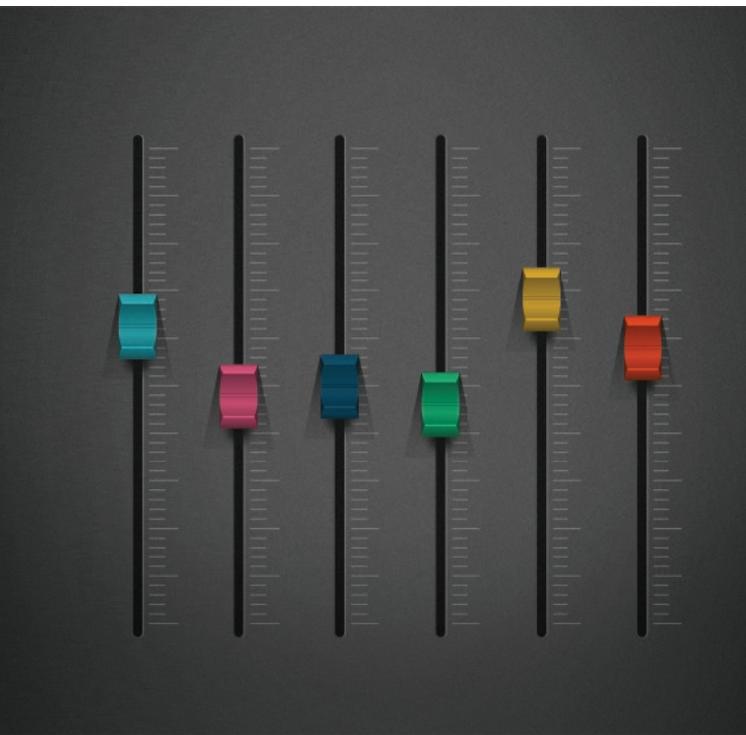*In this final article of a nine-part series, we examine the last section of the Jabian Engagement Framework: how governance can be used as a lever to influence engagement.*

Leveraging Governance to Drive Engagement

By Fred Jewell and Tracy Reznik

This series of articles examines each component of the Jabian Engagement Framework. Please refer to the Fall 2016 issue of *The Jabian Journal* for an introduction to framework. With engagement at the center, the model includes six engagement drivers: growth, relationships, autonomy, security, fairness, and well-being. The emotions and behaviors associated with each of these drivers determine our level of engagement with our company, our team, and our personal lives. Three categories of tools can be used to influence these engagement drivers and create engaged and fulfilled teams: alignment levers, implementation levers, and governance levers.

Governance is how we keep ourselves, our teams, our organizations, and our society on track. It's how we prioritize and maintain focus on the values that are most important to us. It's what keeps people and things moving, focused, and evolving. Good governance helps ensure that we are working as planned, accomplishing our goals, and staying aligned with our purpose. And when we veer off track, governance helps us identify the actions needed to correct course.

Measurement and control are the two levers that constitute the governance category in the Jabian Engagement Framework. Measurement is a precursor to control and can be both quantitative and qualitative. Like goals, measurement can pertain to any of the six engagement drivers and, therefore, to overall engagement. Simply put, measurement is how we evaluate our progress against goals.

Control is where governance gets interesting. Control is about the decisions we make to adjust course based on either qualitative or quantitative measurements. It can come from conscious decision-making (hiring more carpenters to get back on schedule when framing a house) or from unconscious adjustments (turning the steering wheel slightly to stay in your lane on the highway). To help illustrate how these two levers help drive engagement, we'll explore governance at the personal, team, and organizational levels.

GOVERNANCE AT THE PERSONAL LEVEL

When we say someone is "out of control," we are describing a person who is unpredictable, unproductive, and likely damaging relationships as a result of their destructive behavior. When someone is "in control," however, they are intentional, aware of their purpose, and focused on measuring and achieving goals.

At the personal level, one of the key elements of our purpose might be to "stay healthy" and one of our goals might be to "reach our ideal weight." Measurement might include periodically recording our weight and identifying some of

the processes we've put in place to help us lose weight — for example, by measuring our food intake, exercise, and sleep. We might also measure our feelings of well-being daily.

