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# KNOWLEDGE NOMADS

## UNDERSTANDING AN OVERLOOKED SEGMENT OF THE WORKFORCE HELPS MANAGERS LEAD

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Managers have formal and official supervisory authority within an organizational hierarchy. As a result, a perennial concern of managers is employee mobility, i.e., the turnover of workers, and the implication of worker mobility for the staffing of critical functions in the organization.

Managers in organizations can also be leaders. According to Burns, in his seminal volume *Leadership* (1978, 18): "Leadership over human beings is exercised when persons with certain motives and purposes mobilize... resources so as to arouse, engage, and satisfy the motives of followers... in order to realize goals mutually held by leaders and followers." Consistent with this definition of leadership, a core challenge confronting a manager who seeks to lead is to figure out the motives of followers and encourage their commitment to blossom.

In our work, we have observed that managers often have a common mindset about turnover and commitment that limits their ability to lead and, in particular, limits their ability to elicit commitment. Many managers approach commitment in a skewed, simplistic way. As a result, they fail to unleash the commitment of their employees, especially the commitment of a young, growing, mobile, and significant segment of their workforce we call Knowledge Nomads. Indeed, knowing the importance of worker commitment, and knowing how to secure it, are two separate matters. This difference is one of the keys to leading organizations, above and beyond managing.

What is the common mindset that limits many managers' ability to elicit commitment from employees and, as a result, limits their ability to lead? Management theories almost universally presume that increased worker mobility and organizational commitment are inversely related. Thus, mobility is seen as coming <u>at the expense</u> of commitment and, by extension, at the expense of the positive outcomes of commitment. Our analysis challenges this dominant view on two fronts. First, our review of the relevant literature shows that conceptual and methodological biases have exaggerated the degree to which organizational commitment and worker mobility are inversely related. Second, the empirical research we conducted reveals that some of today's highly mobile workers present the potential for fostering organizational commitment <u>amid</u> conditions of high worker mobility, not in spite or instead of it. Such workers, whom we call Knowledge Nomads, are much more mobile than their parents. To better understand their characteristics, it is useful to draw an analogy to the Tuaregs, a nomadic people on the edge of the Sahara desert.

Unlike the sedentary Hausa tribe of the same region, who stay in one village for generations, the Tuaregs carry their belongings from place to place in their search for water and good soil. Once they stop, however, they form a relationship with the land and people around them. They build a settlement and acquaint themselves with their neighbors. They cultivate the land, letting their animals fertilize it. They attend weekly markets, offering their expertise in leatherwork, tailoring, and the making of jewelry, wooden carvings, and colorful straw mats. The settled peoples in the area are unaccustomed to such goods, and are grateful for a visit from the Tuaregs. They try to make the Tuaregs' stay with them as joyful and productive as possible; the Tuaregs, for their part, treat their settlement like home, even though they know that they will eventually move on.

Today's Knowledge Nomads are not unlike the Tuaregs in their movement from job to job as they wend their way through the American employment landscape. The late management expert Peter Drucker defined "knowledge workers" as people who use the greater efficiencies and radically new ways of disseminating knowledge afforded by information technologies to solve problems, generate ideas, and create new products and services.[1] Knowledge workers' value to their manager lies in what and how they think, rather than in what they make or do. Knowledge Nomads are a highly mobile subset of the broad category of knowledge workers. No one organization is their home or life. But like the Tuaregs, they build

homes and till the organizational soil wherever they settle. Although they and their coworkers know they will move on, they are motivated, hard working, and committed during their tenure at any given organization.

The coexistence of strong organizational commitment amid high worker mobility is not just conceptually possible; Knowledge Nomads serve as living proof that the labor pool includes people who exhibit both characteristics. Managers looking to create a more engaged workforce – and become leaders – would do well to consider the factors that help Knowledge Nomads thrive.

