

Culture FITT[®]

Energising your culture with a new FITT[®]ness regime

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Elmira Bakhshalian and Fatima Elmi

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Introduction



This reflective paper (so-called to denote its positioning between ‘blog’ and ‘white paper’) extends and deepens our previous work that examines work engagement and performance. In particular, we look at four different organisational climates or zones – Frustration, Inspiration, Tolerance and Toxic – mapped to our FITT® Grid.

Organisational climate is regarded as the sense-making employees apply to their workplace – their individual and collective experiences on a day-to-day basis. These experiences provide a glimpse of the ‘lived (experienced) reality’ of organisational culture.

If you would like to discuss anything in more detail, please [contact us](#).

Elmira and Fatima

Energy Exchange

Our research over nearly a decade has examined the individual and collective experiences of employees using a diagnostic tool called The Employment Deal Diagnostic (TEDD®). More information about the application of the tool and associated results can be found on the [Kinetiq website](#).

Using social exchange theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), we represent these workplace experiences by personifying the relationship or ‘deal’ between employer and employee – a process that relies on an exchange of contributions of various kinds. Our research has shown that this can be likened to an ‘energy exchange’ (Quinn et al, 2012; Watkin & Hubbard, 2003; Bruch & Ghoshal, 2003) where energy consumption (employee contribution) is offset by energy replenishment (employer contribution). Thus, the energy gap becomes an expression of the balance of the deal - the smaller the energy gap is (i.e. the difference between energy consumption and energy replenishment), the more balanced (and sustainable) the process will be, as illustrated in figure 1.

