There’s a landslide of evidence demonstrating the impact of Optimism on things that matter. Here are some of the key findings on Optimism in the workplace:

Work Results

* *Sales and Retention*:
* Life insurance agents with an optimistic style were less likely to quit and sold more insurance than agents with a pessimistic style (Seligman & Schulman, 1986). 2 studies
  + - Among the agents identified as optimistic, those individuals sold 37% more insurance than their pessimistic counterparts
    - Agents with the highest optimism ratings sold 88% more insurance than those with the highest pessimism ratings
    - Among the low producers, those with an Optimist style had a higher survival rate than Pessimists
* *Job Performance:*
* Pessimism predicted job performance in factory workers (Macan et al., 2005).
  + - Less Pessimistic workers had more favorable overall performance ratings
    - Pessimism predicted an additional 6% of variance in job performance after controlling for variance from a personality and a basic work skills test
    - Less pessimistic workers had better ratings on quality of work, safety of themselves and others, cooperation and self-discipline, judgement, development and improvement ratings and adaptability and initiative in performing tasks
* Employee optimism was significantly related to job performance (Youssef & Luthans, 2007)
* Optimists have more positive attitudes about work and exhibit more positive behaviors at work than pessimists (Kluemper et al., 2009)
* Employee optimism was a better predictor of job performance than a measure of personality for a sample of production workers (Worklife Report, 2011)
* Manager’s optimism was positively related to their supervisors’ ratings of their overall work performance (Jensen et al., 2007)
* Optimistic nurses received higher supervisor ratings in a variety of outcomes including: their commitment to the mission of the hospital, customer satisfaction, and an overall measure of work performance (Luthans et al., 2008)
* Workplace optimism is positively (significantly) related to individual work performance (Medlin & Green Jr., 2009)
* Manager optimism significantly correlated with employee project performance (Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007)
* Employees with greater positive emotion received more favorable evaluations of their performance, higher pay, and received more social support from supervisors and co-workers (Staw et al., 1994)
* There is a statistically significant positive relationship between teacher optimism and performance (r=.932; Medlin et al., 2010)
* *Motivation and Goal Setting*
* Optimists exert more **effort**; if the person is confident about eventual success, i.e. optimistic, their effort will continue. Pessimistic people disengage from effort. If the person is doubtful about his/her eventual success, i.e. pessimistic, they tend to disengage effort. (Carver & Scheier, 1998)
* Optimists are better at **balancing multiple goals** (Segerstrom & Nes, 2006)
  + - In college students, balance accounted for part of the optimists’ better goal progress over the course of the semester
* Optimists are better at engaging in high priorities and place **greater effort** towards high-priority goals (Geers et al., 2009)
  + Students given information stressing the importance of doing well on their final course exam performed differently based on their high or low optimism. Optimists spent significantly more time on practice exams.
* Optimists had higher levels of **motivation, persistence and performance** (Carver et. al., 1979; Taylor and Brown, 1988).
* Expectancies of future success had a positive influence on **effort intentions** for sales people (Badovick, 1990)
* Optimists have higher **goal engagement**, as reflected in their goal importance and **commitment** to achievement (Segerstrom & Nes, 2006)
* Optimists are less likely to **abandon their goals** (Segerstrom & Nes, 2006)
* Optimists build **positive expectations that motivate** goal pursuit; pessimists have self-doubt and negative expectations (Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Seligman, 1998).
* Optimists are more likely to **formulate plans** **and persevere** when facing difficulties, find creative ways to solve problems and use opportunities to meet goals (Cacioppo et al., 2008; Fredrickson, 2001; Kluemper et al., 2009; Youssef & Luthans, 2007).