## ATTITUDES TOWARD COMMITMENT IN ORGANIZATIONS AND THE MEDIA— AND THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF A NEW PERSPECTIVE

Managers pay attention to workers' level of engagement because it is often associated with desirable outcomes, for organizations and for individual workers.[2] Meyer and Allen (1997) found that, in general, outcomes under an individual worker's control are more likely to be positively affected by his or her commitment to the organization. More specifically, employees with stronger commitment have been found to work harder, perform better, miss work less often, and exhibit increased extra-role or "citizenship" behaviors.[3] Not surprisingly, managers are giving employees more freedom to make decisions and manage their day-to-day activities in the hope of creating higher levels of organizational commitment.

Engagement is also associated with desirable outcomes for the workers themselves. There is compelling evidence that individuals want to feel committed. Research shows that attachment is one of the defining experiences of being human, from the cradle to the grave, whereas the opposite of commitment—alienation—is uniformly associated with unhealthy conditions and behaviors.[4]

If managers paid attention solely to the media, however, they might very well view their efforts to promote organizational commitment as pointless. There has been a great deal of discussion in both the popular press and management literature about supposed declines in commitment—where commitment is defined as the amount of time an employee stays with an organization—because of increased worker mobility. In the United States, for example, Tumulty (2002) claims that job turnover rates have spiked as high as 39%. Rice (2002) asserts that 75% of workers in Great Britain say they will not stay at a job more than two years. According to the popular press, workers of past generations did not change jobs this frequently.[5]

Whether grounded in fact or trumped up by the media, claims that worker mobility is increasing, and that this increased mobility erodes organizational commitment, can have pernicious consequences. Researchers in psychology and sociology have documented that expectations can trigger self-fulfilling prophecies.[6] Thus, managers that perceive mobile workers to be less committed often stigmatize these employees as being less ethical, less loyal, more opportunistic, more mercenary, and more likely to abandon the organization in tough times. These negative characterizations can then prompt managers to reduce their commitment to mobile workers. For example, Godinez (2002) cites that mobile workers are more likely to be the first victims of job cuts. Such inequities don't go unnoticed, of course. Just as a jealous lover may eventually drive a faithful beloved into the arms of another, managers that don't trust mobile workers may bring about the very disloyalty they had suspected.

In our research, we chose not to regard the connection between increased worker mobility and decreased organizational commitment as a fact, but rather as a relationship that sometimes holds and sometimes does not. This approach acknowledges the possibility that highly mobile workers can also be highly committed to organizations.

> **"When commitment is viewed independent from mobility, a host of new management (in fact, leadership) approaches present themselves."**

The reasons for exploring commitment amid mobility are compelling. A demonstration of the coexistence of commitment and mobility would counteract the popularly held belief that mobile workers constitute a "free agent nation" of individuals who forego commitment, retreating into themselves to create "Me, Inc." Moreover, such a demonstration would help break the unfortunate self-reinforcing cycle in which management's presumption of low commitment among highly mobile workers actually produces low commitment among such employees. Once managers appreciate the potential for strong commitment among mobile workers, they have good reason to tap that potential, instead of holding these workers at arm's length because they have been unfairly branded as untrustworthy or less committed. This, in turn, could revolutionize organizational policies. When commitment is viewed independent from mobility, a host of new management (in fact, leadership) approaches—designed to elicit commitment rather than simply to reduce mobility—present themselves.

## FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE

The inverse association between organizational commitment and worker mobility runs so deep in the organizational literature that it is often treated as a given. But a thorough review of the literature reveals a systemic overstatement of this inverse relationship. The causes of this overstatement can be traced to three areas of scholarly activity:

*Conceptual definitions of the organizational commitment construct.* Researchers' definitions of organizational commitment are sometimes very explicit in the way they make inverse associations between commitment and mobility. This occurs most often when commitment researchers factor "intent-to-stay" into their definition of commitment (e.g., Ben-Bakr, Al-Shammari, Jefri & Prasad, 1994; Hunt, Chonko & Wood, 1985). Meyer and Allen (1997) cite a definition of commitment that characterizes a committed worker as one who "stays with the organization through thick and thin." The practical and theoretical limitations that result from such a definition of commitment are obvious. How long does a worker have to stay in one place to demonstrate commitment: Two years? Ten years? Moreover, does this number depend on the industry, the worker's age, or where the worker is in his career? And does it change over generations?