Measurements on their own, however, are not helpful unless we use them. That's where control comes in. If we see our weight creeping up, we might decide to cut back on high-calorie foods or increase our level of exercise. Control is about reflecting on what we are quantitatively measuring and qualitatively experiencing. This reflection can take the form of meditation, journaling, coaching, or even engaging in a vulnerable conversation with a friend. To make change happen, though, we need to act on those lessons learned through reflection.

GOVERNANCE AT THE TEAM LEVEL

At the team level, we might track our progress against a project plan, measuring actual effort versus planned effort, scope, and milestone achievement. If the project involved implementing processes or technology, we might measure adoption and training effectiveness. In general, measuring any of the engagement framework implementation levers used on a project quantitatively, if possible, but qualitatively at the least, is a best practice.

To make those measurements effective, however, we need to process them and take action. Control at the team level usually happens in daily stand-ups or weekly status meetings, but this type of control is effective only if those meetings are being run well. Tracking and managing progress against action items is necessary when teams are first forming. As teams mature, less management is needed because individual discipline and governance take over and trust develops between team members; this trust strengthens relationships, ensures the fair distribution of work, and leads to more predictable individual outcomes.

GOVERNANCE AT THE ORGANIZATION LEVEL

At the organization level, metrics like profitability, product quality, process quality, customer satisfaction, employee retention, and engagement can all help measure the health of an organization. However, measurement can become burdensome and ineffective when too many metrics are put in place and never acted upon. It's important for organizations (and individuals or teams, for that matter) to step back and reflect on whether the measurements collected align with their purpose, strategy, and goals.

When measurements fall out of line with the key alignment levers (purpose, goals, strategy, capacity, and belief), they can create friction within the organization and negatively affect the engagement drivers. In a worst-case scenario, they can even drive unethical behavior and create risks to the organization.

Control at the organization level usually happens in a cascaded structure of leadership meetings, with governance reviews on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis at the departmental, divisional, executive, and board levels. And for good governance to be effective, leaders must engage in goal setting, measurement against goals, prioritization of the initiatives to improve performance, and resource allocation.

Governance is critical at this level because it keeps the organization honest, ensuring that it is living its purpose and driving engagement throughout the broader ecosystem where it operates.

SERIES WRAP-UP — SO THAT'S IT?

Governance feels like the right place to end our series on the Jabian Engagement Framework, which began in the Fall 2016 issue of *The Jabian Journal*. We've now covered every driver of engagement and every lever that exists to influence those drivers of engagement. Based on Jabian's extensive research and testing, we are confident that this is a complete and comprehensive framework.

That doesn't mean our framework is never challenged. On the contrary, two areas are questioned most often: trust and leadership. "Isn't trust critical to engagement?" people ask. Like other virtues not directly covered by one of the six engagement drivers (growth, relationships, autonomy, security, fairness, or well-being), trust is made up of a collection of engagement drivers. I trust you if we have a relationship, I have some certainty about how you will behave toward me, and I know that you treat me fairly. When those factors are true, you probably also care about my personal growth and well-being. Like molecules are made up of atoms, trust is made up of a combination of elemental engagement drivers.

The second question that's often raised involves leadership. Isn't leadership critical for engagement? How can I have engagement if I don't have a solid leader? Of course, good leadership is critical. But what is leadership? Effective leadership is the use of the levers on the outside of the framework to influence the drivers that make up engagement. The levers represent a complete collection of tools available to leaders to drive their organizations. The levers influence the drivers, and the drivers influence engagement. From the inside out, it's an engagement framework. From the outside in, it's a leadership framework.

This framework has become our "Swiss army knife" for diagnosing problems and identifying solutions. We hope that you will find it as useful as we have for creating an engaging workplace, enhancing cultures, leading organizational change, tuning team dynamics, coaching and mentoring individuals, and even figuring out how to get yourself out of a funk. 🌀

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