

## Why We Call It a Workforce Priorities Diagnostic – Not an Engagement Survey



*Many organizations run engagement surveys to measure sentiment and compare benchmarks. However, measurement alone does not clarify where leadership should focus or which workforce initiatives will have the greatest impact. We call our approach a Workforce Priorities Diagnostic because it goes beyond reporting scores. Using validated instruments, qualitative analysis, and advanced statistical modeling, we identify the workforce drivers that most strongly predict engagement and retention within your organization.*

*The result is not another data report. It is a prioritized, defensible plan that helps leadership determine what to start, what to stop, and where to invest resources for meaningful impact.*

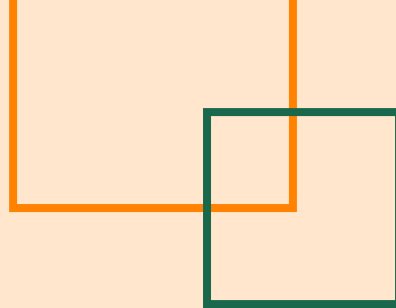
Many organizations begin with a reasonable request: “We need to run an engagement survey.”

On the surface, that seems straightforward. Engagement data can provide valuable insight into how employees experience their work, their managers, and the organization overall. However, over the years, we realized that what we were delivering went well beyond a traditional engagement survey. Even when we referred to our work as an “engagement assessment,” the label did not fully capture the depth of analysis, prioritization, and strategic direction embedded in our process.



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That realization led us to rename our offering. What we provide is not simply an engagement survey. It is a Workforce Priorities Diagnostic. The distinction matters.

### **The Limitation of Traditional Engagement Surveys**

Many organizations already use established survey vendors. They receive benchmark comparisons, engagement scores, and industry percentiles. These data points can be informative, particularly for executives interested in understanding how their organization compares to competitors.

However, benchmarks alone rarely answer the more pressing strategic questions: Where should we focus? Which workforce drivers, if improved, will have the greatest impact on engagement, retention, and performance? How do these findings connect to our broader organizational goals?

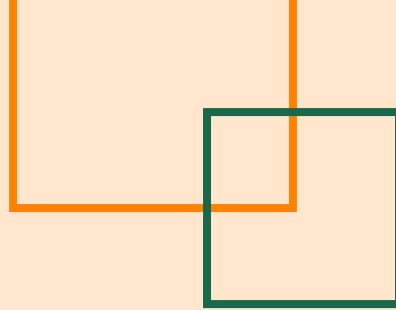
Traditional surveys measure sentiment. They do not inherently identify which issues deserve leadership attention now, nor do they distinguish between areas that are visible and those that are statistically consequential. Without deeper analysis and alignment to strategy, engagement data can become another report, another initiative, and another competing priority.

We have, at times, lost prospective clients because our approach was perceived as “too in-depth.”



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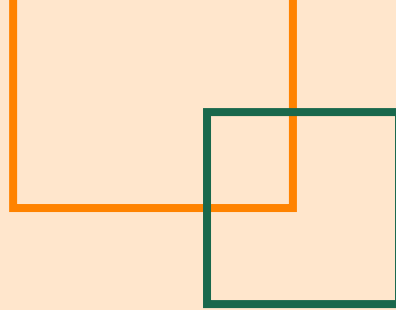
Some organizations were looking for a simpler tool to check a box or confirm alignment with competitors. In certain cases, those same organizations later returned because they recognized that scores and benchmarks did not translate into clear, actionable direction.

### **From Measurement to Diagnosis**

An engagement survey produces data; a diagnostic interprets that data and clarifies what to do next.

Our Workforce Priorities Diagnostic includes a validated, research-based engagement instrument administered confidentially by a third party. We assess engagement across cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions and integrate quantitative findings with thematic coding of open-ended comments.

The differentiator, however, is advanced statistical modeling. Using regression analysis, we identify which workforce drivers most strongly predict engagement within that specific organization. Rather than assuming that the lowest-scoring area deserves immediate attention, we determine which drivers will have the greatest impact if improved. [Multiple regression studies on engagement](#) show that drivers vary widely in their impact on outcomes like performance and retention, which means the 'lowest score' is not always the highest-leverage priority.



This often challenges assumptions. For example, burnout is frequently perceived as the central issue because it is visible and urgent. Yet in many organizations, burnout has minimal predictive impact on overall engagement compared to other drivers. Addressing burnout alone may feel responsive, but it may not materially shift retention or performance outcomes.

Without statistical prioritization, leaders risk investing in the most emotionally salient issue rather than the most consequential one.

### **The Risk of Measuring Without Acting**

There is also a more subtle risk to repeated measurement without prioritization. When organizations run surveys year after year without visible, meaningful change, employees notice. Over time, participation declines and trust in leadership can erode. Feedback without follow-through can create frustration rather than engagement.