*Operationalization of the construct.* Some researchers, such as Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979), include intent-to-remain questions in their commitment scale. Similarly, scales such as those employed by Porter, Crampon, and Smith (1976) include items measuring withdrawal intentions, but don't expressly reference this factor in their summary definition. When an inverse association between commitment and mobility is not explicitly made in the commitment definition, but intent-to-remain questions are included in the operationalization of the commitment construct, the operationalization of commitment strays from the conceptual definition. This dangerous and unspoken leap from definition to operationalization tempts researchers and practitioners to overstate the degree to which commitment and mobility are inversely related—and to overlook instances in which commitment may actually thrive amid mobility. Our concern here is not that continuance (continuity in a job) is considered a component of commitment, but that it is often considered the major and defining component of commitment, and that it is done so surreptitiously, rather than stated outright.[7]

***Empirical research about the construct.*** Given that many researchers write continuance into their definition of commitment, and that many of those who do not explicitly write it into their definition include withdrawal questions in their commitment instrument, it should not come as a surprise that a host of studies have found a negative correlation between commitment and turnover.

Most of the existing research on the outcomes of commitment has been devoted to predicting worker turnover. Hulin (1991), for example, writes that "empirical support for the usefulness of the organizational commitment construct comes from empirical studies testing models of organizational turnover." Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) argue that the strongest and most predictable behavioral consequence of worker commitment is lower turnover. Similarly, research conducted by Koch and Steers (1978), Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979), and Mathieu and Zajac (1990) also found evidence supporting this assertion.

In light of the circular state of affairs in which the organizational commitment construct is conceptually defined, operationalized, and researched, perhaps the only surprise is that the evidence for an inverse association is not stronger. But awareness of the bias in the research challenges organizational scholars to disentangle two ideas that have been closely intertwined and to reconceptualize them as independent concepts, thereby opening up the theoretical possibility that workers can be mobile *and* committed to their organizations.

## AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF KNOWLEDGE NOMADS

In addition to our analysis of the organizational commitment literature, we collected a quantitative data set that allowed us to examine whether workers who move frequently can still be committed to their organizations. We investigated the null hypothesis—that commitment to organization is unrelated to worker mobility.

Seeking to gauge both commitment and mobility, we recruited 115 knowledge workers with similar skill sets and career prospects from two companies.[8] The workers were chosen because they met two important criteria: they were all mobile, moving for both volitional and nonvolitional reasons,[9] and they had been deemed critical to the success of their companies. We administered the survey using a five-step process[10] and collected the survey data anonymously. Our response rate was 54.67%. The average age of respondents was 33 years, and the sample was 53% male and 47% female.[11]

In collecting the data, we used multiple measures. The first of these was Meyer and Allen's (1997) Organizational Commitment Scale, one of the leading instruments for empirical research on organizational commitment, which is weighted toward finding a negative relationship between commitment and mobility.[12] We also measured organizational commitment using a one-item instrument that is employed in many national survey research programs: "I feel very little loyalty to this organization."

We measured worker mobility by using indexes of past mobility and anticipated future mobility. First, we administered Shore and Martin's (1989) Intent-to-Stay Scale. Then, we asked participants for the number of organizational moves they had experienced during their careers.[13] Finally, we asked participants how long they had been at the two companies at which they had most recently worked.

We analyzed these data in multiple ways. A principal way to examine organizational commitment amid mobility is to ask the question: *Do workers who frequently move between organizations tend to be less committed to the organization where they are currently working?* We ran this analysis using two different measures of

commitment; in both cases, we found no correlation between a worker's average length of tenure and the magnitude of his or her commitment to the current organization.[14] Workers who move more frequently between organizations felt just as much loyalty to their current employer as those who move less frequently.

