

## WHITEPAPER

# Solving Today's Biggest Workplace Challenges with Data Analytics

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## INTRODUCTION

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Key people and workplace decisions are typically made in response to an event or issue, often informed by little or no hard data. With **more flexibility** and **less visibility** at work during a period of high employee turnover and unpredictable market forces, companies are scrambling to maintain and retain a high-performing workforce. Questions certainly remain about the future of work, but one thing is certain: **reactive, data-less strategies are no longer sustainable.**

Preventive healthcare is a great example of the benefits of institutionalized proactivity. It's an established, data-driven approach to keeping people healthy that factors in their unique needs and continuously monitors changes. Rather than seeking medical care only when something is wrong, patients are asked to get regular check-ups regardless of symptoms. Catching issues early allows for course-correcting *before* any real damage is done. A reactive approach would've risked unpleasant interventions or symptoms, **at best**. At worst? Potentially **irreversible consequences**.

Something similar happens at work. Companies suffer from "disorders" and symptoms that impact employee retention and the organization's effectiveness. For larger companies in particular, identifying, prioritizing, and implementing the right changes can be a very difficult, slow process.

The challenge for business leaders is that these issues aren't always obvious at the individual or team/department-level, they are often hidden within or across specific pockets of a company. Once symptoms *do* present, this means that **damage has already been done.**

# THE 3 MOST COMMON ORG. DISORDERS

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Just like diseases and medical disorders have known risk behaviors that contribute to them, so too do common workforce & workplace problems. Knowing what drives both positive and negative outcomes helps reveal the core issues and, most importantly, points you to **effective ways of responding**.

Next we'll examine **three key organizational disorders**, their **symptoms**, and how **data analytics** can help companies address them:



## DISENGAGEMENT

### Symptoms:

- Burnout
- High turnover
- Loss of institutional knowledge
- Low morale



## MISALIGNMENT

### Symptoms:

- Hindered innovation
- Low productivity
- Increased delays or errors
- Gaps or conflicts within / across teams



## RIGIDITY

### Symptoms:

- Loss of information-sharing
- Less creativity
- Increased silos
- Slow decision-making speed
- Difficulty adapting or responding to market forces

# DISENGAGEMENT

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[According to Forbes](#), engagement is “the emotional commitment the employee has to the organization and its goals.” Disengagement, then, is a loss of or negative connection to one’s work, often leading to burnout and/or attrition. Its symptoms include increased **unplanned employee turnover, observed complacency and lack of drive, personnel conflicts or HR issues, stifled innovation**, and slowed delivery speeds. Besides the costs associated with managing and supporting disengaged employees at a company, the Corporate Leadership Council [reports that they are 8% more likely to leave](#) and can cost companies up to 1.5-2X their salary.

Interpreting and addressing employee disengagement has historically been very subjective. Thanks to advances in analytics and more data about work than ever before, however, there are key metrics leaders can monitor to detect early warning signs and proactively solve issues.

Here are some metrics used by Humanyze customers **to measure & drive engagement**:



## Core Connections

These are colleagues in an employee’s network that they interact with and rely on most at work. Having strong and regular social interaction with colleagues is a key driver of engagement, and can help employees feel a sense of belonging and trust at work. Conversely, when the average individual in a team has fewer than one core connection, it can be an early indicator of disengagement and eventual attrition or burnout.



## Communication Volume

Measures the time the average employee spends communicating (*email, meeting, call, chat, or in-person*) with others during work hours. Insufficient or sustained drops in communication volume are an early warning sign that employees may be lacking the intrinsic motivation to connect with their colleagues and fully engage with their work.



## Off-Hours Work

This is the overall time employees spend working and communicating outside of normal work hours (*like nights and weekends*). While some off-hours work can be healthy for engagement, if employees or teams work more than the benchmark average for sustained amounts of time, it can be a [significant driver of overwork and burnout](#).

# MISALIGNMENT

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In [aligned organizations](#), employees within and across teams have access to the colleagues and information needed to do their work, as well as its connection to broader company goals or contexts. When companies are well-aligned, they have strong **cross-functional collaboration and communication**, **operate efficiently**, and benefit from more **opportunities for developing new ideas** and **long-term innovation**. Misalignment, on the other hand, leads to increased delays or errors, lost or misinterpreted information, and duplicated or wasted work.

In addition to **costly re-dos**, misalignment can give rise to interdepartmental conflicts, misunderstandings, and a frustrated workforce. While its symptoms can become more obvious over time, here are some metrics that can help leaders proactively pinpoint and address the root causes **before more damage is done**:



## Workplace Connections

This is the number of contacts that an employee collaborates or interacts with on average at work. Having regular exposure to colleagues, particularly from other teams/departments, helps drive innovation and equips workers with the support and information they need to do their best work. At Humanyze, we help drive healthy workplace connections by continuously measuring team collaboration to ensure that employees have the right access to colleagues and the support needed to do their best work.



