GREATNESS MATTERS.

Landmark study yields a surprising insight: While most companies chase employee engagement to inspire great work, human nature works the other way around. Get people involved in doing something great and engagement soars.

Highlights from The 2015 Great Work Index Study.
This is huge. The Great Work Index Study reveals how to boost employee productivity and engagement at the same time.

To learn how, we’ll walk you through a high level summary of the study’s unexpected, but deeply truthful, insight. First let’s talk about the difference between good work and great work.

What is good work?
The Great Work Index Study defines good work as adequate. Expected. There’s nothing wrong with that. Good work is done on time and as promised. It makes a positive impression. But it leaves room for something more.

What is great work?
The Great Work Index Study defines great work as innovative or productive work that goes beyond expectations. It might be about improving things or simply delivering additional value. But most of all, great work makes a difference people love.

How can you tell if someone is involved in great work? The 2010 O.C. Tanner Great Work Study was the largest-ever study of award-winning work. In it, we discovered five skills that, when practiced together, are proven to cause great work outcomes dramatically. You can learn more about the five skills here. Or read the New York Times Bestseller, Great Work: How to Make a Difference People Love.

The five Great Work skills are the basis for the Great Work Index Study.
So, does engagement lead to great work? Sort of.
To explore the relationship between great work and engagement, we asked global respondents a series of standard questions about employee engagement plus questions that revealed if they were performing the five great work skills. 
This is what we found:

Only 41% of highly engaged employees are great at practicing the great work skills.

So, only some of your employees are doing great work.
In fact:

1 in 5 of your most engaged employees aren’t actually contributing great work.

So high engagement scores do not necessarily mean employees are actively engaged in doing great work. That’s the bad news. But wait, it gets better.
Does great work lead to engagement? Absolutely.
When we switched the paradigms, to look at how people practicing the great work skills scored at being engaged, we found something very interesting:

A full 60% of employees who are performing the great work skills are also highly engaged.

So being involved in meaningful work, like innovating or improving things, is highly likely to increase employee engagement.

In fact:

1 in 20

Only 5% of employees who are involved in great work are unengaged.

So, great work is a path to engagement.
To get your employees doing great work, read the infographic, “What Causes Great Work?” Or peruse our Harvard Business Review article, “Why Your Employees Don’t Innovate.”

The five Great Work skills are the basis for the Great Work Index Study. If you’d like to dive deeper into the 2015 Great Work Index Survey, read the entire white paper here.