Another way to investigate the phenomenon of commitment amid mobility is to examine the question: *Is a worker who is strongly committed to his or her organization less likely to leave the organization in the future?* This question examines the relationship, or lack thereof, between current commitment levels and workers' plans to stay in their organization; to answer it, we compared workers' scores on Meyer and Allen's (1997) Organizational Commitment Scale with their scores on Shore and Martin's (1989) Intent-to-Stay Scale. Here again, we found no effect: workers' level of commitment had nothing to do with how long they intended to remain at the organization.[15]

Finally, we asked the question: *Are those workers who are the most transient the same as those who are least committed to their organization?* When we focused specifically on workers' age, we learned that younger workers, who tended to be the most mobile of the people in the sample, were also the most committed to their organization.[16] This correlation between age and organizational commitment proved highly significant.[17] While younger workers report more commitment to their current organizations, they also report a higher likelihood of leaving them. This demographic matches our description of the Knowledge Nomad: mobile, yet attached and committed to the organization while they are there, participating actively in the organizational community and working toward the organization's goals.

In all our analyses, the quantitative data supported our hypothesis that commitment to organization can thrive amid worker mobility.[18] Our empirical research did not reveal an inverse relationship between mobility and organizational commitment. These findings, together with our analysis of the way that the inverse relationship is overstated in the commitment literature, suggest that the possibility for fostering commitment amid mobility is very real indeed. That said, we do not argue that commitment is <u>never</u> inversely associated with mobility—we simply argue that it does not have to be.

Commitment to organization <u>can</u> coexist with high mobility. But many managers still have a deeply ingrained belief that committed workers stay in organizations and do not move. By moving beyond this presumption of an inverse relationship organizational managers can begin to become leaders, by developing strategies for expanding the sphere in which commitment and mobility coexist for maximizing the positive outcomes that result.

## PARTNERING WITH KNOWLEDGE NOMADS

The frequency with which workers change organizations appears to be a fact of 21st century life. But although Knowledge Nomads move frequently, they <u>do</u> form attachments and commitments. In fact, our research indicates that some of the most mobile workers are also those with the greatest commitment to their organizations. To maximize the value of Knowledge Nomads—indeed, to become leaders—managers must invest some of their own time and energy, learning about the conditions that elicit Knowledge Nomads' highest level of commitment.

Advisory projects in which we have worked directly with practitioners to create high-commitment organizations have helped us identify three effective means of increasing the engagement of highly mobile workers.

**1. Don't retain—unleash.** Managers who focus solely on retention, seeking a cure for mobility, frequently do their organizations a disservice by engaging in actions that can be unproductive or even dangerous. To demonstrate this phenomenon, we conducted a workshop with managers from a large company. We asked half of the group what steps they would take to retain a valued worker; we asked the other half what steps they would take to <u>elicit commitment</u> from a valued worker. The two groups produced vastly different action plans. When we replicated this study in a large governmental agency, the results were the same: the goal of eliciting commitment yielded far better leadership strategies than the goal of merely retaining employees.

The managers who were asked how to <u>retain workers</u> made suggestions like "increase salary" and "change his or her title." Such small steps may help keep an employee for a couple of months, but not for the long term—the productivity gains, in other words, will be minimal. By contrast, the managers who were asked how to <u>elicit commitment</u> proposed deeper and more individualized action steps. Among them: "find out what challenges make her tick" and "provide opportunities for learning on the job." The benefits, for both the organization and the individual, arising from such steps are obvious.

Granted, the costs associated with turnover can be significant. Nevertheless, concentrating solely on turnover—especially when it's viewed as a uniformly bad thing—can cause managers to pay attention to the wrong issues. As researchers have observed, some turnover is healthy. It prunes the lower-performing and less-motivated workers from the organization. It can also foster innovation, as new employees bring new ideas into the organization. Yet most managers continue to think more in terms of retaining employees than of eliciting their commitment. This is a sad comment on contemporary workplace culture. The word "retain" makes workers sound like chattel. Who wants to be retained? Most employees seek to be valued, they want to be engaged.

