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Positive Organisational Development Cards User Guide



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Introducing The Positive Organisational Development Cards

The Positive Organisational Development Cards each cover a key concept from the field of positive psychology.

The concepts reflect key findings from positive psychology research of things that make a positive difference to organisational life. Each card lists the benefits of the concept, provides three questions to stimulate discussion, and is followed by three pointers for development. Each is introduced briefly below, arranged in four groups, to help you follow them and get an idea of any you aren't familiar with as well as to help explain them to your audiences.

(See below for: 'How To Use Your Positive Organisational Strengths Cards – 10 Ideas To Get You Started')

PRESENCE CONCEPTS (OR STRENGTHS) - BLUE

Employee Engagement is positively related to: wellbeing and attendance, employee retention, effort and performance, quality, sales performance, income and turnover, profit, customer satisfaction, shareholder return, business growth, and success. According to research, only 19% of employees are highly engaged at work. For an engaged employee, job performance matters.

High Quality Connections are conversations that are generative in nature, affirming and life enhancing. They boost motivation, trust, innovation and information flow. They are particularly important for people who are excluded from more purposeful 'bonding or socialising activities' e.g. casual workers, temps, interns - boosting stickiness and motivation to perform

Positive Energy Networks are mutually energizing, motivating and affirming, with a particular positive and affirming person as the node point. They are generative, they add value. Being part of such a network is highly motivating, encouraging individual commitment, performance and resilience.

Flow is the psychological state experienced when challenge and skill are sufficiently matched in an area of interest to produce complete task absorption. When 'in flow' people are working at their best, using all their abilities to achieve the task. Flow states are highly motivating.

We are displaying **Mindfulness** when we are paying attention in the moment to our internal state or the external world. Mindfulness and attentiveness require being present in the moment. They enhance the quality of interpersonal interactions and the

thoughtfulness of decision making. In the mindless state induced by efficient routines, we can miss important signs of change.

COLLECTIVE CONCEPTS (OR STRENGTHS) - GREEN

Social Capital is the hidden capital of group relationships. Social capital releases the potential of investment capital. Social capital affects trust and information flow, and speed of adaptation. It is a basic requirement for a flexible, flourishing organization. High social capital promotes organisational resilience.

Positive Emotions include things like pride, joy, interest, serenity, awe, and excitement. When feeling good people are more likely to be creative, engage with others, manage complexity, be tenacious, and deal with ambiguity and novel information. The magic ratio of positive to negative experiences is 3:1 or above.

Collective Intelligence draws on the accumulated resourcefulness of the whole organization. Within organisations there is a huge, intelligence held by the whole workforce, not just a select few. In today's competitive world relying on a few key people for knowledge, innovation and decision-making is ineffective.

The degree of **Connectivity** amongst a group is a measure of their alignment. High connectivity promotes self-organization amongst a group, which reduces management cost. Well-connected organisations exhibit lower level, faster, better problem solving and decision-making. High performing teams demonstrate high connectivity.

Four key states characterise people's **Psychological Capital**: hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience. Together these affect performance and satisfaction. Because these are states rather than traits they can be learnt, as can the ability to self-create them. These states are related particularly to motivation and performance at work.

Resilience refers to the ability to bounce-back from adversity. Resilience contributes to post-traumatic growth. Resilient people find sources of positive emotion even in difficult or upsetting situations. Resilient people and organisations are able to return to a functioning, productive state quicker following trauma or adversity.

CULTURAL STRENGTHS - PINK

The Abundance Bridge includes excellence, exceptional performance, generosity, brilliant and benevolence. Flourishing organizations invest in building their abundance bridge as well as closing their deficit gap. While attending to the deficit gap prevents unacceptable performance, attention to the abundance bridge promotes exceptional performance.



Authentic Leadership is made up of four key attributes: openness, integrity, self-reflection and balanced judgement, that underlie surface style differences. Life experiences are more important than innate abilities in achieving formal leadership positions: leaders are made. Authenticity is a key defence against corrosive, demoralising organisational cynicism.

Positive Deviance is about learning from success and building towards excellence. It means paying organisational attention to building the abundance bridge as well as to lessening the deficit gap. Positive Deviance is one of the attributes identified as distinguishing flourishing organisations. Very few organisations really pay attention to learning from their successes.

Virtuous Practices are strengths such as patience, helpfulness, gratitude, appreciation, forgiveness, and humility that characterize the most successful and life enhancing places to work. Strong patterns of virtuous behaviour are a distinguishing feature of flourishing organizations. People are inspired by the virtuous behaviour of others, creating virtuous spirals of mutual benefit and increasing social capital.

Flourishing is a state of growth and abundance. Flourishing organisations exhibit positive deviance, affirmative bias and virtuous behaviour. Flourishing individuals experience positive emotions, engagement or flow, meaning, positive relationships and accomplishment. Flourishing organisations and individuals are likely to be more successful.

APPRECIATIVE STRENGTHS - YELLOW

To experience **Affirmation** is to be valued for who you are and what you bring. When we are affirmed we see ourselves reflected positively in the eyes of others. Affirmation aids personal growth. Affirmation is nourishment for the soul. Affirming the best in people, teams and organisations enhances performance.

