What is the PERMA model?

In 2012, Dr. Martin Seligman introduced a new model for well-being based around the acronym PERMA. Seligman is widely recognized as the founder of The Science of Positive Psychology, and by association this work has influenced the research in optimal organizational performance.

**P** Positive Emotions/Pleasure

**E** Engagement (flow)

**R** Relationships

**M** Meaning

**A** Accomplishment

The PERMA model takes a giant step beyond earlier theories that measured levels of happiness and life satisfaction because it includes additional important elements that drive well-being and flourishing. Each element of the PERMA model meets three criteria:

1. It contributes to well-being.
2. People pursue it for its own sake.
3. It can be objectively measured independently from the other elements.

What does the PERMA model mean to you?

The elements of the PERMA model are being used by researchers around the world to measure well-being in individuals, organizations, and countries. For example, Felicia Huppert and Timothy So of the University of Cambridge recently used PERMA to measure flourishing in each of 23 European nations. They discovered Denmark had the highest level of a flourishing population, while Russia had the lowest. Organizations are fast discovering that by implementing practical interventions derived from the PERMA model, they can enhance the overall level of engagement and well-being within their workforces.

As a result of years of research, there are numerous scientifically validated exercises that have been proven to contribute to organizational performance by generating increased job satisfaction, higher levels of employee optimism, enhanced well-being, and improved work engagement. In short, we now know what individuals and organizations need to do in order to flourish, and these interventions can be taught.