively?
-

7. How often do you start your work day feeling motivated about the tasks you have ahead of you?

Never 1 2 3 4 5 *Most of the time*

8. How would you rate your understanding of what is expected of you in your role?

Very Unclear 1 2 3 4 5 *Very Clear*

9. My role is challenging and allows me to grow personally and professionally.

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 *Very much so*

10. Are there any actions that could be taken to help clarify your role or make it more challenging?

Yes/No

If yes, please explain:

11. How would you rate the importance of S4FK's mission or purpose?

Very Low 1 2 3 4 5 Very High

12. How would you rate your awareness and understanding of S4KF's organizational values?

Not Aware 1 2 3 4 5 Very High

13. To what extent do these values align with your personal values and beliefs?

Not at All 1 2 3 4 5 Total Agreement

I am not aware of S4KF's organizational values

14. Do you have difficulty performing any aspect of your role in a manner that aligns with the organization's values?

Yes/No

If yes, please explain:

15. How would you rate your coworkers' reliability in accomplishing tasks required of your team?

Unreliable 1 2 3 4 5 Very Reliable *I don't know*

16. How would you rate your coworkers' level of commitment to providing quality services?

Very Low 1 2 3 4 5 Very High *I don't know*

17. In my program or department, we work as a team toward achieving program objectives.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Always

18. I feel like I could go to my coworkers if I was struggling and they would be there to support me.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Always *I don't know*

Do you have any suggestions for improving teamwork within the organization?

19. I feel like I could go to my supervisor if I was struggling and he/she would be there to support me.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Always

20. My supervisor encourages my participation in decision-making and problem solving related to my role.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Always

22. How would you rate your supervisor's accessibility?

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 *Excellent*

23. I know that my supervisor can be relied upon to do what they say they are going to do.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 *Always*

24. My supervisor does a good job of communicating the information I need to do my job effectively.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 *Always*

25. How often do you receive recognition or praise for doing good work?

Never 1 2 3 4 5 *Frequently*

26. How would you rate the importance of regular recognition or praise in relation to your overall job satisfaction?

Not Important 1 2 3 4 5 *Very Important*

27. The attitudes and behaviors of S4KF leadership motivate and inspire staff to do their best.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 *Strongly Agree* *I don't know*

28. S4KF's leadership promotes creativity and innovation within the organization.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 *Strongly Agree* *I don't know*

29. Leadership encourages and supports suggestions and change initiatives from staff.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 *Always* *I don't know*

30. I am offered opportunities for professional development based on my individual learning needs and goals.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 *Regularly*

31. How would you rate your awareness and understanding of S4KF's vision and strategic goals for the future?

Not Aware 1 2 3 4 5 *Very Clear*

32. How would you rate the importance of your role in achieving these goals?

Not Important 1 2 3 4 5 *Very Important*

33. S4KF's leadership does a good job of communicating:

Changes in program policies and procedures *Poor* 1 2 3 4 5 *Excellent*
Explanations for decisions
HR Policies & Procedures
S4KF's Mission & Values
S4KF's Vision & Strategic Goals
Important S4KF news & events

34. Do you have any suggestions about how to improve communication within S4KF?

35. Procedures related to compensation, promotions and development are carried out consistently and without bias among all staff.

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 *Always* *I don't know*

36. If I ask for clarification, I am provided with a reasonable explanation of how decisions are made or why outcomes were distributed in a certain way.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 *Always* *I don't know*

37. I am treated with dignity and respect in the workplace.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 *Always*

38. I feel that annual employee evaluations are fair and based on accurate information.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 *Strongly Agree*

39. If you perceive any unfair practices in the organization, do you have any suggestions addressing these?

40. Decisions at S4KF are made in a manner aligned with recognized standards of professional ethics.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 *Always* *I don't know*

41. Management takes into account the potential impact on individuals or groups affected by decisions.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 *Always* *I don't know*

42. Please give an example of a time at S4KF that you felt engaged (e.g. passionate and committed to helping ensure organizational success). What circumstances contributed to your feelings?

43. Give an example of a time you did not feel engaged (e.g. did not want to make the effort to help ensure organizational success). What circumstances contributed to your feelings?

