



## Fuel motivation through progress at work.

### ADEPTION INSIGHTS SERIES

Unpacking insights and themes from the real life experiences, challenges, goals and reflections of thousands of leaders — to support better leadership development journeys.



This insights series report explores core elements that influence motivation and contribute to burnout risk in the workplace. We analyzed data from 590 leaders who completed Adeption’s Grow–Perform–Sustain (GPS) assessment, which measures motivation across five key aspects using a 0–5 point scale and assesses burnout risk using the same scale. The assessment also asks respondents to identify contributors to their current motivation levels.

ADEPTION INSIGHTS

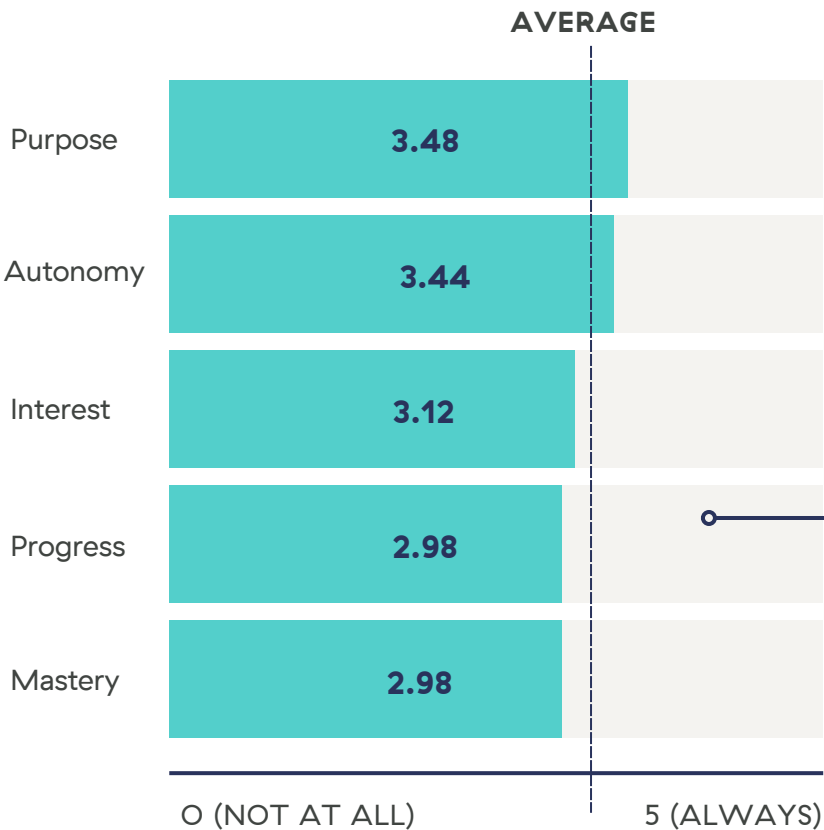
Key Finding: The Power of Progress

Our analysis showed an overall average motivation score of 3.2 out of 5. Across the five different aspects of motivation, having a sense of purpose and autonomy at work received the highest scores. Experiencing a sense of progress and mastery received the lowest scores (each averaging 2.98 out of 5), and were identified as **key areas where targeted interventions could enhance individual motivation**.

Further analysis revealed a **link between a sense of progress and lower burnout scores**, with a one-point increase above average in the progress score related to 12% lower burnout risk.

AVERAGE SCORE FOR EACH ASPECT OF MOTIVATION

To what extent does your work give you a sense of ...



Average response score on a 0–5 point Linkert scale. 585 responses total.

Grow–Perform–Sustain (GPS)

Indicator



The GPS Indicator assessment is based on findings from the research of leadership expert Nick Petrie and his team. This research project sought to understand how organizations can create the conditions for their people to sustain high performance while simultaneously experiencing high levels of well-being.

A 1-point increase in Progress perception leads to a

↓ 12.1% burnout risk

How can we empower leaders with a sense of progress and mastery to boost their motivation?



## What Drives and Drains Motivation?

The **primary drivers of motivation** identified in our research include having engaging challenges, making an impact on others or the business, and achieving goals. These elements **are interconnected through the sense of progress and purpose they foster**. Conversely, **common demotivators were frustrations related to workload that hindered progress** (e.g., negative workload balance, repetitive tasks, lack of organizational or management support) and a lack of strategic clarity, undermining a sense of purpose.

What contributes to your current level of motivation, or lack of motivation, for your projects, assignments and tasks?

### TOP 5 MOTIVATORS



### TOP 5 DEMOTIVATORS



Percent of responses that mention each motivator / demotivator. 585 responses total. Responses can have multiple tags.

Further analysis of motivator and demotivator themes indicated that average motivation significantly decreased when individuals felt a lack of progress. Specifically, **motivation decreased to 30% below average when work did not support personal growth, 18% with excessive repetitive tasks, and 15% due to a lack of recognition or reward**. The data suggests that feeling as if you're making headway and achieving goals at work isn't just a powerful motivator; it's a positive defense against burnout.

## IN ACTION

The next section of this report provides practical strategies to boost the sense of progress you and your team experience, and that your leadership development programs foster.



