

Impacting Well-Being at Work: A Key Managerial Leader Action Role

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Mounting evidence indicating both the benefits of well-being and the negative impact of low well-being in the workplace shows that it is becoming increasingly important for managerial leaders to understand and manage well-being at work. Managerial leaders can play a key role in positively impacting their own and others' well-being. After reviewing some relevant literature, a well-being impactor action role is presented. This action role is implemented through five practices for managerial leaders to execute in workplace settings. The application value and implications of these practices – in practice, policy, research and teaching – are discussed. Some challenges connected to helping managerial leaders and policy makers positively impact well-being at work are offered.

INTRODUCTION

Working adults spend more than one-third of their waking hours at work. The average individual will spend approximately 70,000 hours of his/her lifetime working, with some spending considerably more time at work (Burke, 2017). Satisfaction varies among individuals in workplace settings – some joyfully await retirement, while others seek ways to continue working beyond retirement. One's level of well-being at work is influenced by specific labor market policies, employment conditions and the workplace operating environment. This article focuses on workplace operating environment in the context of well-being at work. A key element in any work environment are managerial leaders and the impact they exert on well-being and performance. Leaders' actions can enhance or diminish their own and others' well-being at work.¹

Well-being, as a construct, has been extensively conceptualized and defined from various perspectives. These points of view have included focusing on psychological, physical and social well-being (Wright, Emich & Klotz, 2017; Grant, Christianson & Price, 2007). Hone, Jarden, Schofield and Duncan (2014) contribute by examining four operational definitions that are found in the literature relating to well-being and flourishing. This work further assists efforts to measure the prevalence of well-being levels and underscores the importance for organizational decision-makers to address this topic.

Seligman (2011), in particular, offers a useful way of conceptualizing well-being. His theorizing has evolved from a focus on authentic happiness to a broader concept of well-being which can be measured by flourishing. Five components of well-being emerge from his most recent work in conceptualizing well-being, including:

- Positive emotion
- Engagement
- Relationships

- Meaning
- Accomplishments

These elements, while defined and measured independently, are believed to be interactive (Seligman, 2011). As the father of positive psychology, Seligman espouses that well-being is now the focal point for this field of psychology and the “gold standard” for measuring whether an individual is flourishing. Flourishing, according to Seligman provides a more complete and accurate view of the nature of high levels of well-being than does the “happiness” construct. The topic of flourishing at work and its connection to well-being continues to be studied in the literature (Colbert, Bono, & Purvanova, 2016). The author and his colleagues have drawn upon the field of positive psychology and the work within that field relating to well-being as well as flourishing to help managerial leaders be more effective.

Dodge, Daly, Huyton & Sanders (2012) offer a conceptual framework that has practical utility for managerial leaders striving to increase levels of well-being in their organizations. Drawing upon conceptual and empirical areas of study relating to well-being, this framework addresses three key areas:

1. The idea of there being a set point for well-being.
2. The notion of attaining equilibrium or homeostasis.
3. The fluctuating states between challenges and resources.

This model will be explored more fully later in the context of the well-being impactor role.

Looking at well-being through a broader lens, beyond the construct of “happiness”, may help provide a unifying concept of well-being across diverse factors and settings that affect worker physical health, psychological/mental health, and the quality of lives at work (McDaid & Park, 2014; Ahuvia, Thin, Haybron, Biswas-Diener, Ricard & Trimsit, 2015). Well-being may be considered an outcome, or a process factor that influences other outcomes (Schulte, Guerin, Schill, Bhattacharya, Cunningham, Pardalai, Eggerth, & Stephenson, 2015). For instance, higher levels of well-being have been connected to increased productivity, lower healthcare costs, physical health and positive aging (Kilfedder & Litchfield, 2014). A number of studies have demonstrated connections between low levels of psychological well-being and poor health (Huppert, 2014). Evidence from other investigations reveal the beneficial impacts of positive emotional states on physical health and survival (Diener & Chan, 2011; Taris, 2017; Cotton & Hart, 2003). Within these contexts, well-being may be seen as a factor that impacts a variety of outcomes thus the author believes it to be extremely important for managerial leaders as well as public policy makers to address well-being and its impacts. As discussed in this article, the well-being impactor role and the associated practices are processes by which managerial leaders can individually and collectively influence well-being outcomes.

The impact of a managerial leader’s action on well-being can be felt and thus viewed from different organizational levels, including individual, group, and organization wide. A managerial leader’s own well-being is also a separate level of focus. A leader’s actions can also impact key external stakeholders (Kerns, 2015). The current work addresses impacting well-being as an integral practice area for managerial leadership.

The construct of well-being, whether viewed as a process factor/variable or as an outcome, or both, dynamically interrelates with leadership at all organizational levels. Before focusing on the well-being impactor role and the related evidenced based practices, a brief discussion relating to well-being and leadership is offered.

WELL-BEING AND LEADERSHIP

The field of leadership has shown increasing interest in well-being (Kowalski & Loretto, 2017; Artz, Goodall, & Oswald, 2017; Luthans, Youssef, Sweetman & Harms, 2013). Traditionally, two conceptual perspectives have been discussed in relationship to well-being. The first perspective represents a dispositional approach that stresses individual differences such as personality as antecedents to well-being, and overall life satisfaction. The second is an approach which emphasizes the situational determinants of well-being. Empirical findings support an integration of both perspectives (Luthans, et al, 2013). These findings are consistent with the perspective of positive psychology that well-being is

determined by a combination of dispositional, circumstantial/situational, and intentional factors (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon & Schkade, 2005; Kerns, 2015).