44. Do you have any suggestions for enhancing employee engagement at S4KF?

45. I try to stay informed about what's happening at S4KF

Never 1 2 3 4 5 *Always*

46. I take advantage of opportunities for sharing opinions and ideas for how to improve organizational performance.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Frequently

47. I speak positively about the work we do at S4KF if the opportunity presents itself.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Always

48. If a co-worker was struggling, I would offer to help in any way I could.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Always

49. I accept tasks outside of my job description in order to help achieve organizational goals.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Frequently

50. I try to maintain a positive attitude during difficult times in the organization.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Always

51. How often do you think about seeking a position elsewhere?

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Frequently

WORK STYLE

Remote Group

52. What are the most positive aspects of working remotely?

53. What are the most negative or difficult aspects of working remotely?

54. What is the one thing that would most improve the experience of working remotely?

55. Do you have any suggestions for enhancing organizational engagement among staff who work remotely?

Office & Mixed Groups

56. If you were offered to opportunity to work from home, would you accept it? *Yes/No*

57. How would you describe the impact such a change would have on your job satisfaction?

Extremely negative 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely Positive

58. What, if any, aspects of working from home would concern you?

59. Do you have any suggestions for management about how these concerns could be addressed?

60. How often do you think you would need to meet as a team to feel engaged with the organization?

END OF SURVEY

APPENDIX F Data Tables Containing Results for Individual Questions

PSYCHOLOGICAL MEANINGFULNESS								
Five Core Job Dimensions	— X	SD	% Choosing each rating					I don't Know
			1	2	3	4	5	
<i>...level of skill variety required to complete task...</i>	4.3	0.7	0%	0%	17%	38%	45%	n/a
<i>...opportunity to see results a from whole piece of work...</i>	4.1	0.9	0%	5%	18%	37%	40%	n/a
<i>...degree that your job impacts the lives of others...</i>	4.6	0.6	0%	0%	5%	30%	65%	n/a
<i>...degree of freedom in determining how to preform job...</i>	4.3	0.8	0%	2%	20%	30%	48%	n/a
<i>...frequency of recognition or praise for doing good work...</i>	4.2	1.0	3%	2%	14%	32%	49%	n/a
<i>...importance of recognition or praise in satisfaction with job...</i>	4.2	1.1	5%	3%	10%	33%	48%	n/a
Combined Avg	4.3							
Role/Organization Fit								
<i>...importance of S4KF's mission...</i>	4.8	0.4	0%	0%	2%	14%	85%	n/a
<i>...alignment of personal and organizational values...</i>	4.7	0.6	0%	0%	7%	20%	73%	n/a
Combined Avg	4.7							
TL - Inspirational Motivation								
<i>...leadership insires staff to to their best...</i>	4.6	0.7	0%	2%	5%	20%	73%	2%
<i>...effectively communicates mission and values...</i>	4.4	0.8	0%	3%	10%	26%	60%	n/a
<i>...awareness & understanding of mission and values...</i>	4.7	0.5	0%	0%	3%	22%	75%	n/a
<i>...effectively communicates vision & strategic goals...</i>	4.3	0.8	0%	3%	14%	29%	54%	n/a
<i>...awareness & understanding of vision and strategic goals...</i>	4.1	0.8	0%	2%	22%	43%	33%	n/a
Combined Avg	4.4							
Team Cohesion								
<i>...coworkers' reliability in accomplishing team tasks...</i>	4.4	0.8	0%	2%	11%	36%	51%	13%
<i>...coworkers' commitment to quality services...</i>	4.4	0.7	0%	0%	15%	30%	55%	13%
<i>...we work as a team to achieve program objectives...</i>	4.2	0.9	0%	8%	8%	42%	42%	n/a
Combined Avg	4.3							
Experienced Challenge and Motivation								
<i>...role is challenging & allows me to grow personally and professionally</i>	4.3	0.9	2%	5%	8%	30%	55%	n/a
<i>How often do you start your work day feeling motivated about your tasks...</i>	4.2	0.8	0%	2%	18%	35%	45%	n/a

