

The Institution of Well-Being:  
Embodying a Culture of Flourishing at the Shawnee Institute

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Abstract

We apply principles of positive organizational psychology to a hospitality inn and resort that seeks to focus on “positive hospitality” – the provision of immersive positive education and well-being to guests and employees alike. The Shawnee Institute aspires to serve as a bridge, linking the science of well-being with organizations across the globe. Integrating well-being throughout the Institute’s employees is desired to boost both employee and visitor experiences and distinguish the Institute from other resorts in the region as a destination, and as an employer. We propose an approach to the broad engagement with organizational well-being, discussing the role of cultural change and the needs of both full-time and seasonal employees. We recommend the use of the psychological capital framework to measure and improve well-being across all employees, and provide an implementation plan that includes immersive education for managers, a holistic appreciative inquiry kick-off for all employees, and well-being implementation exercises for onboarding new employees. This work can assist other organizations, particularly those in the hospitality industry, that seek to improve the well-being of a diverse employee base.

Keywords: Positive hospitality, organizational well-being, psychological capital, hope, efficacy, resilience, optimism, organizational culture, appreciative inquiry, positive education,

## Contents

I.	Introduction.....	4
II.	Shawnee Institute Staffing and Employment Profile.....	5
	A.    Smithfield Township.....	5
	B.    Shawnee Inn & Resort Employees. ....	6
III.	Organizational Culture and Leadership: A Linchpin in the Flourishing and Well-Being of Shawnee Employees. ....	7
	A.    An Overview of Organizational Culture.....	8
	B.    Application of Organizational Culture Principles to the Resort and Institute. ....	10
IV.	Connecting Employee Well-Being to Commercial Well-Being: The Service-Profit Chain. ....	11
V.	Positive Psychological Capital (“PsyCap”): An Organizing Framework for the Deployment of Positive Psychology Throughout the Resort.....	13
	A.    Hope.....	15
	B.    Self-Efficacy. ....	17
	C.    Resilience.....	18
	D.    Optimism. ....	21
	E.    Evaluating Psychological Capital Over Time.....	22
VI.	High-Level Implementation Plan.....	23
	A.    Management Education. ....	24
	B.    Plan Kickoff – VIA Character Strengths and Appreciative Inquiry. ....	24
	C.    Intervention Implementation.....	25
	D.    Areas to Consider.....	26
VII.	Conclusion. ....	26
	References.....	28
	Appendix A: Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ).....	36
	Appendix B. Tools to Facilitate Culture Infusion.....	38
	Appendix C. Sample Rituals.....	45
	Appendix D. VIA Character Strengths Day. ....	54

## I. Introduction.

The Shawnee Inn and Golf Resort (the “Resort”) is a family-run year-round hotel and resort located in Shawnee-on-Delaware Pennsylvania amid the beautiful Pocono Mountains. The Resort features hundreds of acres of natural beauty, convenience to major urban centers, a rich history, and premier hospitality and resort amenities including golf, skiing, water sports, fitness center, spa, and multiple restaurants staffed by a dedicated team of hospitality professionals.

The Shawnee Institute seeks to become the premier global hub for wellbeing science, education, and social impact – a location for individuals and groups to participate in immersive learning about the tenets of positive psychology, positive education, and well-being, and a facility providing deliberate interventions for the enhancement of personal, group, and institutional well-being. To this end, the Institute has signed a Sponsored Research Agreement with an elite eastern university of Pennsylvania, a world-class institute of higher education with a rich background in positive psychology education, to create “The Center for Wellbeing Science, at Shawnee.”

The mission of the Shawnee Institute (“Institute”) is to:

1. Cultivate creativity, innovation, and the positive effects of well-being on the human condition;
2. Train individuals to lead productive, flourishing lives;
3. Educate global well-being professionals, researchers, and practitioners; and
4. Bring together world-class leaders and scholars to address critical global issues.

The Resort and Institute recently announced these plans to the Resort’s employees. The employees are an essential component of the successful transition from hotel and golf resort to Institute for Well-Being. Employees should embody well-being, serving as “well-being ambassadors” to guests of the Institute, in interactions with their colleagues, and ideally in their lives outside of the Resort. While many employees have an underlying curiosity and enthusiasm

for well-being, some employees voiced a concern that they did not fully understand what that might mean, while others expressed concern that this is a temporary focus of management and not something that will be sustained over time.

Because few of the employees are familiar with the philosophies, tenets, or practice of positive psychology, the Institute seeks a strategic plan to educate its employees about well-being and applied positive psychology and enable their collaboration with management to enhance well-being throughout the organization.

## **II. Shawnee Institute Staffing and Employment Profile.**

### **A. Smithfield Township.**

The Shawnee Inn and Golf Resort, nestled in the foothills of the Poconos and graced with the splendor and beauty of the Delaware River Valley and the Appalachian Trail, is a year-round vacation destination located in Smithfield Township PA (population 7,314). Smithfield has seen significant economic upheaval and change in recent years. It was hit hard by the foreclosure crisis, and five significant family-owned lodges have gone out of business. The area is still recovering; median family income is \$57,526, and about 17% of the population lives at or below the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates, 2017).

At the same time, there is cause for optimism in the region. Smithfield has seen its population jump 30% over the past ten years as families move from the New York and New Jersey metropolitan areas in search of more affordable housing, and the population growth has spurred an increase in development, with new water parks and resorts opening.

Tourism is the major industry in the area, with more than fifty resorts, hotels, inns and recreational venues nearby drawing tourists primarily from Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York. Shawnee competes for employees not only with other resorts, but with businesses in

nearby New Jersey (~20 minutes away) that can offer full-year employment at average hourly wages 30-50 cents higher than what is offered in Pennsylvania, as well as the potential for full-time work and benefits. The Institute is thus challenged to maintain a staff that is skilled, informed, and motivated, though it makes the most of its natural advantages: a beautiful location in a growing area, the culture of an intimate family-run business, and an easier commute for locals. The Institute can also offer substantial discounts on all amenities of the resort, such as dining discounts, outdoor and spa activities.

B. Shawnee Inn & Resort Employees.

The Inn employs approximately fifty full-time and three hundred part-time staff. The full-time staff have benefits, and approximately twenty-five are senior management. Part-time staff in the summer months work with golfers, hikers, and kayakers, while part-time staff in the winter assist with the ski program. Approximately 30% of the seasonal staff return year after year; they are passionate about their recreational jobs and have built substantial camaraderie with colleagues and guests. The remaining part-time staff is transitional. Turnover is a particular challenge with low-wage, hourly employees (e.g., housekeeping and kitchen staff) and even more so when those employees are seasonal. Under these circumstances, positive education is both a competitive differentiator for employee retention and a practical imperative for the success of the Institute over time as it becomes a global destination for immersion in positive education and “positive hospitality.”

The Resort’s organizational culture is, for the most part, warm and collegial, though the seasonal nature of the business poses challenges for staffing, continuity, and communication and requires repetition, retraining, and constant team-building. There are no formal professional development programs at the Resort, though expectations and roles are clarified in an employee handbook. Management encourages coaching as needed on assets and challenges. The nature of

the work has not provided an avenue to a recruiting/selection process that supports grooming employees for advancement, though the Resort works to promote from within. There are a few employee recognition programs, which Resort management would like to enhance.

Staff relationships are strongest in those teams that have the greatest continuity and longevity, such as golf, grounds, spa services, the main restaurant, and reservations. These employees return year after year and have a high level of camaraderie. Relationships are more tenuous in housekeeping and other restaurants where there is higher turnover.

The Resort conducts annual employee goal-setting and performance reviews. There are no “wellness” programs to support the staff’s psychological or emotional needs, nor does the Resort offer paid sick days for any of its employees.

### **III. Organizational Culture and Leadership: A Linchpin in the Flourishing and Well-Being of Shawnee Employees.**

The Resort is contending with complex market forces that challenge its vision of providing world-class hospitality services in a small mountain village, and it will be important for the “pivot” from the Resort to the Institute that the implementation of well-being acknowledge these challenges head-on. At the same time, the sustained success of the organization has at least as much to do with organizational culture (company values, personal beliefs, and vision) as it does with market forces (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Resort leadership must recognize that its vision of The Center for Wellbeing Science, at Shawnee and the transformation of its employees from hospitality workers to “wellness ambassadors” represents a substantial investment in organizational culture and a paradigm shift. Organizational culture is particularly sensitive to the process of managing through transitions (Peters, 2018), and thus it is essential that such a shift be made thoughtfully, and with the open participation and input of all Resort employees.