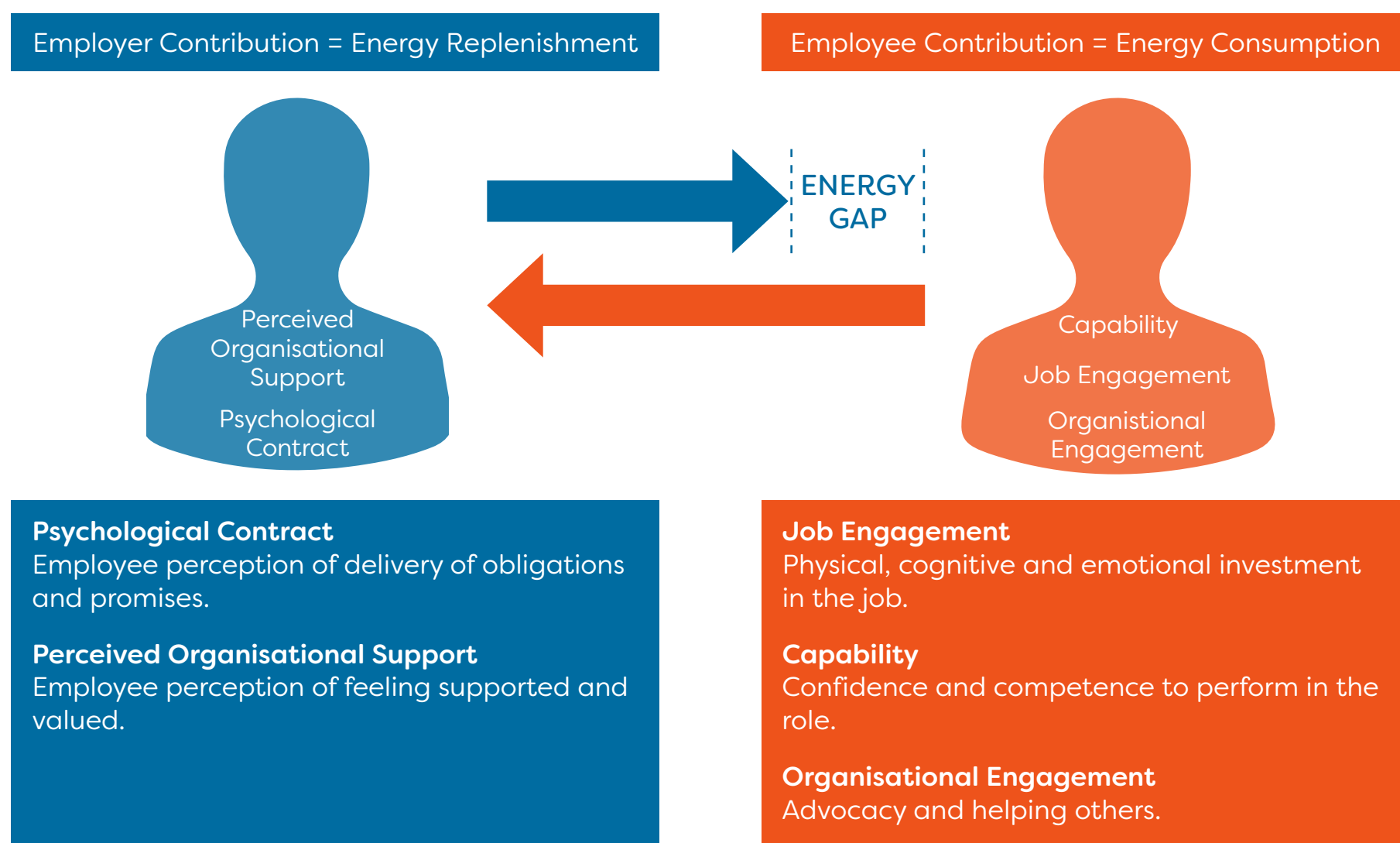


Figure 1: The Employment Deal Diagnostic

Energy Delivery System – Conversational Practice

Another way of looking at energy exchange is in the form of a delivery system fuelled by conversational practice – a conduit that channels different types of energy between employer and employee. These ‘conversational energies’ are influenced by workplace tensions and job pressure (see figure 2), which modify and obstruct the energy flow when they become too high or too low, as illustrated in figure 3.

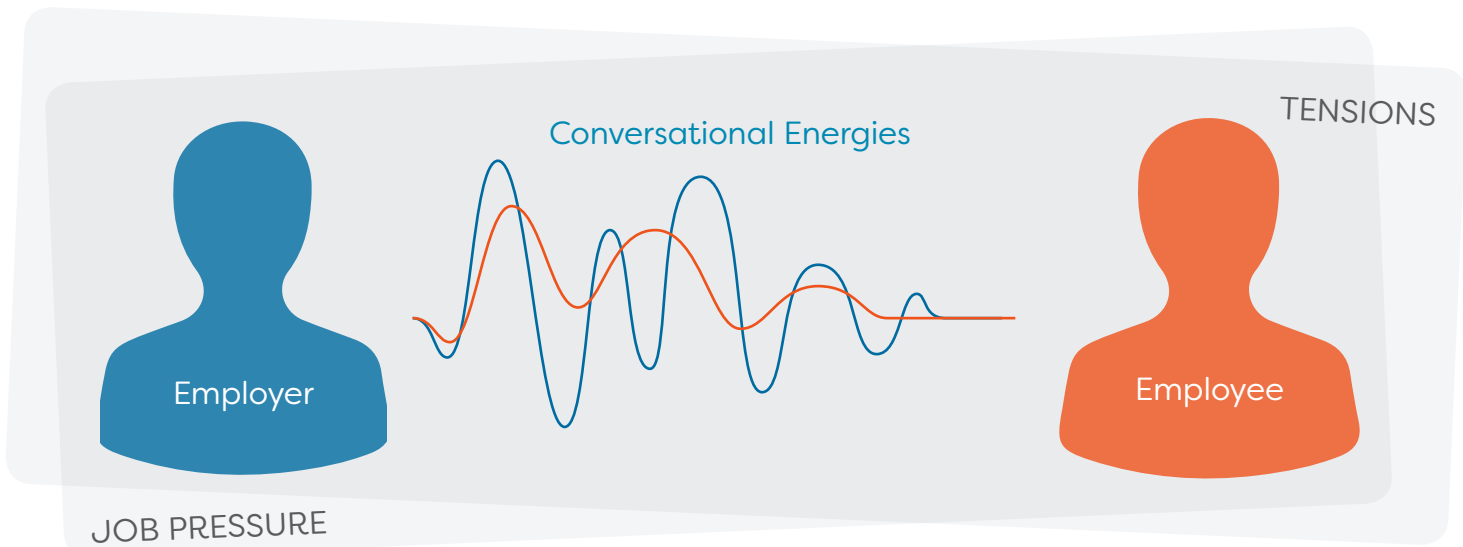


Figure 2: The interaction between conversational energies and workplace tensions and job pressure