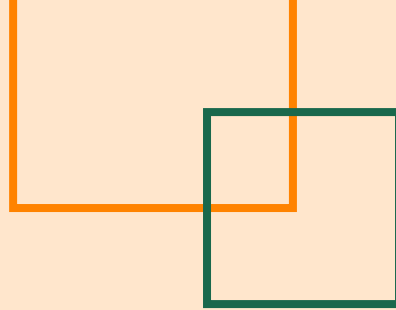
[Research reviewing more than 20 studies](#) finds that the strongest predictor of 'survey fatigue' is employees' belief that nothing will be done with the results, not the number of questions. When organizations collect feedback without follow-through, subsequent engagement scores and participation rates tend to fall, and turnover risk increases.

An engagement survey that does not provide a defensible, data-driven path forward is not neutral. It can weaken leadership credibility.



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This is one of the reasons we believe the industry standard must evolve. Measurement should not be the end goal, but instead, strategic clarity should be.

### **Aligning Workforce Initiatives to Strategic Goals**

Most organizations do not lack activity. They may have leadership programs, high-potential initiatives, wellness efforts, and culture-building activities already in motion. The challenge is not effort; it is alignment.

Which initiatives are directly addressing the drivers that matter most?  
Which efforts are consuming resources without meaningful impact?  
Where should leadership double down, and where should it reconsider?

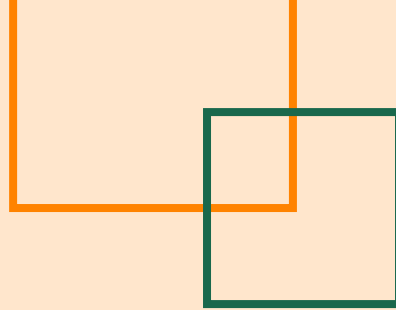
Our diagnostic integrates engagement findings with leadership alignment and initiative mapping. We clarify which workforce challenges are most consequential, which drivers deserve focus now, and how recommendations should be sequenced across culture, people, processes, leadership, and performance. The result is not a list of generic tactics but a prioritized, defensible set of workforce investments tied to strategic objectives.

This enables HR leaders to operate differently. Instead of presenting engagement scores and a menu of possible actions, they present statistically prioritized recommendations that support data-driven decision-making at the executive level.



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### **Why the Name Matters**

The term “survey” suggests information gathering. The term “diagnostic” implies analysis, interpretation, and direction. We are not only measuring engagement. We are diagnosing workforce priorities.

An engagement survey measures sentiment. A Workforce Priorities Diagnostic clarifies where leadership should invest.

That distinction elevates the conversation. It moves engagement from an annual reporting exercise to a strategic input for resource allocation, sequencing, and executive decision-making.

### **A Higher Standard for Workforce Measurement**

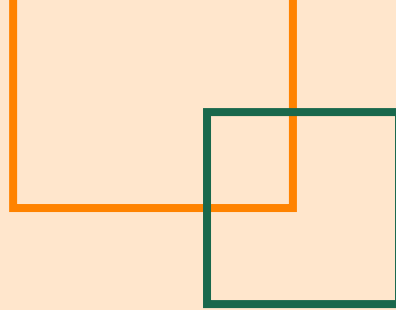
If an engagement survey provides benchmarks but not prioritized action tied to organizational strategy, it remains a measurement tool. If it produces a long list of recommended tactics without linking them to what the organization is trying to accomplish, it creates activity but not clarity.

We believe engagement should be one lens within a broader strategic process. Workforce data should help leaders determine not only how employees feel, but where focus belongs and which investments are most likely to make a measurable difference.



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For CHROs and HR leaders seeking to demonstrate strategic impact, this matters. Statistical prioritization strengthens executive credibility. Data-driven decisions reduce the risk of fragmented initiatives. Clear focus ensures that employee feedback leads to meaningful change.

We have always delivered more than an engagement survey. Now, we are simply calling it what it is.

Before launching another survey, the more important question may be this: Are we focused on the right workforce priorities right now? If you are ready to consider moving from measurement to strategic clarity, [we would welcome a conversation.](#)

# About Orange Grove Consulting



## Learn More

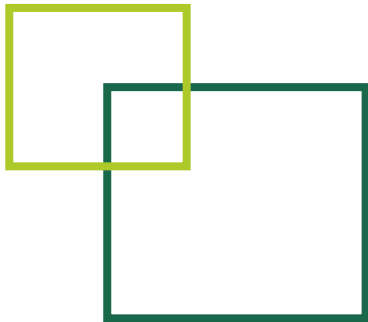
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Organizations today struggle with low engagement, uneven leadership skills, and unclear expectations — all of which make it harder for people to succeed.

We help you build stronger leaders, healthier cultures, and more effective talent systems through research-based consulting and training.

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