The Purpose Linked Organization
How Passionate Leaders Inspire Winning Teams and Great Results
Alaina Love and Marc Cugnon

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ISBN: 978-0-07-162470-1

INTRODUCTION

The key to high performance in the workplace goes beyond traditional “hard skills” — passion is also an essential element. Employees who are able to identify a “passion and purpose” in their lives experience heightened engagement and innovation, and they feel connected to their work in exciting new ways. In an age when the average person spends 84,000 hours of their life at work, it is necessary to feel connected to the work to do it well. In The Purpose Linked Organization, leadership development experts Alaina Love and Marc Cugnon explain the powerful role passion and purpose play in the workplace and show how leveraging them effectively can enhance organizational performance.

The Purpose Linked Organization offer readers guidance on discovering their personal passions and then channeling them in a positive direction. The authors give readers the tools they need to identify their “Passion Profile Archetype” and hone the temperaments necessary for high performance. While written for organizational leaders seeking a meaningful way to gain advantages in a highly competitive marketplace, The Purpose Linked Organization also explains why understanding personal passions and purpose is important to everyone, regardless of title or position.

PURPOSE AND PASSION

Why does purpose matter? This question could be asked by any leader, as “many of us cannot imagine its place in the results-oriented, revenue-driven environments that constitute our daily work.” According to the authors, however, purpose is the key to keeping people motivated in life, and it ultimately shapes their effectiveness at work. Without having a purpose for what one does each day, life lacks meaning. Most people spend the majority of their adult lives at work, and being afforded a sense of purpose is necessary to feel meaning in life as a whole.
Although purpose is more difficult to define, passion is easy to recognize. It is also just as important as purpose. Passion is the excitement people feel and the spark they exhibit when they engage in something that captures their interest. While many people enjoy activities such as golf or gardening — perhaps going so far as to claim a “passion” for them — the authors make it clear that this is not the kind of passion they are addressing.

Real passion, according to the authors, is what keeps a person working until the early morning hours because they are so engrossed in what they are doing that they do not want to stop. This kind of passion is the drive that “generates tireless excitement” and frequently leads to the service of others as people strive to make a difference in the world. Passion is the catalyst for igniting the fire of skill, knowledge, and talent and then channeling it into new and creative ideas. It is the energizing force that keeps a person moving forward in the face of opposition, such as fatigue, lack of resources, or feelings of inadequacy. “Passion,” according to the authors, “gives a voice to our purpose.”

The discovery of one’s passions can take a lifetime; it is usually realized through trial and error as people move through life discovering what excites them. It requires an open mind and great patience, and it also forces a person to become introspective and remain open to feedback from others — this is how people will discover who they really are.

The Drive for Purpose & Passion
Most organizations take great care to craft a mission statement that defines the purpose behind its existence. This mission statement is designed to keep workers focused on the organization’s main objectives and to encourage consumer trust. In effect, the mission statement serves as a “purpose statement” for the organization as a whole; it capitalizes on the organization’s “reason for being.”

But although most leaders are aware of the need to define the organization’s passion and purpose, they often overlook the need for individuals to define their own purposes. Employees today want to be valued by their employers as more than the sum of their skills; they want to be valued as a “whole person.”

Key Concepts

In The Purpose Linked Organization, Love and Cugnon explain how linking passion and purpose to one’s work can enhance organizational performance.

- Most people are unable to define in concrete terms their life’s purpose, even though it is a common human need.
- Readers can discover their personal passions and purpose by utilizing the Passion Profiler. The resulting Passion Archetype Cluster reveals a lot about how well an individual’s work correlates with his or her passions.
- Tapping into a person’s “internal purpose” brings about self-actualization and self-awareness. This in turn ignites passions applied to work, bringing about greater fulfillment in the workplace.
- A sense of purpose and fulfillment creates a happier work environment and highly engaged employees who give 100 percent.
- Passion and purpose are often overlooked when an organization is determining its operational strategy and business goals.

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Throughout the authors’ years of research, they never once encountered a person who claimed he did not want a life that “mattered.” Everyone wants a life that matters, one that is valuable to them. In the authors’ study, every leader admitted his desire to leave a legacy amounting to more than the memory of “just working for a paycheck.”