A. An Overview of Organizational Culture.

An organization's culture facilitates a common understanding of organizational systems for all members. It creates social order, continuity, and a collective identity, and illuminates a vision for the future. Culture has a profound effect on organizational performance and long-term effectiveness (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Cameron & Ettington, 1988; Denison, 1990; Groysberg, Lee, Price, & Cheng, 2018; Peters, 2018; Trice & Beyer, 1993).

Successful organizational cultures tend to be "people-centric," focused on employees as individuals and how they interact as groups. In such cultures, managers communicate clearly to employees about the organization's values in ways that are perceived by employees, who understand and feel passionately about the organization's mission and vision. Staff imagination is encouraged and rewarded, positive interactions are the norm, compensation is fair, and employees are recognized for what makes them exceptional (Peters, 2018).

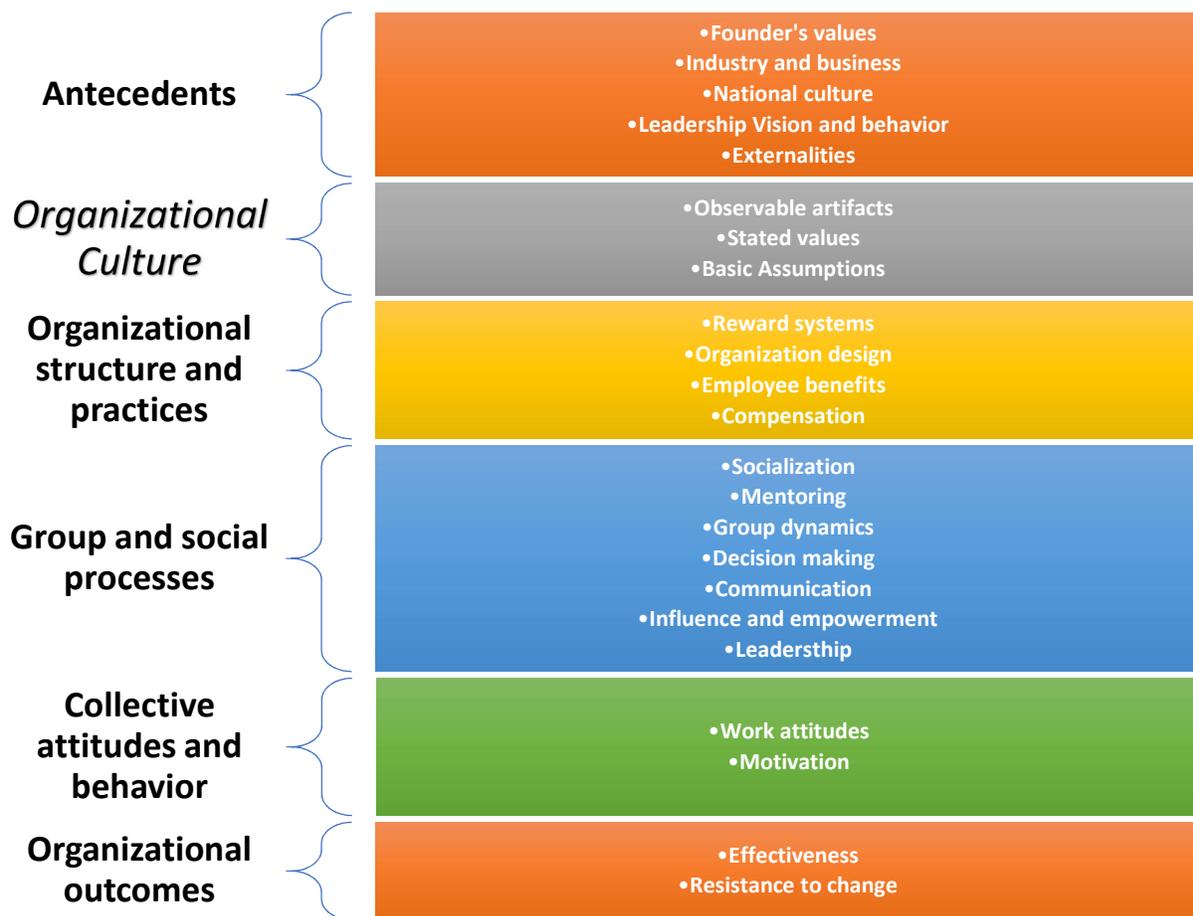
Culture starts at the top, with organizational leadership. More than words, culture must be displayed by leaders throughout the organization who provide clear direction, stories and personal narratives that help all employees define and participate in the cultural mandates. When a specific and defined culture is infused throughout an organization, it enables the creation of legacies, a shift in perspectives, and leading by example that inspires employees, driving them to be their best selves (Wekelo, 2018).

Three foundational precepts of culture are accountability, acumen, and aspiration:

1. **Accountability:** We are all individually and collectively accountable in every situation.
2. **Acumen:** We all develop our skills, commit to learning, and grow personally and as a team.
3. **Aspiration:** We focus on our individual and collective strengths; we have a collective vision and our combined strengths move us forward.

Our teams are generous, reciprocal, and adaptive (Wekelo, 2018).

A strong and supportive organizational culture will assist Resort employees in their quest to become wellness ambassadors for the Institute while improving the Resort’s profitability. It is through culture that leadership: motivates employees; increases job retention, job satisfaction, and morale; enhances individual and team performance and overall working experiences; attracts top talent to the organization; and increases customer satisfaction. An organization built on a solid foundation of positive psychology exemplifies all aspects of supporting employees. This includes generous (but fair) compensation for full and part time work, generous benefits, routine recognition, expanded team interactions and the manifestation of wellness in all aspects of corporate structure and operations (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).



**Figure 1. Framework for Organizational Culture and Leadership Transition. Adapted from: (Schein, 1996; Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly, & Konopaske, 2012; Potter, 1994).**

As the Institute and Resort work together to implement organizational well-being in Resort employees, they should keep these principles of a thriving organizational culture at the forefront. Activities designed to educate Resort staff about well-being, or policies and procedures for employees in their interactions with each other, with managers, and above all with guests to the Resort, should be consciously evaluated to ensure that they conform with principles known to produce a strong organizational culture (Wekelo, 2018). (Additional explanations about these Principles, and sample exercises to infuse them through an organization, are provided in Appendix B).

B. Application of Organizational Culture Principles to the Resort and Institute.

The Resort and the Institute, supported by its university partner, have a unique opportunity to align positive psychology, positive organizational culture, and positive leadership. The Institute has begun in a thoughtful way, with an initial focus on staff well-being. Prioritizing wellness throughout the organization is at the heart of flourishing and well-being for Resort employees, and happier, healthier employees with significant tenure will be the result. Once the employee base is committed to the organization's mission and comprehends the value of the Institute's focus on well-being, Resort employees will become the "wellness ambassadors" needed by the Institute to provide world-class positive education experiences for the emotional and financial well-being of all.

Culture change at the scale of the Resort and Institute needs to be carefully considered by leadership. Their willingness to participate in such an undertaking is crucial, and any concerns they may have about this course of action should be clearly stated and carefully addressed (Cameron and Quinn, 2011; Dutton, 2003). It is very challenging for leaders to be truly aware of

others if they are not first aware of themselves. It will also be important for current Resort managers at all levels to be physically and emotionally present and available to employees as measures tied to positive psychology are rolled out through the organization. Such presence is of great value in affirming a supportive culture, as management working alongside all staff allows for deeper appreciation of the modified culture (Peters, 2018), and the mutually pro-social benefit of employees and management learning to appreciate each other's engagement and contributions (Gable, Gonzaga, & Strachman, 2006).

Once leadership is committed to changing the culture of the Resort to embrace the Institute, the burden will remain on managers to optimize relationships with the staff through the transition, and beyond. Listening to understand, seeing the positive side, having empathy and compassion for others, and building trust are ways leaders and managers can work to create balance (Wekelo, 2018).

#### **IV. Connecting Employee Well-Being to Commercial Well-Being: The Service-Profit Chain.**

It is a laudable impulse for the leadership of the Resort to seek to improve the well-being of their employees, and it is easy for external advisors to recommend the creation of economic incentives and motivators for employees such as sick days, additional healthcare benefits, competitive salaries and wages, and seasonal bonuses. At the same time, the Resort and the Institute are economic entities, and culture changes that cannot be linked, directly or indirectly, to profits and positive cash flow may threaten the ability of the Resort to provide a culture of well-being, no matter how well-intended those changes may be.

