

# **Designing Work to Achieve Well-being and Service Improvements**

**Talk by Graham Lowe, Ph.D.  
Healthy Workplaces for Helping Professionals  
Conference  
Edmonton, 13 October 2017**

# My focus today

## How can you design work to improve both well-being and performance?

- Ingredients of a successful healthy workplace strategy
- Linking employee well-being to your organization's performance
- Your role leading healthy workplace change

# Successful healthy workplace strategies

# Workplace health promotion works

To answer the question, “*Do workplace health promotion programs work?*” a team of experts concluded that if these programs are well-designed, effectively executed and guided by evidence-based principles they can provide substantial health and financial benefits.

There is a huge difference between comprehensive workplace health promotion and “*random acts of wellness.*”

*Goetzel, R. Z., Henke, R. M., Tabrizi, M., Pelletier, K. R., Loeppke, R., Ballard, D. W. et al. (2014). Do workplace health promotion (wellness) programs work? Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine 56, 927-934.*

# Promoting a 'culture of health'

A best practice in workplace health promotion is for employers to promote a '*culture of health*', which means "integrating health into the way an organization operates, thinks, and acts."

*Kent K, Goetzel RZ, Roemer EC, Prasad A, & Freundlich N. (2016). Promoting healthy workplaces by building cultures of health and applying strategic communications. Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine 58(2):114-122.*

# Taking an integrated approach

**“...companies that integrate their health and safety efforts, building a culture of health and wellness along with a culture of safety, are likely to have a competitive advantage in the marketplace.”**

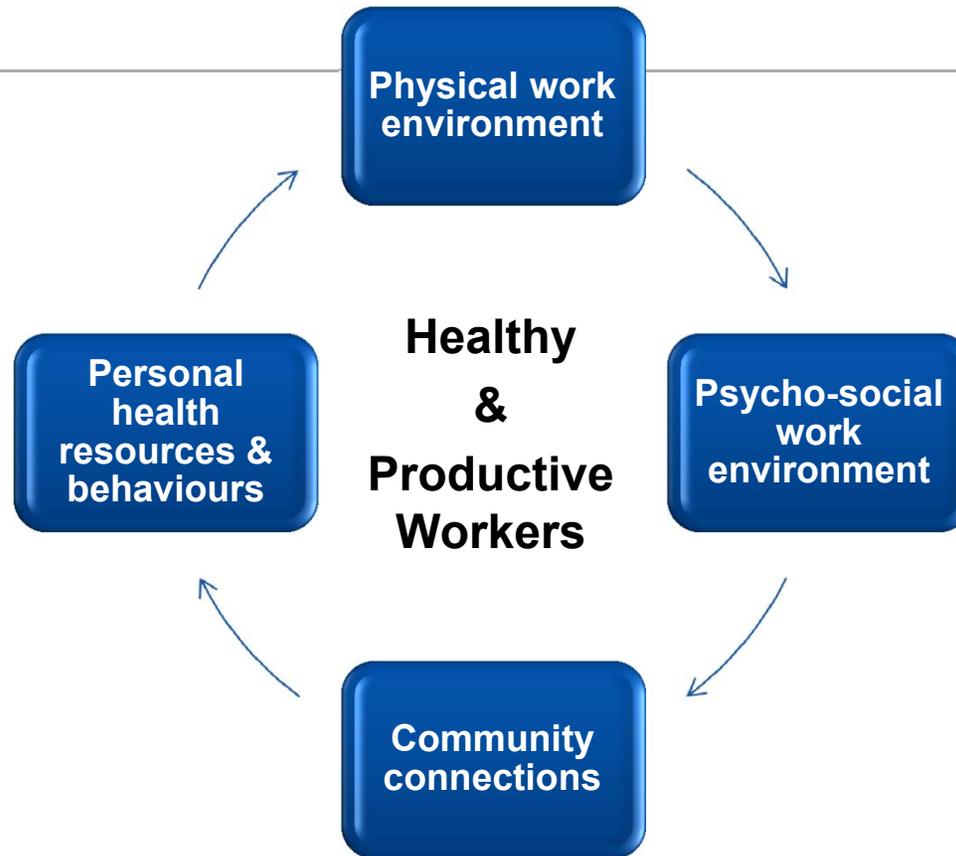
Fabius, R. M., et al. (2016). Tracking the Market Performance of Companies That Integrate a Culture of Health and Safety: An Assessment of Corporate Health Achievement Award Applicants. *Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine*, 58, 3-8.