The above findings have implications for managerial leaders striving to positively impact well-being in organizational settings. Taken together, it seems that managerial leaders can help their people as well as themselves by becoming more aware of elements at work that may influence levels of well-being and by taking actions that enhance these areas.

With the above perspective in mind, managerial leaders can likely help individuals, groups, and their organizations achieve higher levels of well-being. These efforts can positively impact important areas of workplace functioning and may spillover to other domains of well-being (Pierce, Gardner, & Crowley, 2016; Ilies, Wilson, & Wagner, 2009). Rath and Harter (2010) have provided practitioners with a framework to view well-being across five domains. These domains include the following:

- Career Well-being
- Social Well-being
- Financial Well-being
- Physical Well-being
- Community Well-being

Research relating to the above domains indicates that increases in career well-being can spillover into other domains to increase well-being within them (Rath & Harter, 2010), further strengthening the case for managerial leaders to be effective in executing practices that positively impact well-being.

Grant, Christianson and Price (2007) call attention to the multi-dimensional nature of well-being and the significant role managerial leaders play in impacting well-being for better or worse. Results from a recent meta-analysis, which reviewed the connection between leadership, followers' mental health/well-being and performance, underscore the important role that leadership plays as an occupational health factor for organizations (Montano, Reeske, Franke, & Huffmeier, 2017). The impacts that managerial leaders have on well-being – both positive and negative – are receiving increased coverage in the professional and popular literature.

On the positive side, Luthans, et al. (2013) offer empirical support and ways for leaders to better understand and help their employees enhance their overall well-being at work. Positive leadership practices were also shown to drive employee well-being among 454 nursing home employees (Kelloway, Weigand, McKee, and Das, 2013). A recent review by Allen and McCarthy (2016) provides a number of evidence-based tools for enhancing well-being at work that are accessible to managerial leaders. The work of Zheng, Molineux, Mirshekary and Scarparo (2015) suggests opportunities for organizations and managerial leaders to improve the well-being of employees in areas of work life balance. They point out how work life balance impacts employees' significant others as well as organizational performance.

Interestingly, Perko, Kinnunen, Tolvanen, and Feldt (2016) investigated and found a relationship between employees' well-being and their perceptions of a leader's approach that included an abusive leadership style. Their results found a relationship and congruence between levels and changes in employee well-being and their perception of leadership style. The negative impacts of abusive/dysfunctional leader behavior have been reported to include reduction in employee discretionary effort, psychological stress and trauma. In an integrative literature review, Rose, Stuck, Twyford, and Bergman (2015) provide a visual taxonomy of dysfunctional leader behaviors which categorizes this behavior's relative severity and its perceived impact on reports, ranging from annoying to traumatizing. The impact of a leader's diminished psychological resources on leadership behaviors was investigated and found to be an antecedent for higher levels of abusive supervision (Byrne, Dionisi, Barling, Akers, Robertson, Lys, Wylie, & Dupré, 2014). This study is especially useful in contributing to the extant literature because it investigated the leaders' own psychological well-being as a behavioral antecedent. The impacts of managerial leaders' behavior on employee health and well-being indicators such as general health, anxiety, burnout and turnover has also been reviewed in the context of better understanding high performance workplace settings (Jensen & Van De Voorde, 2016).

We will now turn our attention to five evidence based practices that help operationalize the well-being impactor action role.

WELL-BEING IMPACTOR ACTION ROLE

The quality of leadership and people management in an organization influences how employees experience work which in turn impacts their health and well-being (Kilfedder & Litchfield, 2014; Heaphy & Dutton, 2008). C-level executives and managers at all levels have been encouraged to promote and support well-being among their employees (Robertson & Barling, 2014). Kelloway and Barling (2010) offer that leaders can serve as role models, provide consequences (rewards and punishments) and make decisions in ways that either positively or negatively impact well-being at work.

It seems important for managerial leaders to understand the importance of simultaneously applying well-being practices to themselves and others. There is growing evidence that leaders need to have both a leader-centric and an employee-centric perspective when it comes to impacting well-being at work (Bryne, Dionisi, Barling, Akers, Robertson, Lys, Wylie, & Dupre, 2014). A leader's actual behavior as well as the perceptions others hold about the leader are key elements in determining the impact leaders have on well-being at work.

After many years of experience in applying well-being practices in workplace settings and in extensively studying well-being, the author integrated a well-being impactor action role into a broader leadership competency dimension (Kerns & Ko, 2014). This well-being impactor action role is operationalized through evidenced based practices that include the following:

- Fostering and managing engagement
- Promoting and managing positivity
- Profiling and managing time perspectives
- Managing strengths
- Making work purposeful and meaningful

The well-being impactor action role is a key behaviorally oriented leader resource that can help managerial leaders impact all levels of organizational functioning. The practices associated with this role need to be assessed, effectively managed, and monitored on an ongoing basis. This action role is a core managerial leadership competency within a broader managerial leadership system that needs to be effectively executed by C-level executives as well as first line supervisors to help positively impact well-being at work.²

Before reviewing each of the five practices that are associated with this role, a framework for assessing and monitoring the execution of these practices which helps operationalize the role will be briefly presented. This framework is based on the Linkage Research Model (LRM) and has been adapted by the author and his colleagues to many workplace settings (Wiley, 2010; Kerns, 2002; Kerns & Ko, 2010). The LRM can be depicted as a clock as shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1
LINKAGE RESEARCH MODEL: ASSESSING THE WELL-BEING IMPACTOR
ACTION ROLE PRACTICES



In this analysis, the twelve o'clock position of the LRM are the five practices associated with the well-being impactor role. At three, six and nine o'clock respectively, are employee, customer and business results. The primary purpose of linkage research is to identify managerial leadership practices operating in the work environment (the current case being managerial well-being practices at twelve o'clock) that influence employee well-being, customer relationships and business/organizational results. To accomplish this, managerial leadership practices are assessed, and correlated with employee and customer survey data, and with other key organization metrics such as overall organizational well-being.

