



877-273-5812 (TEL:877-273-5812)
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REMOVING THOSE ROSE-COLORED GLASSES

Dr. Tracy Brower, PhD, MM, MCR |

Global Vice President of Workplace Vitality™ | Mars Drinks



Talk to any management guru or social scientist and they'll tell you that the higher a leader goes in an organization, the more that leader is at risk of being out of touch with reality. We found evidence of this challenge in our global research on Workplace Vitality™ that we conducted with 3,815 people across 6 countries[i].

Interestingly, in our

assessment of leadership

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we found that executives, middle managers, and associates have similar views of reality, but they vary in how positively or negatively they think things are going. In relative terms, they agree with each other about company performance on engagement, collaboration, well-being, and productivity (the lines in the graph below are roughly parallel).



(https://marsdrinks.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/graph_may22.jpg)

Where they differ is in their positivity about those metrics (the lines in the graph above are at different heights on the graph). On all the pillars – engagement, collaboration, well-being, and productivity – executives see them as performing most positively, middle managers in the mid-range, and associates perceive them to be performing least positively.

It's not so surprising that leaders may have rose-colored glasses when it comes to perspectives of their organizations' success. After all, we reward people who come with solutions rather than problems and we prefer that challenges be solved as close as possible to the ground. These kinds of organizational dynamics can result in senior executives who may have a more positive sense of things than the rank and file, because they're not getting the full report.

Another reason that leaders may have views that aren't shared by middle managers or associates, is they may not have adequate opportunities to listen. And this is where workplace drinks can play a key role. Based on our research

through surveys[ii] and also through interviews[iii], we found that employees especially value leaders who listen, who are in touch, and who ask questions of employees. And this is brilliantly done over a monthly coffee chat, through time spent in a coffee bar, and through the occasional afternoon tea between leaders and employees.

Of course most leaders are pressed for time so these kinds of opportunities with employees can be hard to fit into an already-busy schedule, but they pay terrific dividends – by providing more clarity on what’s happening, more insight on employee perspectives, and more connection to the brilliance that resides in the organization. And this kind of knowledge is critical to leaders making effective decisions that impact on growth, shareholder value, and the company’s success.

That’s a lot of impact through a cup of coffee.

For the detail on how executive viewpoints differ, download our white paper **[here \(-/media/21C8955C9EF14242B06868FBFB2F16A7.ashx\)](#)**.

GET THE WHITEPAPER



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[i] Research was conducted in June 2015 across China, UK, US, Canada, France, and Germany.

[ii] Our survey of 3815 globally in June 2015, and our survey of 4,000 people in the US and Canada in October 2015.

[iii] Interviews conducted October 2015 through January 2016 with employees of multiple companies across geographies, industries, and sizes.

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