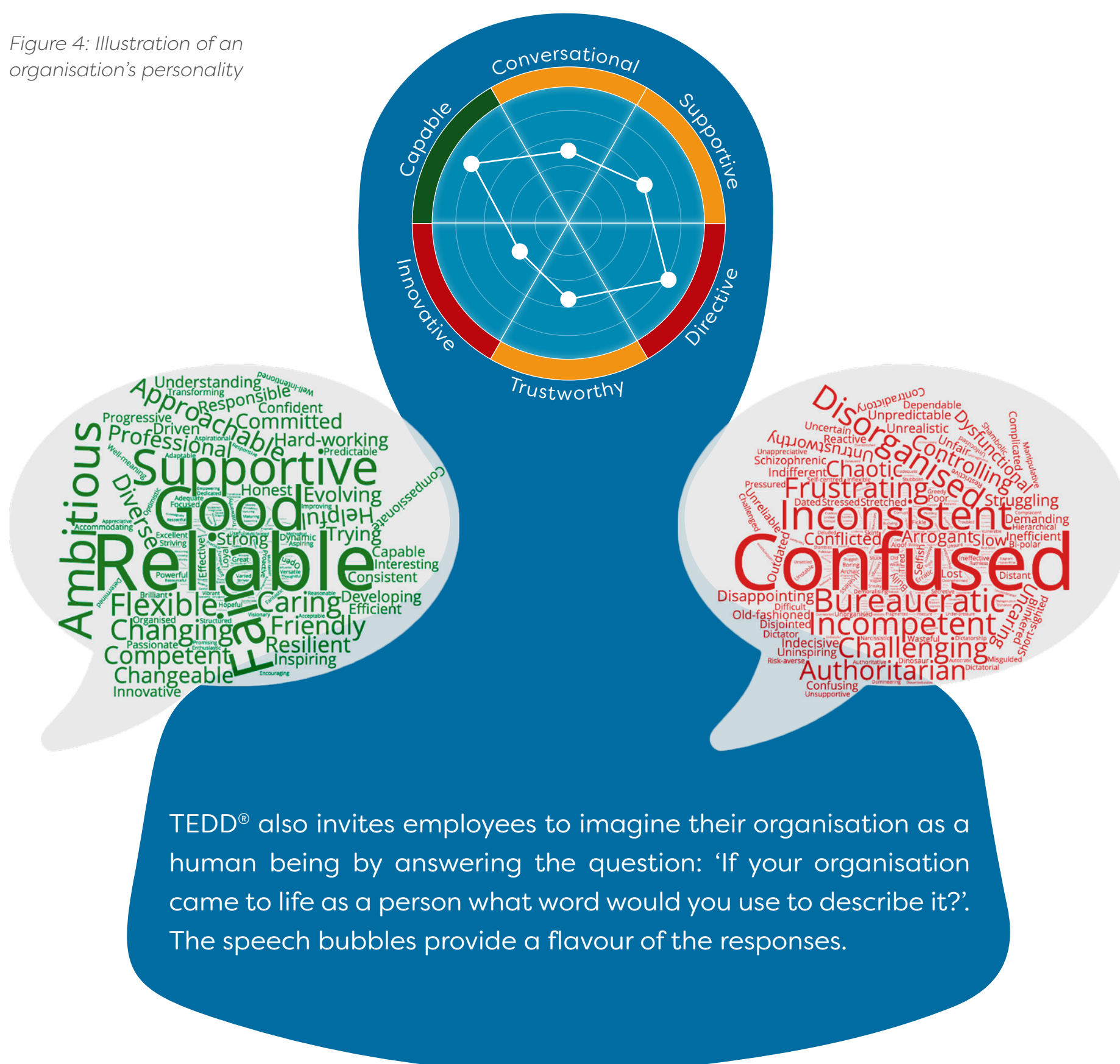


Figure 3: The curvilinear relationship between conversational practice, workplace tensions and job pressure

The Changing Face of the Employment Relationship

TEDD® invites employees to rate a range of ‘human dispositions’ that provide an insight into the perception of an organisation’s personality, which reflects the quality of the employment relationship – see figure 4. Moreover, they have implications for employer branding and shine a light on whether the internal view held by employees corresponds with the external proposition offered by the employer.