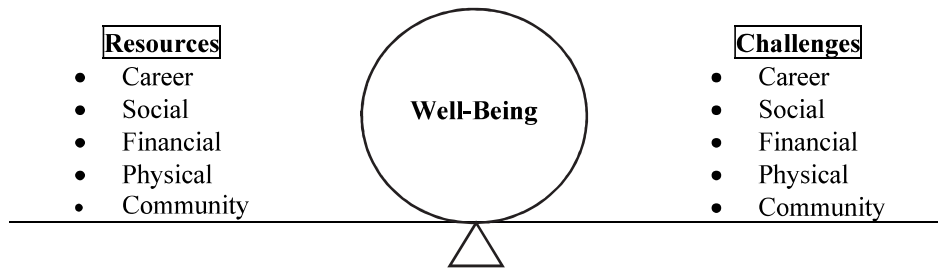
When positioning practices which comprise the well-being impactor role with managerial leaders in workplace settings, as context, the author introduces the framework offered by Dodge, Daly, Huyton & Sanders (2012), and the well-being domains provided by Rath & Harter (2010). In defining well-being, three key concepts support the operational definition of well-being:

- Set point range
- Equilibrium/balance point
- Challenges – Resources dynamics

With these concepts in mind, leaders are asked to think of well-being as the balance point between challenges and resources. In order to maintain balance, resources are used to address challenges. Each of us has a set point range which represents our “well-being balance point” which we strive to maintain (Dodge, et al. 2012). Each of us faces unique challenges which require us to engage our unique pool of resources to maintain balance.

Consider the domains of well-being proffered by Rath and Harter (2010): career, social, financial, physical, and community. Stable well-being occurs, for example, when a leader’s resources (career, social, financial, physical, and/or community) meet a specific challenge (career, social, financial, physical and/or community). When a leader’s resources fail to meet his/her challenges, his/her well-being may suffer. On the other hand, when resources far exceed the challenges the leader faces, he or she may, over time, become complacent (Dodge, et al. 2012). Figure 2 depicts the balancing act that managerial leaders play in striving to keep their well-being in balance. The five practices associated with the well-being impactor role offered in this article can help leaders positively impact each of the well-being domains listed in Figure 2 under “resources” and “challenges”. When working with managerial leaders, the author typically primarily focuses on the career domain while addressing the other four areas as appropriate. Positively impacting well-being at work can be managed using the five practices serving as resources. These practices can become a challenge if a leader is not competent in executing the specific practices needed in a specific situation.

FIGURE 2
WELL-BEING: A DYNAMIC MANAGERIAL LEADER BALANCING ACT
OF RESOURCES AND CHALLENGES



With the LRM (managerial leadership at 12 O’Clock model) in mind along with the resources – challenges framework, a brief review of each of the five practices associated with the well-being impactor role follows. These practices relate to engagement, positivity, time perspectives, strengths and purposeful/meaningfulness at work.³

Practice #1: Fostering and Managing Engagement

Fostering and managing engagement at work positively impacts levels of well-being. Robertson and Cooper (2011) report clear links between well-being and employee engagement. They offer a useful indexing of the key benefits to organizations along with supporting research evidence for the value of having engaged employees. Managerial leaders who can effectively manage an employee workforce for greater engagement are likely to realize increased levels of well-being, improved return on investment, and enhanced customer satisfaction/loyalty.

Key action areas with broad application for managerial leaders to build engagement at work include:

1. Modeling key engagement behaviors, including vigor/energy, dedication and absorption.
2. Showing interest in employee development, learning and well-being.
3. Managing work and job demands while recognizing and optimizing personal and job related resources. (Refer to Figure 2: Well-being: A dynamic managerial leader balancing act of resources and challenges)
4. Encouraging matching skill levels with important and relevant challenges to move toward flow states (Csikszentmihayi, 1997).
5. Aligning individuals, groups and the organization on critical success factors including core values, strategic direction and meaningful metrics.

Bakker, Albrecht and Leiter (2011) note the need to consider the influence that managerial leadership models and actions have on engagement. Measuring and evaluating the impact that one’s engagement enhancement practices have on the achievement of key results and other significant outcomes is important, including measuring and evaluating well-being and performance in relationship to a managerial leader’s effectiveness at fostering and managing work engagement. These efforts are advanced when applying the LRM (previously depicted in Figure 1) to this measurement process.

Successfully fostering and managing engagement can likely drive key results across all functional work areas and all organizational levels, and improve the likelihood of increasing well-being levels for themselves and their people. Executives who have applied the five actions noted above in workplace settings have observed improved performance and enhanced well-being for themselves and other individuals and groups (Kerns & Ko, 2010; Kerns & Ko, 2014).

Practice #2: Promoting and Managing Positivity

Skillfully promoting and managing workplace positivity advances well-being at work. Biswas-Diener (2010) reports on research revealing the significant benefits associated with positivity in workplace settings, including enhanced well-being, job satisfaction, and resilience.

There is a strong connection between an individual’s ratio of positives to negatives and his or her overall well-being. High ratios of positivity to negativity (ratios near 5 to 1) find people “doing well” but low positivity ratios relate to “doing poorly” (Frederickson, 2009). Positivity is also associated with improved physical health and resistance to acquiring infectious illnesses (Moskowitz & Saslow, 2014). Positivity may encourage healthier behaviors like better sleep habits and increased exercise (Rath, 2013). This connection between positivity and improved physical health may help to reduce an organization’s healthcare costs and boost work force productivity.