Fortunately, research has identified a "Service-Profit Chain" illustrating the relationship between employee well-being and financial flourishing for an organization (Figure 2). It works in this way: investing in employee well-being will improve employee job satisfaction, as

employees benefit from and react positively to the Institute’s impact on their environment. This in turn increases employee productivity and reduces employee turnover. The combination of more productivity and less turnover enhances each employee’s value to the organization. It also enhances customer satisfaction. This is essential for the Resort and the Institute, as customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry leads to customer loyalty. Loyal customers to the Institute will return to the Resort and the Institute for additional visits and are the most likely individuals to recommend the Resort to others, generating increased revenue growth and increased profitability for the Resort. Thus, there is a clear, linear progression from the investment that the Resort will make in its employees (and the differentiation of the Resort from other similar hotels in the Poconos) to the economic well-being of the Resort and the Institute. (Heskett, Jones, & Loveman, 1994; Sasser, Schlesinger, & Heskett, 1997; Walker, Johnson & Leonard, 2006).

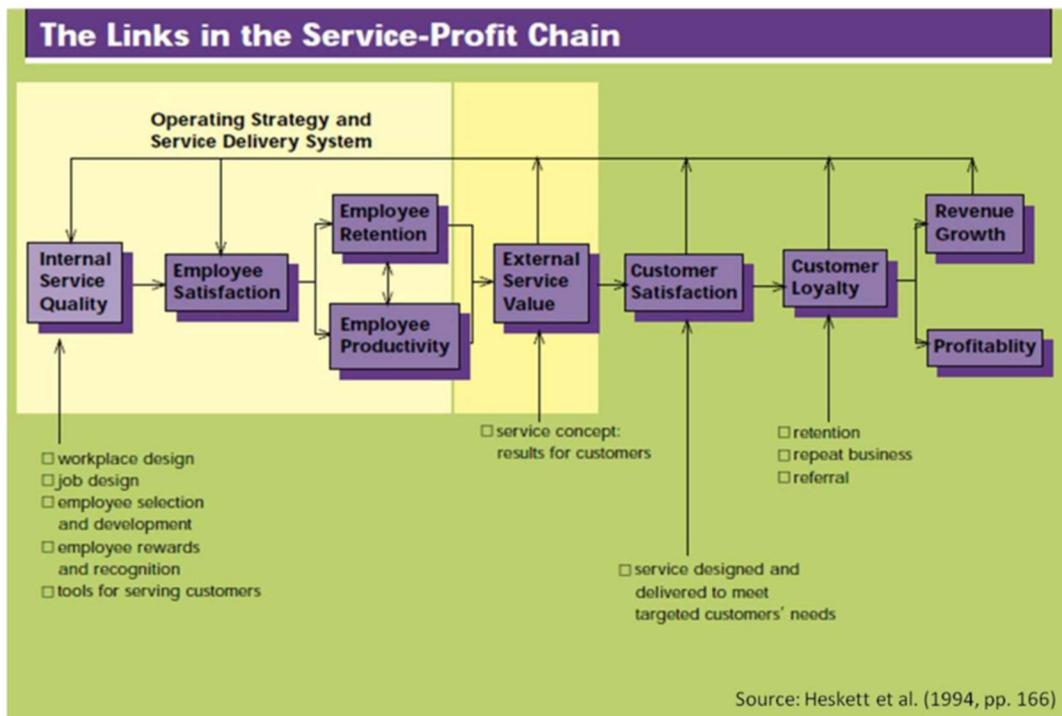


Figure 2. The Links in the Service-Profit Chain (Heskett et al., 1994).

This clearly defined linkage between investing in employees and the increased profitability of the Resort and the Institute is what drives our recommendations regarding the application of positive psychology throughout the organization. This linkage should constantly be emphasized to management, and in particular to management who may be skeptical of positive psychology.

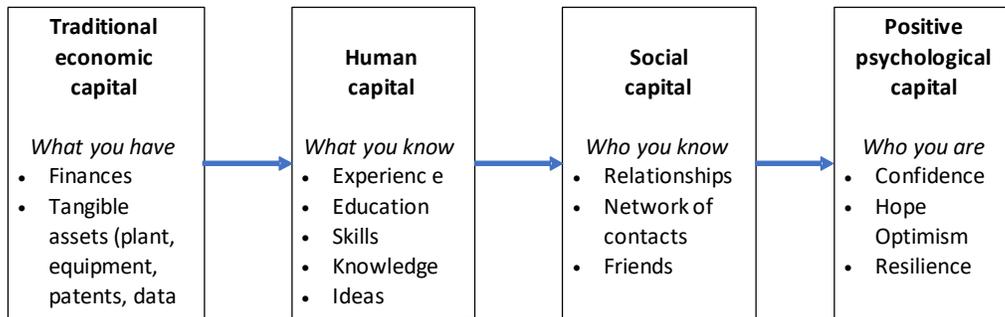
A management team that is open-minded and realistic about positive psychology will be the best group to phase in well-being exercises while accounting for economic realities. It may not be feasible to embrace all possible positive psychology exercises, habits, or rituals at once. Transparency about this issue with all employees, and inclusion of economic realities of operating the business of the Resort as an ongoing dialogue with all employees, will help employees embrace realistic optimism and a gradual shift in culture without defaulting to skepticism or disbelief in the process. As a result, it will enhance the culture described above and empower Resort employees to feel that their contributions to the greater organization are meaningful and valued (Dalio & Bobb, 2017).

#### **V. Positive Psychological Capital (“PsyCap”): An Organizing Framework for the Deployment of Positive Psychology Throughout the Resort.**

We recommend the framework of Positive Psychological Capital (“PsyCap”) to guide Resort leadership as it implements training and hiring initiatives designed to instill well-being in its employees. PsyCap emphasizes an individual’s personal identity in his or her work life; by engaging more fully with employees as people, companies can enhance the employer/employee relationship for all parties.

Importantly, PsyCap is quantifiable and measurable, allowing Resort managers and employees to participate in an ongoing conversation about how PsyCap can be enhanced within

the diverse circumstances of the Resort's employee base. (It seems unlikely, for example, that a hotel room cleaner will benefit from the same well-being initiatives as a golf pro shop manager.)



**Figure 3. Models of Capital.**

Unlike human capital, which focuses on *what you know*, and social capital, which focuses on *who you know*, PsyCap addresses *who you are*, and promotes growth across the four pillars of Hope, Self-Efficacy, Resilience, and Optimism to improve work motivation and engagement, and to enhance positive organizational behavior (Luthans, Luthans, & Luthans, 2004) (Fig. 3).

PsyCap can be thought of as an individual's positive psychological state of development in the workplace. It is characterized by: (1) self-efficacy, the confidence to accept and put in the effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) optimism, positive attribution about succeeding now and in the future; (3) hope, the ability to persevere, and when necessary redirect paths to goals; and (4) resilience, sustaining and bouncing back to attain success when confronted by adversity. (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007).

While each trait within the PsyCap construct is unique, measurable, developable, and impacts performance (Luthans & Youssef, 2004), it is important to note that PsyCap is a higher order core construct that is more predictive of desired employee outcomes (e.g., performance and job satisfaction) than any of the individual pillars independently (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio,

2007). This is in part because the pillars are related; if an individual is high in one pillar, he or she is often high in others (Luthans, 2010).

There are events in the workplace every day that shape PsyCap's pillars of confidence, hope, resiliency, and optimism for employees (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). With careful attention to these events and close dialogue with its employees, the Resort can shape these events to grow its organizational culture, supporting employees in positive psychological change and renewal. Focusing on PsyCap and measuring its growth over time can ground employees in a nurturing environment, creating a competitive advantage for the Resort to attract and retain top talent (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). This intentionally inserts the Resort and the Institute into the Service-Profit Chain described above, for the good of both the enterprise and its participants.

A. Hope.

Hope encompasses both the desire to attain one's goals (agency) and multiple ways to get there (pathways) (Luthans, 2004). Agency involves the energetic pursuit of goals, supported by past experiences that prepare one to be successful in life (Magyar-Moe & Lopez, 2015). Pathway engagement is seen in individuals who can conceive of multiple solutions to a problem and have the confidence to think that they can overcome most problems, even in the midst of a setback (Magyar-Moe & Lopez, 2015). These traits can be expected to be useful in all roles at the Resort.

Hope has a positive correlation with job satisfaction. It buffers the impact of stress and exhaustion for hotel employees and reduces the desire to switch jobs (Jung & Yoon, 2015; Yavas, Karatepe, & Babakus, 2013). Thus, the Resort should cultivate hope in its employees, as a tool to reduce employee stress and exhaustion (and ultimately turnover). Hope appears to be contagious; employees high in hope can serve as role models for their colleagues and may attract other potential employees with higher hope levels (Yavas et al., 2013).