With two-thirds of American employees experiencing some level of burnout (**Moodle**), and global employee engagement at a low of 21% (**Gallup**) it's essential for leaders to actively cultivate cultures that support high performance, personal growth, and sustainable well-being.

## FOR YOU, THE LEADER

**Reflect on your growth:** As you advance in your career, how you work often becomes more significant than what you do, especially for leaders. While technical skills are easy to measure, progress in your leadership and interpersonal skills is often overlooked.

### REFLECTION

Try this reflection question, or use it to coach others:

- In the past six months, what positive shifts have you noticed in how you operate, lead, or connect with others?

## FOR YOUR TEAM

**Focus on wins:** The Progress Principle by Teresa Amabile and Steven Kramer shows that the single most important driver of motivation is having a sense of making progress in meaningful work. Even small wins release dopamine, creating a powerful, positive cycle. For leaders, the Progress Principle encourages actively facilitating daily progress by providing support ("catalysts" and "nourishers") and removing obstacles ("inhibitors" and "toxins").

### BOOK

The Progress Principle: Using Small Wins to Ignite Joy, Engagement, and Creativity at Work

**Delegate meaningful tasks:** Empower your team by entrusting them with projects that have real impact and align with their strengths, rather than just mundane tasks. This not only boosts their overall sense of progress but also contributes to key motivators like taking on interesting challenges and having an impact on others and the business.

**Incorporate impact reviews:** Shift the focus of your regular one-on-one check-ins to include discussing impact and forward movement. Consider asking, "What impact do you feel your work had this week?" or "How do you feel your contributions recently have moved us closer to our team's goals?"

## FOR YOUR PROGRAMS

**Counter change blindness:** Feedback is essential for helping people recognize gradual changes, both positive and negative. Our appreciation exercise in leadership development experiences helps leaders acknowledge the growth of their cohort members. Often, those around us are best positioned to notice our progress. Incorporate coaching questions that acknowledge change blindness into your programs. For example, 'What small tasks have you gradually adopted, and how will you prioritize the most meaningful?' or 'Reflect on the growth you've observed in this cohort; write it down for shared discussion.'



**Change blindness** is the phenomenon where we don't always notice gradual differences in ourselves and our environment over time. Consider a child's growth. Parents who see their child daily might not register the slow increase in their height. However, when a relative visits after a six-month absence, the accumulated change is striking. The relative perceives the significant growth all at once, a transformation the parents miss because it happens too slowly.

**Celebrate success:** Providing visual measurement systems or anchor points in a program is a great way to bring attention to and celebrate progress. Our Adepton platform uses a gamification feature to show leaders where their self-selected peers are in a development program, relative to their progress. i.e. if they have completed more of the self-paced work. This fosters community encouragement, allowing participants to support those who are lagging, and provides external motivation for those who see their peers ahead.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

Adepton has over ten years of experience delivering leadership development experiences, empowering thousands of leaders to drive their continuous development. Through our platform's conversational interface, we've amassed extensive datasets on leadership development, including challenges faced and strategies used. This includes data from over 100K users, nearly 3 million coaching question responses, and almost 400K insights (reflections on actions taken). Unlocking these insights allows us to deliver personalized, data-driven experiences to leaders globally at — at a scale that was never possible before.

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## About this report cont.

The data used in this report comes from 590 people who have completed Adeption's GPS assessment. This is a cross-organizational sample. Due to the nature of the data export the number of organizations in the sample is unknown.

In this assessment, people rate themselves on a 0–5 point Likert scale across five key aspects of motivation (Purpose, Progress, Autonomy, Interests, Mastery) to score their current sense of motivation, and their level of burnout.

They also complete a required open-response question. *“What contributes to your current level of motivation or lack of motivation for your projects, assignments, and tasks?”* that gives further insights into the specific areas of their work that are impacting their motivation. Each free-text response was tagged with the themes below, with multiple themes allowed per response.

**Motivator Themes:** A clear sense of purpose, Feel aligned to organization values, Has an impact on business, Has an impact on others, Achieving goals and targets, Recognition and reward, Taking on interesting challenges, Work contributes to personal growth, Working as a team, Socializing at work, Having autonomy and freedom, Feeling supported and secure, Have strategic clarity and focus, Positive workload balance.

**Demotivator Themes:** Lacks a sense of purpose, Feel misaligned to Organization values, Has No impact on business, Has no impact on others, Not making progress on work, Lacking recognition and reward, Too much repetitive or boring work, Work doesn't support personal growth, Dealing with difficult stakeholders/colleagues, Office politics, Feeling micromanaged or constrained, Lacking support from organization/management, Lacking strategic clarity and focus, Negative workload balance.

## ABOUT ADEPTION

How Adeption can help you grow agile leaders for the future of work.



### ASSESSMENTS

A scalable solution for individual or team growth. The GPS assessment in this report helps leaders to perform at a high level without sacrificing wellbeing and health



### WORKSHOPS

Designed to enable behavioral shift through iterative action and experimentation in the “flow of work” while fostering collective leadership intelligence.



### PLATFORM

The digital platform uses AI to scale development and support pull-based learning. A coach on-demand, leaders access tools, insights and support at their point of need.



### LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Using our B3 methodology across all touchpoints, programs are designed to grow agile leaders within a supportive development ecosystem.

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