Five action areas assist managerial leaders when seeking to promote and manage positivity:

1. Encouraging forgiveness
2. Expressing gratitude
3. Energizing positive reactions
4. Savoring
5. Communicating “personal best stories” (PBS).

Table 1 depicts a continuum of effectiveness across the five action areas intended to drive promoting and managing workplace positivity.

**TABLE 1
EFFECTIVENESS CONTINUUM ACROSS FIVE ACTION AREAS
FOR PROMOTING AND MANAGING POSITIVITY**

<u>Action Area</u>	<u>Effectiveness</u>		
	<u>Low</u> ↓	<u>Moderate</u> ↓	<u>Highs</u> ↓
1. Forgiveness	Hold grudges	Forgives	Forgives and Gains Perspective
2. Gratitude	Ungrateful	Grateful	Grateful with Great Impact
3. Positive Energizing	Negative Influence	Positive Influence	Top Energizer
4. Savoring	Ignores Events	Recognize Events	Savors Events
5. Communicating PBS	No stories	Communicates stories of success	Communicates positive stories of success

These five action areas should be regularly assessed to determine managerial effectiveness in executing these practices. This assessment can be used to create a “Positivity Profile”, displaying positivity across the five action areas.

People react to the behavior of managerial leaders by behaving (take additional observable action), having psychological feelings (affect), experiencing physical sensations, imagining and thinking. In an adaptation of Arnold Lazarus’ Multi-Model Approach (Lazarus, 1989), the author has developed and implemented a B.A.S.I.C. Positivity-Negativity Profile to index behaviors (B), affect/emotion (A), sensations (S), images/mental pictures (I) and cognitions/thoughts (C) that leaders and their people have in response to managerial leadership actions. The author uses “B.A.S.I.C.” reactions to help operationally define “positivity” in a managerial leadership context as, “managerial leader actions that promote a positive behavior, affect, sensation, image and/or thought in himself or herself or in others.” Positivity management seeks to help individuals identify, develop and/or fine tune their actions to promote and

manage positivity so that they can integrate positivity into their daily lives and into actions to optimize workplace well-being and performance.

When leaders are able to optimize their skill at promoting and managing positivity at work, they increase the probability of increasing well-being levels and performance for themselves and their people. Managerial leaders who can bring positivity to the balancing of workplace challenges with resources are more likely to positively impact well-being at work.

Practice #3: Profiling and Managing Time Perspectives.

A person's orientation toward time – the past, present and future – in relationship to various temporal dimensions is referred to as his or her perspective on time. One's perspective on time affects his or her well-being, work preferences, and performance (Kerns, 2012).

Managerial leaders who more fully understand their orientation toward time and effectively manage time perspectives can potentially enhance their own well-being and the well-being and performance of the people they lead. The author's evolving work with his colleagues in this area is encouraging and has yielded a number of useful frameworks and tools to support the practice of profiling and managing time perspectives (Kerns, 2012). For example, developing a "time profile" to represent individual differences among people in the workplace along relevant temporal dimensions, along with integrating key elements of time perspective into a coherent step-wise management approach, have advanced work in this area.

Perspectives on time influence an individual's experience, motivation, thought process, and behavior. To understand a person's time perspective, it is useful to view his or her orientation to the past, present, and future along the following five dimensions:

1. Frequency of use: To what extent does a person focus on the past, present and/or future? Does he or she show a preference for one dimension of time over the others?
2. Span: How much time does the past, present and future encompass for this person? For example, some people may look at the future as encompassing a span of five years, while others may view the future with a ten year time horizon.
3. Positivity: To what extent does this person view each of the past, present and future as positive, negative, or neutral, respectively?
4. Intensity: How intensely does this person view "significant events" in the past or present, as well as events that are anticipated in the future?
5. Alignment: To what extent does this person see the past, present, and future as being interconnected?

Through the author's extensive fieldwork, these five dimensions have surfaced as important variables that define an individual's time perspective and establish his or her time profile. The author developed a "Time Profile" to facilitate a managerial leader in thinking about his or her orientation or perspective with regard to time across the five dimensions noted above (Kerns, 2012).

The process of systematically understanding and managing time perspectives offers substantial benefits in many areas for managerial leaders and their organizations. Of particular value is the finding that a balanced time perspective may contribute to well-being more than operating within one's preferred time perspective to the exclusion of the other two perspectives (Boniwell, Osin, Linley, & Ivanchenko, 2010). Rather than predominantly operating in one dimension, with a balanced time perspective, one would appreciate the past, focus on what's important that can be influenced in the present, and plan for the future. Managerial leaders who are able to demonstrate flexibility in this way, managing across time perspectives, are likely to enhance well-being for themselves and for those they manage.

We know, for example, from the extensive research reviewed by Zimbardo and Boyd (2008) that an individual's decision making is influenced by his or her time perspective. Decisive problem solving and well-being can be advanced when managerial leaders use a balanced time perspective when addressing challenges and managing resources (Kerns, 2016a).

Practice #4: Managing Strengths

Managerial leaders can help themselves and others enhance well-being and performance by effectively managing strengths. Evidence indicates that helping employees do what they do best contributes to producing higher levels of well-being.

Effective and healthy workplace cultures result when employees can say “at work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day” (Wagner & Harter, 2006). Being able to do what one does best at work can enhance well-being, employee engagement, and performance. Paying attention to strengths and incorporating strengths into performance at work is good business.

The definition of a "strength" in this context draws from the research of Peterson and Seligman (2004) as well as from the work of The Gallup Organization (Rath, 2007). In this context, an area of strength is one in which you are able to consistently perform at a very high level, which energizes you, and which you perceive as producing a positive experience.

