

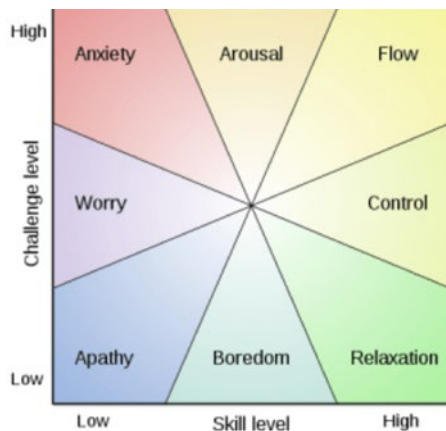


FINDING FLOW

Ever had a moment, perhaps while playing sports, reading, or working through a complex problem, where you are so focused on a task that the world around you seems to disappear? It feels like you are on autopilot and work comes naturally with no effort. Athletes call it “being in the zone.” Positive Psychologists today have given it an official name: *Flow*.

According to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, PhD., author of “Finding Flow,” there are key factors that accompany the experience of flow. While many of these components may be present, it is not necessary to experience all of them for flow to occur:

1. There are clear goals that, while challenging, are still attainable.
2. There is a complete focus on the activity itself.
3. People experience feelings of personal control over the situation and the outcome.
4. People have feelings of calmness and a loss of self-consciousness.
5. There is immediate feedback.
6. People know that the task is doable and there is a balance between skill level and the challenge presented.
7. People experience “Loss of Ego” or lack of awareness of their physical needs.
8. There is strong concentration and focused attention.
9. The present is what matters. People experience timelessness, or a distorted sense of time, that involves feeling so focused on the present that you lose track of time passing.




ABOUT JOE

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Csikszentmihalyi’s Flow Model Theory as depicted in the diagram, explains that when people perceive themselves to be above their own personal average level of challenges and skills, they experience flow. The opposite is the state of apathy, where both challenges and skills are low. Other combination of challenges and skills produces feeling of worry, anxiety, and arousal (when challenges outweigh skills), or control, relaxation, and boredom (when skills outweigh challenges).

In the business world, is it possible to build flow in organizations? Csikszentmihalyi, in his book “Good Business,” describes that it is impossible to create an environment that will foster flow without commitment from top management. Flow in the workplace means employees are fully engaged when their skill sets are balanced against the challenge at hand. For example, a sales manager might task sales representatives to expand into new territories with a new product line or to develop creative new ways to pitch a product. When this balance is achieved, the employees feel a heightened sense of personal satisfaction in their work.

Unfortunately, it is difficult for workers to focus on achieving company goals if those goals are not understood properly or connected to the mission, vision, and purpose of the organization. Between 50-80% of the U.S. working population is not actively engaged at work, costing the nation \$483 billion to \$605 billion per year (Gallup Research Data) in lost productivity (that includes the price of absenteeism, workplace accidents, and increased health care costs). Four forces of disengagement are the culprit here: mismatch between employee and role, mismatch between employee and their direct manager, mismatch between employee and company culture, and mismatch between employee and their teammates. These four forces result in employees who do the bare minimum to keep their job.

Are you measuring what matters today in your organization to help your employees reach flow and become fully engaged?

If you want to learn more about how to increase employee engagement, contact AlliancesHub to request a complimentary C-Suite 1:1 Talent Strategy Session. ●