Job Quality – What is it, why does it matter, and how can it be improved?

Presentation by Graham Lowe, Ph.D.

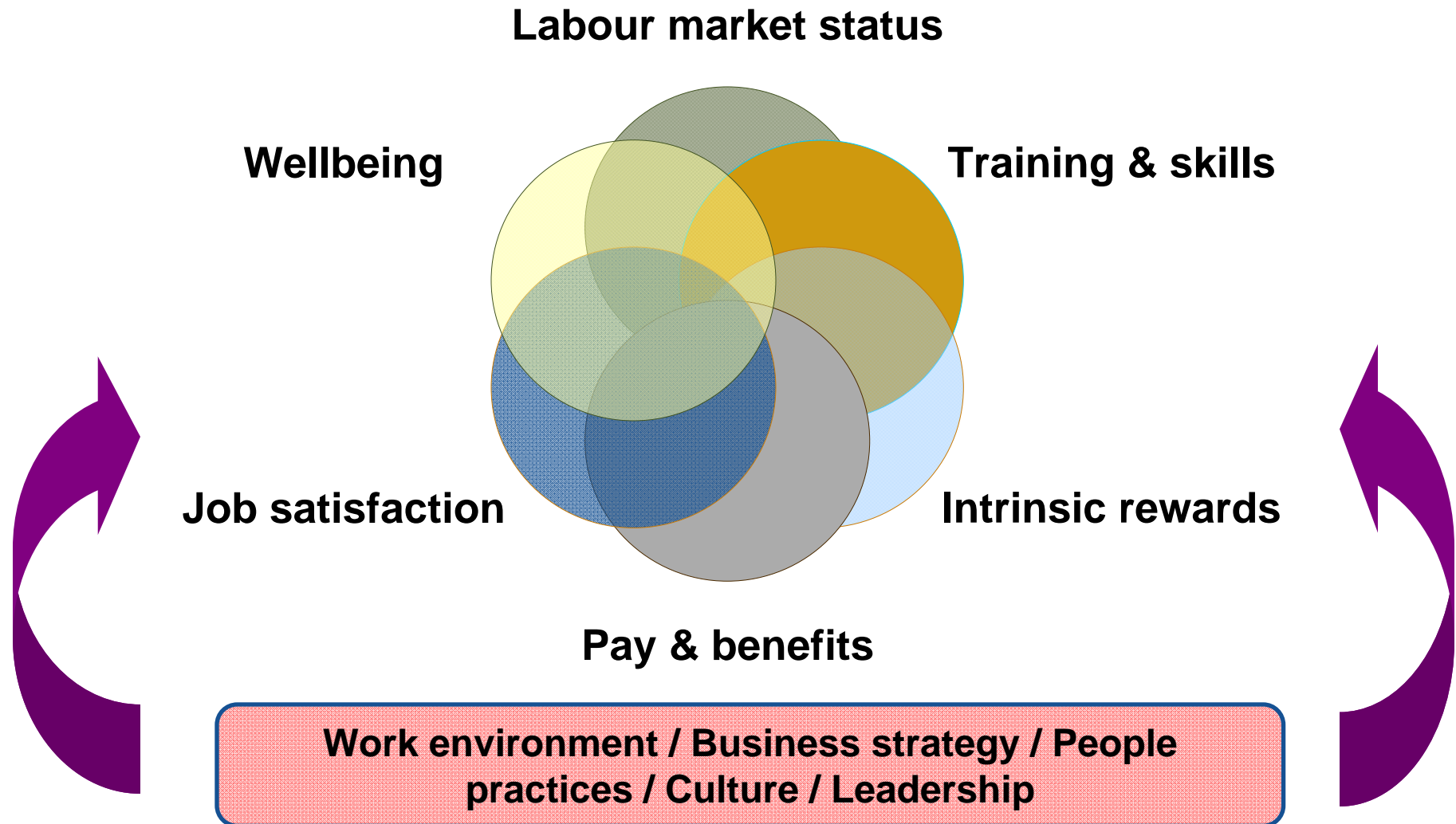*Institute for Work & Health Plenary*

Toronto, 17 November 2009

Presentation outline

1. Defining job quality

2. Why it matters

3. How it matters

4. Improvement strategies

5. Discussion

1. **Defining job quality**

2. Why it matters

3. How it matters

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Job quality framework

Labour market status

Wellbeing

Training & skills

Job satisfaction

Intrinsic rewards

Pay & benefits

Work environment / Business strategy / People practices / Culture / Leadership

1. Defining job quality

2. **Why it matters**

3. How it matters

4. Improvement strategies

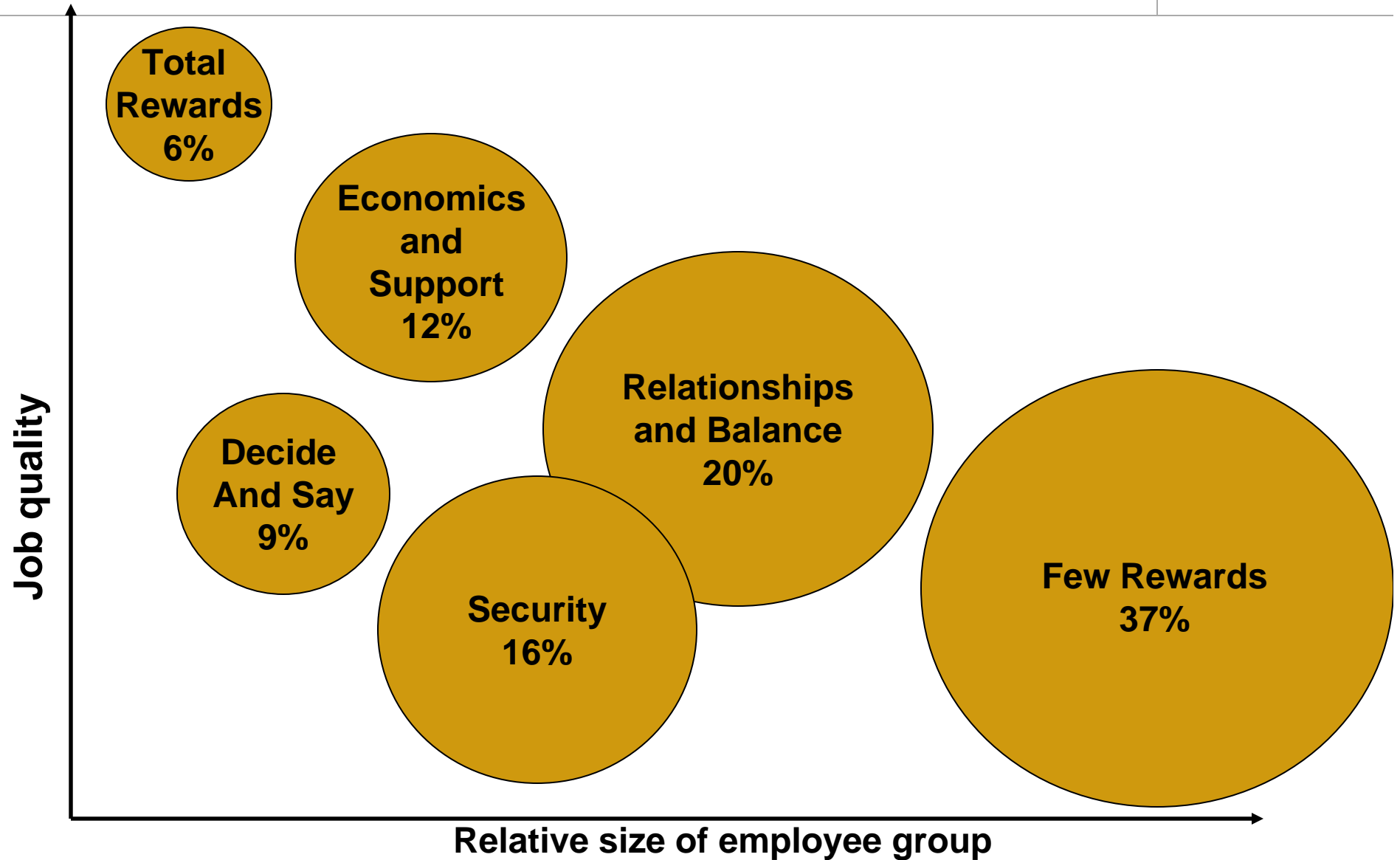5. Discussion

Human capital risks and costs

RISKS

- Stress
- Work-life imbalance
- Low morale
- Low commitment
- Dissatisfaction
- Health problems
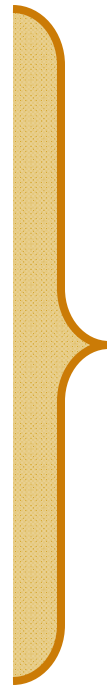
COSTS

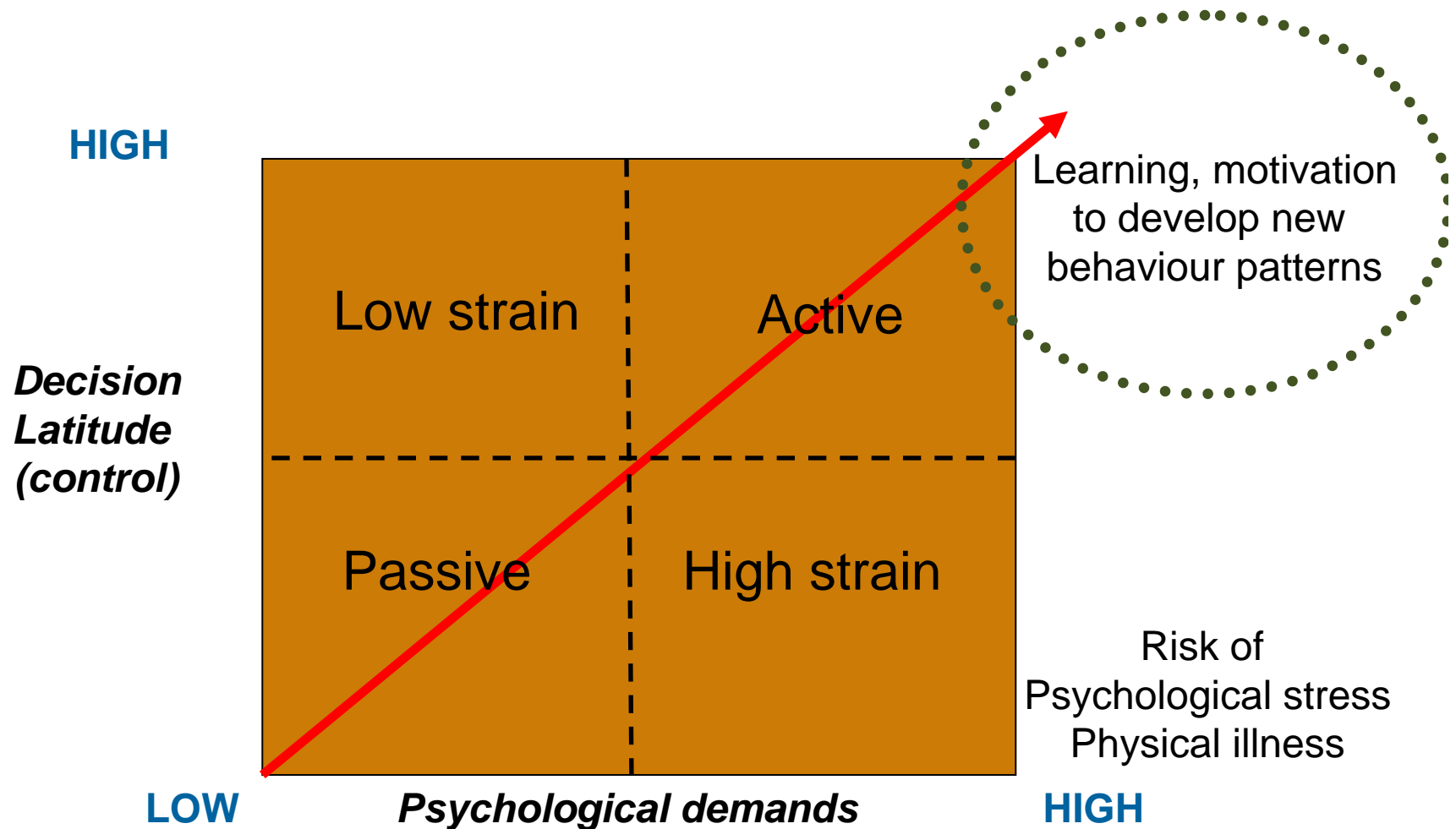- ✓ Turnover
- ✓ Health benefits
- ✓ Absenteeism

Job quality and labour market inequality

A positive perspective

- Wellbeing

- Capabilities

- Collaboration

- Innovation

- Community

Demands, control and job quality

HIGH

Decision
Latitude
(control)

Low strain	Active
Passive	High strain

Learning, motivation
to develop new
behaviour patterns
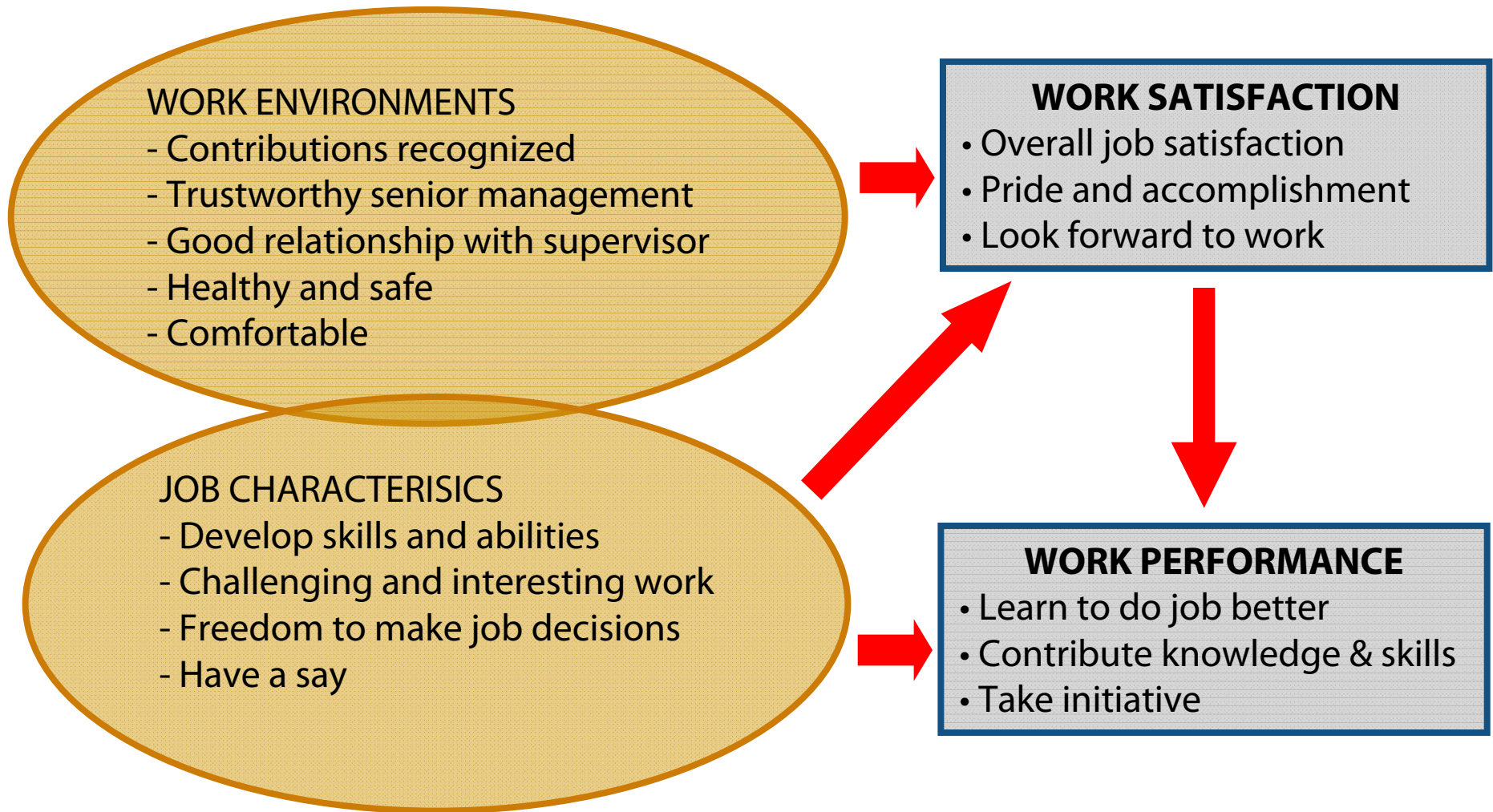
Risk of
Psychological stress
Physical illness

LOW   **Psychological demands**   HIGH

Karasek, R. & Theorell, T. *Healthy Work: Stress, Productivity, and the Reconstruction of Working Life*: Basic Books, 1990.
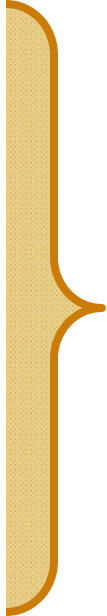
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Integrated quality – performance model

WORK ENVIRONMENTS
- Contributions recognized
- Trustworthy senior management
- Good relationship with supervisor
- Healthy and safe
- Comfortable

JOB CHARACTERISICS
- Develop skills and abilities
- Challenging and interesting work
- Freedom to make job decisions
- Have a say

WORK SATISFACTION
• Overall job satisfaction
• Pride and accomplishment
• Look forward to work

WORK PERFORMANCE
• Learn to do job better
• Contribute knowledge & skills
• Take initiative

Source: G. Lowe, *21st Century Job Quality*. Canadian Policy Research Networks, 2007.

Work environments and safety culture

SAFETY CULTURE: Report – Learn - Act

Positive outcomes for stakeholders:

1. Teamwork

2. Fair processes

3. Supportive supervisor

4. People leadership

5. Learning environment

- Reduced risk of errors

- Improved service quality

- Improved HR outcomes

- Improved quality of work life

Source: G. Lowe, The role of healthcare work environments in shaping a safety culture. *Healthcare Quarterly* 11, (2) 2008

Safety culture strategy model

Connecting the quality dots
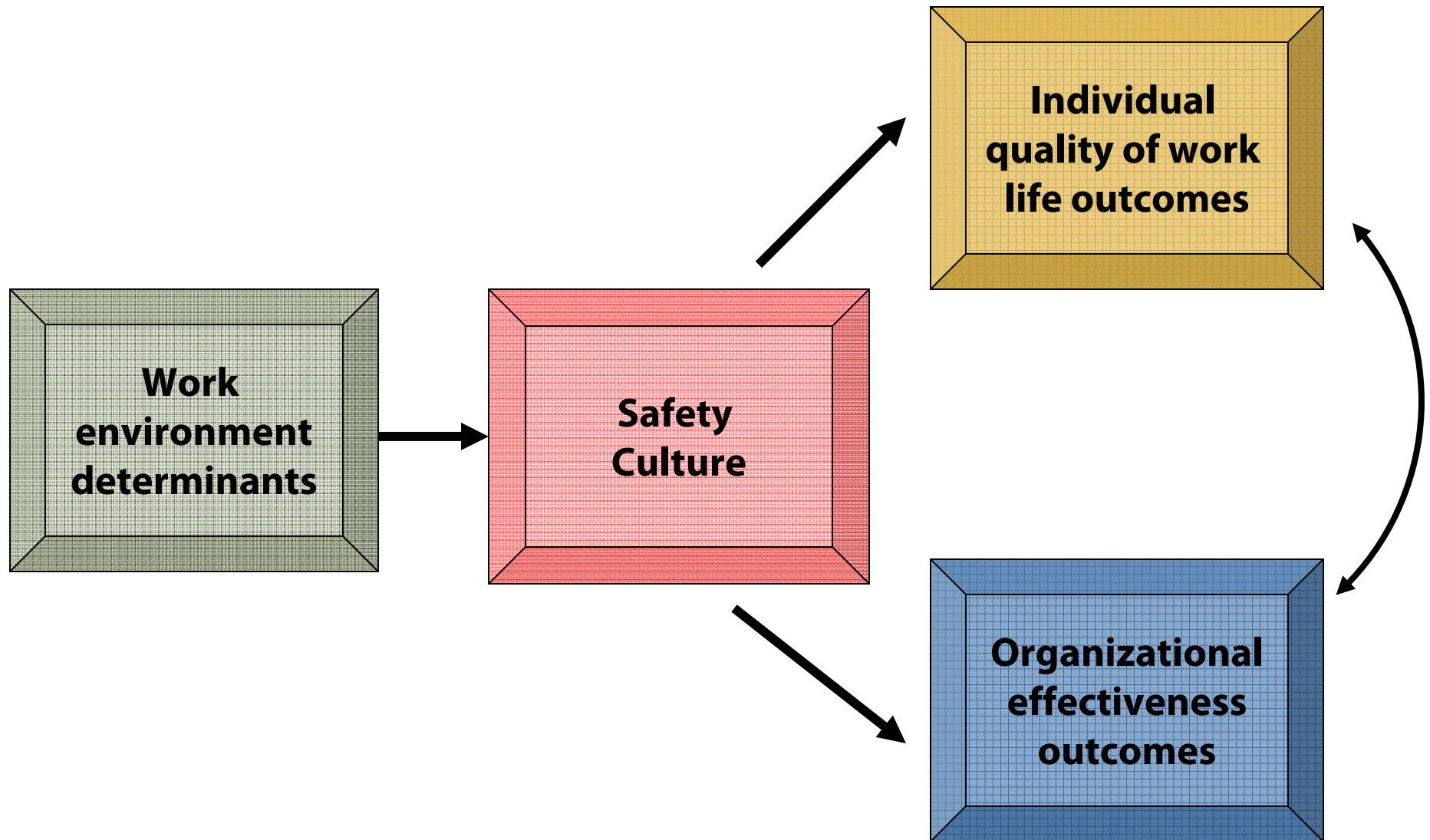
Workers in healthy and safe work environments…

— Trust management

— Are engaged in their jobs

— Report delivering high quality services

Source: G. Lowe. *Creating a High Quality Work Environment. Results from the HSAA Work Environment Survey.* Edmonton, Health Sciences Association of Alberta, 2006.

21st-century HR strategy

WELL-BEING   PERFORMANCE

CULTURE

Trust and well-being
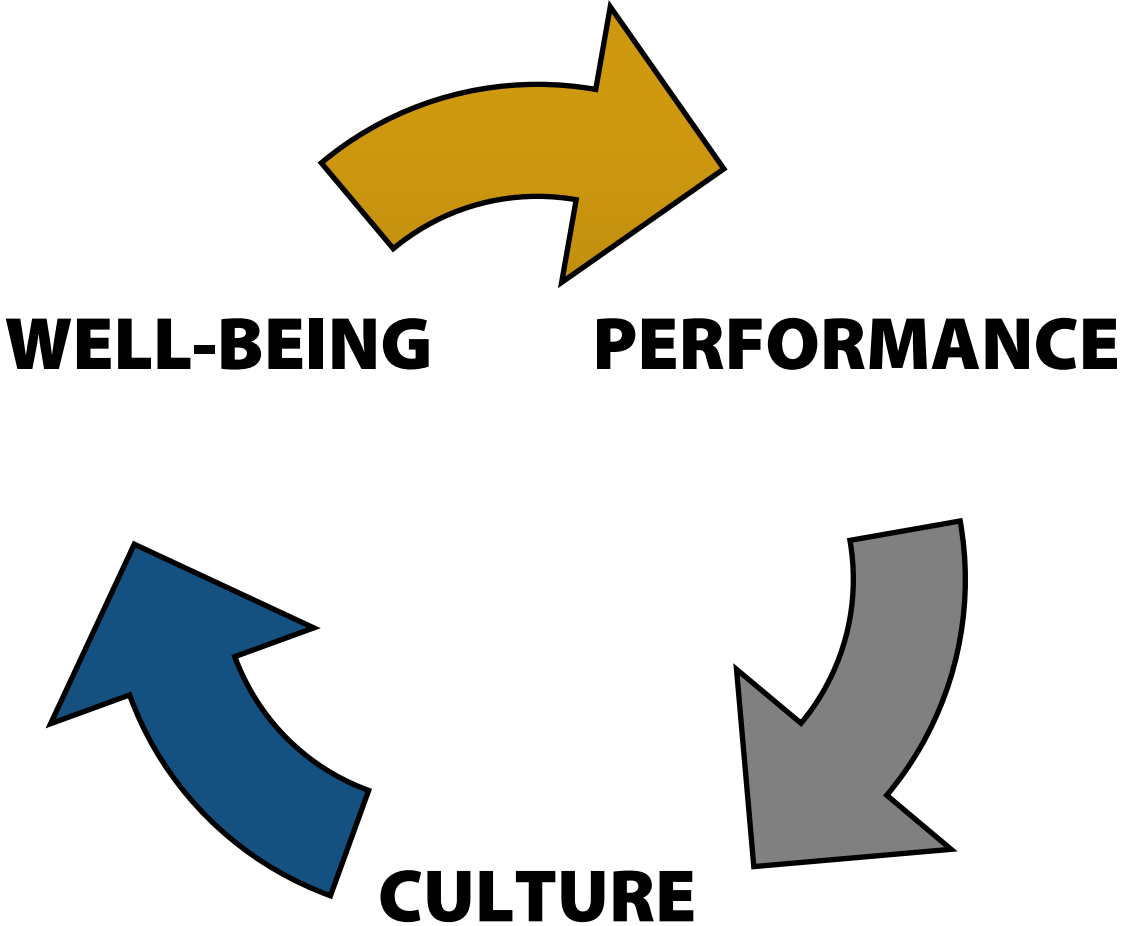
Employees in the 50 Best Workplaces in Canada have:

- ✓ Work-life balance
- ✓ A psychologically healthy work environment
- ✓ Meaningful work
- ✓ Friendly co-workers
- ✓ Fun at work

Compared to employees in other list participants. Source: Great Place to Work Institute Canada.

Why trust matters

Trust in senior management is related to:

- ✓ Skill development
- ✓ Commitment
- ✓ Motivation
- ✓ Satisfaction
- ✓ Low stress
- ✓ Low absenteeism

Source: *Rethinking Work* 2004 employee survey. Ekos and Graham Lowe Group.

Values as guides

"In the most influential corporations today, a foundation of values and standards provides a well-understood, widely-communicated <u>guidance system</u> …"

R. Moss Kanter, *Harvard Business Review*, January 2008.

"Core values are the organization's essential and enduring tenets – a small set of <u>general guiding principles</u> … not to be compromised for financial gain of short-term expediency."

J. Collins and J. Porras, *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*, 1994.

Examples

NOKIA
Connecting People

Treating one another with trust and respect is a cornerstone of the Nokia values, and essential for building an open and honest spirit at the workplace.

FOUR SEASONS
Hotels and Resorts

"Enshrining the Golden Rule as our working guide was the most fundamental decision in shaping our future." Isadore Sharp, CEO

IBM

New core values through global 'values jam': ... Trust and personal responsibility in all relationships.

MAYO CLINIC

Core principles include mutual respect and a "work atmosphere" that fosters teamwork, personal responsibility, integrity, innovation, trust and communication.

The service profit chain

Organizations with **clearly codified cultures**…

⇨ become better places to work

⇨ are more innovative, productive and profitable

⇨ have stronger customer and employee "ownership"

James L. Heskett, W. Earl Sasser, and Joe Wheeler. *The Ownership Quotient: Putting the Service Profit Chain to Work for Unbeatable Competitive Advantage*, Harvard Business Press, 2008.

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Getting at root causes
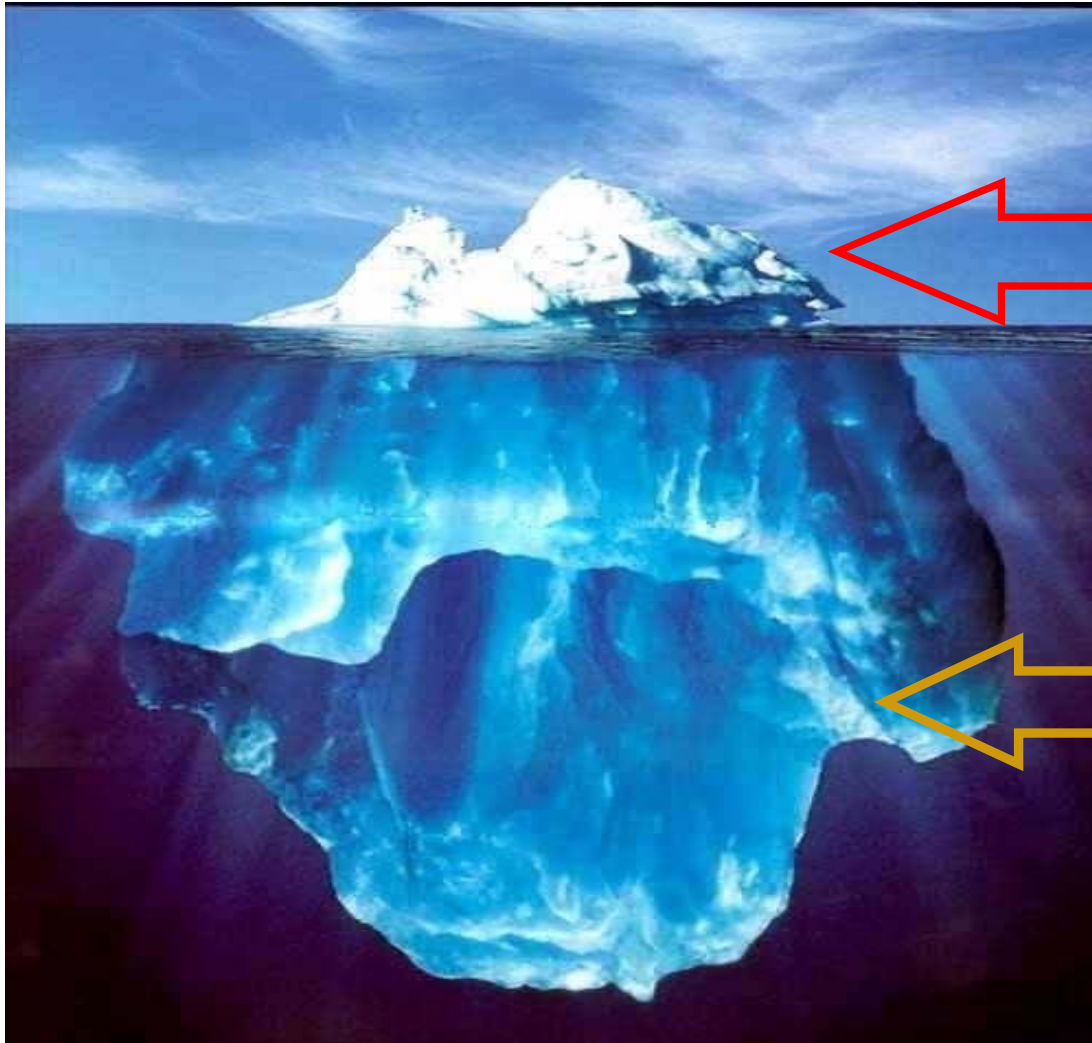
- LTI, absenteeism, presenteeism, turnover, benefit costs
- Low employee engagement

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Thinking bigger…healthy organizations

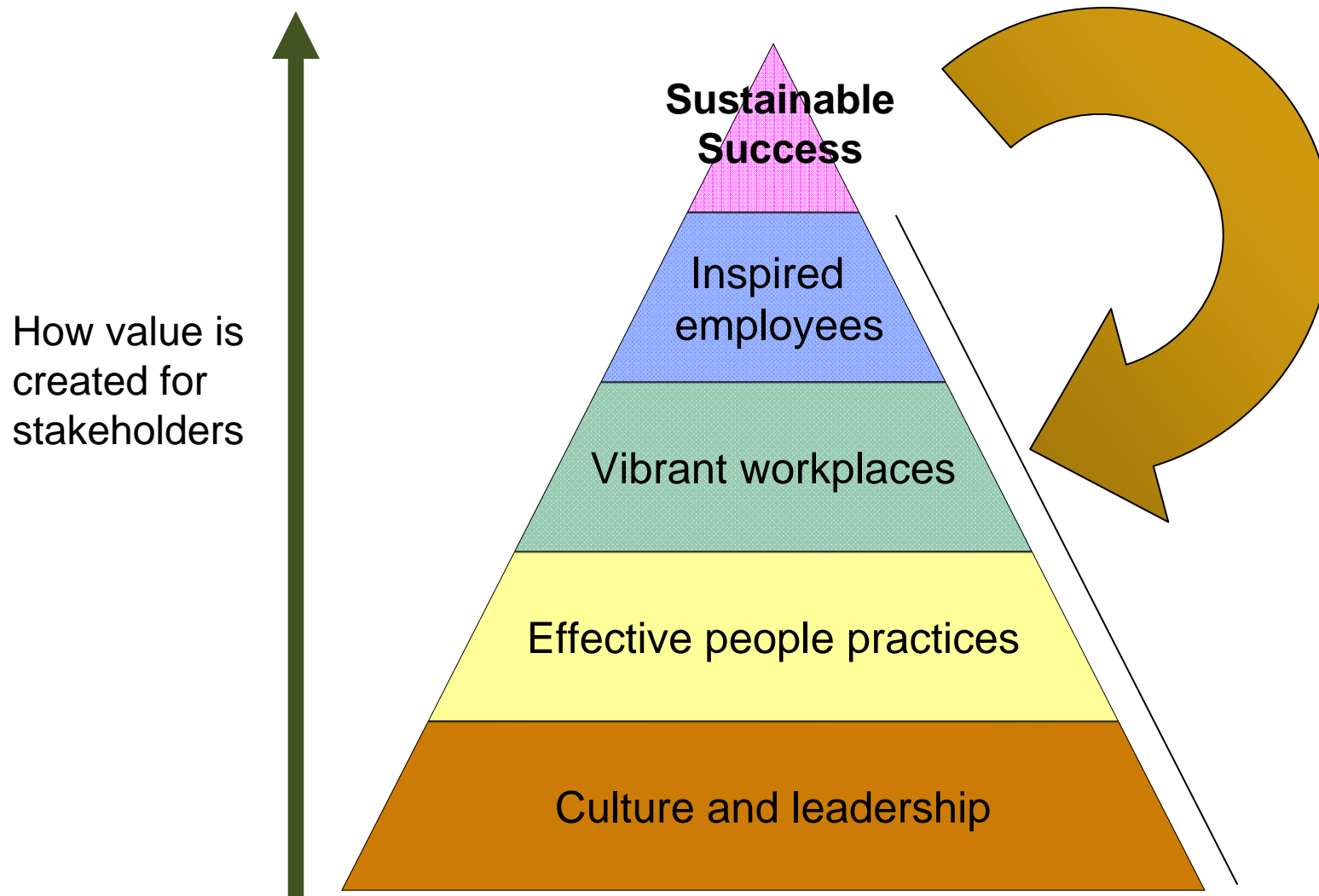**US National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health defines a healthy work organization as:**

"…one whose culture, climate and practices create an environment that promotes both employee health and safety as well as organizational effectiveness."

Source: S. Y. Lim and L. R. Murphy. The relationship of organizational factors to employee health and overall effectiveness. *American Journal of Industrial Medicine* Supplement, May, 1999: 64.

Comparing 2 perspectives

DIMENSION:	Workplace Health Promotion	Healthy Organization
Target	Individual	Organizational
Change model	Health promotion	Organization development
Scope and focus	Program-based	Systemic and holistic
Timeframe	Short and medium term	Long term
Individual benefits	Reduced health risks	Quality of life and capabilities
Organizational benefits	Lower employee costs	Higher performance
Links to strategy	Part of HR plan	How the business operates
Responsibility	Formal roles	Shared responsibility

The healthy organization value chain

How value is created for stakeholders

Sustainable Success

Inspired employees

Vibrant workplaces

Effective people practices

Culture and leadership

Integrating people and performance

Retention & Recruitment

Engagement

Learning & Development

Social Responsibility & Environment

People Strategy

Performance Management

OHS

Pay & Benefits

Health Promotion

Culture

Strategic Priorities

RESULTS

Telus Wellness Strategy

TELUS Wellness Mission

"At TELUS we take a holistic approach to personal and organizational wellness. We encourage positive movement toward optimal well-being through opportunities for awareness, education and growth."
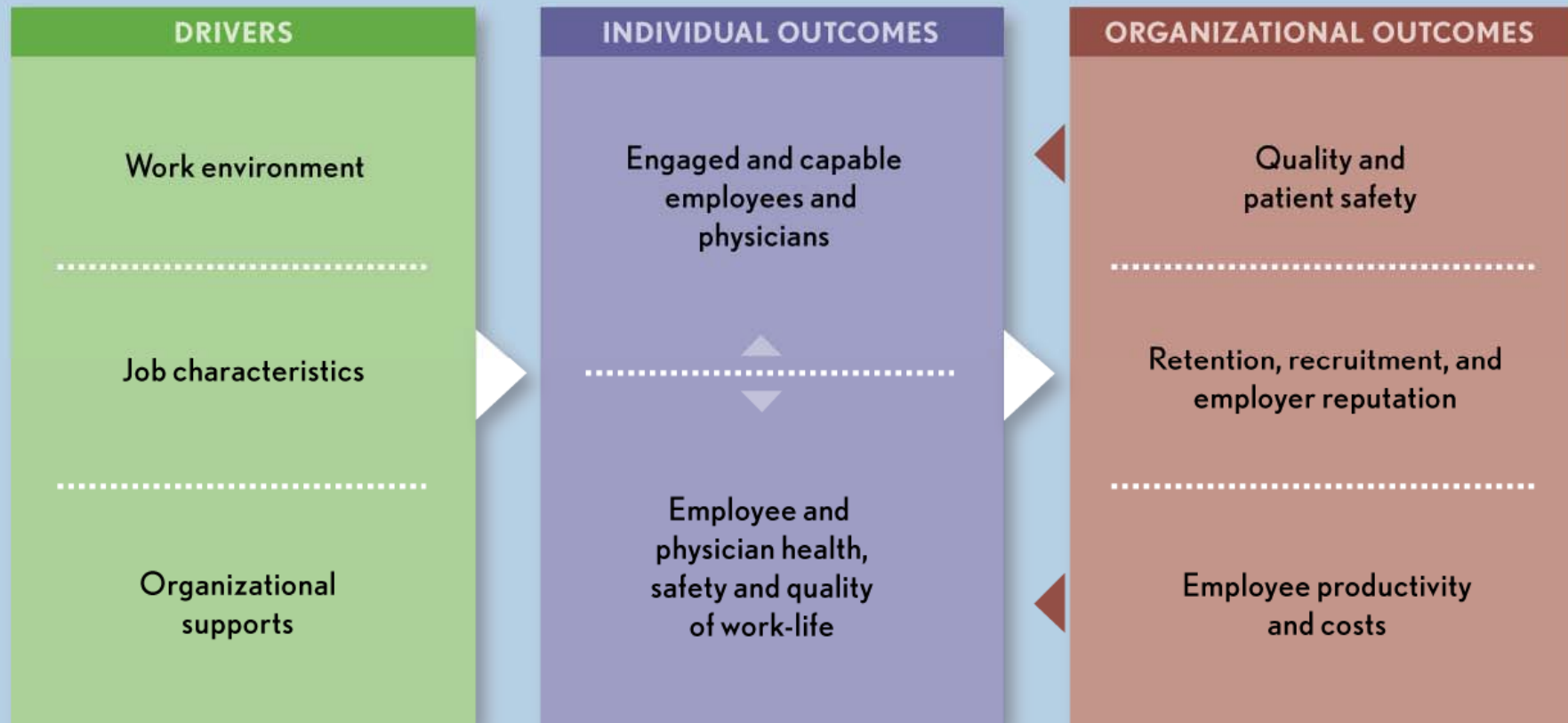
TELUS Wellness Vision

"The TELUS culture inspires and supports team members to improve their quality of life and actively engage in wellness pursuits."

EXCELLENCE • TEAMWORK • LEADERSHIP
LEARNING • DIVERSITY • INTEGRITY

OHA Healthy Workplace Model:
The people dimensions of high-performance

DRIVERS
- Work environment
- Job characteristics
- Organizational supports

INDIVIDUAL OUTCOMES
- Engaged and capable employees and physicians
- Employee and physician health, safety and quality of work-life

ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES
- Quality and patient safety
- Retention, recruitment, and employer reputation
- Employee productivity and costs

CONTEXT

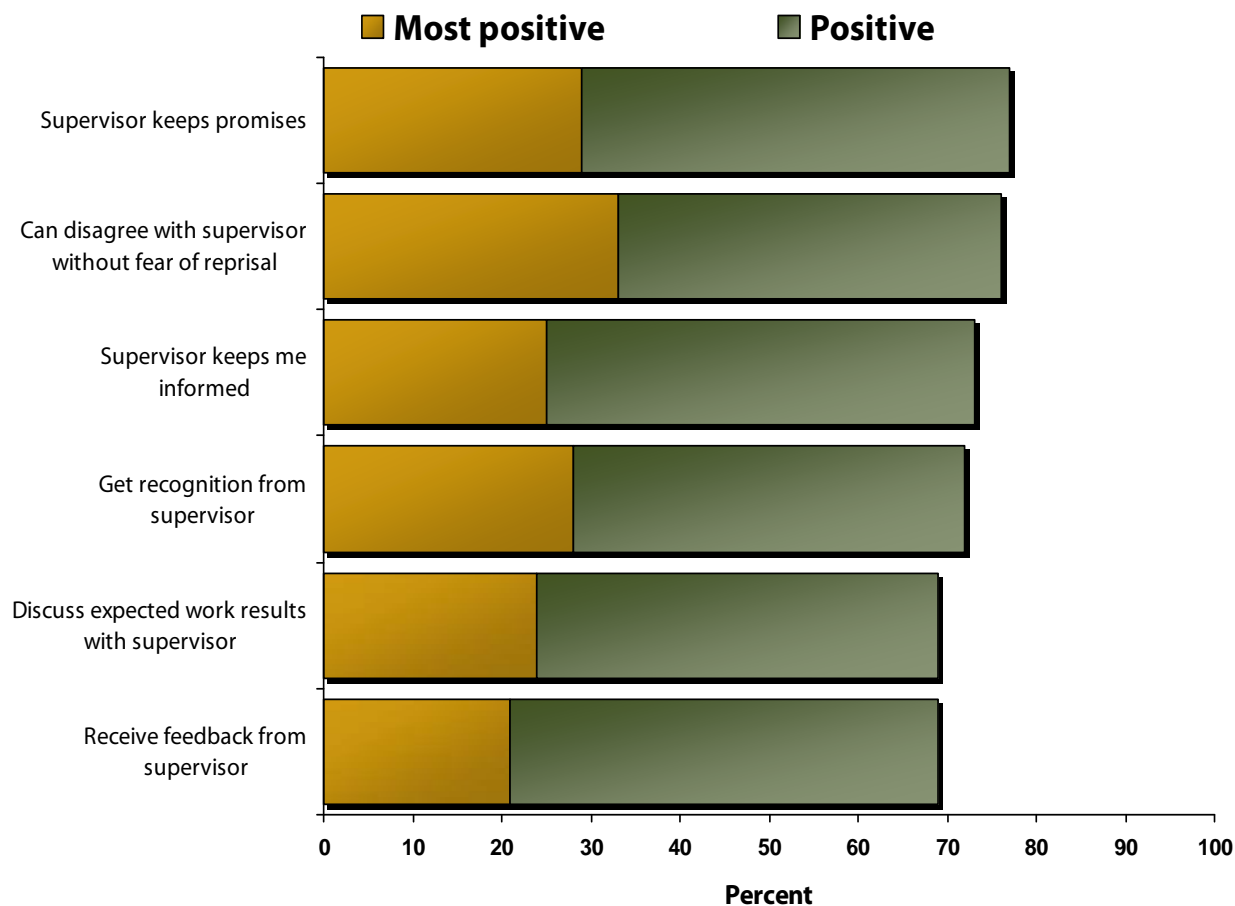Enabling context: strong values; compelling vision; clear mission; committed leadership

OHA

Revitalizing culture

- "You don't change cultures – you revitalize existing cultures. … What you do is bring back the energy that is still there."

  Henry Mintzberg

How supervisors support employees

Most positive **Positive**

- Supervisor keeps promises
- Can disagree with supervisor without fear of reprisal
- Supervisor keeps me informed
- Get recognition from supervisor
- Discuss expected work results with supervisor
- Receive feedback from supervisor

Percent (0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100)

Source: Government of Canada, Public Service Employee Survey, 2005. Response categories on all items are 'strongly agree' and 'agree' for most positive and positive, respectively.
http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pses-saff/2008/index-eng.asp

Examples of the leadership skills, abilities, and characteristics needed in the federal public service, guided by integrity and respect:

✓ Fosters a climate of transparency, trust and respect

✓ Builds a safe and healthy work environment

✓ Teaches and learns from others

✓ Shares information

✓ Promotes collaboration

✓ Encourages open constructive discussion of diverse views

✓ Follows through on commitments

✓ Solicits and listens to input

✓ Communicates with clarity and commitment

✓ Coaches, challenges and provides growth opportunities

Source: Canada Public Service Agency, Key Leadership Competencies, 2006.
www.psagency-agencefp.gc.ca

Trail Operation Guiding Principles

These guiding principles define what we value, how we behave, and what we expect of others. Living by these guiding principles will ensure Trail Operation's future success.

1. We act with **integrity**, treating all with **dignity**, **fairness**, and **respect**.

2. We commit to everyone going home **safe** and **healthy** every day.

3. We take **personal responsibility** for our actions and results.

4. We **support** each other to achieve our fullest potential.

5. We **act responsibly** to support a sustainable future for the **communities** and **environment** in which we operate.

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careers
contact
site map

The change *process* matters

"If there is one clear result from the research on change management, it is that <u>employee participation</u> increases individual ownership and excitement and, in turn, decreases individual resistance to change. The more people are involved, the more the change effort is their change effort."

Source: M. Tushman and C. A. O'Reilly III. *Winning Through Innovation: A Practical Guide to Leading Organizational Change and Renewal*. Harvard Business School Press, 1997. p. 200.

Healthy change

- Model the goals

- Vision-driven

- Values-based

- Continuous learning

- Capacity building

Aligned to strategy

This becomes how you operate

Health promotion as organizational development

Healthy change provides opportunities for employees to…

- Actively create a better work environment
- Take ownership for improvements
- Link personal and organizational goals
- Show mutual caring and support

Shared responsibility for quality improvement
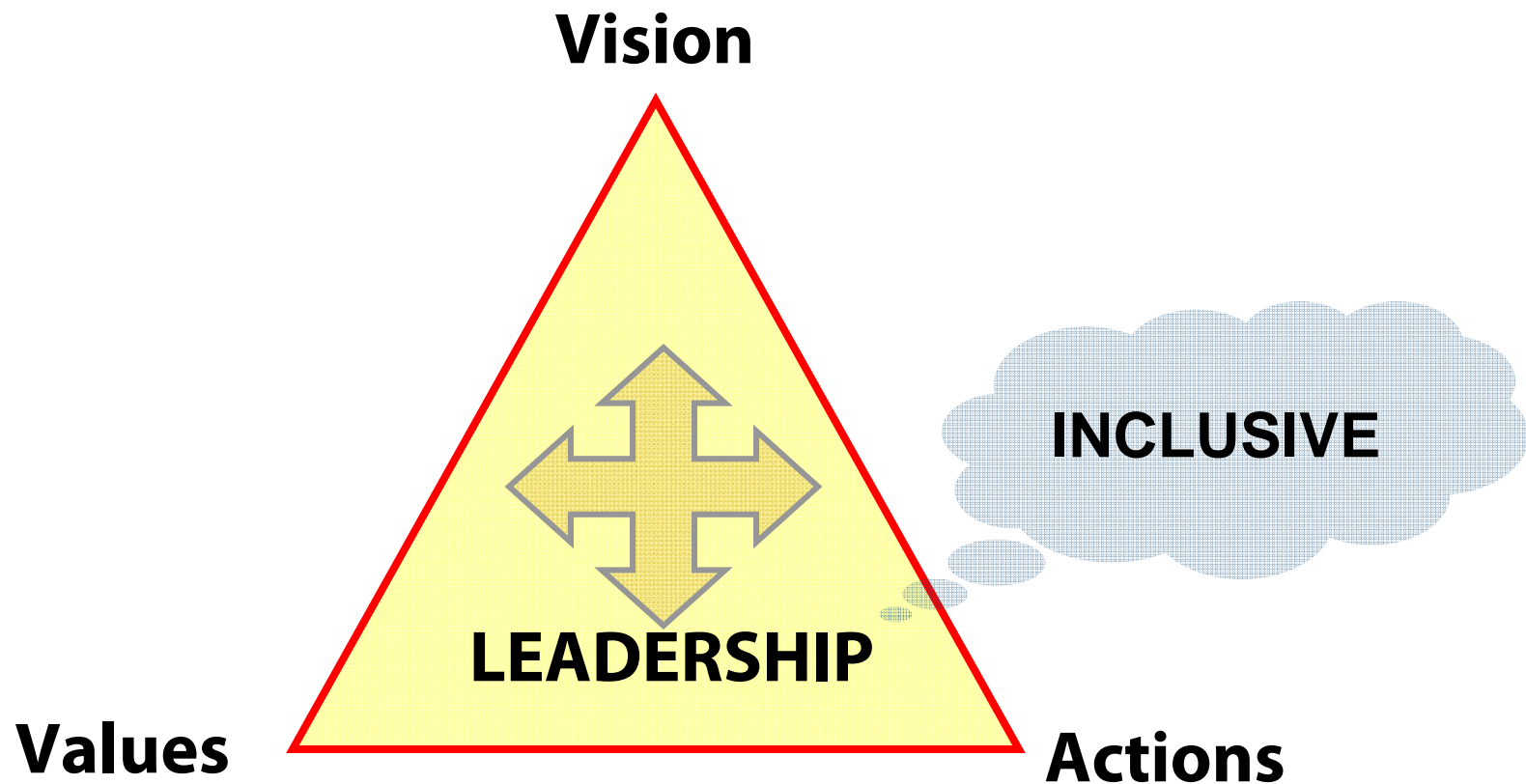
Finding common ground

1. Clarify causal logic and dynamics.

2. Understand barriers to EBM.

3. Make the change process a variable.

4. Do in-depth case studies.

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THE GRAHAM LOWE GROUP

Watch for my new book in April 2010…

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