Kerns (2010) has developed a practitioner friendly strengths behavioral checklist to help managerial leaders and their reports identify their top five strengths at work. Feedback to affirm agreement with their identified top five strengths from “trusted others” who know the individual well and are willing to give honest input is useful. In affirming the five identified strengths, ask strategic questions such as "Do I feel a sense of ownership, authenticity and excitement while expressing them?" (Seligman, 2002). Reflecting on "personal best" stories, (situations where the individual has performed exceptionally well while engaging in a targeted strength) is also useful to affirm and more fully understand an identified strength. If re-assessment is needed, the individual should reevaluate his or her strengths.

Many useful things can be done to help optimize the execution of strengths at work. For example, developing and documenting a strength-based mission provides purpose and positive motivation. The experience that comes from practicing strengths in new and challenging ways develop the strengths even further. Obtaining useful feedback on how effectively one is executing his or her strengths is valuable.

Measuring and evaluating the impact of strengths management efforts on key results/outcomes is important. Feedback gleaned from this measurement and evaluation process aids in making behavioral changes and/or adjustments to optimize strengths at work.

Research is showing that managerial leadership effectiveness is enhanced by investing in strengths. The work of Rath and Conchie (2008), for example, indicates that by investing in employees' strengths, an organization may see as much as an eightfold boost in employee engagement. Further, when managerial leaders are able to optimize their strengths at work, they may experience a “spill-over” effect into other domains of their life.

Of the five practices comprising the well-being impactor action role, managing strengths, especially connects to the other four practices. A managerial leader who can effectively apply his/her strengths to managing engagement, positivity, time perspectives and purpose - meaningfulness will likely enhance his/her well-being while boosting others' well-being.

Practice #5: Clarifying and Shaping Purpose and Meaningfulness

To achieve higher levels of well-being with high performance at work, managerial leaders and their people can benefit by knowing where things are going and that their work is meaningful. Leadership actions can shape directedness and meaningfulness at work which positively impacts well-being at work. Understanding how purpose and meaningfulness are connected at work allows managerial leaders to enhance their own well-being and performance, and to boost the well-being and performance of the people they lead.

The work of Rosso, Dekas, and Wrzesniewski (2010) provides an extensive and useful theoretical integration and review of literature relating to the meaning of work from which a number of important observations can be gleaned. For example, definitional clarity between the often confusing concepts of meaning, meaningfulness, and purpose is offered. It seems useful to consider meaning as relating to the type of meaning employees make of their work, while connecting meaningfulness to the amount of significance employees associate with their work. Rosso et al. (2010) seem to agree with Ryff's (1989) definition of purpose as a sense of directedness and intentionality. In the author's view, meaningfulness,

or significance of work, and purposeful work are separate concepts. In practice, they overlap. Leaders are an important source for shaping and impacting meaningfulness at work (Rosso et al., 2010), and critical in the development of purposeful and meaningful workplace culture. Leader practices can influence the level of purpose and meaningfulness in the workplace which, in turn, impacts levels of well-being.

To be a purposeful performer, employees must have a clear and coherent direction, know what to focus on, and know how to access and link with resources. They also benefit from a supervisor who effectively balances job challenges with workplace demands. It is equally important that individuals have the opportunity to apply their strengths and talents in their functional role at work (Kerns, 2009). When taking these actions, a managerial leader is positively impacting well-being levels.

Specific actions positively influence levels of meaningfulness in the workplace, such as:

- Displaying a high integrity index, where there is a high correlation between what the leader says and does. Menard and Brunet (2011) found a significant relationship between meaning of work and leader authenticity.
- Connecting employees' performance-based job descriptions to key actions that positively impact end users. Individuals who understand how their work positively impacts end users see their work as important and, often, as contributing to the "greater good" (Lips-Wiersma, 2002).
- Reinforcing employee actions that enhance significant stakeholder outcomes. With this reinforcement, individuals learn and understand the importance and meaningfulness of their work.
- Increasing the sense of belonging to a workgroup that is pursuing important and significant work. With this, managerial leaders develop workplaces and teams that embrace a common cause, perceive and act to influence a set of important common goals, and perceive and act interdependently to advance their work.
- Striving continuously to increase their followers' self-efficacy. Leaders who show focused interest in their peoples' abilities and confidence levels produce meaningful outcomes. With an increased sense of personal power to do important things, the workplace becomes a place of enhanced meaningfulness for individuals.

When managerial leaders are able to optimize their execution of the well-being impactor action role, they improve the likelihood of increasing well-being and high performance for themselves and their people. The practices of engagement management, promoting and managing positively, managing time perspectives, managing strengths, and shaping purpose and meaningfulness interact. All five practices have important implications for practice, policy, research and teaching.

APPLICATION VALUE AND IMPLICATIONS

The managerial leadership action role for impacting well-being at work has application value and implications for practitioners, policy makers, researchers and teachers. All four groups influence the practice of leaders. A discussion of the application value and implications of the proffered managerial leader action role and related practices for impacting well-being across practice, policy, research and teaching domains follows.

Practice Domain

Using the five practices described above to help practitioners better understand and positively impact well-being has proven to be useful. The practices, when viewed as resources to help managerial leaders impact well-being levels, help them practically connect these elements of the well-being impactor role to practice challenges. Enhancing well-being becomes a managerial leadership challenge with the five practices serving as resources.

An especially helpful way to apply these practices has been to convert the five practices and associated action areas into a behavioral rating scale for managerial leaders to use in self-assessment. For example, the practice of fostering and managing engagement is further broken down into five key actions to take when executing this practice. In this case, the five actions associated with engagement include:

1. Modeling key engagement behaviors.
2. Showing interest in others' development.
3. Managing work and job demands.
4. Matching skill levels with challenges.
5. Aligning resources with critical success factors.