In the past, most people would go to work and accept the realities of their jobs without question. They had little power or reason to make it any different, and most relegated their hopes for a “more fulfilling life” far into the future, when they could retire and then pursue their passions.

Today’s self-aware society is a far cry from those days, and younger workers, including Baby Boomers, are not willing to wait for retirement to gain a sense of fulfillment. According to the authors, most people spend more than 84,000 hours of their lives at work. As such, it is absolutely essential for people to find fulfillment in their careers — and fulfillment relies on the connection that one feels as a result of passion and purpose.

**Purpose Power**

In today’s workplace, countless tools are available to measure workers’ skills levels and determine how capable they are of carrying out a particular job, position, or assignment. Most of these assessment tests identify what a worker is capable of “doing,” focusing on “hard” skills and competencies. While these tools can serve a valuable purpose, the authors argue that who a person is also has a significant impact on the organization — at least as much as their hard skills do. Passion and purpose are defining elements of this.

While employee skills will always be important to successfully achieve goals, their passions will define the difference between marginal success and flourishing, both for the organization and the individual.

Leaders who understand the importance of purpose and passion should strive to learn as much as possible about their employees. Effective leaders who know their employees’ passions can link those passions to their work and then enjoy the improved performance and atmosphere that results — something the authors call **Purpose Power**. Purpose Power stems from those individuals who no longer seek a just a paycheck but instead seek significance in their job, which they identify with their purpose in life.

Organization leaders can harness this energy by recognizing who each worker is as a person; by understanding the passions that drive them; and by linking those passions and purposes to their careers. These workers will consequently feel energized and experience a sense of satisfaction about their jobs — and this translates into success for the organization. “A new creative edge is achieved when organizations realize that employee purpose drives the quality and clarity of employee input to the business.”

In addition, organizations that focus on their employees’ passions create a happy work environment, which the authors argue is important to organizational success — the psychological health of every individual forms a component of the company’s organizational DNA. An individual’s passion and purpose are often overlooked, however, when identifying resources that contribute to an organization’s strategic plan and goals.

Leaders who fail to connect their employees’ skills and knowledge to their purpose and passion miss out on the potential of Purpose Power. Their work-
Leaders who understand this connection, however, can ensure their employees are in the positions best suited for them, which will keep their skill and energy levels high. For instance, an employee who gains new training and skills may be taken away from a job she had been passionate about. Although a higher salary and increased perks may entice her to accept the promotion, she may become dissatisfied if the new position lacks the element she was passionate about in the first place.

### The Passion Profile

According to the authors, every individual has a “Passion Profile” that defines the elements he or she is passionate about. In order to determine an employee’s distinct Passion Profile, the authors developed an online test that identifies the individual’s “Passion Archtype Cluster.” The Cluster consists of the three archetypes that scored highest on the individual’s test. Typically, each person demonstrates a distinct primary archetype and one or two secondary archetypes. There are ten archetypes that may define an individual’s Passion Profile:

1. **Builders** – “The driving force for growing business.” Builders are oftentimes entrepreneurs who take a vision and turn it into reality, making things happen as they move toward their goals. Builders thrive on creating something from nothing. They are focused on the primary objectives of a project, and they are capable of overcoming any obstacles along the way. They can also be impatient and undervalue other people’s opinions or advice. To create an optimal team, leaders should pair Builders with Connectors, Conceivers, and Processors. Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, is a Builder.

2. **Conceivers** – “The intellectual acrobats of an organization.” Conceivers dissect information in order to gain an understanding of what is possible. They are “big-picture thinkers with broad intellectual interests.” A Conceiver soaks in large amounts of information, dissects it, and comes up with possible new ways of doing things. They are “outside-the-box” thinkers, often seen as renegades and destabilizers as they challenge the status quo. Leaders should pair Conceivers with Builders, Transformers, Discoverers, Creators, and Teachers. An example of a Conceiver is Peter Drucker, author and management consultant.

3. **Connectors** – “The bridge-builders of an organization…passionate about exploring linkages between individuals, between problems and solutions, and between needs and their source of fulfillment.” Connectors are curious by nature, and this curiosity drives them to gain a deep understanding of every facet of a task. Connectors sincerely like people and enjoy creating a sense of community. Some see them as a threat, however, due to their ability to get along with all levels of authority within an organization. Their desire for consensus can also lead to stagnation or compromise. Leaders should pair Connectors with Builders, Conceivers, Processors, and Teachers. Henry Kissinger is a good example of a Connector.

