

The Match Game

It's important to understand specifically what gets each employee satisfied, energized and productive and then match that to their daily job as much as possible. Discussing this with each team member provides a chance to talk about the shared responsibility for engagement and the employee's personal role. If you have regular one-on-one meetings, use that setting to bring up the conversation. If not, simply schedule a short get-together to talk it through. Don't worry; you don't have to stop everything to get these get-togethers scheduled. Just put a sign-up sheet on your door with times you are available and let folks know that you want to meet with each of them. I know you are busy, so do what's realistic based on your schedule. Just don't put this off for too long because you'll end up spending time on engagement-related issues, whether you want to or not.

Ask the Question

Start by asking the same question asked at the team meeting: *"Give me a few examples of times when you've felt satisfied, energized and productive at work."* It may take a few minutes for the employee to come up with something. Avoid filling in the silence and just let him or her think about it for a few minutes. You can provide personal examples or ask follow-up questions. "When do you feel time flying?" "When are you 'in the zone'?" "What part of work do you look forward to?"

Listen carefully and learn more specifically what gets and keeps each team member engaged and in Professional Paradise. You'll notice that some responses are internally driven and others are based on external experiences. Both are fine, although the goal is to be more internally motivated so you don't have to count on others to find Professional Paradise. Remind the employees that they have the power to connect to these motivators every time they work simply by paying attention and noticing the "paradise" parts of their day. That's how each person creates his or her own Professional Paradise.

Make the Match

Keeping track of what gets each team member satisfied, energized and productive might seem daunting, but it's actually easier than you think.

On a white board (or pieces of flipchart paper) in your office, write "Professional Paradise" at the top. Then write down each team member's name. During your meetings discussing engagement, ask each person to write down one or two things (on the board next to their name) that gets them satisfied, energized and productive.

On a second white board entitled, “We Are Making a Difference” (or the name of your choice), post projects, work in progress, committees, learning opportunities, etc. Examples include: lean daily management teams, unit councils, IT implementation teams and new employee orientation mentors.

When something new gets added to the *We Are Making a Difference* board, match team members based on what gets them satisfied, energized and productive. Also, ask employees to drop in periodically to see what’s on the board and to let you know when something looks like a good match to them.

This is a great way to figure out whom to assign to which projects. You can look at the board and find the best match with someone who will be energized by the work. That’s the Match Game in action!