## New Alberta initiative...

Alberta Health's ***Healthy Workplaces Program***, to be launched early 2018 ([www.albertahealthyworkplaces.ca](http://www.albertahealthyworkplaces.ca)):

“In a Healthy Workplace, everyone understands that employee health and well-being are essential for business success and there is a comprehensive range of policies, resources and practices that promote good health among employees, support employees to reduce health risks behaviours, and provide a work environment that proactively prevents injury and illness.”

# Workplace Health Framework



## Organizational Success Factors



# Healthy Workplace Action Model

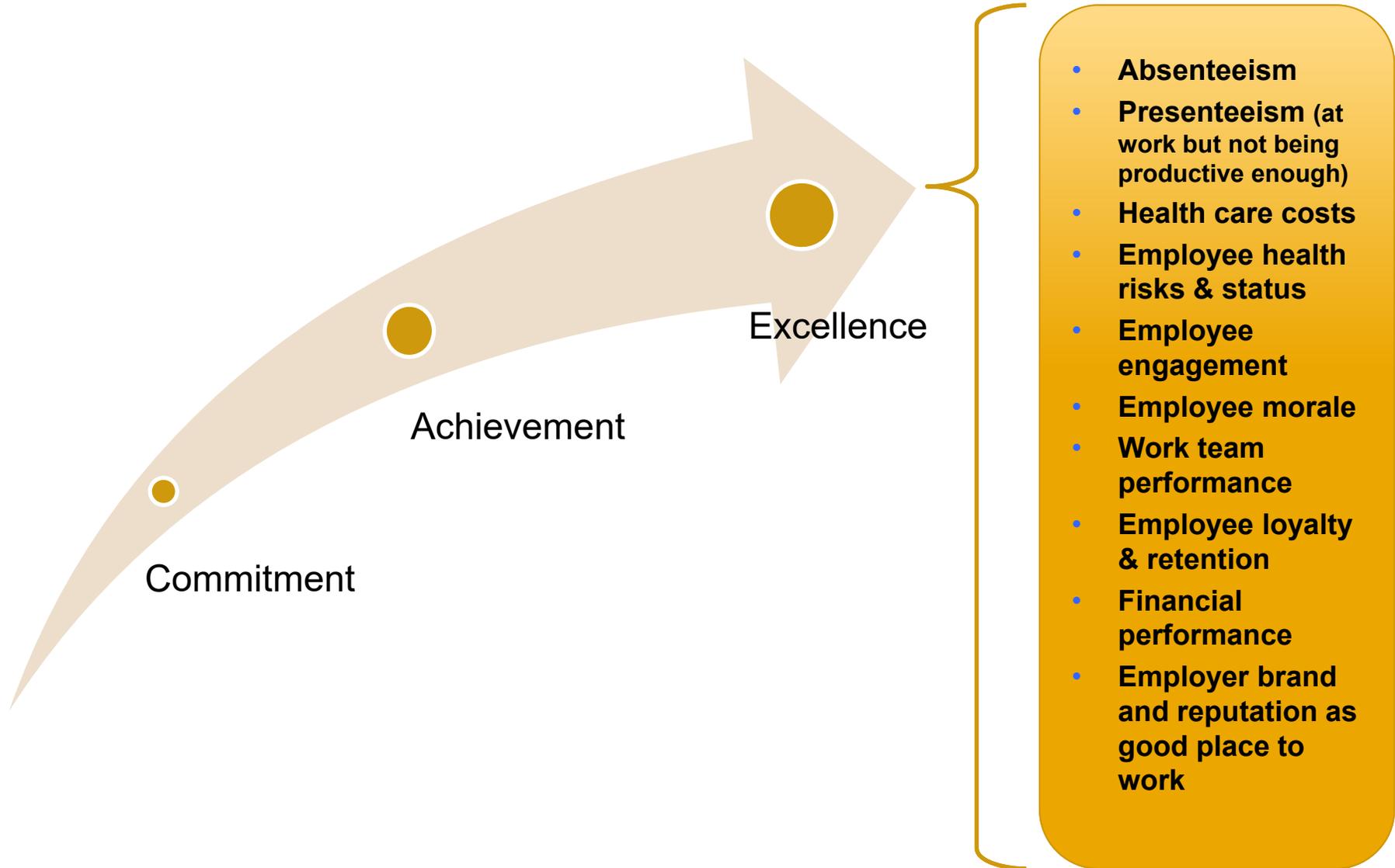


## 3 Healthy Workplace Levels

The **Alberta Healthy Workplaces Program** is built around three levels, each representing successive stages of workplace health in terms of actions taken and progress achieved.