4. **Creators** – The artisan of the organization. “They are filled with images, emotions, and elements that appeal to the senses.” Their imaginations give them the drive to form and develop ideas. Creators are open to every possibility life offers, and they see unlimited potential in human imagination. They desire to create something that does not exist, and they require a great deal of autonomy and freedom in their work. Creators may also be sensitive to criticism, have a hard time separating emotion from logic, and be somewhat disorganized. Supportive pairings of Creators are Conceivers and Builders. Stephen Spielberg is a Creator.

5. **Discoverers** – The “explorers and innovators of the organization. On a passionate quest to find a new treasure.” Discoverers are driven by the journey of discovery. They are adept at processing data and taking it to logical conclusions. They seek evolution and change. Discoverers may also be narrow in their vision and obsessive about a project long past its value. They can lose sight of objectives, as
they are driven by the need to explore. Leaders should pair Discoverers with Processors, Teachers, and Conceivers. The scientist who discovered the vaccine for polio, Jonas Salk, was a Discoverer.

6. **Processors** – “The spinal column of the organization — they are the sustainers of structure, function, and tradition.” Processors possess high analytical skills and thrive on sifting through the details. They can see beyond the immediate and envision future problems. Processors are capable of building “systems and processes,” though they can also be unrelenting perfectionists, demanding overly high standards and maintaining unrealistic expectations of others. They tend to be traditionalists who resist change. Good pairings for Processors are Transformers, Teachers, Discoverers, and Healers. Peter Orszag, who headed the U. S. Office of Management and Budget, is a Processor.

7. **Transformers** – “The alchemists and change agents of the organization.” Transformers are constantly looking for ways to improve an organization and bring it to its full potential. They are quick to gain the trust of others, and they are willing and comfortable exploring the unknown. They can also become impatient when others stand in their way, and they may lack the ability to formulate a concrete plan for their ideas. Transformers work well when paired with Processors, Connectors, and Healers. Barack Obama, the 44th President of the United States, is a Transformer.

8. **Altruists** – “The humanitarians of the organization. They demonstrate a strong passion for work that benefits the higher good of an organization, and society as a whole.” Altruists do not seek popularity; instead, they strive to become the advocate for the needy and the “moral compass” for an organization. Altruists become deeply committed to their causes and focus their attention on the needs of the less fortunate. They can also lack the ability to expect accountability and responsibility of those they assist. In addition, they may ignore important close relationships while focusing on their causes. Leaders should pair an Altruist with a Builder, Processor, and Connector. Mother Theresa was an Altruist.

9. **Healers** – “Carry with them a passion for creating peace where there is turmoil, applying salve to open wounds, and mending broken relationships or broken spirits.” Healers are capable mediators with high levels of patience who help repair dysfunction in an organization. They tend to be unselfish and accepting of all people, though they may also create an unhealthy dependence on their contributions to a situation. The desire to go beyond the call of duty may lead to overwork or exhaustion. Healers pair well with Connectors, Teachers, and Transformers. One example of a Healer is Andrew Weil, author, physician, and leading proponent of integrative medicine.

10. **Teachers** – “Are integral contributors to the lineage of organizational knowledge. They help to create the foundation of institutional wisdom.” Teachers thrive on new information and sharing that information with “hungry minds.” They enjoy close relationships with their learners, and they are typically passionate about continually gaining knowledge. When teachers share information, some may consider them pompous. If a person is not interested in what they are teaching, teachers tend to interpret this as a lack of respect. Two good pairings for the Teacher are Transformers and Builders. One exemplary teacher is Michael Geisen, a science teacher, who was nominated as the 2008 National Teacher of the Year.

According to the authors, “Examining your own Passion Archetype Cluster can reveal a lot about how well the work you’re doing at present correlates with the passions you carry.” A strong connection between one’s passion and one’s work grants a feeling of fulfillment and success in one’s job. Once understanding is gained, this information can then be used to make better choices. Knowing and understanding what drives people helps them understand which jobs to seek, which organizations to apply to, when to say “yes” or “no” to promotions, how to lead and manage people, and more.
Benefits of The Passion Profile

Once a person knows his Passion Archetype Cluster, the information can be applied in many ways. First, it can define a person’s character strengths. Every position requires not only a particular set of skills, but also a certain set of character qualities. If a person knows the character qualities he possesses — such as being resourceful and resilient — he can apply them at work. Leaders will also benefit, as they will know who should be assigned each job.