So which organizational arrangements and management practices will have the retention cart following the commitment horse, and not the other way around? Deb Casados, founder of 3's Consulting and a veteran leader of many high-commitment work organizations, proposes that managers spend less time trying to retain employees through shallow incentives like salary bumps and more time wooing them over and over to the job and the organization by offering interesting challenges, greater latitude, and stimulating learning opportunities.

Employee commitment will not be fostered by any one management practice, Casados emphasizes, but rather by the diversity of the organization's efforts to develop commitment. Imagine the organizational mantra changing from "attract and retain the best employees" to "attract the best employees and keep attracting them for as long as they are here." By continually re-recruiting their employees, organizational leaders unleash them, as it were, to throw themselves into the work for as long as they stay at the organization.

**2. Create mechanisms to align workers' commitments.** Length of time in an organization is certainly the most common way of measuring employee commitment, but it is hardly the most interesting or helpful approach for managers. Far more important than the duration of a worker's stay in an organization is the quality and quantity of the work he or she does while there.

Instead of gauging worker commitment based upon the amount of time spent with any one organization, we define commitment as: *the degree of an employee's psychological attachment to an organization and the intensity (quality and quantity) of physical and mental effort the employee expends on behalf of the organization.*[19] This definition has the benefit of being general enough to be compatible with the many different bases or forms of commitment—including those of the Knowledge Nomads, who are committed to organizations while still mobile.

> **"Employees can be actively committed to themselves, their families, their careers, their projects, _and_ their organizations. In fact, the most powerful and synergistic combination occurs when all these commitments are aligned."**

A common belief about transient knowledge workers is that other commitments replace their commitment to the organization. Some argue that mobile high-tech professionals identify more strongly with a project or with their industry than they do with the organization for which they work. Others claim that a parent's commitment to family necessarily supersedes his or her commitment to work. These commitments are not mutually exclusive, however.[20] Employees can be actively committed to themselves, their families, their careers, their projects, _and_ their organizations. In fact, the most powerful and synergistic combination occurs when all these commitments are aligned.

The goal of the organization and its managers, therefore, should be to have an employee's multiple commitments reinforce one another. Harvard Business School Professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1968) first sparked research into commitment mechanisms in a groundbreaking study that focused on the means through which the social systems of communes elicited commitment from their members. Working with a wide array of organizations, we have refined the commitment mechanisms approach by examining organizational arrangements in which commitment to organization thrives alongside commitment to career, rather than at the expense of it. Furthermore, we have developed a method of assessing employees' commitment by examining commitment to personal goals in the context of commitment to the organization.

In our work, we have identified several practical mechanisms by which managers elicit organizational commitment while strengthening their alignment with employees' other commitments and, by doing so, exhibit leadership. These include:

> • _Opportunities for formal and informal learning at work._ When workers are learning, their long-term career prospects improve. In other words, the organization's current needs become better aligned with the individual's long-term career need to continually develop new skills that enable him or her to remain at the cutting edge of the profession.
> • _Small work groups._ Employees feel more attached to their organization when they feel more attached to such groups. But to prevent work group commitments from being antithetical to the organization—for example, a work group's commitment to devoting extra time to a group project that is not aligned with the overall strategic plan—it is crucial for the work group's mission and purpose to have the organization's stamp of approval.[21] When this is the case, workers' commitments to their work group and the organization become mutually reinforcing.

Managers who elicit high commitment from mobile workers become leaders as they focus less on traditional rewards and compensation and more on aligning their workers' various commitments. This insight is consistent with other work on leadership (e.g., Bennis, 2003), which has examined leadership as a process of engaging others by creating shared meaning. Shared meaning can result, in part, from aligned commitments of both worker and employers. Leaders, for example, create jobs in which a worker's commitment to his or her career or family is aligned to his or her commitment to the organization. As a result, workers are not forced to choose one commitment over another and their commitments can flourish.