- 1. Commitment:** The entry level, for organizations that are starting to build the foundation for a healthy workplace, beginning to address workplace health issues and ready to make a solid commitment to take necessary action.
- 2. Achievement:** The intermediate level, for organizations that have advanced beyond the Commitment level, having developed and implemented a comprehensive healthy workplace plan or strategy.
- 3. Excellence:** The advanced level, for those organizations that have met all the requirements for the Achievement level and can show measureable improvements in employee health and well-being, have the resources and capacity to sustain this progress, and have developed a culture of health.

# Healthy Workplace Payoffs



# Healthy workplace assessment tool

## How the Assessment Tool Advances Organizations Through the 5-Step Healthy Workplace Action Model

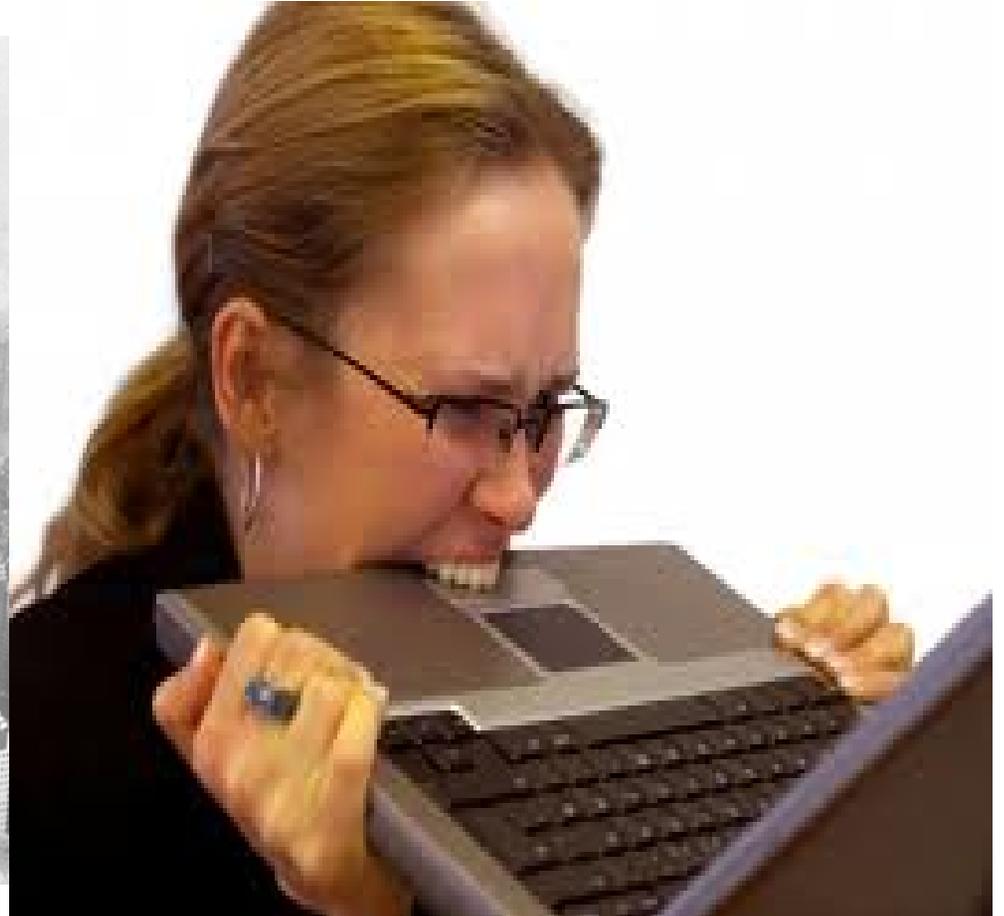
LEVEL	Healthy Workplace Actions				
	Engage	Assess	Plan	Implement	Evaluate and Improve
1. <b>Commitment</b>	✓	✓	✓		
2. <b>Achievement</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	
3. <b>Excellence</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