Figure 4: Illustration of an organisation’s personality



The FITT® Grid

By analysing the data to look for the relationship between employee contribution (energy consumption) and balance of the deal (energy gap), we produce the FITT®Grid (shown below in figure 5) - a useful representation of four organisation climates (zones), each one revealing individual and collective insights about the workplace experience.

The zones are now illustrated in more detail.

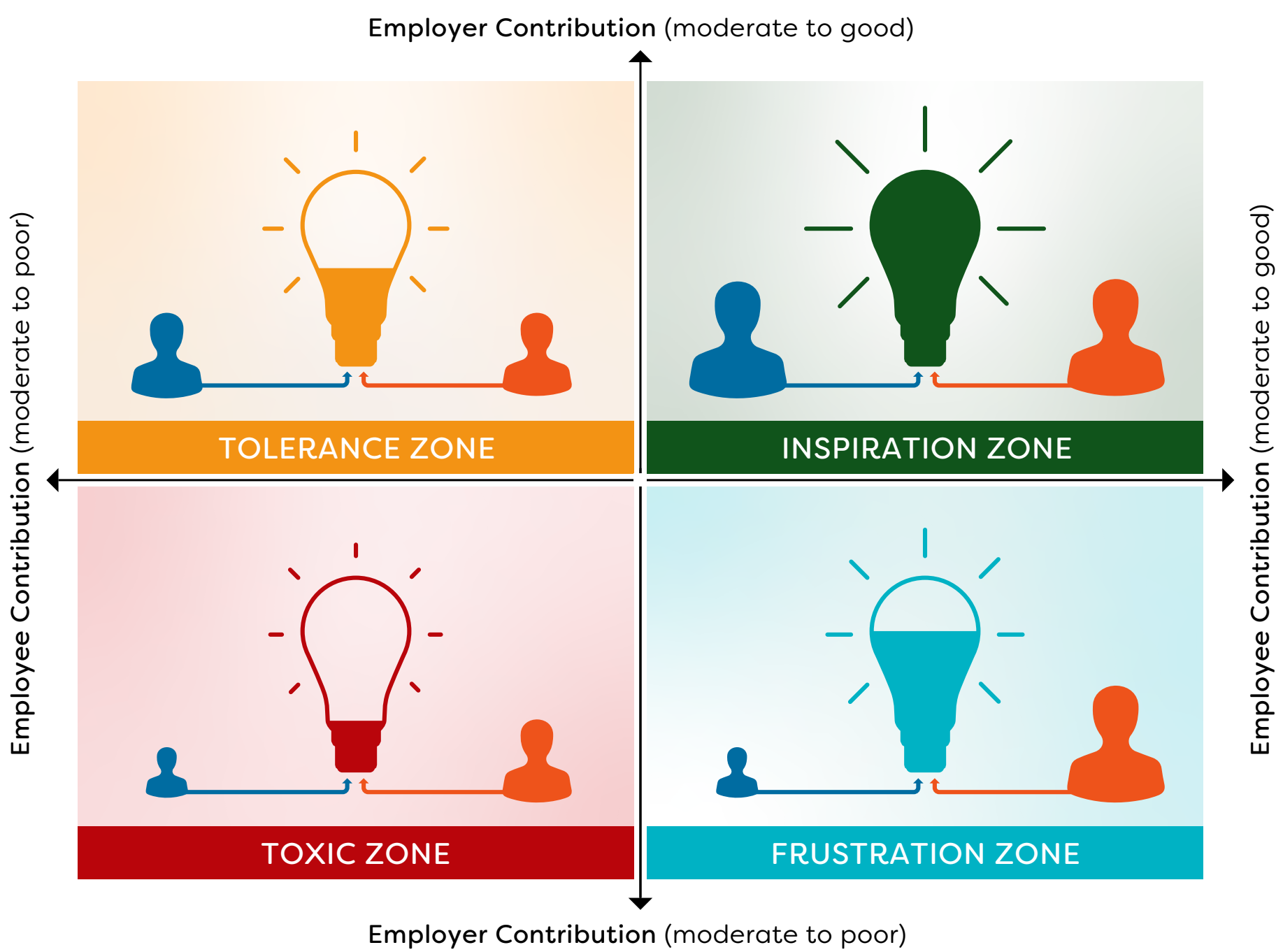


Figure 5: A graphical representation of FITT®

Frustration Zone



- An imbalanced employment relationship.
- Employees' energy levels are not being replenished.
- The pressure of having to maintain work standards leads people to become overwhelmed and frustrated.
- Reduced propensity for individuals and teams to work together to actively solve problems and deliver solutions.
- Fewer opportunities to learn from mistakes.

'If your organisation came to life as a person what word would you use to describe it?'

Hardworking, Frustrating, Disorganised.

"I often start work early and continue until late, the only way I feel I can get the work done."



"I will go that extra mile to help out my colleagues as I feel that it is very important to have good relationships with colleagues and to help each other out, especially in these difficult times. However, the increasing workloads are straining and putting pressure on these relationships and creating a very stressful work environment at the moment."



- Employee Contribution
- Energy gap (Balance of the Deal)
- Tensions and Job Pressure
- Conversational Practice
- Personality

Key:



Good score/outcome to be celebrated.



Moderate score/outcome. Capable of improvement.



Relatively poor score/outcome. A clear signal to improve.

"My manager doesn't recognise that I am under pressure and applies unreasonable deadlines to increase stress levels."



Inspiration Zone



- A healthy balance in the employment relationship.
- The level of energy exerted by employees is in line with that reciprocated by the employer.
- Job pressures and tensions inspire employees to be more innovative.
- Increased propensity for individuals and teams to work together to actively solve problems and deliver solutions.
- Employees feel confident to express discontent in the workplace and engage in challenging dialogue with senior management.

‘If your organisation came to life as a person what word would you use to describe it?’






Supporting, Inspiring, Progressive.



“There is a very strong support mechanism in place to ensure that you are happy, not stressed, receiving all training that you need and where possible you want, and the staff are all supportive when you need help.”

“Free exchange of ideas to produce the best way forward on a number of topics affecting the team.”



