

Study: Versatile Leadership as Important as Pay to Job Commitment

North Carolina State University study sheds light on factors that promote employee engagement.

Greensboro, NC, March 27, 2007 – Leaders with a high versatility index have employee teams with high job commitment and engagement, reports a unique industry-university collaborative study at the North Carolina State University. The study underscores the role of versatile leadership in producing commitment and engagement among highly educated workers in creative or research-oriented positions. The research was conducted as a National Science Foundation-funded dissertation by Dr. Beth Coberly under the supervision of Dr. Denis Gray, Professor, Department of Psychology, to improve the hit-rate of breakthrough innovations by faculty members who are involved in research for private business. They sought the key workplace factors that promote the job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement of highly creative knowledge workers. The study included faculty from nearly thirty cooperative research centers from around the U.S.

“We found that leaders who were flexible at adjusting their styles and behaviors to the leadership situation also had the most satisfied and committed research teams,” says Dr. Gray.

Rob Kaiser, a partner with the executive development consultancy, Kaplan DeVries Inc., which also supported the research, points out that the number one motivator of commitment for the researchers in this study was personally meaningful work on compelling projects. “This is not a surprising result, in itself,” he says. “But it does underscore the importance of matching creative people to the right job and playing to their natural interests and talents.”

Kaiser continues, “What surprised us was that versatile leadership tied for second place with rewards as the next most important factor.” Kaiser concludes, “In other words, compensation is no substitute for weak leadership—managers who lack versatility and lead with an inflexible, 'my way or the highway' style are liable to alienate creative talent beyond a point that can be fixed by throwing money at them.”

The study employed a unique measure of leadership, the patented [Leadership Versatility Index](#)[®] (LVI). The LVI measures the extent to which leaders have a well-rounded style and vary their approach with the situation, as opposed to over-relying on one way of leading or another. The LVI and its decade-long development are described in a 2006 book, [The Versatile Leader](#) (Pfeiffer/Wiley), coauthored by Bob Kaplan, Ph.D., and Rob Kaiser. For more information, contact authors Bob Kaplan and Rob Kaiser at 336-288-8200.

A free two-minute trial of the Leadership Versatility Index is available on www.VersatileLeader.com. The online survey is hosted by assessment specialists, [Performance Programs, Inc.](#)

About Kaplan DeVries, Inc.

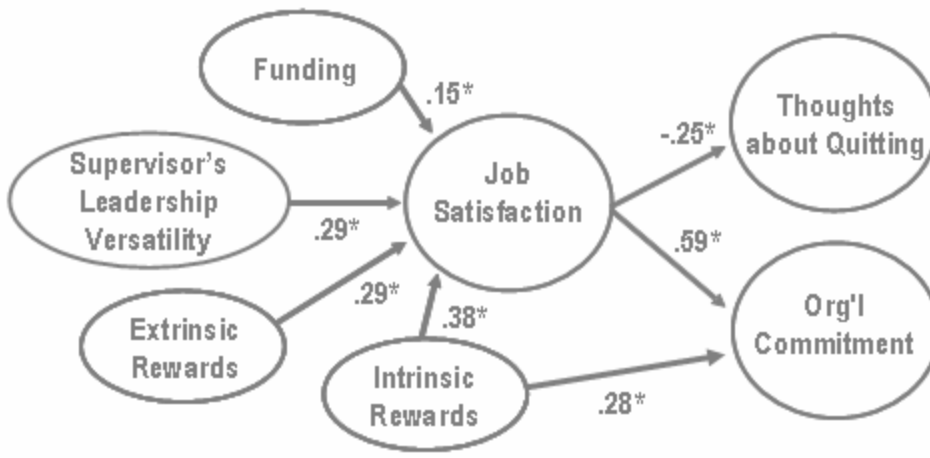
Kaplan Devries, Inc. provides intensive consulting to CEOs, "C-level" executives, general managers, and functional heads at the next level. Their consulting is designed to bootstrap these leaders to better performance and to assist their organizations with talent management. The firm also conducts original research. The firm's principals publish extensively in academic and business journals and are available for speaking engagements. The firm was founded in 1992.

About Performance Programs, Inc.

Performance Programs is a firm of industrial psychologists and research professionals specializing in online surveys, tests and assessments for human resources. Performance Programs was founded in 1987.

Media Contact: Kathleen G. Connolly,
Performance Programs, Inc.
800-565-4223

Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction, Commitment, and Retention



Source: Cokerly, B. *Faculty Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment with Industry-University Research Centers*. Doctoral Dissertation presented to the faculty of the Department of Psychology, North Carolina State University.