*Prepares organizations for enrolling in the Certificate of Recognition Health Standard*



# Linking well-being to your organization's performance

# Changing perceptions of risk

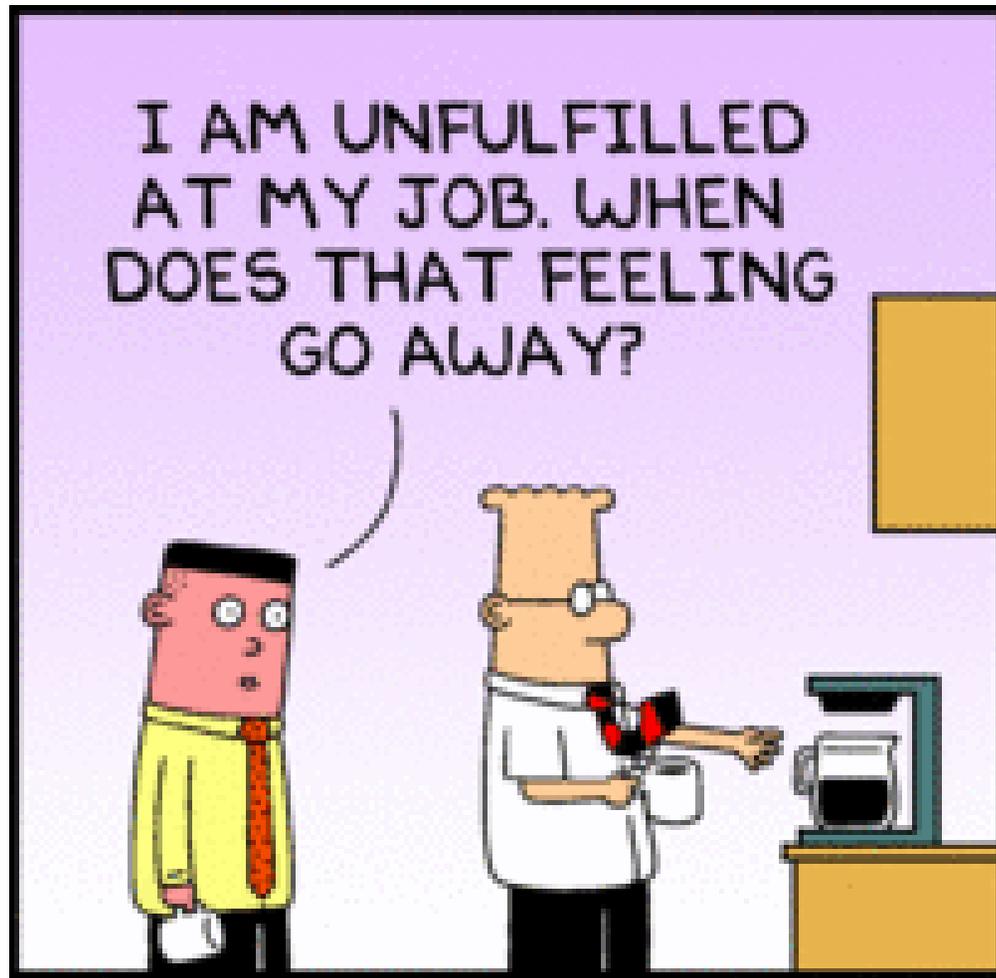


# Happy employees



See: *Harvard Business Review*, Jan-Feb 2012.

# A big problem?



Dilbert.com DilbertCartoonist@gmail.com

## Psychologically healthy & safe workplaces...

- Foster psychological well-being while enhancing organizational performance
- Promote respectful relationships between staff, customers, the public
- Support staff experiencing psychological difficulties

Source: Dan Bilsker and Merv Gilbert, *Psychological Health & Safety: Action Guide for Employers*

# Assessing risks and identifying opportunities: *workplace factors*

1. Psychological and social support
2. Organizational culture
3. Clear leadership and expectations
4. Civility and respect
5. Psychological job demands
6. Growth and development
7. Recognition and reward
8. Involvement and influence
9. Workload management
10. Engagement
11. Work/life balance
12. Protection from violence, bullying and harassment
13. Physical safety