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY								
Rewarding Interpersonal Relationships	– X	SD	% Choosing each rating					I don't Know
			1	2	3	4	5	
<i>I am treated with dignity and respect in the workplace</i>	4.7	0.7	0%	3%	3%	12%	81%	n/a
<i>...I could go to my supervisor for support if I was struggling...</i>	4.8	0.6	2%	0%	2%	12%	85%	n/a
<i>How would you rate your supervisor's accessibility?</i>	4.7	0.5	0%	0%	2%	25%	73%	n/a
<i>...I could go to my coworkers for support if I was struggling...</i>	4.6	0.7	0%	2%	8%	18%	65%	7%
Combined Average	4.7							
Supervisory Style & Practices								
<i>...encourages participation in decision-making & problem solving...</i>	4.7	0.7	0%	2%	7%	15%	77%	n/a
<i>...can be relied upon to do what he/she says they are going to do...</i>	4.7	0.6	0%	0%	5%	22%	73%	n/a
<i>...effectively communicates info I need to do my job...</i>	4.7	0.7	0%	3%	2%	18%	77%	n/a
<i>...understanding of what is expected of you in your role...</i>	4.6	0.6	0%	0%	5%	32%	63%	n/a
Combined Average	4.7							
Organizational Culture								
<i>S4KF's leadership does a good job of communicating HR P&P</i>	4.1	1.0	2%	5%	19%	34%	40%	n/a
<i>...does a good job of communicating changes to program P&P</i>	4.2	0.9	0%	7%	12%	40%	42%	n/a
<i>...leadership promotes creativity & innovation within the org...</i>	4.5	0.7	0%	3%	5%	33%	57%	2%
Combined Average	4.2							

PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT								
Organizational Justice	– X	SD	% Choosing each rating					I don't Know
			1	2	3	4	5	
<i>...decisions made in alignment with recognized standards of professional ethics...</i>	4.5	0.7	0%	0%	10%	22%	61%	7%
<i>Procedures ...are carried out consistently and without bias among all staff.</i>	4.3	1.0	2%	5%	3%	20%	42%	27%
<i>...annual employee evaluations are fair and based on accurate information.</i>	4.6	0.6	0%	0%	5%	22%	59%	14%
<i>Leadership does a good job of communicating explanations for decisions</i>	4.0	1.1	3%	7%	17%	31%	42%	n/a
<i>...lif asked, leadership provides reasonable explanations for decisions and method of outcomes distribution...</i>	4.5	0.9	0%	7%	3%	23%	62%	5%
Combined Average	4.4							
Transformational Leadership - Individualized Consideration								
<i>Leadership does a good job of communicating important S4KF news & events</i>	4.3	0.9	2%	2%	14%	31%	53%	n/a
<i>Leadership encourages and supports suggestions and change initiatives from staff.</i>	4.5	0.8	0%	3%	7%	24%	59%	7%
<i>...takes into account potential impact on individuals/groups affected by decisions.</i>	4.4	0.7	0%	2%	8%	28%	52%	10%
<i>...perceived importance of your role in achieving S4KF's strategic goals?</i>	4.3	0.8	0%	5%	10%	37%	47%	n/a
<i>...opportunities for professional development based on individual needs & goals</i>	3.8	1.2	7%	10%	12%	36%	36%	n/a
Combined Average	4.3							

Work Style Narrative Response Summaries

<i>What, if any, resources (e.g. technology, policy & procedures, documents, office space/supplies, time) would help you do your work more efficiently and/or effectively?</i>					
RESOURCE	Office	Mixed	Remote	Unspec	All
Technology (<i>Work Laptop/Tablet/Computer</i>)	4		4	1	9
More Resources/Equipment/Supplies/Technology (<i>Unspecified</i>)	4	1	2		7
Admin. Support (<i>Records Audit Assistance/Gen. Admin/online data access & submission</i>)	3		4	1	8
Office Equipment (<i>Copier/Scanner/phone</i>)	1		2		3
Changes/Clarity in P&P (<i>Unspecified</i>)	1			1	2
More Office Space	2				2
More Communication/ More 1:1 Time During Training	1		1		2
Less Office Time				1	1

<i>What are the most positive aspects of working remotely?</i>	# of responses
Flexibility/Ability to make your own schedule	14
Freedom/Autonomy/Empowerment/Greater Responsibility	8
Additional responses included: More time with families instead of in an office; Morale & Reduced stress associated with traffic and time pressure	3
<i>What is the one thing that would most improve the experience of working remotely?...or enhance engagement?</i>	
"social" events and celebrations	2
Calendar of events, updated contractor website	1
Dedicated workspace for contracted workers.	1
Remote check-in & submission of documentation	1
<i>What are the most negative or difficult aspects of working remotely?</i>	
Lack of compensation for work related costs (mileage/gas/wear & tear on vehicle/supplies)	6
Isolation/Loneliness	5
Lack of remote access to forms/client charts	2

