

***We: How to Increase Performance and Profits through Full Engagement***  
**Rudy Karsan and Kevin Kruse**

**SYNOPSIS**

When you describe what your employer does, do you say, “we” or “they”? Do you say “we produce widgets” or “they produce widgets?” According to Karsan and Kruse, the authors of *We*, you can tell a lot about whether employees are fully engaged in their jobs by how often they use the word *we* as opposed to *they*, *our*, or even *I*.

This book is written in four parts which cover the big picture on how work and jobs have changed, ways for employees to find their true purpose and culture fit, how great leaders harmonize their teams, and a manager’s toolkit describing drivers of engagement and tactical ways to address them.

Some of the similarities they describe between corporations and individuals make it clear how critical the recruiting and selection process are in full engagement. Here is just a sampling:

Companies...	Employees...
...choose which markets and geographies to operate in	...choose which industry and geography to work in
...find customers who will pay for their products or services	...find organizations that will pay for their services
...compete against other companies, some of which are in emerging countries offering lower prices	...compete against other works, some of whom are in emerging countries that offer lower wages

The authors also talk about the importance of harmonization, not just engagement. They say that engaged employees without direction may give you retention benefits but have little impact on business results. They describe harmonization as the combination of employees who are engaged and aligned. They describe engagement as the extent to which employees are motivated to contribute to organizational success and are willing to apply discretionary effort to accomplish tasks important to the achievement of organizational goals. Alignment means that people are voluntarily united to pursue a common cause. It suggests that all workers understand, agree and work with the same understanding of the organization’s core purpose, values and objectives. It doesn’t mean that everyone is marching the same way in the same uniform in lockstep. It means that everyone knows which hill to climb and why they are climbing that hill. How they make the climb is still up to them. The benefits of harmonization include elimination of waste, performance improvement, increase in useable innovation and talent improvement.

*Review by Chris Gay, Bridge Consulting*

**SAMPLE LEARNINGS**

This book is based on research from Kenexa, a company that conducts employee engagement surveys for more than 10 million workers in over 150 countries each year.

While there are no universal drivers of engagement, there are three that consistently appear in Kenexa’s research: Growth, Recognition and Trust. An acronym reflecting these drivers describes how “GReaT” managers are those who focus on and reinforce the drivers. The book details each driver:

**Growth** – is not just about training programs. It can also include having a mentor, time on the job to explore new interests, alignments, or tasks that are challenging, higher visibility opportunities, and a formal career path process.

**Recognition** – is simply the acknowledgement of an achievement, yet only 47% of Kenexa’s survey respondents are satisfied with the recognition they receive from their manager. GReaT managers also value people, which is appreciating them for who they are and what they bring to the organization.

**Trust** – is made up of three components:

- Competence – skills that enable influence
- Care – the extent to which it’s believed a leader wants to do good for employees
- Commitment – consistently following a set of values with which employees agree