Source: *National Standard*

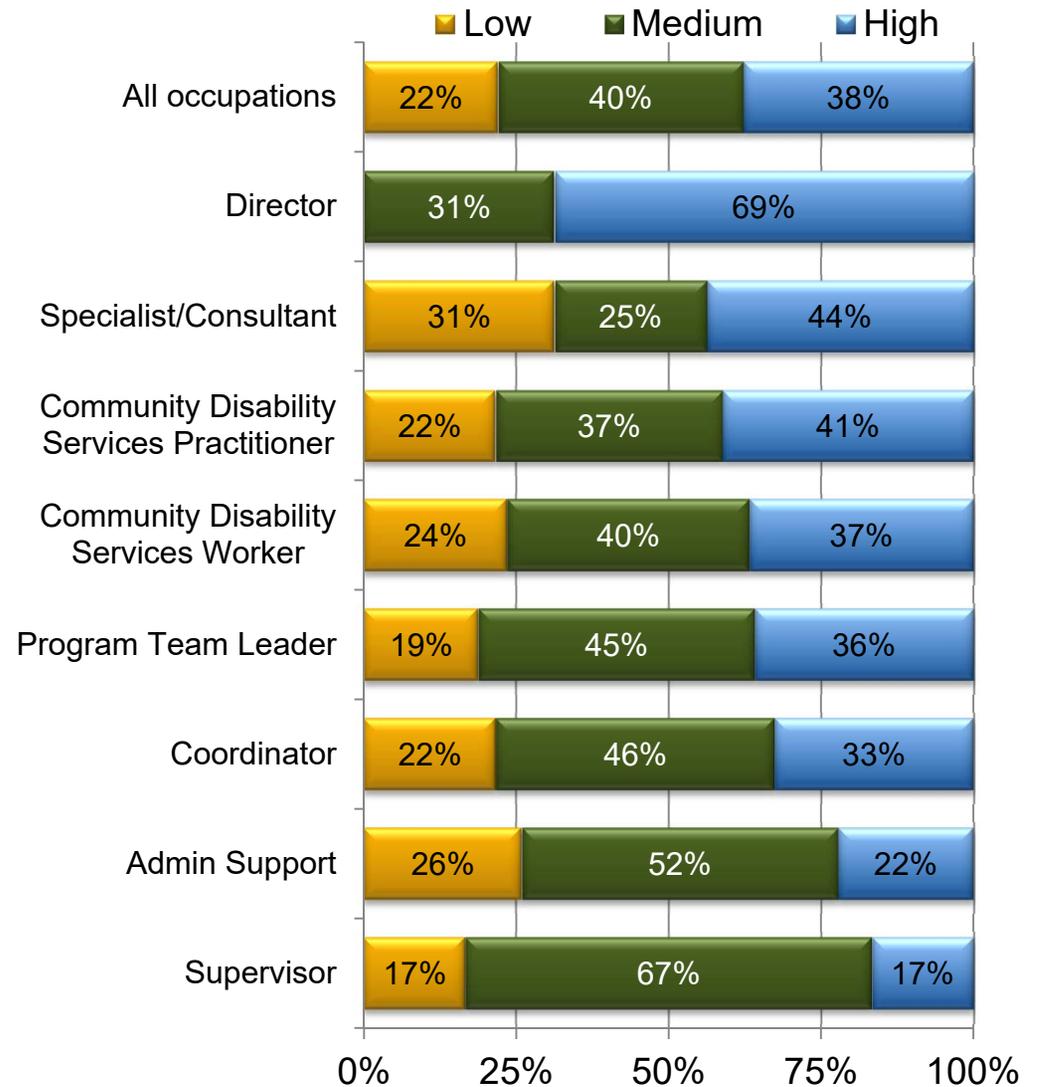
# Employee engagement – Edmonton PDD

- 2011 'YOUR VOICE' employee survey, 8 Edmonton-area PDD agencies (n=835; 55% response rate))
- 7 items measure the emotional, rational and behavioural dimensions of employee engagement.
- Engaged employees are satisfied, loyal, proud, inspired, feel their work is meaningful, share the organization's values, and speak highly of the organization as a workplace.
- High engagement is a triple-win: employees, clients and management benefit.



# Engagement levels by occupation

- The 7-item Engagement Scale (ES) has scores between 5 and 35.
- These scores can be grouped into low, medium and high levels of engagement.
- There are statistically significant differences in ES scores by agency and occupation (but not gender, age or seniority).