**3. Establish alumni networks.** Workers move on for a variety of reasons. Sometimes, they want an adventure or simply a change. In other cases, a worker may move because he or she has been laid off in an organization-wide downsizing. In some instances, workers change jobs to follow their partners. For whatever reason, Knowledge Nomads will eventually move on to their next sites. This transition can and should be viewed as the next step in a continuing and positive relationship.

Ideally, the move should not contain any traces of "good riddance," as if the worker's departure represented a failed retention effort. Nor should an organizational leader let the worker depart without saying goodbye in a way that indicates desire to work with him or her again. The transition should feel like a release for the organization and the individual, both of whom have given and received the best during their time together.

This is not to suggest that all interaction must cease once an individual has left the organization. On the contrary, relationships may continue for years, via e-mail or other forms of communication. Alumni networks have proven to be a particularly beneficial strategy: by staying in touch with the Knowledge Nomad who has gone off to another job, organizations are often able to gain new contacts, valuable information about different market sectors, and new prospects.

Some Knowledge Nomads who leave an organization end up purposefully migrating back. Jill Ward, a marketing manager at Ernst & Young, calls such people "boomerangs."[22] Employees who return for a second tour of duty offer a wealth of understanding and background that other job applicants typically do not have. After all, who is more valuable than someone who already understands your organization?

## CONCLUSION

Eliciting commitment is central to leading organizations. Finding ways to elicit commitment is one way in which managers in organizations become leaders. Knowledge Nomads–a young, growing, mobile, and significant segment of their workforce–challenges the prevailing view of today's worker as someone who will move from organization to organization to advance his or her own career, showing little commitment to organizations. In fact, Knowledge Nomads *do* commit to organizations, and they do it while maintaining their commitments to their own careers, professions, and families. They move on, and they carry with them the beliefs, methods, and attachments they learned in your organization. Sometimes they even come back.

Re-recruiting (rather than simply retaining) such workers, finding ways to align these workers' various commitments, and building alumni networks all help increase worker engagement. In doing so, they represent critical steps on the path to organizational leadership.

**Notes**

### Acknowledgments

## ENDNOTES

1   See Drucker (1959); and Shea (1987).

2   It is important to note that the relationship between organizational commitment and positive outcomes, for both the organizational and individuals, is not unequivocally desirable—even though, for many reasons, it is often highly desirable. As with many positive states, there can also be "too much of a good thing," as when, for instance, commitment involves a loss of personal freedom and choice. Furthermore, researchers have argued that an excess of commitment can be maladaptive to both individuals and organizations. Whyte (1956) suggests the possibility of a "shadow side" to excessive commitment, a possibility further explored by Randall (1987) and others. Although interesting and important to examine, this shadow side of organizational commitment seems to be the exception rather than the rule. Maladaptive outcomes of commitment identified in the literature seem to occur when commitment is excessive. The more typical scenario is for individuals to choose to be committed to the organizations they join and for commitment to have positive effects both for the organization and its members (Pfeffer, 1998).

3   See Hackett, Bycio & Hausdorf (1994); Meyer, Allen & Smith (1993); Somers (1995); Bashaw & Grant (1994); Munene (1995); Pearce (1993).

4   See Ainsworth, Blehar, Water & Wall (1978); Bowlby (1982).

5   Interestingly, while there is a perception that worker mobility is on the rise, empirical evidence examining trends in worker mobility—specifically the perceived decline in job tenure—is mixed (Auer & Cazes, 2000; Marcotte, 1999). For example, there has not been an observable increase in the number of employees with tenure of less than one year (Jaeger & Stevens, 1998). Still, there is some evidence that there was a slight decline, in the aggregate, in job stability in the early 1990s (Neumark, Polsky & Hansen, 1997). But regardless of whether mobility is actually on the rise, the perception that it is fuels assumptions about the direction of organizational commitment. The critical point here is that the perceptions of an inverse relationship between worker mobility and organizational commitment may be just that: perceptions.