Appreciative Inquiry understands the organisation as a living system and develops it through growing more of the best. Appreciative Inquiry offers a positive psychology approach to organisational development. By working with the whole system, Appreciative Inquiry creates rapid, coordinated, energised change.

Generativity is a source of change: new, compelling ideas, generated by the group, garner commitment and energy. Generativity occurs when people come together: combining knowledge, inspiring each other and creating new possibilities and generating energy for action. High quality interactions promote generativity

Strengths are the natural abilities developed over your life course. Using strengths feels effortless and highly engaging and energizing. Strengths underpin many aspects

of performance at work. They are the source of motivation, development, high performance. Strengths are the most efficient source of excellence

How To Use Your Positive Organisational Strengths Cards – 10 Ideas To Get You Started

So you've got some of our Positive Organisational Development Cards - now what? We have produced a list of 10 ideas for ways in which you could use the cards to add value to your work with different audiences.

In General

You can use these cards in a number of ways to stimulate discussion; create commonality and motivation; and to identify agreed action. Some general ideas are:

- Use the cards as they stand, the questions and the action points
- Use a rating scale 'To what extent is this present in our team/organization/group at the moment on a scale of 1-10? What would we like to be? How can we move towards this?' etc.
- As a prioritizing tool. 'Which five of these are most key to our future success/our development/our strategy?'
- As playing cards. Each person has some. Someone starts by laying down a card they think is important (to the topic under discussion) explaining why they think so, the person who thinks they can build on this with one of the cards in their hand lays it down with 'yes and...'. This is a cooperative card game, with no winners or losers.

With Senior Executives

1) Leadership

Use the Authentic Leadership card as a stimulus to the initial discussion.

Ask them to identify what other cards they see as being relevant to being an effective, positive leader (e.g. affirmation and positive deviance, mindfulness, engagement, virtuous practices, positive energy networks and strengths). Use the questions to stimulate discussion and the further notes to create possibilities for initiatives or personal development

2) Organisational Culture

Take the five culture cards (pink). For each card consider and discuss the questions and then make a rating for each concept (where are we now?) on a scale of 1-10. Then ask – Where do we want to be? Look at the action points and pick a few as a basis for planning how to start moving in the right direction

Leaders and Managers in General

3) Using micro-moments as a leader

Select the cards that leaders can have an impact on in every engagement they have (e.g. positive deviance, virtuous practices, authentic leadership, high quality connections, positive emotions, flourishing, mindfulness). Use the questions to stimulate discuss to raise awareness of the importance of these concepts to creating a positive organisational atmosphere. Then use pointers for action to help create action resolutions.



4) Performance Appraisal

The yellow cards (with the possible exception of the Appreciative Inquiry card) form a good basis for a performance appraisal conversation. Also include the blue cards engagement and flow and maybe the flourishing card. The key question is ‘When you do you experience this at work? What are you doing, who is around?’ and so on to help them learn about when they are at their best.

Alternatively, you can spread the cards out and ask them to pick a few cards that exemplify what they would like more of in their work. Or what they find most exciting at work e.g. using strengths, being affirmed, having great conversations and so on.

5) Career Counselling

Pick a few appropriate cards like affirmation, strengths, positive deviance, authentic leadership, engagement, generativity, and ask them which of these features might be important to them in a job or their next career move? How can they find out whether a job or organization offers these? Alternatively get them to pick the five that seem most important to them to allowing them to give their best at work.

Groups – Development

6) Culture / Organisational Development

Take the pink culture cards and add any others you like, such as positive deviance, affirmation and flourishing, asking ‘What is important to us in our culture? Where is this already present?’ and so on, use the questions on the back of the card as well. Get the group to make a current rating of where the organization is, then use the suggestions on the cards to stimulate discussion of actions to increase positivity of the culture. These cards help individuals identify what they can do to move things forward.

Take the green cards and repeat the process. These give ideas as to how to create cultural change at the collective level.

7) Identifying our strengths as leaders and managers

Start with the strengths card, identifying what strengths are and working with the questions and suggestions on the back. You can then delve further into the individual and collective strengths using a strengths card pack (such as the Strengthscope cards or the Positive Insights strengths cards), or work with rest of the positive psychology concept cards to identify organisational positive psychology strengths. E.g. as an organization we are good at... ‘affirmation’ and the evidence is....

From here the discussion can move to how to build on the strengths we have and, how to discover hidden organisational strengths.

8) Divisional Groups or Teams – our local culture

Use the cards to help the group address the question of what kind of atmosphere do we want to create in our local part of the organization? How can we do this?

9) During Redundancy and Other Difficult Times

Take green cards and positive emotions and high quality connections as a basis for a discussion on, 'How can we consciously work to boost all of these in our organisation even as we have to do this difficult thing?

Take yellow cards and ask 'How can we build these into our process for doing what it is we have to do?'

10) Increasing Motivation and Morale

Take positive deviance, positive energy networks, positive emotions, flourishing, strengths, engagement and appreciative inquiry cards as a basis for discussion asking, 'How can we increase these in our organization?' Use green cards to help identify collective processes to engage and motivate.

These are just 10 ideas to help you get started, I hope you find them useful, please do write and let us know how you do use the cards, and any ideas you have for improvements to them.

For further information on these alternative approaches to change, please email jemsmith@acukltd.com, phone 07973 782 715 or visit www.acukltd.com