# Engagement “drivers” – Edmonton PDD

- Using the Engagement Scale, we can identify the specific features of job, work environment, management and organizational supports that have the biggest impact on employee engagement.
- This analysis measures the “net” impact of each factor measured in the survey (i.e., after taking into account all other factors measured in the EES).
- These factors are the “drivers” of employee engagement.
- Understanding these “drivers” of engagement can help to plan improvements.

## These factors (ranked by importance) have the biggest impact on engagement:

1. Management cares about the well-being of employees.

2. My job is interesting.

3. I trust the managers of this organization.

4. My job enables me to use my skills and abilities.

5. Satisfaction with work schedule.

6. Management keeps me informed about important issues.

7. I feel I belong to a team.

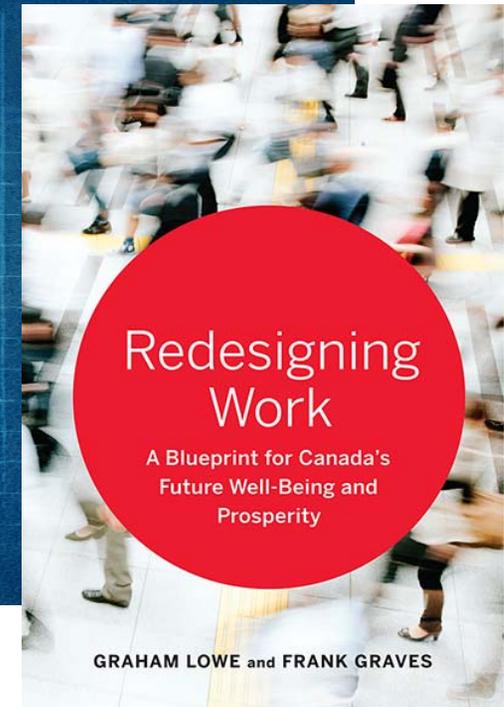
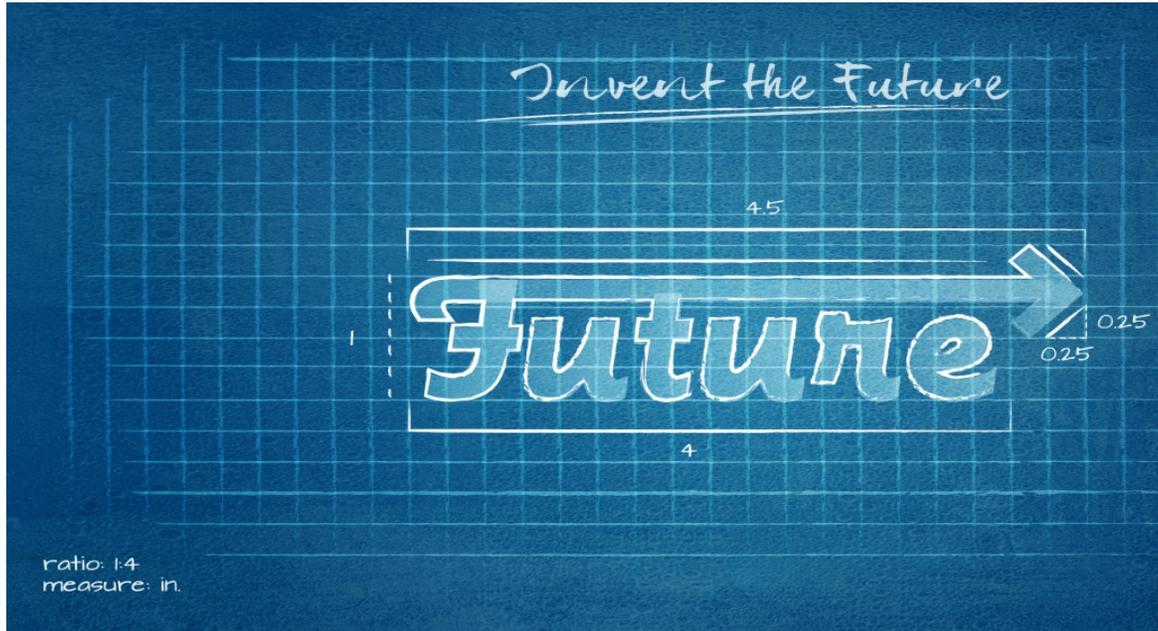
# Action implications

The survey identifies specific opportunities for improvement:

- Giving employees more say in decisions affecting their jobs
- More feedback and support for career development from supervisors
- Acting on employees' input
- Keeping employees informed about important issues
- Valuing employees' contributions
- Giving employees a fair hearing if they have a complaint.

