A blue-tinted photograph of two men in an office setting. They are seated at a desk, looking towards a computer monitor. The man in the foreground is wearing a light-colored shirt, and the man behind him is wearing a checkered shirt. The background is slightly blurred, showing office equipment and a window.

Purpose creates human happiness and transforms business performance

It can be accurately measured in any business

Our numbers and analysis show how purpose is working and where it is blocked.

Because it's not the words that count. But how they're lived and breathed.


contexis index[®]
The Index of organisational effectiveness

Introduction

A clear purpose is now a basic expectation on all companies. But it's not enough to say you have a purpose. It must be authentically lived in the business. And to do that effectively and with precision you need numbers. Numbers that measure how purpose is *really* working to shift beliefs and behaviours across the organisation.

The Contexis Index® has been developed in a unique collaboration between business performance experts Contexis and researchers at Cambridge University to provide those numbers. By focussing on the impact of purpose on the DNA of the organisation itself, it provides the numbers to answer two questions; to what extent is purpose driving performance in my organisation? And how and why is it working and where is it blocked?

The irresistible pressure not just to say you have a purpose but to live it.

Purpose is your enduring and meaningful reason to exist. It aligns financial performance with a societal goal, provides a clear context that guides decision-making and unifies and inspires people.

Employees, customers, regulators and even investors rightly demand organisations say what they believe. But in a post-COVID, #metoo and BLM world there is a rapid shift from 'stating' to 'living' purpose. Employees demand action not words. Consumers shun businesses that fail to live up to their responsibilities.

What if this was more than a moral responsibility? Measuring purpose impact in organisations across the globe has taught us that people everywhere are far more motivated, engaged and productive in purpose-led businesses. It also makes them happy. And that means the business simply performs better.

But there's a problem. In every organisation we've measured, for many people purpose is having no impact at all. People are being left behind.

We show why that is. For purpose to engage, clarify and inspire it must be activated in peoples' lives. And what activates purpose, to create the startling performance gains of the most purposeful companies, is embedded in the culture.

Purpose is a complex cultural process. But it is predictable. Understanding that in a real business in real time requires accurate, robust and actionable metrics.

Metrics that reveal purpose at source and track and adjust its impact over time and across the business.



Now more than ever we need robust and actionable metrics

WHAT

The Contexis Index® has been developed with researchers at Cambridge University to provide those metrics. By focussing on the impact of purpose on the DNA of the organisation itself it shows how purpose is acting positively in the organisation - and where it is blocked.

Our analysis is based on years of observing the cultural attributes that are present in high-performing, agile and entrepreneurial organisations globally. These real-world observations have then been combined with the cutting-edge research of behavioural scientists from institutions across the globe.

The Index is therefore unique in bringing together academically rigorous measurement scales of organisational behaviour with detailed analysis of the role of cultural factors. It combines robust levels of research validity and academic scrutiny with practical and actionable business insight.

The Index allows you to understand the current position across a wide range of population groups inside the company and compare yourself to organisational norms outside it. It allows you to design targeted interventions to improve organisational effectiveness and optimise employees' experience of purpose at work. And allows you to track performance over time to assess and adapt communication and interventions to maximise impact and efficiency.

Robust metrics for purpose and for its impact on real people and real business

The Index tells you how purpose is actually working across the business by measuring the specific 'performance behaviours' known to have the greatest impact on human fulfilment and business performance, using measurement scales from leading behavioural scientists. These measurements cover the full range of cultural performance (e.g. compassion, openness), human performance (e.g. engagement, autonomy), and decision performance (e.g. velocity, adaptability).