Summary of Narrative Responses Regarding the Impact of Changing to a Remote Work Style	# of Responses
<i>Why would you choose to accept a remote position?</i>	
Less Distraction/Greater Productivity	6
Increased Flexibility	4
Confidence in Ability & Motivation to Do Job Remotely	3
Less Traffic/Commuting Time	2
<i>What, if any, aspects of working from home would concern you?</i>	
Lack of Personal Interaction/engagement w/coworkers/"pulse" of S4KF	8
No Concerns	6
Access to Office Space/Supplies/ Charts/Technology Barriers	6
Lack of Focus/Personal Discipline	3
Home/Work Life Separation	2
Access to supervision	2
<i>Suggestions for Addressing Concerns</i>	
Combination of working from home and office time	4
Web Meetings/Have additional meetings and fun staff gatherings	2

APPENDIX G Outcomes Measurement & Action Learning

ACTION LEARNING

Action learning can take many forms and is often a formal, highly structured process however the recommendation here is for a more informal approach based on the general process, main goals and principles of action learning outlined below. The overall goal would be the creation of the systems and tools for data collection and determination of meaningful outcomes, both operational as well as for clients, and the indicators that will be used to measure progress.

Process:

- Small teams of 4 to 8 employees are formed, ideally with members from more than one program or department
- Teams are given clear and significant objectives and fully empowered to bring the challenge to a successful conclusion

Goals:

- Increase employees learning capacity within an organization while responding to a significant organizational challenge
- Build systemic innovation and learning capacity within the organization.

Principles:

- Teams are non-hierarchical – all members participate as equals and are empowered and encouraged to contribute, no matter what their rank or role within the organization.
- The focus is on the right questions – not the “right answers”
- The more challenging the questions, the better the learning experiences and strategies.
- Learning is open, reflective, practical & shared
- Solutions will be more practical and meaningful if they are determined by those who will actually be implementing solutions

An action learning approach offers several benefits. Action learning provides a means by which outcomes measurement can be approached as enhancing learning and growth in the agency with the ultimate goal of providing clients the best services possible while strengthening the organization’s value system and furthering the mission of the agency. This not only potentially gives the project a high degree of meaning but can altogether avoid the negative approach typically employed by nonprofits, and most often unsuccessful, which is to tell staff they have to start collecting this data or the organization will lose its funding. Lynch-Cerullo and Cooney (2007) indicated that approaching outcomes measurement from positive, client-focused perspective rather than as something that *has* to be done can achieve a much greater degree of buy-in.

In addition, if the System of Care values and principles are used as a framework for the development of measures where relevant, this can help ensure that the process will be client focused and result in a measurement system in strong alignment with the mission, as well as embedding the values in service provision in a highly visible manner (i.e. client satisfaction surveys, pre and post treatment surveys). This can be a significant benefit in ensuring that as

the agency expands, the values are not lost, even for staff who may never have physical contact with the agency.

Finally, this learning approach can help reduce anxieties surrounding the other piece of outcomes measurement, which is analyzing the results. Employees often worry that if outcomes do not meet desired targets, they will be viewed negatively. By creating a culture of learning, quality improvement can be seen as an expected and continual process rather than something required due to poor performance. This can potentially result in a greater willingness to share struggles and collaborate to solve problems in other areas as well.

OUTCOMES MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

Urban Institute - Key Steps to Outcomes Measurement

Guide that includes steps from the initial formulation of workgroups through to using your results to improve services http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/310776_KeySteps.pdf

San Francisco Children’s System of Care Family-Driven Care Assessment Tool

An example of how the System of Care values and principles could be used to design questions in consumer satisfaction surveys.

http://www.tapartnership.org/soc/catalogue/docs/FamilyAssessmentToolFinal_SanFran.pdf

Family Journey Assessment – Example of questions that could be used to assess client progress with regard to family empowerment

<http://gucchdtacenter.georgetown.edu/Activities/FamilyJourneyAssessment/Family%20Journey%20Assessment%20SAMPLE.pdf>

COA Standards for Performance & Outcomes Measurement

<http://coanet.org/standard/pqi/3/>

FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Although rare, there are foundations that offer grants to support capacity building and administrative needs. For example, the Kresge Foundation provides operating support grants to nonprofits for promoting sustainability. These consist of unrestricted funds that can be put toward staffing, technology, and business practice development (see <http://kresge.org/funding/types-of-funding>).

Technical Assistance Partnership for Child and Family Mental Health

<http://www.tapartnership.org/>

National Technical Assistance Center for Children’s Mental Health

<http://gucchdtacenter.georgetown.edu>

Reveal, E. & Helfgott, K (2012). Putting the Pieces Together: Guidebook for Fact-Based Decision Making to Improve Outcomes for Children and Families

http://www.tapartnership.org/docs/Putting_the_Pieces_Together_Final.pdf