These actions along with those associated with the other four practices become items in a survey that is used for self-assessment and/or 360° feedback as needed and appropriate.

Another valuable application in working with executives is to have them regularly assess their well-being across the five domains formulated by Rath and Harter (2010). In this process, after they have completed the on-line program offered by Rath and Harter in their book, *Well-Being*, they are provided with a brief form on which to track their well-being across the five domains on a monthly basis. This process has proven to be an effective way for practitioners to continuously assess, monitor and take actions to improve their own well-being and consider how their well-being is impacting others.

A variation of the previously noted process is to have executive teams assess, track and action plan together around how they can individually and collectively positively impact well-being levels. This process also uses the *Well-Being* book by Rath and Harter (2010) as a resource and subsequently has team members utilize a more informal method for tracking individual and team well-being ratings. An interesting result from implementing this process with executive teams is that they typically become coaches for one another around executing the various practices within the well-being impactor role. These efforts have yielded many self-observations among team members about how they have used the five practices both individually and collectively within their executive team and with their reports as well as in significant relationships outside of work.

The, “*Well-Being: Dynamic Managerial Leader Balancing Act of Resources and Challenges*” (as previously noted in Figure 2) is frequently used with executives to help them identify their unique set of circumstances within this system of “Challenges – Resources”. This process helps managerial leaders maintain an equilibrium that positively impacts their well-being. This intervention has helped a number of executives realize and manage the level of engagement in projects. Many have come to realize that their well-being suffers when they engage in too many projects and do not prioritize these efforts in terms of what is important and what they can most effectively influence. Without this prioritization and focusing they run the risk of depleting their resources to draw upon when facing leadership challenges (Bryne, et al., 2014).

Policy Domain

In addition to the idea that well-being at work is good business, there are policy implications for why managerial leaders should strive to positively impact well-being at work. Workplace environments can contribute to or detract from one’s psychological, mental, and physical well-being. Integral to this process are the practices of managerial leaders that impact levels of well-being.

McDaid and Park (2014) have presented reasons for investing in well-being in the workplace. Their research and explanations for enhancing well-being at work cut across a number of areas including public health, mental health and business economics. Managerial leader practices that positively impact well-being at work:

- Contribute to population health goals
- Address the psychological impact of the changing nature of work
- Promote social inclusion
- Impact business economics
- Impact on well-being levels at a societal level

The above effects highlight some important areas in which workplace well-being can impact outside the work environment. Schulte, et al. (2015) also identify issues for viewing well-being in a public policy context relating to employees and the workplace operating environment. They offer a framework for considering different types of well-being and related policy challenges, such as how to drive policy and measure its effectiveness in relationship to well-being. From their view point, well-being in the workplace can relate to the organization of work as well as to such things as ergonomics, work safety and psychological stress induced by the behavior of dysfunctional bosses (Schulte, et al, 2015).

Organizational well-being can also benefit from being viewed in a broader situational context. Kerns (2015) has developed a practitioner oriented framework for leaders to view spheres of influence that impact them and their organization. This framework identifies the following four spheres of influence:

1. **Core organizational identity:** An organization's core identity offers an understanding of the attributes that define the organization and set it apart from other entities in terms of purpose, values, and guiding principles. Well-being is enhanced when the individual leader's core identity, the other three spheres of influence, and the five practices are aligned and effectively executed.
2. **Internal Environment:** The internal environment relates to the organization's strategic direction, operational focus and linkages with resources. The organizational culture, people and structure, as well as systems and processes are contained within this sphere of influence. Managerial leaders need to discern what is going on regarding these elements within the internal organizational environment and how they may be individually and/or collectively influencing a specific situation to positively or negatively impact well-being levels.
3. **Transactional Environment:** The transactional environment influences derive from interactions occurring on a periodic basis. Organizational stakeholders who do business with an organization and/or are regularly impacted by the enterprise are found in this sphere of influence, as are customers, suppliers and competitors. Two often overlooked elements within this sphere of influence are local and/or regional communities in which the enterprise is located, and significant others such as family, extended family and others connected to an organization's workforce. Organizational policy makers need to take this sphere of influence into account, especially the employees' significant others, when considering well-being. This observation is supported by the knowledge of how well-being levels can spillover to areas outside of the workplace.
4. **Extended External Environment** The extended external environment sphere contains important influences which are beyond the direct control of managerial leaders. These influences include such areas as government legislation, demographic changes and the economy. Other macro level factors may include technology, and societal life style preferences. This sphere of influence has more impact on leaders in some industry sectors than in others, for example, as it relates to their efforts to impact well-being levels in their organizations.

This practice oriented situational context framework has implications for well-being and policy in several ways. First, it highlights the importance of having leaders who are aligned with the identity of the entity including effectively executing the five practices associated with the well-being impactor action role. Leaders who are misaligned with an organization's core identity will likely find it difficult to positively impact their own well-being, let alone that of their employees. Second, and closely associated with the previous observation, the internal environment, especially the culture, needs to embrace well-being as a key outcome and allow C-level leaders as well as first line supervisors to find appropriate ways to execute the five evidenced based practices for impacting well-being. Third, the potential positive and negative spillover effects from the internal operating environment need to be recognized and managed (Ilies, Wilson & Wagner, 2009). For example, the research showing the impact of workplace experiences on the significant others of employees underscores the spillover effect and how the execution of the five practices can help make this linkage a well-being enhancer (Zheng, Molineux, Mirshekary, & Scarparo, 2015). This spillover effect can also take place in transactions with customers and suppliers (Baranik, Wang, Gong & Shi, 2017). Finally, leaders and policy makers wanting to make the case for enhancing well-being at work can point to the economic, health and societal quality of life gains realized by having high levels of organizational well-being. The work being done to measure well-being to guide policy

making including establishing national well-being accounts may provide policy makers and other leaders with additional information beyond existing economic and social indicators (Musikanski, 2014; 2015; Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2015).

