

The Research Behind *The Progress Principle*

Our initial purpose in this research program was to understand the role of inner work life in organizations: what influences it, and how it influences performance. To understand such interior dynamics better, we asked members of project teams to respond to an end-of-day e-mail survey every day during the course of their projects—just over four months, on average. The projects—inventing kitchen gadgets, managing product lines of cleaning tools, and solving complex IT problems for a hotel empire, for example—all involved creativity. The daily survey inquired about participants’ perceptions of the work environment, their mood, and their motivation levels that day, as well as what work they did and what events stood out in their minds. But the key question – the answers to which informed our major conclusions – asked participants to describe an event that happened that day that was relevant to their work on the project.

We recruited people from 26 project teams within 7 companies. Our final sample of 238 employees consisted of 182 men (77 percent) and 56 women. The mean age was 38.2 years (standard deviation = 10.2 years), with a range of 22 to 68 years. Teams participated for between 9 and 38 weeks, with an average of 19 weeks. In the end, this yielded 11,637 daily questionnaires and diary entries.

Much more detail about the methods, data, and findings can be found in the appendix of *The Progress Principle*.