Second, knowing these qualities can help people understand potential vulnerabilities and problems. If a person is a Builder, for instance, one of his qualities is a goal-driven attitude. If he overdoes this attribute or pushes people too fast, the quality quickly turns into a liability. The role of the leader is to pair complementary archetypes in order to maximize the qualities each person contributes.

Another benefit of knowing one’s archetype relates to career planning. Keeping to the same example, a Builder would make an ideal candidate for a key leadership position in a start-up company. A Processor, on the other hand, enjoys analyzing details and would make a great accountant, engineer, or air traffic controller. Likewise, hours spent analyzing detailed reports would stifle a Teacher, who thrives in an atmosphere that allows development of others’ potential.

Pairing people together with differing character qualities is both beneficial and challenging. A Builder, for instance, benefits by teaming with a Processor: while the Builder forges ahead and navigates uncharted territory, the Processor can analyze the details along the way. A Builder is a big-picture person, while the Processor is concerned with each and every nuance. This complementary paring is beneficial to an organization.

While opposites can complement each other, they can also rub each other the wrong way. As such, when a leader forms a team, it is important to know which qualities will clash or cause friction. Understanding these potential differences ahead of time will help leaders manage issues as they arise. Leaders can also help each team member gain a better understanding of why they need the other person, despite their differences.

Defining an Approach for Accessing Purpose

Most people are unable to define their life’s purpose in concrete terms, but the authors emphasize that it has been documented throughout history as a common need. Elijah’s story in the Bible is one example: Elijah was determined to hear a voice that would link him to his higher purpose. The authors also cite Homer’s Odysseus, who wandered through life until he realized what was most important to him. History demonstrates the very human desire to know one’s own purpose.

Even though knowing one’s purpose and passion is the key to a happy existence, the authors acknowledge that the journey to discovering them is not easy. It is a process that can take years of trial and error, and in the end, the person may still be unsure of what really matters.

While there is no simple formula for discovering purpose and passion, the authors have developed a four-step approach called PREP (Preparing for the Journey). These four steps serve as a framework for action during the journey, helping readers not only come to a quicker understanding of what is meaningful, but also enjoy the process of discovery.

1.) Be Present and Open – When seeking a purpose, individuals should start by being attuned to everything that happens in their day-to-day lives and to be aware of which things engage them. They must be open to any opportunity life presents in the here and now. By staying open and aware, a person does not have to obsess over how discovery will happen; she will be aware of all life’s possibilities as they emerge.

2.) Reflect and Partner – This concept has four essential elements that a person must incorporate into her daily routine: 1.) stillness, 2.) contemplation, 3.) courage, and 4.) community. The first three elements of the process require one to look inward for understanding and change. The fourth element (community) requires the person to learn from outward experiences, partnered with the people they encounter on a day-to-day basis.
3.) *Examine* – This step requires people to analyze their past with a critical eye, searching for clues that may reveal past passions. Individuals must also consider what they are willing to do to change their situation in order to pursue their passions. This step moves the individual from complaining about dissatisfactions to “actively constructing a meaningful future.”

4.) *Persist* – The final step represents the realization that the journey to purpose is a journey of discovery; it is not meant to be a quick formula or a “straight line” to a goal. It is not unusual for people to feel frustrated or discouraged when they do not find immediate answers or when they encounter delays — but it is important to stay the course and persevere.

According to the authors, Step Two (Reflect and Partner) is a vital step, and they address each of its four elements in a process they call “creating the right mix for purpose and passion: The Art of Reflecting and Partnering.”

First, the authors address stillness and contemplation together, as they are interconnected. Being still and contemplating life seems to run counter to what society teaches as productive; by and large, corporate culture assumes that if a person is not actively “doing something,” he is wasting time — and time is money. In other cultures, however, stillness and contemplation are considered valuable: when an individual is still, he is at her most introspective and creative. Quieting the mind allows time for self-reflection and new ideas to emerge. Capturing these ideas and contemplating their meaning helps individuals gain a deeper understanding of who they are as individuals. It also opens the mind to creativity and innovation. Different people have different approaches to their ideal type of contemplation. Some prefer an exercise routine, when their mind is free to wander and their body is fully engaged. Others sit quietly in a meditative state. There is no one “right way” to contemplate — what is “right” is whatever works for the individual.