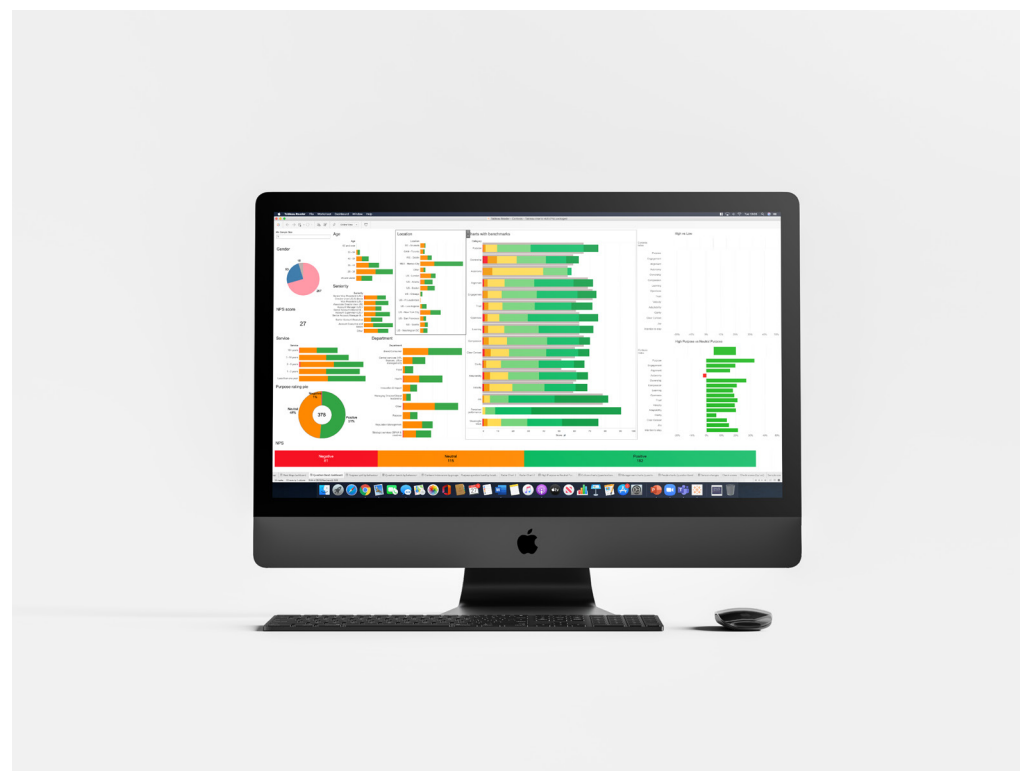
The Index then measures each employee's understanding of and attitude towards purpose. And determines, through detailed analysis of the data, *how* purpose is influencing the key performance behaviours through measuring specific moderating cultural characteristics.

Measuring these cultural characteristics is vital to being able to understand how purpose is working. And in determining programmes and interventions that will bring purpose to life across the business.

The Index also measures a range of other 'performance outcomes' such as perceived performance, joyfulness and intention to stay; and additional measures that support the analysis including personality types, meaningfulness of work and level of systems thinking.

Data for the Index is gathered via a 15-minute on-line survey of employees. Results are provided via an interactive dashboard, a detailed face-to-face presentation and Report with full analysis and recommendations from a powerful combination of researchers at Cambridge and business analysts at Contextis.

Data is held at Cambridge, secure and fully anonymised.



What it tells us; the extraordinary impact of purpose; in numbers

The Index has been adopted by companies across the globe. So, what is this revealing about purpose and its real impact?

The numbers are clear and remarkably consistent across business types, sizes and across cultures.

Purpose supports human happiness and real business performance. Done well, the results can be extraordinary.

In every business we have measured, there is a group of people for whom the company's purpose is truly alive. And another, usually much larger group, for whom it isn't. These purpose-positive people are not just more joyful and fulfilled but dramatically more committed, responsible, open and engaged than their peers. They are clearer on strategy, more willing to trust the company and much more likely to stay.

But this is not about how aware they are of the company purpose - awareness

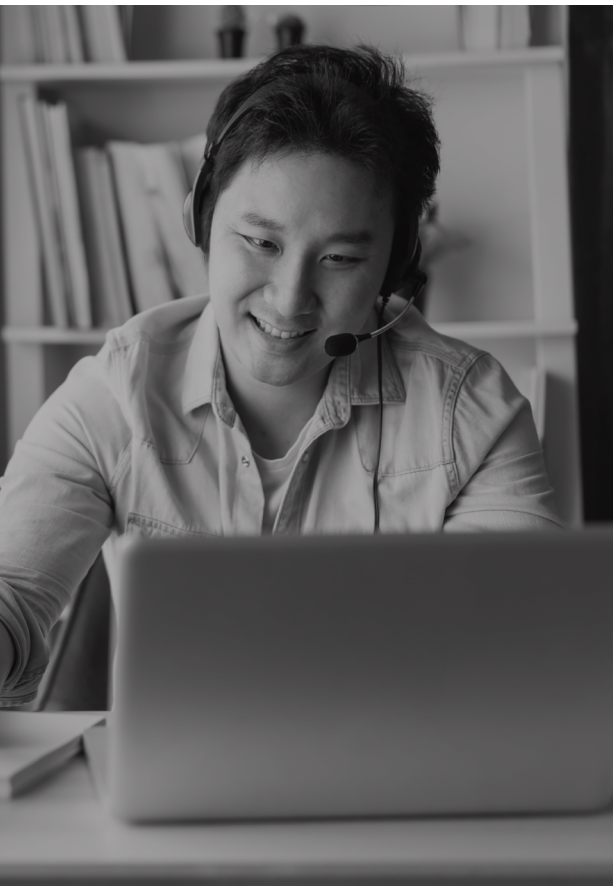
has a minimal impact. The unique insight that sits at the heart of the measurement methodology is that what brings purpose to life is the interaction between three very specific cultural attributes. These are the degree to which purpose is believed to be the *clear and authentic driver* of business decisions, the extent to which it is trusted as such, and how far people feel they can take emotional *ownership* for it.