## Management Access

This is the amount of time that employees spend with managers and leaders across the company. Managers are often information/knowledge brokers within companies, so regular exposure to them better connects employees to organizational objectives and other departments, allowing them to work on the right things more efficiently. Humanyze's global benchmarks help customers understand if teams are having sufficient time with management. If a client notices low scores, this means workers likely aren't getting the exposure or support they need to grow and succeed.



## Focus Time

This is the amount of time employees have for uninterrupted "focus work" during the work day (time not spent interacting with colleagues or in meetings, etc.). While Focus Time does not directly relate to social capital, it is a leading indicator of efficiency. By optimizing "heads-down" time, employees can reap the benefits of collaboration without negatively impacting their productivity. Humanyze uses global benchmarks to measure whether teams have sufficient focus time to get their work done. If it drops below the threshold, workers are at-risk of inefficient time management risk, disengagement, and burnout.

# RIGIDITY

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As companies reassess and restructure their people and workplace strategies, the **speed and ease at which they can adapt** and support their workforce through these transitions is crucial for success.

Highly adaptable organizations have established, “informal” social networks that allow for fast and easy information flow. This helps tacit knowledge to reach those who need it in order to successfully roll out and adopt new policies, programs, and ideas. Rigidity, difficulty or slowness adapting to change and market forces, means that costly change initiatives fail or take too long to gain the necessary support and traction. A rigid communication structure and culture also risks the loss of top talent to more progressive competitors, as well as key institutional knowledge leaving with them.

The negative impacts of rigidity become even more dire and pronounced when companies are forced to adapt quickly to unexpected changes or disruptions, like the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are two examples of workplace behaviors that, when measured correctly, can help signal if organizations **are (or aren’t) poised to succeed in times of change**:



## Weak Connections

Also called “*weak ties*”, these are an employee’s peripheral contacts at work. Although typically casual or unplanned interactions with colleagues from other departments/teams that an employee may not rely on directly, **these are highly important**. For companies to quickly and effectively adapt to change, they must be nimble and foster this kind of informal information-sharing and collaboration. Weak Connections are **essential for creativity and new ideas** as they provide **increased exposure to information** and the social fabric of the organization. Humanyze customers monitor Weak Connections using global benchmarks to proactively identify and address early symptoms should they fall below the recommended threshold.



## Cross-Level Collaboration

This is how much an employee interacts with colleagues of a different hierarchy. [A recent McKinsey study](#) revealed that **lack of career advancement and development is now the top reason employees quit their jobs**. Without cross-level collaboration, employees are at-risk of feeling unmotivated and like there’s no opportunity to advance their careers. Encouraging open communication across all levels breeds a culture of belonging, information-sharing, opportunity, and transparency. When Humanyze customers see that it’s low, this indicates that employees are silo-ed by seniority. By proactively monitoring, they can quickly implement effective interventions (*mentorship programs, strategic office re-designs or re-stacks, etc.*).

# UNLOCKING YOUR DATA'S FULL POTENTIAL

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While some are adopting more proactive strategies to identify and address these disorders, these methods are strictly subjective or fail to reveal the core issues. Take employee engagement surveys as an example. Even if employees feel compelled enough to report that they are unsatisfied at work, leadership still must deduce *why*. While they can be incredibly helpful, subjective tactics only provide a partial lens at a specific snapshot in time. In order to regularly monitor and address the effectiveness of the organization, as well as get the most value out of methods that reveal how workers feel, leaders must lean on **hard data about how work happens**.



Solving these issues is possible with the very data that's **already at every company's disposal**. Workplace analytics, which uses science-backed principles of organizational network analysis (ONA), integrates crucial but disparate data from company-owned systems and tools (*i.e. communication data, office usage, performance KPIs, surveys, etc.*). Connecting the dots between **data about how work happens** and **business/people outcomes**, gives change-makers a **holistic understanding of how, where, and with whom work gets done best**.

## CONCLUSION

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Proactivity isn't just about avoiding negative consequences. Methods like workplace analytics give companies a competitive advantage and a blueprint for success by flagging high-performing behaviors and patterns to replicate. In addition to mitigating unnecessary costs or losses, analytics is the key to **maximizing human resource investments** and taking full advantage of opportunities ahead.

Like healthcare providers, all levels of a company **must embrace data and preventive methods to maintain a healthy, effective workforce**. Workplace analytics offers the most effective, efficient way to measure and understand how different behaviors and conditions *really* impact a company.



Interested in how Humanyze helps customers shape a  
successful, data-driven Future of Work?  
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