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“Great team to work in with positive work ethic.”



Toxic Zone



- A complete breakdown of the employment relationship.
- Psychology safety is absent – employees are unable to speak openly.
- Employees begin to withdraw their energy output.
- Lack of trust between managers and staff.
- Poor conversational practice results in elevated levels of workplace tensions and job pressure.

‘If your organisation came to life as a person what word would you use to describe it?’

Incompetent, Confused, Dictator.



“Poor culture around communication and internal competition - doesn’t enable collaborative working as everyone works in silos and is fearful about sharing or encouraging others.”

“Lack of communication from management on a regular basis, don’t feel like there’s much trust between members of the team at times.”



“Poor management, too much hierarchy, and oppressive environment.”



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Tolerance Zone



- Individuals and teams are not encouraged and may not seek new challenges.
- Employees are content to earn a living and not become deeply invested in goals.
- A laissez-faire approach to leadership.
- A relaxed and 'laid back' climate.
- Work is seen as 'simple' and 'stress-free'.

'If your organisation came to life as a person what word would you use to describe it?'

Steady, Okay, Solid.

"I like the environment. I am not under pressure to get a huge amount of tasks completed as well as care and I'm paid well."








"Easy job, no stress."



"The simplicity of the job, good pay."



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Having completed her MSc in HRM and Organisational Analysis (approved by CIPD) with King's College London, Elmira is currently in the process of becoming a chartered member of the CIPD (MCIPD). She relishes academic research and is always looking at ways to infuse the works of academics and practitioners to find new pathways for learning, underpinned by her capability to link conceptual thinking with impact in the workplace. She has also spoken at various conferences including the 7th International e-HRM conference at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan in December 2018.

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Fatima enjoys infusing statistical analysis with free text comments to offer compelling insights into employee engagement and performance. Having completed her MSc in HRM and Organisational Analysis (approved by CIPD) with King's College London, she is currently in the process of becoming a chartered member of the CIPD (MCIPD). In 2018, she presented a research paper at the CIPD applied research conference exploring how 360-degree assessments can inform interventions in Leadership Capabilities.

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