



Optimism at Work

A Primer for Cultivating an Optimistic Workplace

What is Optimism?



Optimism is the ability to see, feel, and focus on the good in yourself, in others, and in the world around you, regardless of the circumstances. Optimists do not ignore challenges, but they may see obstacles as building blocks and not barriers.

The Benefits of Optimism

Psychological



Optimists are better at coping and show increased resilience, and decreased depressive symptoms. Optimists are less likely to experience suicidal thoughts.

Physiological



Optimists tend to be healthier, live longer, and have better survivability outcomes. Optimism is correlated with reduced risk of cardiovascular and coronary heart disease.

Socio-Economic



Optimism is correlated with higher graduation rates, larger social networks, increased income over time, and improved career success. Optimists are more likely to be hired and promoted. People find experiences with optimists positive and enjoyable.

Workplace Benefits



Optimism has shown many benefits in the workplace.

A two-year study of 5K newly hired insurance salesman found that optimistic salespeople outperformed their pessimistic peers by **37%**. A subset of **super optimists** (those who scored in the top 10% of the optimism measure) outperformed those who scored in the bottom 10% by **88%**.

Employees with increased optimism levels experience higher levels of

- organizational commitment
- job satisfaction
- performance
- productivity and job performance
- organizational citizenship behavior.

Not only are optimism levels important in employees, but they're essential in leaders too. Optimistic managers influence team productivity and performance.