It has been demonstrated that by impacting hope and resilience, PsyCap impacts behavior (Avey, Wernsing, & Luthans, 2008). Researchers who conducted interviews about how hotel employees helped other colleagues, followed rules and procedures, and implemented solutions for the good of the organization found that employee hope and optimism had a significant effect upon employee job satisfaction, while employee hope and resilience affected organization citizenship (Jung & Yoon, 2015). Thus, initiatives calculated to increase employee hope at the Resort should enhance workplace well-being and improve overall staff engagement.

Hope theory helps define specific exercises designed to help others increase their pathway and agency (Magyar-Moe & Lopez, 2015). To increase an employee's pathway engagement, for example, a supervisor could take a long-range goal and break it down into smaller steps. The focus for the employee then becomes the first sub-goal; by discussing ahead of time the possible routes to achieve the sub-goal, the employee can select a specific approach from the available options as she makes progress towards the higher-level goal. There is also value in talking through possible barriers and ways to overcome them as the employee learns new skills to reach the goal. To further increase agency, the employee can be reminded to incorporate positive messages about achievement and recall other times when they overcame challenges. Of course, hope sometimes must overlap with resilience; if a path forward becomes completely blocked, the employee and manager can communicate to either find another path or decide to find a substitute goal (Magyar-Moe & Lopez, 2015).

As with the other three pillars of PsyCap (and the overarching PsyCap construct), the Resort's focus on hope should include both training for current employees and a hiring process for new employees that seeks individuals who bring to the Institute an innate reservoir of hope. Asking job candidates to talk about how they achieve goals and techniques they used to do so

would help clarify their level of hope for hiring decisions (Karatepe, 2014). The use of hope as a selection criterion in hiring also communicates to current employees that management values energetic goal pursuit in the workplace (Karatepe, 2014).

B. Self-Efficacy.

Self-efficacy, or the belief in one's abilities to successfully perform tasks (Luthans, 2002; Bandura, 1977a) has vast consequences in terms of the effort, perseverance, and level of challenge that employees set for themselves (Bandura, 1982; Bandura, Adams, Hardy, & Howells, 1980). There are four factors that influence self-efficacy: enactive mastery, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological arousal (Bandura, 1982).

Enactive mastery is the repeated accomplishment of performance tasks (Bandura, 1982; Bandura, Adams, & Beyer, 1977). Vicarious experience, sometimes described as "modeling," is more successful in building self-efficacy when it follows a challenge that must be overcome, as opposed to situations in which success came easily from the start (Bandura et al., 1980). Modeling is most effective when the modeled behavior produces clear outcomes and there is similarity between modeler and modeled in terms of age, capability or other personal commonalities (Bandura, 1977). Verbal persuasion (e.g., convincing another about what one can do) may be able to influence another's beliefs in their capabilities, but this appears to be somewhat less influential than enactive mastery or modeling (Bandura, 1982). Finally, a person's perception of her physiology, such as a heightened state of arousal when giving a presentation, may be interpreted as not being up to the task, and undermine the individual's performance. In such situations, modeling enhanced self-efficacy and performance more effectively than psychological desensitization (Bandura & Adams, 1977).

Self-efficacy is significantly correlated to job performance as well as to both individual and organizational well-being (Bandura, 1982; Bandura & Adams, 1977; Bandura et al., 1980;

Gist, 1987; Locke, Frederick, Lee, and Bobko, 1984). The reverse is also true: those with lower self-efficacy tend to be less persistent, exert fewer coping efforts, and show less mastery, creating a cyclical reductive effect on self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1982; Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Brown & Inouye, 1978).

The strong positive correlation between self-efficacy and work-related performance is moderated by task complexity and locus of performance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). As a result, those with higher self-efficacy are more likely to select opportunities with greater challenge and higher pay, while those with low self-efficacy may choose to apply for less challenging positions or positions with little future (Bandura, 1977). Since the Resort will need individuals who can adapt to new programs and types of service, it is worth considering how to bolster self-efficacy in existing employees and how to measure self-efficacy levels in the people they hire. Consideration should also be given to strategies to attract and engage confident employees with a sense of capability.

A number of elements may be helpful in this regard. These include goal-setting (Locke et al., 1984), clear instructions regarding task performance and means (Gist et al. 1989), effective feedback systems (Ivancevich & McMahon, 1982), intrinsic interest (Deci & Ryan 1980), training for growth (Kanfer, 1987), managing work environment constraints to minimize factors that may diminish self-efficacy (Gist & Mitchell, 1992), and providing clear standards and consequences for employee performance (Bandura & Cervone, 1983; Bandura, 1986; Bandura & Wood 1989).

### C. Resilience.

Resilience can be defined as “the capability of individuals to cope successfully in the face of significant change, adversity, or risk. This capability changes over time and is enhanced by protective factors in the individual and environment” (Stewart, Reid & Mangham, 1997).

Resilience is linked to self-efficacy. In the face of difficult experiences, people seek motivation and a belief that they can succeed in future endeavors (Masten & Reed, 2002). If they succeed, that success in overcoming adversity and obtaining a new equilibrium in turn promotes more resilience (Masten & Coatsworth, 1995; Masten & Reed, 2002).

An individual's resilience in the workplace is enhanced through a variety of protective factors, including access to human, social, and material capital, combined with experiences that support growth, expertise, and efficacy (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003). Agency, individual decision making, and self-awareness are essential elements of resilience (Luthar, et al., 2000). Mastery and self-efficacy are more likely to emerge when individuals can use their strengths, including critical thinking, creativity, and autonomy (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2001; Masten & Reed, 2002; Masten & Coatsworth, 1995), self-correct (Dweck, 1986), or participate in experiential learning (Kobasa, 1979; Sternberg & Kolligian, 1990).

The Resort can engender resilience in its workforce by giving its employees authority to make decisions and resolve problems in their area of expertise (Wruck & Jensen, 1994). The cycle of resilience hinges on individual training, experience, the development of specialized knowledge, license to make decisions, utilize creativity, and overcome challenges. Competence and efficacy are born from the use of discretion in performing these behaviors and developing agency and competence (Garmezy, 1991). (It is worth noting that this argues strongly in favor of engaging Resort employees in the design of employee programs designed to enhance PsyCap. Involving employees should increase their autonomy and engage them in improving their own environment in collaboration with management.)

The development of organizational and individual resilience can be enhanced at the Resort through attentiveness to the seven "streams" of practical behavior that contribute to

resilience: (1) *Community*, a shared sense of purpose and identity; (2) *Competence*, the capacity and skills to meet demands; (3) *Connections*, relationships and linkages that expand capacity and flexibility; (4) *Commitment*, trust and goodwill; (5) *Communication*, strong interactive discourse to make sense and derive order; (6) *Coordination*, good timing to ensure alignment; and (7) *Consideration*, attention to the human element (Horne & Orr, 1998).

Organizations with a discernible culture tend to be more resilient (Schein, 1997). Thus, as the resort considers the cultural shift described above as it implements well-being initiatives, it can focus on identifying and conveying its culture to its employees through a variety of means, including:

- Group norms and behavior: rituals, language, customs;
- Articulated values;
- Formal philosophy, policies, and ideology;
- Rules of the game. How you get along in the organization, or “how things are done;”
- Climate: feel, layout, atmosphere;
- Embedded skills: skills and competencies, often passed on informally;
- Habits of thinking, mental models, linguistic paradigms, and shared cognitive models;
- Shared meanings and implicit agreements; and
- Metaphors and symbols.

Finally, it is important to note that a culture of success and supportive colleagues builds upon itself. Providing new employees with role models who embody the desired culture, conducting experiential learning exercises, and promoting a sense of belonging to a successful team will ensure that the new employees engage with the Institute’s new culture from the very beginning of their time with the Resort (Everly, 2011). This interpersonal support is itself the single most powerful predictor of resilience (Everly, 2011), and should have a positive effect upon the employee and upon every guest that employee connects with, at every level of the

workforce. A learning organization, such as the Institute, that combines systems thinking, organizational culture, shared vision, individual development, is an adaptive organization building organizational resilience (Senge, 1990).

D. Optimism.

Optimism can be defined as the attribution of positive events to internal, permanent, and pervasive causes, and the attribution of negative events to external, temporary, and situation-specific causes (Luthans, 2004). Like hope, optimism reflects a positive outlook on the future – but where hope is initiated and determined about the self (e.g., “I hope that things will go my way,”) optimism is focused on forces outside the self (“I am optimistic about the future and my role in it”) (Luthans, 2010).