By addressing the above issues, management can build trust, demonstrate they care about employee well-being and foster engagement.

# How can we design better jobs?



- Need a **blueprint** for better work
  - Ask workers
  - Build on work experiences and values

# Workers' perspective on better jobs



# What's most valued?

## *Most important characteristics in deciding which job to choose:*

- A workplace free from harassment and discrimination
- Work that gives a sense of pride & accomplishment
- Good job security
- Challenging and interesting work
- A healthy and safe workplace
- Senior management I can trust



# Top motivators

*What contributes most to making you look forward to work?*

- The people I work with
- Challenging, interesting and varied work
- Helping customers, clients, society



# Your role

# Enablers of healthy workplaces

- 1. Leadership commitment:** Demonstrated commitment from leaders, backed by resources, to improve employee well-being and the embedding of health and safety goals into the organization's culture.
- 2. Integrated and comprehensive approach:** A commitment to achieving healthy workplace goals is integrated into the organization's strategy and linked to safety, human resources and corporate social responsibility.
- 3. Participation:** Active participation of employees and managers at all stages of the workplace health improvement process, and as users of healthy workplace programs and resources.
- 4. Communication:** The organization and its leaders regularly communicate with workers about healthy workplace resources, initiatives and progress through multiple channels.
- 5. Continuous improvement:** Achieving healthy workplace goals requires time, persistence, a continuous review of progress measures, and appropriate adjustments to initiatives.

# How do you promote psychological health & safety in your workplace?

- ✓ Demonstrate a personal commitment to a PHSW?
- ✓ Communicate why and how a PHSW is strategically important?
- ✓ Communicate how corporate values and ethical responsibilities require a PHSW?
- ✓ Role model the skills and behaviours other managers need to support a PHSW?
- ✓ Create accountability for actions contributing to a PHSW?
- ✓ Take into account employee wellbeing when making corporate decisions and planning change?

# Alberta Healthy Workplaces: Achievement Level Requirements

<b>Leadership &amp; Culture</b>	<b>Fully Met</b>	<b>Partially Met</b>	<b>N/A</b>
The organization's senior leaders are committed to and actively participate in the company's health and wellness programs.	✓		
Senior leaders encourage employee participation in workplace health and wellness programs.	✓		
The organization has a Healthy Workplace Policy that addresses employee physical and psychological health, and is aligned with safety policies.	✓		
The organization has a dedicated annual budget for workplace health initiatives.	✓		
The organization has human resources dedicated to workplace health.	✓		
The organization recognizes employees and work teams for healthy and safe behaviours.	✓		
The organization provides managers at all levels with education and training regarding their role in creating a healthier workplace.	✓		

# Low-cost actions you can take...

1. **Live the** corporate values and model healthy behaviours.
2. **Engage** employees, developing a shared vision of a healthy and safe workplace.
3. **Design** change to be healthy.
4. **Expand** occupational health and safety management systems to promote psychological health and safety.
5. **Collaborate** with HR and OHS to develop integrated approaches to employee well-being.
6. **Analyze** your OHS and HR metrics to demonstrate connections between health, safety and performance.
7. **Strengthen** your organization's culture as the foundation for a healthy, safe and high-performing workplace.

