New Deal of Employee Engagement
*A Sustainable Body-and-Mind Engagement Model*

By Bernard Coulaty

©McGraw-Hill Education Asia - September 2016

Author’s mini-website with teaser video: [http://www.mostengaged.com/](http://www.mostengaged.com/)

Author’s LinkedIn profile: [https://hk.linkedin.com/in/bernardcoulaty](https://hk.linkedin.com/in/bernardcoulaty)
Book Overview

“New Deal of Employee Engagement” is at the crossroad of many disciplines—business performance, organizational efficiency, leadership development, human resources management, individual psychology, “body and mind” approaches, and somatic and spiritual approaches.

Because engaging means engaging one’s physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual resources through an eco-system involving the individual and his environment.

This book is a journey through personal experience and research, forming a “Sustainable Body-and-Mind Model” (SBME) deep diving into the mechanisms and individual dimensions of the “Self”, illustrated through eight concrete profiles covering the full scope of disengagement, engagement and over-engagement.

There are two major visions of engagement:

- A “carrots-and-incentives” vision, based on the belief that people need to be engaged and pushed by their manager, by accurate reward policies, and by events within the organization;
- A “whole self” vision, based on the view that people have a potential of engagement within themselves that can be mobilized not only by policies but also by acknowledging their uniqueness as an individual and their potential to be self-engaged.

The ambition in the book is to capitalize on both visions and propose a “Sustainable Body-and-Mind” approach of engagement, with practicable and actionable tools for both employees themselves and HR/business leaders, and also a strategic engagement framework including organizations, teams, managers and individuals.

SBME

The “Sustainable Body-and-Mind Engagement” (SBME) model is articulated around:

1. Dimensions of the “Self” engaged: what is engaged?

What part of the Body-and-Mind of each individual is being mobilized? What are their associated functions and purposes? This is the “vertical” engagement of a person.

2. Levels of engagement: how much is engaged?

How much of each dimension of the self is engaged? What is the intensity of engagement in each dimension? What are the potentially counterproductive extremes of engagement or disengagement? This is the “horizontal” engagement of a person.

3. Territories of engagement: where is engagement?

Where is engagement, and for whom are individuals engaged? For themselves only? Their manager? Their peers? The whole organization? The global external society? We could call this the “spatial” engagement.

4. Engagement profiles
Mixing dimensions of the self (1), levels (2) and territories (3) of engagement leads to defining a range of eight engagement profiles, from the most “disengaged” individuals to the most “over-engaged” ones. This is the cornerstone of the model: we will try to understand the psychology and behavioral patterns of each profile and seek the best way to manage, develop or sustain their engagement.

**MOST**

This innovative and holistic modelization leads to a strategic engagement framework (MOST), whereby “engaging” Managers and Organizations develop and sustain “engaged” Selves and Teams over time.

Leveraging the previous dimensions and engagement profiles, the proposed “MOST Engaging-Engaged” framework will aim at defining strategies and the role of key actors: engaging organizations and people strategies, engaging managers and leaders, and engaged individuals and teams.

A segment in the book describes how to manage high potential and high professional workers and how to retain talent. The book tells about how a leader should set an example for his/her workers through self-development. There are answers to some frequently-asked questions about talent management and a daily calendar for leaders to use in planning for efforts to manage and develop talent.

The objective here is to build a holistic approach to employee engagement that can be easily transferred into actionable and operational practice.

Building on the proposed models, the book concludes with a discussion on a “new deal of engagement” reconciling organizational and individual drivers and purposes.

**Q&A with Author**

**Why publishing such a book now?**

I have built my personal beliefs and philosophy on the value of employee engagement through experience, from an industrial environment in France (downsizing reality, with trade-unions and blue-collar workers seeking collective engagement through security and keeping their jobs) to a fast-moving consumer goods context in Asia, another view with a more individualistic engagement in a “talent war” context, with a strong optimism in the future.

Despite the contextual stretch, the driver of ultimate performance was always engagement, this “extra mile” that people go individually and collectively to reach the organizational goals. I was exposed to various environments and hierarchical levels/sociologies and was each time impressed by the impact of engagement or disengagement on organizational performance. I can testify of genuine blue-collar workers forcing admiration through their collective and emotional commitment while fighting for they factory as it was downsized. I can also acknowledge the huge
variety of rational and “spiritual” engagement that white-collar graduates and senior executives are capable of, while developing themselves as managers and leaders.