6   See Merton (1948); Rosenthal & Jacobson (1992).

7   To be sure, one of the most important advances in the organizational commitment literature has been the articulation and investigation of different forms of commitment. For example, scholars have begun to differentiate between "continuance commitment," "affective organizational commitment," and "normative organizational commitment." It is critical to note, however, that even when a particular form of commitment is focused on a worker's staying in an organization, assumptions about commitment and mobility can still leak into the other forms of commitment. In Meyer and Allen's (1991, 1997) typology, for example, continuance commitment is often discussed as the form of commitment most concerned with whether a worker stays in a organizational. But it is instructive to look at the operationalizations of their two other forms of commitment: affective and normative organizational commitment. Both of these presume that organizational commitment and intent to remain in the organization are one and the same. Affective commitment is measured by items such as "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization" and "I think I could easily become as attached to another organization I am to this one." Among the measures of normative commitment: "I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer."

**8** These two companies were matched for industrial niche: commercial Internet software and complex Internet-enabled services. Two corporate recruiters reviewed the field site companies and evaluated the degree to which these companies would be recruiting from the same pool of workers. Both reported that the skills, background, and employment prospects of the employees in each of the two field site companies were very similar.

**9** Pittinsky (2001) found that the intersection of commitments—the compatibilities as well as the conflicts—are a better predictor of turnover than any one commitment alone. For example, the compatibility of family commitments and organizational commitment can be more important to whether one stays in an organization than family commitment alone or organizational commitment alone. Moreover, some very committed people leave organizations because of conflicts, not because of low levels of commitment in any absolute sense.

**10** First, we randomly selected a target sample of employees from the companies' telephone directories; this provided us comprehensive and up-to-date lists of employees. Second, we send a general e-mail announcement requesting survey participation. Third, midway through the survey period, we sent a follow-up request to employees in the targeted sample who had not yet completed the survey. Fourth, during the final three days of research, we left a flyer requesting participation from employees in the targeted sample.

**11** We provided the research contacts at each of the field sites with the survey sample's distribution of gender, age, geography (whether onsite or working in the field), and job function. No systematic differences between the sample and the target population, above and beyond what would be expected with random sampling, were uncovered.

**12** Use of this scale is a conservative approach because, as noted earlier, commitment scales, including Meyer and Allen's Organizational Commitment Scale, are often operationalized in a way that frames commitment as a reason for staying in or leaving an organization. Thus the deck is, in some sense, stacked toward finding a relationship. In this light, the lack of relationship predicted and observed in our research is even more compelling.

**13** Participants generated a career history—including their previous employing organizations, dates of employment, geographic location of employment, and organizational role—to help ensure the accuracy of responses for this self-report measure of past mobility. The alternative methodology, a developmental study following a cohort of workers over their careers, was not possible for practical reasons.

**14** First measure: $\_ = .84$: $r = .007$, $p = .94$; second measure: $r = -.07$; $p = .42$

**15** $\_ = .78$: $r = .05$, $p = .54$

**16** Age was partialed out in these analyses. As a result, age was found to be related to both commitment and mobility; it drove a correlation between the two variables independent of a distinct relationship between them. Interestingly, age was related to commitment, but not in the direction commonly assumed. Younger workers were found to have higher commitment to organization than older workers.

**17** $r = -.29$, $p = .001$

**18** Because the hypothesis is one of no relationship between commitment and mobility, we took four methodological precautions. First, we conducted a power analysis, which revealed that, based on the range of effect sizes reported in the commitment literature (e.g., Mathieu & Zajac, 1990), our study sample size was large enough to detect an effect at a power of 90%. Second, we examined the relationship between commitment and mobility from four different perspectives. Third, to avoid drawing premature conclusions from a single set of analyses, we used multiple measures. Fourth, we asked a second researcher to examine the data and run similar analyses, with the expectation of finding statistically significant inverse relationships between commitment and mobility measures.

**19** See Pittinsky (2001).

20  See Levine & Pittinsky (1997).

21  See Hackman (2002), for a rich discussion of teams in their organizational contexts.

22  See Baker (2001).

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