* Optimistic leaders are more likely to see problems as challenges, exert **greater effort** for longer periods to reach their goals, and seek out and appreciate the positive aspects of difficult situations (Tombaugh, 2005)
* For teachers, having an optimistic subculture (e.g., created though innovation, focus on results vs. activities, goal setting, stress teamwork) directly and positively impacts goal setting. Goal setting then indirectly impacted individual performance through workplace optimism (Medlin et al., 2010)
  + - Schools that have optimistic cultures positively impact teacher optimism
* Goal setting leads to engaged employees 🡪 engaged employees exhibit higher levels of workplace optimism 🡪 higher levels of workplace optimism improves the individual performance of an organization’s employees (Medlin & Green Jr., 2009)
* Optimistic salespeople are more likely to perceive a given goal as attainable (Strutton & Lumpkin, 1993)
* *Stress & Coping in the Workplace*
  + Restaurant workers who reported having higher levels of optimism reported lower levels of **stress** (Hayes & Weathington, 2007)
  + Optimism buffers against the occupational and **life stress** of university teachers (Macan, 2007)
  + The more optimistic, the more likely one is to use **problem solving** and positive cognitive restructuring strategies and the less likely one is to use avoidance strategies to deal with **workplace stress** (Welbourne et al., 2007)
  + The use of **problem-solving**, cognitive restructuring and support-seeking coping strategies was associated with greater job satisfaction
    - These coping strategies accounted for over 20% of the variance in satisfaction
  + Optimistic call center employees had less **stress** and work/nonwork **conflict** than their pessimistic counterparts (Tuten & Neidermeyer, 2004)
  + For salespeople, there are differences in the degree to which they use coping strategies (Strutton & Lumpkin, 1993)
    - Optimistic salespeople were more likely to use directed **problem solving** (using careful, experiential based analysis in their efforts to remove the stressor), positive reinterpretation (readjust/reshaping themselves for the better as a consequence of the stressors), and self-control (acting with restraint) as coping strategies
    - Pessimistic salespeople were more likely to pull back from the **stressful** situation and to do so in a way that would harm their performance (using self-indulgent escapism and negative avoidance coping)
* *Work Engagement/Burnout*
  + Optimists perceived lower levels of **job stress** and work & non-work **conflict** than pessimists for employees at a call center (Tuten & Neidermeyer, 2004)
  + Optimism acts as a buffer against the **burnout** for information technology professionals (Riolli & Savicki, 2003)
    - Under conditions with low work resources, being optimistic was related to lower burnout and being pessimistic was related to higher burnout
  + Restaurant workers who reported having higher levels of optimism reported lower levels of job **burnout** (Hayes & Weathington, 2007)
  + Optimists are more likely to interpret organizational events as favoring their individual goals, interests, needs, and well-being, thus experiencing more **positive affective states** (Mignonac & Herrbach, 2004)
  + Greater optimism is significantly associated with less risk of job **burnout** (Chang et al., 2000)
  + Optimism was significantly negatively associated with **emotional exhaustion** and **job cynicism** and positively related with **professional efficacy**. (Chang et al., 2000)
    - This suggests that more optimistic workers are likely to feel less **emotional exhaustion** from their jobs and less cynical about their job goals, while also suggesting that more optimistic workers feel they have more control and **influence** on what happens at work.
  + **Employee engagement** is significantly positively related to workplace optimism (Medlin & Green Jr., 2009)
  + Manager and employee optimism was significantly related with **engagement** which, was significantly related with **project performance** (Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007)
    - This suggests that managers who are more engaged in their work are more likely to manage teams that produce better results.
* *Other Work Outcomes (e.g., Organization Commitment, Job Satisfaction, Creativity)*
  + Optimism predicts **creativity** at work, more specifically, it predicts 57% of the unique variance of creativity (Rego et al., 2012)
  + Optimistic behavior plays an important role in increasing **organizational commitment** (Ashraf et al., 2012)
    - Organizational commitment can be achieved by the combining presence of goal setting, employee engagement, and workplace optimism
  + Optimists have increased **commitment to the organization**, **job satisfaction**, increased performance and **citizenship behaviors** (Kluemper et al., 2009)
  + Optimism significantly related to **job satisfaction** and **work happiness** (Youssef & Luthans, 2007)
  + Optimism was associated with increased intrinsic **job satisfaction** (aspects of the job such achievement, independence, responsibility, etc.) (Welbourne et al., 2007)
  + Optimism is one of three psychological capacities essential for leadership (Amit et al., 2004)
  + Optimistic and engaged employees were more likely to report to a manager that valued their strengths, had a positive perspective, and frequently provided recognition (Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007)