The third component, *working with courage*, involves letting go of one’s safety net and opening the door to new possibilities. Individuals must resist relying on the status quo, on other peoples’ definitions of who they are, or on what is predictable and known. Working with courage challenges individuals to rethink who they are and possibly redefine themselves. This may require a person to acknowledge that she sees herself differently than how others have defined her in the past. This is often when a person realizes that her “true self” had been lost along the way, and now she is on a journey to get that person back.

The final ingredient, the *power of community*, is the recognition of the fact that people need each other. Whether at home, at play, or on the job, no one is designed to live in isolation; people need a sense of belonging to others, and they need to feel as though other people are on their side. Everyone needs other people to listen to their ideas and stories, and to encourage them in their mission to find a purpose. There is a contagiousness of energy and life that affects each person as they root for the success of another.

*It is important to recognize the process as a journey rather than a destination.*

### The Impact of Culture on Leveraging Purpose and Passion

One final bit of evidence that supports the link between purpose/passion and job performance comes from behavioral economics. Here, the authors cite a scientific study that sought to determine how hard a person works in relation to how much he is paid. In the study, one group of people was asked to perform a task “as a favor,” while another group was paid for completing the same task. When the end results were compared, the study found that the first group worked harder to complete the task well. According to the authors, “most of us wouldn’t demand pay for doing what we perceive to be a ‘Good Samaritan’ favor for someone else.” This is one example of a *social norm*. Social norms are comprised of internal purpose, self-awareness, and personal passion. *Market norms*, on the other hand, teach people to seek an education, receive training for a job, and develop the skills to carry it out in order to receive money for the work performed. That is the market norm reward: a paycheck. When people are internally driven to act according to a social norm, the expected outcome is not a monetary reward but rather a sense of joy and fulfillment. This is something money cannot buy.
Conclusion
The authors conclude that leveraging a person’s internal purpose is the key to self-actualization and awareness. This in turn ignites an individual’s passion for her work, bringing about greater fulfillment in the workplace — and ultimately creates a happier work environment and highly engaged employees who give 100 percent.

What does this mean for leaders in the workplace? According to the authors: “We have now entered the ‘Era of Consciousness.’ In this new era, leaders will be called upon to become profoundly aware of themselves and their teams, to help those they lead discover and apply their passions to the work of the organization, to become deeply aware of the customers they serve and the value that company’s products and services can offer.”

When leaders give employees “permission” to reach their potential, maximum creative effort is no longer left to chance. Instead, it becomes a purposeful, passionate endeavor that everyone can benefit from. As skilled, educated employees work with passion and purpose, they create an energetic, productive environment that gives organizations the competitive edge they need to succeed today’s marketplace.

Features of the Book
Reading Time: 7 hours, 233 pages

Although written primarily for organizational leadership, The Purpose Linked Organization can benefit all readers. The authors emphasize how important it is for both leaders and individuals to understand their passions and purpose in life and to relate them to their careers. The book provides all-inclusive framework for individual satisfaction and for companies looking to maximize their organization’s performance to gain a greater foothold in competitive economic times.

As organizational leaders discover their purposes and help employees realize their own passions, the energy, drive, and creativity born from self-discovery becomes a major performance resource for the organization. Happy people work harder than those who are discontent. Leaders who are passionate about their work will ignite and inspire passion in others.

The Purpose Linked Organization provides online access to the “Passion Profiler” test, which determines an individual’s distinct “Passion Profile.” This tool is a crucial piece in the “Performance Nexus” — where skill, passion, and core values intersect. In addition, The Purpose Linked Organization includes case studies, theories, charts, action plans, and diagrams to enhance each concept. Individual testimonies from leaders who share their inspirational stories are also included.

The book is designed to be read from cover to cover, along with the reader’s participation in the online “Passion Profiler” test. The book contains a list of frequently asked questions about the “Passion Profile” as well as a comprehensive Bibliography and Index.

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