Training for optimism, and evaluation of optimism in potential new hires, should focus on the individual’s verbal and written explanatory style. When discussing negative events, optimistic employees will tend to use vocabulary that conveys external, temporary and situation-specific causation, while more pessimistic employees will tend to accept personal responsibility for the event (even if circumstances were clearly outside her control), and use words like “I’m just terrible at x” or “I’ll never be able to do y” (Seligman, 2006). Role-playing and other training can develop optimism in employees and improve their speech patterns in interacting with guests at the Resort and the Institute, if it emphasizes leniency for the past (e.g., self-forgiveness), an appreciation of the present, and opportunity-seeking for the future, as well as the development of realistic perspectives about event causation (Luthans, 2004).

Such training may be particularly suited to hospitality employees, and in particular those who have responsibility for interacting with guests. Such employees are engaged in “emotional labor,” and must demonstrate a sincere and genuine sense of concern for the guests (Johanson & Woods, 2008). Using optimistic vocabulary while actively addressing guest concerns and

complaints can transmit a desire to exceed the customer's expectation with a positive outlook that emphasizes the temporary nature of the problem.

E. Evaluating Psychological Capital Over Time.

To determine whether the employee well-being initiatives implemented by the Resort are providing the desired benefits to Resort employees, we recommend tracking PsyCap and focusing on who an employee is and who he/she is becoming and linking that to the organization (Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, & Combs, 2006). Increases in PsyCap correlate with positive affect, job satisfaction, and subjective well-being (Lorenz, Beer, Pütz, & Heinitz, 2016) as well as reduced employee turnover (Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009), and the composite measurement of PsyCap appears to provide greater predictive power for job performance and job satisfaction than any of the four factors alone (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). Thus, by strategically conducting employee support programs that promote optimism, self-efficacy, hope, and resilience, the Resort can increase the overall PsyCap of its employees and advance both their well-being and that of the organization, which can in turn support the guests of the Institute and facilitate their learning.

Evaluation of existing levels of PsyCap prior to implementation of the Plan, followed by periodic re-evaluation as the Plan is implemented, will allow management to gauge the progress of the Plan against the Resort's goals over time and across diverse cohorts of Resort employees. A validated measurement of PsyCap is the Psychological Capital Questionnaire ("PCQ"), a 24-point self-reported questionnaire (Luthans, et al., 2007) (see Appendix A). The PCQ is based on six questions for each of the four pillars of PsyCap, and thus can be analyzed in subgroups to generate information regarding each pillar, allowing for the creation of more targeted interventions if needed in the future. (Note that even the act of administering the PCQ conveys

management's desire to empower and support the employees; this in and of itself may serve to increase PsyCap in employees taking the PCQ.)

We recommend that the Resort administer the PCQ to all employees as it begins to implement well-being initiatives in various parts of the Resort. Additional administrations of the PCQ would take place six months later, and at six- or twelve-month intervals going forward. The PCQ would also be included in the on-boarding process for new employees.

Regular administration of the PCQ will give management and employees a greater awareness of the transition of PCQ from an external "state of mind" into a more intrinsic character trait in Resort employees (Avey, Luthans, Smith, & Palmer, 2010). Additional information (and potential counterfactuals) can be gathered through feedback interviews with specific managers. This information should be coupled with longitudinal data about employee turnover prior to and after the initiation of the Plan, to ensure that the Plan's interventions are in fact supportive and are not creating unintended or undesirable outcomes.

## **VI. High-Level Implementation Plan.**

Our high-level plan for the infusion of well-being throughout the Resort's employees consists of three phases: (1) an immersive management education in the tenets of positive psychology, organizational and individual well-being, and positive education; (2) an Appreciative Inquiry process with the entire employee base to kick-off the process and to design mutually beneficial exercises to increase well-being and develop High-Quality Connections (HQCs) between management and employees, employees and colleagues, and employees and guests; and (3) the implementation of well-being exercises in strategic parts of the Resort, including an initial focus on the "on-boarding" of new Resort employees to introduce them to the updated culture and designed to increase employee engagement and reduce turnover.

A. Management Education.

Given the confusion and lack of awareness of the specific tenets of positive psychology and how they can be applied specifically to the Resort and its employees, the Institute should conduct specific education around employee and organizational well-being, PsyCap and its constituent components, and measurements of success first for the year-round management of the Resort. It is these individuals who will be tasked with executing the culture change that comes with transforming the Resort into the Institute, and it is they who will set the example of the updated organization culture for all employees. We recommend following the general process of organizational immersion in positive psychology that has been successful in primary and secondary schools around the world, and that in the future organizations will conduct at the Institute (Adler, 2017). The Institute will be richly served in this regard, as its advisor Alejandro Adler is the preeminent scholar and implementation expert in positive psychology in schools (Adler, 2017). We suggest a 10-day immersion program led by experienced personnel from the university partner, which has deep expertise in conducting such retreats. This experience will also generate new ideas for how best to host similar programs for a variety of other organizations at the Resort.

B. Plan Kickoff – VIA Character Strengths and Appreciative Inquiry.

The VIA Character Strengths are an extensively researched set of 24 traits that have been prized across cultures and throughout the ages as important for human flourishing. By identifying, sharing, and focusing on our signature character strengths, we can more easily create meaningful connections and increase our likelihood of success when confronted with psychologically demanding or ego-depleting tasks (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) engages all employees in a communal exploration of the organization's strengths and how they intersect with the character strengths of the employees

(Cooperrider & Godwin, 2015). AI helps all participants define more clearly the organization's positive potential, creating a sense of shared participation in the creation of the next iteration of the organization (Krattenmaker, 2001).

We recommend that the Institute engage certified instructors in the VIA Character Strengths and Appreciative Inquiry and conduct a day-long seminar on each, and their roles in positive psychology, for all employees of the Resort. The purpose of the Character Strengths day would be to provide a common positive vocabulary for all employees that will facilitate collegial interaction and mutually supportive problem solving, while the day-long AI session would serve as a holistic engagement of all Resort employees regarding their perspectives on what the Resort is, and what the Resort could be, providing valuable data from a variety of knowledgeable perspectives on how the Resort can provide better service in a more efficient manner, while building an important cultural foundation of holistic communication between all employees and leadership of the Resort, thereby increasing employee engagement and well-being. An example of this Character Strengths Day is set out in Appendix D below.

C. Intervention Implementation.

It is anticipated that the AI will generate a large number of recommendations for ways to increase employee and guest well-being at the Resort. It is essential to the long-term success of the AI process that some number of these interventions be implemented, to lend sincerity and credibility to management's commitment to welcoming the voices of the employees. We recommend a representative committee of employees meet to review each suggestion generated in the AI, and the rapid strategic implementation of selective recommendations designed to have maximum positive impact on the Resort and the Institute.

#### D. Areas to Consider.

To achieve the Institute's goals, it will be important to implement positive interventions across multiple organizational levels, including employee to employee, employee to manager, manager to employee, manager to manager, and Resort employee to Resort guest. A representative sample of Resort experiences that should be carefully evaluated in the AI and intervention implementation phases includes (but should not be limited to):

1. Creation of an Institute and Resort statement of values, and articulation of behaviors that reflect those values;
2. Interviewing potential new employees;
3. Onboarding employees in ways that will convey meaning, empowerment, the connectedness that exemplifies a family-run business, and builds resilience and dedication to the Institute;
4. Check-In experience;
5. In-room environments that enhance comfort and emotional well-being of guests and that connect room cleaning staff to guests
6. Physical and mental well-being of employees and guests;
7. Participation of guest/employee family members in well-being offerings;
8. Physical fitness resources;
9. Mindfulness training;
10. Special events and employee/guest celebrations;
11. Dining opportunities for staff and for guests;
12. Effective feedback systems;
13. Exposure to humanities for guests and employees simultaneously – movie nights, book discussions, etc.;
14. Employee evaluation: 360s throughout organization, regular opportunities to solicit staff feedback; and
15. Educating about thinking traps and other areas for risks of mutual misunderstanding.

### **VII. Conclusion.**

This paper provides a plan to engage management and staff in a wholesale pivot of the Resort from a year-round golf and skiing mountain resort to a global Institute of well-being, a place where positive psychology is thoroughly integrated in the physical space and interpersonal dynamics among managers, staff, guests, families, and others working at, attending, or affiliated

with the Resort. By embracing cultural change, educating managers in the principles of positive psychology, focusing on the components of Psychological Capital, conducting a holistic Appreciative Inquiry to generate a shared vision of cultural growth and contextually implementable interventions, strategically prioritizing organizational change through high-impact positive interventions, and measuring impact through the validated instrument of the Psychological Capital Questionnaire, the Resort and the Institute will be well-positioned to create a global leader in the education and implementation of positive organizational scholarship.

