

Are current success measuring metrics the right ones?



My last [article about happiness](#) emphasizes the fact that many of us measure success simply by how happy we are most of the time. How others see our success (and I mean here „ours“ in general not related to me or my colleagues), is a different story. How the current (mainly Western) society measures success at large, that's another story too.

We all know there is a mixture of reasons, choices and actions leading to happiness/success. When it comes to *professional* success, however, I have been seeing quite a shift lately. Not yet a major one but on the verge to become one.

A shift from the way people see success - the commonly accepted successful person/company - rich, famous and competent, tough, etc. towards a different one - more focused on the health and wellbeing of self and others, less willing to sell more than anyone could buy (see waste related studies). Less willing to negatively impact the climate just to make its shareholders happy - a kinder, more compassionate type of person/organization. Still focused on delivering growth but in a much more responsible manner, with high focus on addressing the potential negative impact on the people, planet etc.

Of course the side effects of the well intended technologization have not yet shown their claws but I strongly believe that the humanity and the generations to come could/will stimulate the creation of a totally different breed of a company, a company that measures success in a very different manner than it is measured today.

When we look at the definitions of success presented in different dictionaries we find “the achieving of the results wanted or hoped for”, “the accomplishment of an aim or purpose, the achieving of desired results,” etc.

So, in a nutshell, it is actually about the way we set our objectives, aims, purposes. It is actually in our hands to start, today, to measure differently and not wait for something to happen or someone else to ask us to. To start a new model that could be co-created.

If these objectives, purposes, metrics are meant to have and measure a stakeholder value focus/positive impact towards all stakeholders and not just for shareholders, then “the new model of success” will be measured this way.

A few of my thoughts below:

The current new era of emerging technologies, of high-speed changes, exposes us to a new way of working and living, creating new experiences that challenge deeply this nonsense called “work-life balance” created in the “old” model of doing business.

Our capacity of unlearning and finding our ‘own purpose’ will be crucial in addressing how our lives will be and how happy we are.

For example, why would work be outside of life and not part of life? Why would someone willingly spend most of the waking time in a non-meaningful place or in a non-meaningful activity.

One of the reasons is when you don’t like what you do, when you accept to stay in a context to work just for the benefits offered or because you’re “trapped” by a context, despite not bringing fulfillment, or because it is more of a career plan rather than a calling, an enjoyment.

Or, when you work for someone who doesn’t really care about you and others. Not to mention the category that blames everything and everyone around for the choices they make without being actually forced.

The meaning of your job, what you have to do to turn work for pay into satisfaction, or even better, to turn what you do into a calling, is a model that jointly you and your employer have to co-create on the foundation of a shared and strong purpose.

It is something between you, the employer and the other participants to grow and contribute to. And for as long as businesses start pursuing stakeholder value while shareholders are still very important and will be provided decent value too, we might be slowly, slowly removing this nonsense “work-life” balance tag and transform it into ... “life”.

And while reading this, many executives/executive or non-executive boards might ask themselves: “what’s in it for me so that it is worth challenging the (still) working status-quo?”

I believe I have a pretty argued answer but as companies are different and in different contexts, I refrain myself from providing a generally valid answer and let it come by itself for everyone reading this by the end.

Now, a few metrics we have thought about starting a while ago and that might change, for good, the way companies measure success (together with some of the “classical” ones):

- ROC (Return on Character). See <https://hbr.org/2015/04/measuring-the-return-on-character> where our collaborating company KRW International could provide more details.
- Return on Stakeholder Engagement
- Employee real/ authentic engagement (measured by the real effort they put into accomplishing a company’s mission and shared purpose)
- Customer engagement/loyalty from customers
- Engagement to Customer/Loyalty towards customers
- CSR employee involvement rate (and I do not mean here the PR exercises but the real involvement, self-driven)
- A company’s involvement in addressing at least one of the world’s grand challenges – education, poverty hunger, pollution, health access, waste, etc.
- Meaningfulness @ work
- Investments in the personal wellbeing of employees and customers
- People/ key people retention
- People/ key people development, etc.

As they are not having (yet) a widespread use, we would be delighted to receive your input and comments on them as well as suggestions of other relevant metrics that should be measured.

We thank you in advance!