For businesses this is therefore a far more nuanced conversation than most people acknowledge. Getting purpose right is only the start. Bringing it to life requires a real focus on consistently and authentically living it in the strategy of the business, building radical levels of trust, and encouraging a culture of ownership for all.

But the rewards are remarkable. We see companies measuring extraordinary leaps in human and organisational performance with real and measurable outputs in terms of commercial return.



Covid, remote working and the surprising influence of purpose



C OVID-19 has forced an unprecedented shift to dispersed and remote working. Leading organisations are adapting their thinking with extraordinary speed. PwC anticipates most of its 22,000 UK staff and Tata Consultancy Services 75% of its 450,000 global workforce to work from home in the post-COVID-19 world.

In fact, 86% of UK CEOs say there is an enduring shift towards remote collaboration. And 98% of people would like the option to work remotely for the rest of their career with 84% of them feeling able to perform as effectively working remotely as in the office.*

“The notion of putting 7,000 people in a building may be a thing of the past”
Jes Staley CEO Barclays Bank

But there’s a problem. Most organisations are finding they are not terribly good at managing remote teams in a way that gets the best from their people. Our measurement system

explains why this is so. And provides a blueprint for building happy, productive and innovative remote teams. Teams with at least a 50% increase in feelings of commitment and behaviours of responsibility.

Our research shows something remarkable. Remote workers appear hyper-sensitive to the positive impact of organisational purpose. And that has huge implications.

Of course, the numbers show that employees who identify with organisational purpose are significantly more engaged than average colleagues wherever they work. But the impact of purpose on feelings of commitment and responsibility amongst remote workers are a remarkable **three times** stronger than amongst their *office-based* peers.

Why is this so? Why does bringing purpose to life appear to have such a marked impact on remote workers? Purpose appears to effectively bridge the social distance of remote work.

“One basic difference between [dispersed] global teams that work and those that don’t lies in the level of social distance—the degree of emotional connection among team members. Mitigating social distance therefore becomes the primary management challenge for the global team leader”

Tsedal Neeley, Naylor Fitzhugh Professor of Business Administration, Harvard

The numbers show that in remote teams, the emotional connection that an activated purpose creates leads to significantly higher levels of productivity, a greater ability to sustain autonomous work and dramatically stronger feelings of responsibility, care and commitment. As well as impacting motivation and mental health.

And that has huge implications as we move into an increasingly dispersed way of working in a post COVID world.

*PwC, World Economic Forum /Buffer State of Remote Work Survey

WHY A GREAT PURPOSE WASN'T ENOUGH	
CLIENT	Global Professional Services (2020)
THE PROBLEM	The firm had an ambition for purpose to be part of the everyday experience of staff and customers globally. But knew there were parts of the business where the strategy was not landing. They just didn't know why.
INDEX NUMBERS	Purpose was truly active for only 25% of employees. This group were happier, far more productive, took more responsibility and were less likely to leave. Most employees felt neutral about the purpose, which meant it was failing to support positivity and performance in most of the business. It wasn't that they didn't care; employees passionately wanted to believe the firm made a difference; most just didn't see the purpose as relevant to day to day actions and decisions. It wasn't <i>theirs</i> .
INDEX ANALYSIS	For purpose to be alive to them people must feel ownership and attachment. In this case, ownership was markedly strong in the purpose-positive group but weak in the neutral majority. The numbers also revealed in detail where ownership and purpose activation were weakest in terms of offices, functions, age and seniority. Interventions could therefore be highly targeted.
OUTCOME	The new strategy was to make purpose relevant with a re-frame from driving purpose down from the top to empowering teams to design the execution of purpose for themselves. The focus was on Directors and Fee Earners in specific departments and locations where emotional ownership was measured weakest. The Index will be repeated Q1 2021.

ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST PURPOSEFUL BUSINESS LEAVES 1/3RD OF EMPLOYEES BEHIND	
CLIENT	International Media Group (2020)
THE PROBLEM	The Group considered itself a global leader in purposeful business. But acknowledged some intractable scepticism amongst individuals and in some operations. And they knew these were doing the business harm.
INDEX NUMBERS	For 72% of employees purpose was actively influencing how they felt, behaved and made decisions. But even with a dedicated Purpose Secretariat and a global investment in purpose, there was a sizeable minority who still felt neutral or even negative about purpose.
INDEX ANALYSIS	The analysis showed why the minority felt unconnected to purpose. It wasn't awareness. In specific offices a weakness in trust detached people from purpose and suppressed its impact. In others it was weak emotional ownership. These factors had a far greater impact on purpose activation than gender, geography, ethnicity, age, practice, how long people had worked in the organisation or how aware they were of the purpose message.
OUTCOME	For the first time the firm had a clear set of metrics, by office and division, that showed purpose performance and explained where purpose was blocked and why. This allowed the Secretariat to focus energy and resources on specific parts of the business with highly targeted messages and interventions. The Index will be repeated Q2 2021.