The more recent years of living and working in Asia contributed greatly to my belief that engagement can definitely wear diverse forms, behaviors, cultural attitudes and practices.

Obviously, the understanding of what is driving some employees to be fully motivated and engaged or others to “check out” and become disengaged is at the heart not only of the human resources function but also of the whole organizational performance.

Employee engagement is at the heart of everything HR and business leaders are striving for: performance management systems, talent management and leadership development. At the same time, unlike other HR disciplines it cannot rely purely on tools and processes, or even leaders! I do not remember who said “better have great implementation of a poor strategy than have the greatest strategy poorly or badly implemented”. Well, it is the same in human resources. You may have the best HR policy and the more sophisticated tools and processes, but when it comes to making things happen it is all about engaging people themselves and about the inner perception of these people of what is being proposed to engage them! The level and quality of engagement and motivation of employees is key to making the difference and creating the expected modified behaviors and performance.

This book is at the crossroad of many disciplines: business performance, leadership development, human resources management, individual psychology, “body and mind” approaches, and spirituality. Because engaging means engaging all resources—physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual—and not only relying on the best leader or the best human resources policy but viewing engagement as an “eco-system” involving the individual in his complexity. In summary, if we need engaging organizations and leaders to obtain engaged employees and teams, we also need to consider the potential of the individual for engaging his whole “Self.”

I had the chance to work for organizations that support full engagement, but it is far from being the case everywhere. Engagement is in crisis in many organizations, and this book aims at giving the full scope of the reality, from disengagement to over-engagement, with a positive note of hope as I am a strong believer in a better life achieved through engaged people.

**What evolution in HR did you acknowledge during your career and how can your book answer the new issues the HR function is facing?**

Engaging the right employees with the right skills and behavior is the key ingredient in managing business performance. How can we reconnect the disengaged, especially when they are “sleeping talents”? How can we take care of the engaged with a sustainable approach?

Employee engagement is not a strict HR discipline; it is a personal experiment, a journey through individual truth and psychology. Some individuals are naturally positively involved and engaged, while others need to be pushed forward and motivated. Therefore, the key role of managers and also a good human resources and organizational response is to create and initiate engagement. Unlike performance management or talent development, engagement relies mainly on people in their complexity and their whole self, beyond organizational and managerial responses. In this
regard, to have a full understanding and drive of employee engagement, the wholeness of the individual must be integrated.

There is also a great deal of contextual difference contributing to the high variation of employee engagement: white versus blue collar employees, national and cultural differences, unemployment versus full employment economic contexts, downsizing vs talent war strategies, etc. Last but not least, the dimension of the individual being engaged, the level of intensity of this engagement and the different behavioral profiles of engagement all make a huge difference in the expected output.

Engagement in all its shapes (within organizations, within the family circle, the link with spirituality, etc) seems to be in crisis. “Paradox” might be too weak a term to describe this situation in the western world, where “disruption” between employers and employees can be the reality in many organizations. In this context, how can we create “naturally and spontaneously engaged and self-motivated employees”? How can we understand and address disengagement and support managers to drive engagement forward?

Engagement has more to do with “trust and love” than “being engaged to be married for life,” as trust and love are not lifetime commitments. On the other hand, the relationship between employers and employees is not on equal terms, although in the emerging markets and “war for talent” contexts, employees seem to have more power over organizations!

HR also has to face and tackle the following issues and challenges, all addressed in the book with guidelines and orientation based on a mix between my experience and research:

- The balance between business and human impact of employee engagement;
- The drivers of engagement: from satisfaction to motivation and from motivation to engagement;
- The various modes and styles of engagement according to the context (business stakes, organizational model, diversity of populations...);
- The impact of the rising digital world on engagement: work vs life and space vs time;
- The challenge of managing the “disengaged”, developing the “potentially engaged”, sustaining the “engaged” and caring about the “over-engaged”;
- The monitoring of individual vs collective Engagement.

Any specificities in Asia?

A distinction between the Western “old world” and emerging countries (the “new world”) is at least essential to understand the differences in the views on engagement for employers and employees.

In the western “old world,” where the reality is downsizing and unemployment, the views from employers and employees are as follows:

- Employers are looking for high engagement from employees, yet cannot fully guarantee long-term employment;
- Employees are ready to engage but consider their work-life balance and job security as much more important, and when they do engage, they claim guarantees in the form of job security for the long-term.
In emerging countries and the “new world,” and very specifically in Asia where the context is a fierce talent for war, the views from employers and employees are as follows:

- Employees are the ones who lead the market. They are ready to engage, but want to remain free to leave anytime for a better opportunity (and there are many!);
- Employers fight to retain the best talents and must develop a long-term approach with an adequate EVP (Employee Value Proposition).