A special case can also be made for policy makers in organizations to address the adverse impact that incompetent, ineffective or otherwise bad bosses has on well-being levels. Currently, the base rate for ineffective leadership exceeds fifty percent (Kaiser, Le Breto, & Hogan, 2015). Increasingly the negative impact of bad and/or abusive bosses/leaders is being treated in the extant leadership and public health literature (Musikanski, 2014; 2015; Rose, Shuck, Twyford, & Bergman, 2015). This research is buoyed by the mounting evidence of the costly and negative impacts of dysfunctional leaders on such areas as turnover, discretionary effort, and goal achievement (Tepper, Henle, Lambert, Giacalone, & Duffy, 2008). Also, in support of the previously discussed spillover effect, research is showing that dysfunctional and low well-being enhancing bosses influence more negative employee evaluations directed toward family members and reduce family interactions. In these situations employees bring troublesome behaviors home from work (Schyns & Schilling, 2013). This alarming pattern of poor managerial leadership is occurring while approximately 14 billion dollars is being spent annually on leadership development programs in the U.S. (Gurdjian, Halbeisen & Lane, 2014). This discrepancy between leadership effectiveness and investment in leader development would seem to merit the attention from organizational policy makers and other decision makers.

Research Domain

While this article is focused on practicing managerial leaders with the hope of helping them better understand and execute practices associated with positively impacting well-being at work, several areas seem to be fruitful targets for additional research. It would be of interest to further examine the spillover effects within and between the four spheres of influence previously offered in the discussion of well-being practices and situational context. It would be especially useful to extend the work being done relating to the role that dysfunctional leaders play in adversely impacting the levels of well-being of employees significant others. In connection with this research, further application of the Linkage Research Model (LRM) in assessing a leader's effectiveness at executing the five well-being practices offered in this article would be valuable. This work would likely shine additional light on the impact that managerial leaders have on employees, customers, and the overall well-being of an organization.

The work of applying evidenced based practices to positively impacting well-being at work could benefit from researchers studying additional practices beyond the five offered here. It would be of interest to know what practices tend to enhance well-being as well as increase performance. This work would contribute to the extant literature that is exploring the connection between high performance and high well-being in workplace settings (Boxall, Guthrie & Paauwe, 2016; Bryson, Forth & Stokes, 2017). The author's field work as well as empirical studies suggest that there are practices that more positively impact both well-being and performance at work such as strengths management (Kerns, 2010). The author's research in applied settings with the five practices associated with the well-being impactor role could be extended.

Beyond specific practices that impact well-being, it would be valuable to see more practitioner oriented frameworks for understanding and executing well-being programs at work (Guest, 2017). Specifically, these frameworks could help bring additional definitional clarity and assessment focus to the study and practice of well-being at work. This work could help us better understand the antecedents, intervening practices and consequences connected to leader behavior intended to positively impact well-being. Further exploration of how well-being enhancing practices could be integrated into the challenges – resources conceptual framework could be fruitful.

It also seems important that research efforts represent an interdisciplinary perspective. There is a need to assess the impacts of well-being at work on other important domains outside of the work environment. The impacts of workplace well-being on such areas as the economy, healthcare, society, and governments are important to understand and manage, going forward, especially for policy makers and organizational leaders (Layard, Clark, Cornaglia, Powdhavee, & Vernoit, 2014). Finally, the work of Rath and Harter

(2010) can be further explored to assess the dynamic interactions among the five well-being domains, i.e. career, social, financial, physical and community. It would be of interest to further review how improved and/or decreased well-being levels, within and between domains, effect one's well-being. Finally, the relationship between performance and well-being at work would be useful to better understand and help guide practices. This conceptual and empirical work could build upon what we know about the antecedents and dynamics associated with practices that enhance well-being and performance.

Teaching Domain

The teaching of leadership could benefit from having practical frameworks and tools to offer emerging and experienced leaders looking to enhance their effectiveness. The author has transferred some of the applications used in workplace settings into the MBA classroom when teaching frameworks, tools and evidenced based practices associated with positively impacting well-being at work.

Experiential exercises, in particular, have been used by the author to help business students better understand and apply the practices offered in this article. This process often includes presenting learners with executive profiles that reflect low levels of well-being and have students suggest practices to employ to boost well-being. They are asked to do this work in small groups to identify sources of low well-being and to identify practices and associated behavioral action plans to boost well-being levels. Each group also typically projects the expected impact of anticipated actions on the executives' well-being. These sessions conclude by having students identify and discuss the value to a managerial leader in being able to competently positively impact his/her well-being and that of others.

Another classroom application of the five practices offered here is to have students select one of the five practices and identify specific actions they can take to successfully execute the practice at work. For example, they are asked to specify what they would do in order to increase their positivity in new and different ways within a specific time period. This application requires the student to assess his/her positivity using the action areas offered in this article, affirm them and select a specific area where he/she will apply the positivity. After implementing this project, students report back to the larger class in a five to ten minute presentation addressing three questions:

1. What actions to boost your positivity do you plan on taking?
2. Where will you apply/take this action?
3. How do you expect this application to impact your level of well-being and that of others?

This application is preceded by students having read numerous articles about evidence-based practices that leaders can employ in workplace settings to positively impact well-being. Students typically report that this activity helped them connect the concept of well-being to real world practice. They also often indicate that these interventions positively impacted them as well on the other individual or group they were working with in the application.