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**Appendix A: Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ)**

(Copied directly from Luthans, F., Youssef, C. M., & Avolio, B. J. (2007). *Psychological capital: Developing the human competitive edge*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.)

Below are statements that describe how you may think about yourself right now. Use the following scales to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

(1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = somewhat agree, 5 = agree, 6 = strongly agree)

1. I feel confident analyzing a long-term problem to find a solution.
2. I feel confident in representing my work area in meetings with management.
3. I feel confident contributing to discussions about the company's strategy.
4. I feel confident helping to set targets/goals in my work area.
5. I feel confident contacting people outside the company (e.g., suppliers, customers) to discuss problems.
6. I feel confident presenting information to a group of colleagues.
7. If I should find myself in a jam at work, I could think of many ways to get out of it.
8. At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my work goals.
9. There are lots of ways around any problem.
10. Right now I see myself as being pretty successful at work.
11. I can think of many ways to reach my current work goals.
12. At this time, I am meeting the work goals that I have set for myself.
13. When I have a setback at work, I have trouble recovering from it, moving on. (R)
14. I usually manage difficulties one way or another at work.
15. I can be "on my own," so to speak, at work if I have to.

16. I usually take stressful things at work in stride.
17. I can get through difficult times at work because I've experienced difficulty before.
18. I feel I can handle many things at a time at this job.
19. When things are uncertain for me at work, I usually expect the best.
20. If something can go wrong for me work-wise, it will. (R)
21. I always look on the bright side of things regarding my job.
22. I'm optimistic about what will happen to me in the future as it pertains to work.
23. In this job, things never work out the way I want them to. (R)
24. I approach this job as if "every cloud has a silver lining."

Note: (R) indicates reverse scoring.

Once the PCQ scores are collected, they can be compiled into a tracking table like this:

<b>Employee</b>	<b>Initial PCQ Score</b>	<b>Training Date</b>	<b>1 mo. Post-Training PCQ Score</b>	<b>Manager Comments</b>	<b>Still Employed?</b>
Jane Doe	3.8	3/3/2018	4.1	Seems engaged in processes, improvement visible	Yes

## Appendix B. Tools to Facilitate Culture Infusion.<sup>1</sup>

Culture infusion exercise for all teams and all staff at Shawnee.

- Questions for leadership: How can Shawnee focus more on all staff? List at least three options. Which one can be implemented first? What steps are required? When will it be rolled it out?

### Principle 1: Provide intentional leadership

Teams may enhance their own working ability by reflecting on leaders that have inspired them over the years. Different qualities stand out for each of us and help us determine what leadership styles resonate with us.

1. Who do you think of as pivotal leaders from the past?
2. What current leaders stand out to you?
3. What qualities do these leaders have?
4. Who has been most influential to you as a leader in your career? Why?
5. How can the leadership of our firm mirror these same qualities?

Please provide 2–4 suggestions. After this exercise, work to implement the suggestions into the culture of Shawnee.

Culture Infusion Exercise: Practice setting and following intentions for Shawnee. What are two intentions for Shawnee as a whole that you would like to progress on in the next six months? How will you communicate and measure success of those intentions? In your opinion, what results would portray a successful outcome?

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise cited, these principles are taken from Wekelo, 2018.

**Principle 2: Prioritize personal wellness**

The health and well-being of each individual employee matters. Together, employee health results in a healthier organization. Health benefits, sick days, and promoting health is essential for the well-being of all staff and guests. These health dynamics include, breathing, movement, play, nourish, and replenish.

Culture Infusion Exercise: Consider implementing programs to incorporate self-care values into Shawnee's operations. For instance: Start meetings with movement, play, or dance. Encourage team members to conduct walking meetings when appropriate. Offer opportunities for teams to play in and out of the office. Provide healthy food options at work. Facilitate breathing exercises and replenishment education and experiences.

**Principle 3: Insist on a healthy work/life balance**

Balance between tasks at work can save time and energy. Suggest a process of more efficient meetings to minimize meeting time. Agendas are set with specific items to review. If questions are sent out prior to the meeting staff may review and come prepared making meeting time more fruitful saving time and energy.

Culture Infusion Exercise: Assure all Shawnee teams that you care about their work/life balance. Supervisors may be trained to ask their team members how they can help facilitate better balance; what works for each of us is personal. Shawnee may consider surveying employees on their work/life balance and implementing programs that may be beneficial to various cohorts.

**Principle 4: Practice effective communication**

Listening is necessary for building trust. With trust comes enhanced relationships that build a stable culture for continued success. The way we are engaging in all aspects of life transfers into our workplaces. Our ability to include diverse perspectives demonstrates our value for diversity and our willingness to include everyone. Deep listening includes several constructs including: (1) the practice of empathy; (2) Focused attention; (3) Suspension of judgment; and (4) Responsiveness.

**Principle 5: Handle conflict directly, openly, and immediately**

The “3P method” may help in overcoming challenges. This will help quickly shift energy towards helpful actions based on teamwork and agreement.

Step 1: Pause to conquer negativity

Step 2: Pivot out of the negative spiral

Step 3: Consider positive possibilities

A possible exercise for all teams is to ask the following questions:

1. What are you grateful for?
2. What do you regret?
3. How were your feelings hurt?

Start with a small group in which you would like to strengthen relationships. There does not necessarily have to be conflict. As you gain confidence with the exercise, you may wish to expand its usage. We all want to feel heard and appreciated.

Culture Infusion Exercise: Implement the 3P Method at Shawnee. The concept is easy and having a common way of dealing with conflict levels the playing field and many times fends off conflict before it starts.

In the midst of an organizational transition, an inventory of Shawnee's style of communication and effectiveness may be helpful. How might the management team lead by example in using effective communication strategies in all interactions?

### **Principle 6: Focus on all staff**

Employees are the beating heart of an organization, so organizations that want to honor and leverage their employees will take the time to gather employees' opinions and preferences. It is essential that there be follow up, so employees know their voices are heard and honored and that implemented changes be long-lasting. Continuity builds trust.

Schedule a play date with your team: play games at lunch, go to a sporting event, take a painting class, or get out and move together on a walk-and-talk. Survey team members on what they want to do and use their feedback to choose the event. Every team at Shawnee is supported in their efforts to know they matter; they add value and are valued.

### **Principle 7: Regularly conduct employee surveys.**

Steps for Conducting Effective Surveys: (1) create; (2) announce; (3) execute; (4) analyze and implement; (5) follow up.

In your immediate team or group, a survey may be used to ask 3–5 open-ended questions about how your team or group can collaborate more effectively or what they enjoy most about their jobs. Implement the agreed-upon strategies and maintain them over time.

Culture Infusion Exercise: Commit to conducting at least 2–4 surveys throughout the year to check in with your employees. Gauge overall team satisfaction is crucial; employees want to feel included, respected and listened to.

Recommendations for a possible survey for Shawnee includes the following:

1. What is your favorite thing about working at Shawnee?
2. What would you like to see the Shawnee accomplish in the upcoming year?
3. What project have you enjoyed working on most while with us, and what were the main factors making it enjoyable?
4. What aspects of your role and activities at Shawnee motivate you?
5. Are there any aspects of Shawnee that make your life or job more difficult than they need to be? If so, please list them as well as what could be done to remove these obstacles.
6. Any other feedback you would like to share? Any other suggestions?

A Brief Mid-Year Survey at Shawnee might include the following:

1. What are 2–4 suggestions you would like to share to enhance Shawnee?
2. What inspired or motivated you the most in the past six months?
3. Any other feedback you would like to share? Any other suggestions?

### **Principle 8: Align goals to rewarding performance.**

How do you get your employees started with the creative process of setting inspirational goals? Before employees set their goals for the coming year, invite them to complete a simple exercise to get clear on what they want to be doing. They can choose which answers they want to share. Ask them to take time to reflect and mindfully complete the following:

1. Make a list of each specific job function.
2. Highlight the ones that bring the most joy. Keep this list for reference.
3. Highlight the ones the individual excels at. Keep this list for reference.
4. Honestly answer the following questions (feel free to use your lists from #2 and #3 above to spark your thinking):
  - a. What inspires you?