# Model healthy behaviours

- ✓ Living the corporate values builds trust



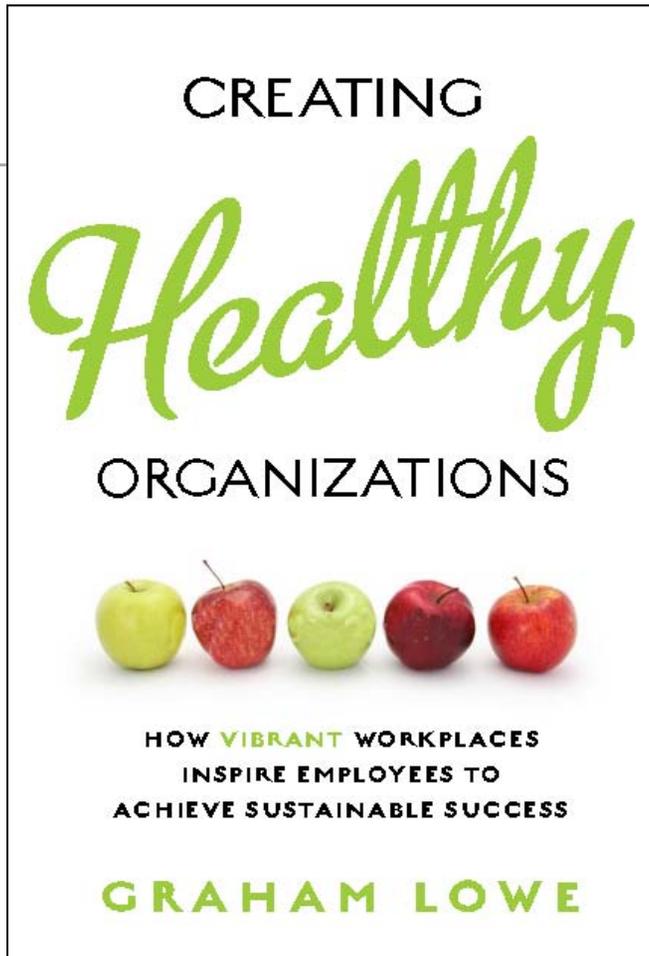
**“You’ve earned our trust, Wigman.  
Starting tomorrow, the electronic  
ankle monitoring device comes off.”**

# Achieving sustainable success

**You can't become a healthy organization by launching another program. It must become how you operate.**



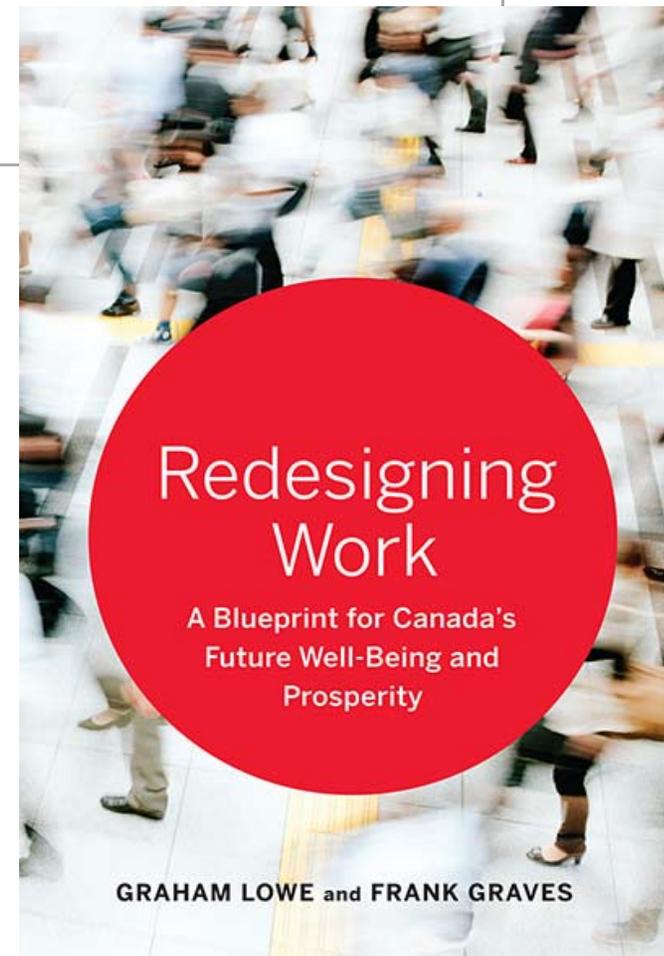
# Questions & Comments



[www.creatinghealthyorganizations.ca](http://www.creatinghealthyorganizations.ca)

Follow me on Twitter: [@HealthyOrgs](https://twitter.com/HealthyOrgs)

The Graham Lowe Group | [www.grahamlowe.ca](http://www.grahamlowe.ca) | [glowe@grahamlowe.ca](mailto:glowe@grahamlowe.ca)



[www.redesigningwork.ca](http://www.redesigningwork.ca)