An especially useful and impactful tool for helping students better understand the relationship between a leader's well-being and the well-being of those they lead is to have them read the Rath and Harter book, *Well-Being*, and complete the online assessment tools that are provided in this resource. This process requires them to track their daily activities that impact their well-being and to also index their well-being across five domains on a regular basis. Students are asked to review their ratings informally and connect their levels of well-being to how they interact and treat others at work. What typically emerges from this analysis are discussions about how their levels of well-being influence their behavior toward others at work. Typically, these discussions extend to how their well-being levels at work influence their interactions and relationships with significant others outside of the workplace. These discussions become teaching moments to reinforce the topic of spillover between workplace behavioral episodes and the impact of these events on significant others outside of work.

SOME CHALLENGES

Getting managerial leaders and their organizations to effectively execute the practices associated with positively impacting well-being offers a number of challenges. Practical and appropriate assessment tools

are needed for managerial leaders to determine their impact on influencing well-being levels. This challenge, as reviewed by Hone, Jarden, Schofield, and Duncan (2014), is exacerbated by there being a multitude of different frameworks and related measurement approaches for understanding and assessing well-being. Addressing this challenge may encourage the integration of well-being metrics with utility analysis which may lend support for the development of additional well-being enhancing practices (Tziner, Fein, & Birati, 2014).

Closely associated with the above challenge is the need for managerial leaders to see well-being within a broader more holistic context (Kowalski & Loretto, 2017). This would help leaders and their organizations better understand and perhaps appreciate the significant impact that differing levels of well-being in the workplace have on other spheres of influence that leaders and organizations encounter (Kerns, 2015). This challenge becomes more urgent as research continues to suggest the strong spillover effects of well-being at work to other areas of life. Managerial leaders need to increase their awareness of these relevant and important impacts and also strive to impact well-being levels by effectively executing evidence based practices to include the five offered in the current article.

Getting organizational leaders and policy makers to effectively communicate the importance of workplace well-being to key stakeholders is a challenge. This challenge involves both effectively communicating key content areas as well as delivering the message in a high impact way. The content of the message needs to include such topics as the strong connection between workplace well-being driven by managerial leaders at work and well-being levels found outside of work. From a process perspective, the message needs to have high impact. Policy makers wanting to take on this challenge need to understand “what to say” and “how to say it” for high impact. There are resources available to help policy makers as well as managerial leaders successfully address this challenge relating to high impact communicating (Kerns, 2016b).

Finally, top management and boards of directors need to address the challenge brought on by bad bosses. These efforts need to focus on leadership development programs that help managerial leaders on the organizational firing line more effectively advance the practice of positively impacting well-being levels in their organizations (Harms, Crede, Tynan, Leon, & Jeung, 2017). These efforts may help turnaround the epidemic of ineffective managerial leadership. In addition, organizational boards and policy makers could benefit by proactively helping managerial leaders improve their well-being enhancing practices, even if they are, at a specific point in time, not considered to be performing ineffectively. While it is beyond the scope of the current article to address this topic extensively, it seems that the five practices put forth here would be examples of what managerial leaders could do more of with the support and encouragement of top management policy makers.

Addressing the challenges of assessment, establishing a holistic perspective, dealing with well-being diminishing bosses and having policy makers effectively address/communicate the need to develop managerial leaders to more effectively impact well-being seems important. As more attention is focused on the practice oriented aspects of impacting well-being at work, additional challenges for practitioners, policy makers, researchers, and teachers will be presented. The well-being impactor role is a competency for managerial leaders to execute and, when effectively done, likely contributes to enhancing leadership and organizational effectiveness across a variety of settings.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The development and application of practices to help managerial leaders more effectively understand and impact well-being in workplace settings will be beneficial to advancing the practice and study of leadership. As this work continues there will be a need for definitional clarity, assessment tools, and leadership development efforts to help leaders better understand and manage well-being at work. These and related efforts will likely advance our knowledge and understanding of how to best impact well-being levels at work. Managerial leader practices will be an integral part of these efforts. Policy makers as well as practitioners play key roles in impacting well-being at work.

ENDNOTES

1. A debate comparing and contrasting management and leadership has occurred over more than thirty years. In this article the terms managerial leadership, management and leadership/leader are used synonymously.
2. This system of managerial leadership strives to provide practitioners, applied researchers and teachers with an integrated approach to viewing and understanding leadership. The system brings together several streams of leadership study and research that have been offered over the past 100 years. A core dimension in this model relates to a leader's competencies. As part of this dimension a better understanding and management of the well-being impactor role can help advance the practice, study and teaching of leadership which is the focus of the current article. It is beyond the scope of the current presentation to review and discuss the other system dimensions.
3. While an extensive discussion and analysis of the five practices which comprise the well-being impactor action role is beyond the scope of the current article, the interested reader is referred to the following published work by the author: Kerns, C.D. (2014). Fostering and managing engagement: A framework for managerial leaders. *Journal of Leadership, Accountability, and Ethics*, 11(1), 34-49.; Kerns, C.D. (2011). Promoting and managing positivity: A coaching approach. *Business Renaissance Quarterly*, 6(3), 25-49.; Kerns, C.D. (2012). Profiling and managing time perspectives: A systematic approach. *International Leadership Journal*, 4(1), 1-21.; Kerns, C.D. (2010). Managing your strengths: An approach to boost happy high-performance. *Leadership Review*, 10 (Spring 2010), 66-81.; Kerns, C.D. (2013). Clarity of purpose and meaningfulness at work: Key leadership practices. *International Leadership Journal*, 27(1), 27-44.

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