- b. Who inspires you professionally?
  - c. What is your favorite thing about your work?
  - d. What excites you personally? At work?
  - e. In what ways could the passions you pursue on a personal level benefit Shawnee?
  - f. What do you want to be doing professionally in five years?
  - g. What skills do you want to improve?
  - h. What type of project do you want to be on next?
  - i. What would you like to help with internally?
  - j. What would you like to learn more about internally?
  - k. What would you like to help Shawnee accomplish next year?
  - l. What would you like Shawnee to help you accomplish next year?
  - m. What is your favorite thing about working at Shawnee?
  - n. What do you do to ensure balance in your life?
  - o. Do you give yourself time to do the things you love most?
5. Review your lists and identify themes or recurring answers. Share with your supervisor.
  6. Work with your supervisor to create goals that align with your desires.

This exercise will help employees get excited about the next year, balancing the personal and professional as they create a fresh new set of goals that supports their wellness and job advancement.

### **Principle 9: Encourage team connection (Dutton, 2003)**

The people of Shawnee are its greatest asset and setting up fun and meaningful employee events is a great way to say “thank you.” These events also help reduce employee stress, and they enhance relationships as employees get to know each other better outside the office. When your staff take part in activities for a social cause, they get to know their co-workers and hone their teamwork skills while giving back to their communities and other organizations that have a positive impact on our world. The Resort’s community dinner is a wonderful example of an activity of generosity and giving back. At the same time, the overall culture of the Resort is enhanced,

especially when these activities are aligned to individual, team, and corporate goals. No matter the activity, make sure to let your team members help choose the activities, and provide clear support from leadership so they see by example that Shawnee values connection, play, and reward as well as work.

For Successful Employee Social Activities:

1. Confirm leadership support
2. Survey employees
3. Send thank you notes
4. Share the fun Tips for Successful Cause-Related Employee Activities:
  - a. Align activities with employee and corporate goals
  - b. Survey employees
  - c. Take action
  - d. Report
  - e. Share on social media

### **Appendix C. Sample Rituals.**

The following exercises are intended to be performed regularly with Resort employees, becoming habits and maturing over time into “rituals” that are recognizable and unique aspects of life at the Resort and the Institute. We have selected these exercises (and provided instructions for how to implement them) to address some of the issues and aspirations voiced by Shawnee leadership and staff during our recent visit to the Resort. They are expressed in plain language intentionally to make the implementation as user friendly to Shawnee as possible.

#### 1. All-Hands Weekly Ritual.

The purpose of this all-hands-on meeting is to inspire, engage and educate. It also gives everyone in the company a voice to contribute value and raise concerns. This is essential for an organization that aspires to embody well-being.

The All-Hands meeting does three things: (1) celebrates people and accomplishments; (2) drives alignment around mission, strategies, and priorities; and (3) provides a forum to ask and answer questions.

People crave recognition and appreciation. Providing this in a public forum costs nothing beyond a little time and goes a long way in terms of increasing motivation and loyalty. In our meeting with Resort employees, there were several reflections on how programs to recognize employees have not lasted and this has been perceived as a lack of integrity. Having a weekly ritual where employees are recognized would likely help increase the kind of engagement and trust with employees that Shawnee is seeking to foster and improve employee retention.

The Company All-Hands will be run weekly, for an hour, at a time that allows the greatest number of employees across the organization to attend. Friday afternoons are often a

good time for All-Hands as it allows for reflection of the week gone by and sets up employees to go into the weekend excited for the week ahead. If this is not possible, find a time that works best for the most people.

Resort leadership should be deeply involved in curating the content for every single All-Hands. This will include material from the science of well-being that each leader feels particularly connected to and wishes to address in the belief that practicing it will benefit Shawnee, its people and its mission. Once the outline for the All-Hands is established the responsibility for running the All-hands will rotate among members of the leadership team.

Each executive who runs the All-Hands injects their own special flavor into its content and delivery. This keeps things interesting and fresh and allows for a range of perspective.

The agenda for the meeting will roughly follow the following guidelines:

- **0-15 minutes: Recognize your people and their accomplishments.** Express your appreciation of who those people are and the specific strengths, qualities, and values you see and admire in them. Ways to do this include:
  - Welcome new hires. Possibly bring them up front if it is a more significant hire. Let them introduce themselves, sharing for a few minutes who they are, why they joined Shawnee, and what excites them.
  - Celebrate employee milestones such as anniversaries.
  - Open the floor to your employees to allow them to call out their peers for how they have contributed
  - Share significant accomplishments of the past week and call out teams who have done exceptional work and give them a round of applause (and maybe a round of drinks) to celebrate their achievement.

- **15-40 minutes: Purpose and Strategy**
  - Shawnee is a mission-driven organization. This mission, their reason for being, needs to be shared, again and again, with the people who carry out that mission and make it possible. Share with your people why they are there and what you are working to accomplish with their help.
  - Be true to your personality and style, and at the same time effectively communicate how you see Shawnee as a force for changing the world, what that looks like, and why that matters to you. Paint that world with your words. Use personal stories or anecdotes if that works for you.
  - Share your game plan. How are you planning on creating the kind of difference you hope to make? Be clear and to the point. What are the key objectives you are looking to meet and how are you planning on meeting them? How will you know when you get there? How do these objectives tie into the bigger picture?
  - Present one focus or initiative for the coming week that is of particular importance. Break it down to its pieces and explain why it is so important. Then clarify what successful accomplishment of that goal will look like.
- **40-55 minutes: Q and A (Make sure to leave sufficient time for this)**
  - Have a forum where people can submit questions and vote on the questions that resonate with them. Answer the top few questions posed each week. Here is a free tool you can use for this: <https://www.tricider.com>

- Take 2-3 spontaneous questions from the crowd that arose based on anything that came up during the meeting. When appropriate refer the question to the person most suited to answer it.
- **55-60 minutes: Wrap Up**
  - Thank everyone
  - Bring proceedings to a close
  - Maybe play a piece of music or show a video that ends on an upbeat/inspirational note.

## 2. First Day Experience (Onboarding):

People's lives are defined by moments. When most people are asked about their first day at work, they generally do not consider it a defining moment. This lack of attention given to an employee's first day is a mind-boggling wasted opportunity to make an employee feel included and appreciated. There are particularly valuable moments that have the potential to pay dividends for decades to come if properly understood and engineered.

People remember their lives in terms of peaks and pits (Kahneman, Fredrickson, Schreiber, & Redelmeier, 1993). There are three types of moments that mark our lives: transitions, milestones, and pits. Bar and bat mitzvahs, confirmations, and weddings are examples of both milestones and transitions, and hopefully not pits. Transitions are naturally defining moments. By recognizing these moments, we can shape them to make them more memorable and meaningful.

For this reason, the first day of work is worth investing in. For new employees, there are three big transitions happening at once. Intellectual – new work. Social – new people. And

environmental – new place. The first day has the potential to be a peak moment, instead of a bureaucratic ritual that can leave a newcomer wondering if she made the right decision accepting your job offer.

Lonny Fry, Head of Global Strategy for John Deere, provides an excellent example of the potential for on-boarding (Heath & Heath, 2017). Unlike the midwestern United States, where John Deere is part of the landscape, the company is not a well-known brand in Asia. As a result, employees of John Deere in Asia were less emotionally tied-in to the brand, and their Asian offices were suffering from a lack of employee engagement and retention. Lonny saw an opportunity to build that connection and realized that it needed to start on an employee's first day. Collaborating with her team, they created "The First Day Experience." This is how a typical first day might unfold:<sup>2</sup>

1. Shortly after receiving the offer letter from John Deere, an employee receives an email from a John Deere friend (we will call her Onika). Onika introduces herself and shares some of the basics: what to expect your first day, the activities you will be engaged in, where to park, what are the dress norms, and so forth. Onika also tells you that she will be waiting to greet you in the lobby on your first day at the start of your workday.
2. When your first day comes, you park in the right place, make your way to the lobby and Onika is waiting there. You recognize her from her photo, which was part of her email. On the giant flat screen in the lobby, there is a headline welcoming you by name.

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<sup>2</sup> What follows assumes a specific type of employee; modifications to this process will be necessary for, e.g., employees who do not work in an office environment, or who do not have computers, etc.

3. Onika shows you to your work area. Next to it is a six-foot banner welcoming you by name and alerting others in the office of your presence as a new hire. Throughout the day your co-workers come over to say hello and welcome you.
4. Additional welcoming occurs at the first All-Hands meeting (see above) in which you participate.
5. As you get settled, you notice the background picture on your monitor and it is a gorgeous shot of John Deere equipment on a farm at sunset, and below it is a caption:  
*Welcome to the most important work you will ever do.*
6. You open up your computer (or phone) to find that there is already an email in your inbox. It is from Sam Allen, the CEO of John Deere. In a short video, he talks about the company's mission: to provide the food, shelter, and infrastructure that will be needed to feed the world's growing population. He closes by saying, "Enjoy the rest of your first day and I hope you will enjoy a long, successful, and fulfilling career as part of the John Deere team."
7. At midday, Onika comes to your workspace and takes you to lunch off-site with a small group. They ask about your background and tell you about some of the projects they are working on.
8. Later in the day, your boss's boss, the department manager, comes by and makes plans with you to have lunch (or some other form of social interaction) the following week.
9. At the end of your workday, another more experienced employee comes to your workspace and explains that she has been assigned to be your "John Deere buddy" as

you adjust to this new environment. She asks how your first day went and asks about any concerns, questions, ideas, or thoughts that you might want to ask or share.

10. Your John Deere buddy performs this small kindness daily for the first week, twice during your second week, and at least once-weekly for the next several weeks. By ending the new employee's day with the kindness and attention of attentive and caring listening, you are left with a lasting positive impression as you go home, remembering (as we all do) the peak and end experiences of the day most strongly. This also helps your supervisors detect small issues before they become big issues that are harder to deal with, helping employee retention.

11. You leave the office that day feeling: you belong here, the work we are doing matters, and you matter to your colleagues, your supervisors, and the company as a whole.

John Deere rolled this initiative out in their Beijing and India offices. In each location, the response was outstanding and contributed to significant gains in profitability, employee engagement, and culture.

Here is how a similar on-boarding experience could occur at the Resort, fueled by the Institute's positive education principles:

1. The General Manager will appoint a group of team members who can excel at the "Onika" welcoming role. These individuals will lead the implementation of this project across the different departments within the Resort.
2. The "Onika Team" will be initiated into this endeavor by receiving coaching from The General Manager, or another suitable manager, on how to successfully deliver this first day experience. The team will meet regularly to provide ongoing feedback and receive coaching on how to improve their performance.

3. The team will write a short and compelling script about the meaning and purpose of what the Institute is doing and the Resort's future vision. It will also record a professional and polished video to be used in an email welcoming each new employee.

Here are some examples to help stimulate your creative juices and demonstrate how some successful companies have done this:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOKpFSx3jZo>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZXvr5LqzEVE>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uoGleagzw9U>

4. Set a date to roll this out for new hires.

### 3. Shawnee Morning Ritual

One challenge regularly faced by managers at the Resort is employees who “bring their personal lives to work.” In other words, negative experiences or situations that are causing Resort employees to suffer are too commonly crossing the threshold of the Resort and impacting the way that the employees conduct their work. Managers are looking for tools that will help employees be effective at work notwithstanding conflict in other areas of their lives, while improving the interactions among all team members.

The following is a ten-minute morning exercise to be done at the beginning of each shift by employees. It serves multiple purposes, including learning effective goal-setting and problem-solving skills, fostering high-quality connections with fellow employees, and improved processing of emotional stress.

**Time needed: 10 minutes total (5 minutes per partner)**

- **Step 1:** Find a partner (one of your co-workers)
- **Step 2:** Think of a challenge that you are currently facing or will be facing soon. This can be work-related but does not have to be. Choose something that you are comfortable sharing with your partner, and then share it.
- **Step 3:** What is your desired outcome? Share this with your partner
- **Step 4:** What obstacle or obstacles may get in the way? Share this with your partner.
- **Step 5:** What is your plan? Share with your partner at least one concrete action you can take to move one step forward towards reaching your desired outcome. Consider how you could leverage one of your strengths to help you reach your outcome.

**Why is this helpful?**

By giving employees the opportunity to address the challenges they are bringing into work with them with a supportive co-worker, they have the chance to process what they are experiencing and perhaps get to a better place emotionally that will allow them to move forward into their work day more effectively. Also, connecting meaningfully with a coworker is a positively energizing interaction that fosters better communication and cooperation between employees. Further, by thinking through the steps of what outcome they wish for, what obstacles may get in the way and then plan how to overcome those obstacles, they are empowered to solve their challenges in a step-by-step way that they can apply to almost any challenge they will face. In addition, by considering their natural talents, and where they are stronger and have experienced a degree of self-efficacy in the past, they are encouraged in their ability to meet their present and future challenges (Duckworth, Grant, Loew, Oettingen, & Gollwitzer (2011)).

### **Appendix D. VIA Character Strengths Day.**

The leadership of Shawnee has expressed five desired outcomes:

1. Introduce Resort staff to positive psychology;
2. Improve employee well-being for the present and future;
3. Lower employee turnover;
4. Prime their employees for the future of Shawnee as a center of positive psychology and education; and
5. Have the employees' exposure to positive psychology impact their engagement with inn guests.

We propose to initiate this process with an introduction to the VIA Character Strengths:

- a. Have the entire staff take the VIA Character Strengths survey, available at [www.viacharacter.org](http://www.viacharacter.org);
- b. Engage the entire inn staff in a day-long workshop focused on teaching them about strengths and how to leverage them for personal and professional benefit. A potential agenda/structure for this workshop follows.

#### **Potential VIA Character Strengths Workshop.**

Materials. Each employee will receive:

- A personalized folder with the VIA FAQs handout and the employee's individual PRO report describing his/her unique profile of character strengths.
- A card with the employee's name and "signature strengths" that can be attached to a lanyard and worn throughout the workshop, enabling others to see the employee's signature strengths, and vice versa.

Activities:

1. Place personalized folders on each seat

2. *Icebreaker*: “Stand-up if” exercise. Moderators show the group pictures of different behaviors in different situations and the audience stands up if they are like the picture being shown.
3. *Education*. Moderators explain character strengths as a lens through which we interact with the world; we each possess a unique lens formed by the configuration of our strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). By understanding and focusing on our character strengths, we find an easier pathway to engaging with the world in ways more likely to lead to our successful achievement of our personal goals.
4. *Exercise*. Each employee will read through the brief paragraphs that describe each of their top 5 signature strengths and will underline the words or statements that particularly resonate. Employees will pair up and share an insight they learned with the person next to them.
5. *Exercise*. Model positive intros and strengths-spotting feedback (Peterson, 2006), using several key employees we have identified and primed for the demo.
6. *Exercise*. The group will break up into round tables of ten each. In a round robin style, each person will give a positive introduction in which they describe a moment that they are proud of since they joined Shawnee (or if they are new employees, a recent positive moment). Others at the table will provide strength-spotting feedback (e.g., “that was a great story and I feel like it really showed your character strength of prudence in the way that you did x.”) This will expose and familiarize participants to a range of strengths, while helping employees connect meaningfully with their colleagues around strengths (Peterson, 2006).

7. *Debrief.* Moderators discuss lessons learned and insights gained with the entire group. This sharing builds trust and connection, and increases the value of the insights shared.
8. *Exercise.* The group will be divided into pairs. Each person will do the “5 minutes – 5 stories” exercise in which each person gets 1 minute to explain each of his/her signature strengths (Niemiec, 2017).
9. *Exercise.* The group will self-select into pairs of people who do not know each other well and will brainstorm potential activities for potential guests that would match each employee’s signature strengths. The employees will record the set of ideas they came up with and later hand these in (anonymized if so desired by the employee). This will be followed by a debriefing of insights gained from the experience.
  - a. **NOTE:** This could become the basis of a new and unique Institute guest experience. A guest who takes the VIA character strengths survey before coming to the Institute would find a personalized strengths report with a set of suggestions for activities and opportunities the guest can take advantage of at the Institute to engage his/her strengths, as well as an explanation of the potential benefits of those activities. Couples staying at the Institute could receive an overlapping report that matches their shared strengths as well, or some activities that will appeal to different strengths (Lyubomirsky, 2007).

### **Use of Character Strengths Over Time.**

In the future, Shawnee Institute employees will wear an attractive nametag or lanyard with their name and top signature strength, similar to nametags that list an employee’s hometown

or single “passion activity” at other hospitality resorts. This will encourage conversations between employees and guests over the VIA Character Strengths and their application to well-being.

This will contribute to the employees’ sense of mattering and meaning as they are identified by their unique strengths and have a clear path for making a difference in others’ lives (Prilleltensky, 2014). Further, the repeated focus on strengths and using them will help imbed this mindset in their lives for their present and future benefit.

In addition, it may create a unique guest experience in terms of growth and connection with staff and the Shawnee experience. Also, it will likely foster better appreciation between the staff of the different strengths within the group, helping them work together more effectively.