**The key reasons to read/buy your book?**

Business leaders and managers will find tentative answers to their quest for a better understanding on how to manage disengagement and sustain engagement, individually and collectively, while adapting their behavior to the proposed 8 engagement profiles within their teams.

HR professionals and practitioners will be able to build a better detailed understanding of all “Body-and-Mind” dimensions and leverage the engagement profiles to reinforce their partnership with business leaders and better monitor individual and collective engagement internally.

Most importantly, I have also written this book targeting employees themselves, defending their point of view through a deep dive into all dimensions of their “Self”, for a better understanding of what is driving their own quest and engagement in their working and personal life. Engagement and its consequences on the “body-and-mind” is far too important to be left to the sole responsibility of managers, HR and organizations.

Undergraduate or post-graduate students of human resources, as well as MBA students, are also on top of my thoughts as this topic is clearly under-researched, so I wanted to propose a detailed while simple way to address this key topic for their future life as individuals and future HR or business leaders. For sure the book could be followed by talks or teaching modules within universities and business schools.

**ENDORSEMENTS/PRAISE FOR THE BOOK**

“The New Deal of Employee Engagement provides a potent foray into an area that is at once critical and under-researched. In it, Bernard provides an invaluable model that effectively organizes his experience and thinking on the issue into a practical set of tools for readers, be they organizational leaders, managers of teams, HR professionals, or employees seeking a way to think about their own engagement”.

- Thomas MANARELLI, PhD, Professor, Organizational Behavior at INSEAD and Higher Education Consultant

“Our established frames of references and our certitudes with regard to organizational design, human resource policies and people management are profoundly challenged by these models. At a time when one of the burning questions of the day is how to bring individuals and organizations closer together, I am convinced that this book will constitute a key landmark in furthering
understanding of what can make a person ready to engage with their company in order to generate sustainable performance”.

- Daniel BAROIN, Vice President CAREWAN, Chairman of the French “Observatoire de l’Engagement”

“Bernard Coulaty’s contribution to the employee engagement debate is exceptional in many regards. First of all, this is a practitioner book, based on years of HR experience in both Europe and Asia. Bernard is familiar with all aspects of human capital management, having worked for some of the most admired French companies. In addition, the book provides a comprehensive framework to apprehend staff engagement. Using effective employee profiling, Bernard brings simplicity to a complex topic. A must read for anyone interested in people management and leadership.

- Jean-Baptiste ALOY, Senior Vice President Employee Research IPSOS

“At last, someone who knows what he is talking about, giving tools and guidance in an area which we all struggle with. Employee engagement, in this complex multi-BU, multi-cultural, multi-functional and multi-generational environment, needs a robust and consistent methodology to analyse the way each individual member of staff interacts with their employer and what can we do about it. Bernard Coulaty has made an important contribution to our toolkit for managing staff in this increasingly complex world”.

- Adam SALZER, Managing Director, Consulting PricewaterhouseCoopers Consulting

“Employee engagement” is a popular topic, but most publications are addressing “Why is it important?” or “How to engage?” rather than “What makes engagement?” and “How to measure the level of engagement?”. The proposed “Sustainable Body-and-Mind Engagement Model” provides the answer, deep-diving into the mechanics of the various elements creating engagement and the dynamics among them, leading to a roadmap to evaluate the engagement level and optimize it over time. Bernard Coulaty writes in a scientific way with a human touch, builds his modelization from field experience, inspired by the philosophy from West to East. Follow him in the journey to discover the “mystery” of engagement!”

- Leon Li: HR Director SAINT LAURENT Asia Pacific (KERING Group)

“Attracting, Motivating & Retaining high-performing employees is critical to all firms. The New Deal of Employee Engagement provides a toolkit for mapping of employee engagement in any firm, and the ‘MOST’ framework enables leaders to navigate their way to achieve high level engagement (‘Sustainable Body & Mind Engagement’). This important topic is highly relevant for firms with multi-generational workforces, an exposure to millennials, firms that seek to truly include diversity or those battling the ‘war for talent’ - which is pretty much every firm that I have worked with”!

- Steve WYATT, Affiliated Professor, Strategy and Management Practice Executive Director and Executive Development Head at SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY