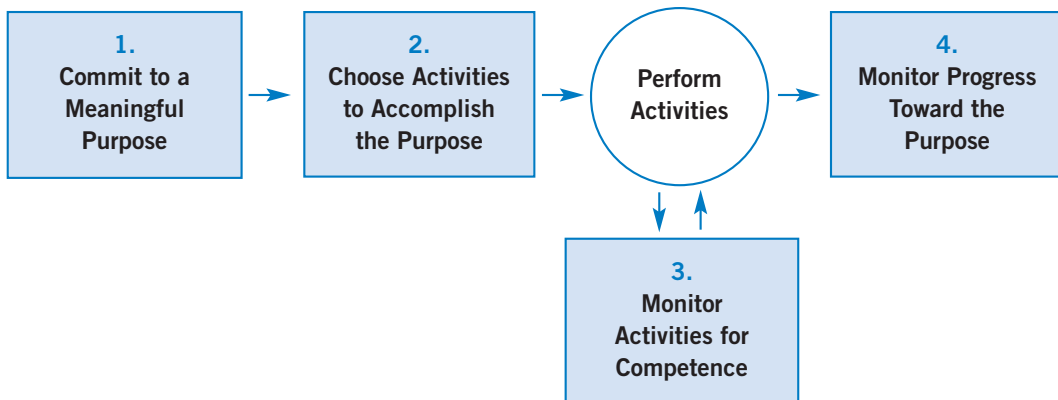


Understanding Work Engagement

The *Work Engagement Profile* measures key factors that keep you engaged in your work. In general terms, this engagement involves the energy and thought you put into your work. By *work*, we mean both the activities you perform and their intended purpose. When you are engaged in your work, you take steps to ensure that your activities are effective in accomplishing their purpose.

The *self-management process* shown below provides a more detailed picture of what engagement entails. The white circle in the figure represents your behavior as you perform work activities. The blue boxes show the steps you take to direct your activities toward accomplishing their purpose.

THE SELF-MANAGEMENT PROCESS



Source: Adapted from Kenneth W. Thomas, Erik Jansen, and Walter G. Tymon Jr., "Navigating in the Realm of Theory: An Empowering View of Construct Development," *Research in Organizational Change and Development*, 10 (1997), 1–30. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

As the figure shows, self-management involves four main steps:

1. Committing to a meaningful work purpose—one that is worth your effort
2. Choosing activities that you believe will best accomplish the purpose
3. Making sure you are performing those activities competently
4. Ensuring that your activities are making progress toward the purpose

WHAT MAKES WORK ENGAGING?

When the right conditions are in place, each of the steps in the self-management process can give you an *intrinsic reward*—a positive boost of energy you get directly from your work. The *Work Engagement Profile* assessment measures these intrinsic rewards:*

- Your sense of **meaningfulness**
- Your sense of **choice**
- Your sense of **competence**
- Your sense of **progress**

These psychological rewards keep you engaged in your work—and energize you to keep performing at your best.

The rows in the chart below show that two of these rewards come from your work *activities* and the other two come from your work *purpose*. The columns show that two rewards are forms of *opportunity* and two are forms of *accomplishment*.

THE FOUR INTRINSIC REWARDS

	OPPORTUNITY Rewards	ACCOMPLISHMENT Rewards
From Work ACTIVITIES	Sense of Choice	Sense of Competence
From Work PURPOSE	Sense of Meaningfulness	Sense of Progress

- Your sense of **meaningfulness** is the opportunity you perceive to pursue a worthy work purpose.
- Your sense of **choice** is the opportunity you perceive to select activities that make sense to you and to perform them in ways that seem appropriate.
- Your sense of **competence** is the accomplishment you experience in skillfully performing the activities you have chosen.
- Your sense of **progress** is the accomplishment you experience in advancing toward the purpose.

*This list of intrinsic rewards is adapted from Kenneth Thomas and Betty Velthouse, "Cognitive Elements of Empowerment," *Academy of Management Review*, 15 (October 1990), 666–681.