TRUST UNLOCKS PURPOSE IN A GLOBAL BANK - WITH THE MOST SURPRISING RESULTS	
CLIENT	International Bank (2019)
THE PROBLEM	The European division had engaged external consultants to develop a new purpose. It now wanted to measure how purpose was influencing team effectiveness.
INDEX NUMBERS	Organisational performance was remarkably weak, particularly in culture and leadership. Trust measured 37% below a benchmark of other organisations. The longer an individual served in the Bank, the less positive their attitudes became.
INDEX ANALYSIS	There was a clear source to the problem: 77% of people did not believe in the Bank's purpose. But the small group that did scored dramatically better on all characteristics. Remarkably, experiencing trust 300% more strongly.
OUTCOME	Coaching for leaders and a line-led programme of open conversations about purpose and the behaviours they expected and committed to was rolled out. The Index was repeated after 6 months. Trust levels had shot up, effectively 'unlocking' purpose with now 50% positive about the purpose. There had been a marked improvement in happiness, personal motivation and wellbeing - and a 30% reduction in turnover intention. Customer-facing teams also reported an unexpected uplift in revenue performance averaging 13%.

FAST-GROWTH FINTECH DISCOVERS THE PURPOSE IT HAD NEVER HAD - AND A 20% PERFORMANCE UPLIFT	
CLIENT	Fintech (2018)
THE PROBLEM	A London-based pioneer in foreign exchange had grown rapidly into a €1 billion business by being at the forefront of innovation and offering amazing customer service powered by an exceptional culture. But the Founders knew that in some parts of the organisation culture worked better than others. But they hadn't been able to pinpoint the true source of excellence in their people performance.
INDEX NUMBERS	Scores for engagement and joy were practically off the charts for almost all. But one particular characteristic appeared consistently only in their highest performing people. Those who felt the firm to have a purpose beyond profit showed performance 17% higher than average peers. And were 34% more loyal.
INDEX ANALYSIS	Which was odd. As the firm did not have a stated purpose. But that meant newer hires had no language or framework to understand why the organisation existed and what it sought to do in the world. That left some confused and disengaged.
OUTCOME	It was a simple task to get the firm together in small groups to discuss and understand purpose; to language what some employees instinctively knew. The exercise gave new energy and new focus to the whole business. And the Index gave it a clear performance target and a metric to measure it against.


Transforming your purpose impact through measurement

Any organisation can accurately measure its purpose, and understand how its impact can be transformed, by using the **Contexis Index®**. Measurement can be at organisational, departmental or regional level. It can start with a pilot.

The process is simple. The analysis is rigorous.

In running the Index you are not only accessing exceptionally valuable data and insights but also joining a global movement of academics and business leaders dedicated to better understanding purposeful business. Every company that participates provided vital, anonymised data that helps scientists better understand the role of purpose in creating great companies. The Index also contributes funds that directly support the work of scientists at Cambridge and beyond.

We'd love to hear from you.

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About



Cambridge Judge Business School

As the business school of the University of Cambridge, the School is a provider of management education and is consistently ranked as one of the world's top business schools, with the Cambridge MBA programme ranked among the top in the world by Bloomberg, the Financial Times, Business Insider, US News & World Report and Forbes Magazine. It is named after Sir Paul Judge, a founding benefactor of the school.



Cambridge Psychometrics Centre

Active in Cambridge since 2005, the Centre is dedicated to research, teaching and product development in both pure and applied psychological assessment. The Centre brings together psychologists, statisticians, mathematicians, computer scientists, clinicians and linguists at the University of Cambridge to conduct research on cutting edge developments in the theory and practice of psychological assessment.



Contexis Index[®] Community Interest Company

The Contexis Index[®] is a regulated Community Interest Company and has been established by Contexis to support research and education in organisational purpose in leading institutions and charities globally. 65% of annual excess income is reinvested in our community of researchers and opinion-influencers. The CIC's first Research Grants were made in September 2020.



Contexis

As a Certified BCorp we believe that all businesses need to take a clear and courageous view of what it believes and why it exists – and then place that belief at the very heart of its strategy. We observe how purposeful thinking can transform large organisations to improve agility, speed and the ability to 'get things done'. Our focus is on building engaged and agile cultures, working in three areas of ownership, trust and context, to turn thought into practical action that cascades change right down the organisation.