



Head & Heart is a collection of ideas, resources and frameworks to support your personal and professional development in leading yourself, others and organizations with head and heart.

Winter 2010

From the Editor

Dear Readers,

Performance is dynamic in nature, showing up with dramatically different results, even when carried out by the same person. Likewise, our emotional states prior (and after) a particular performance may often vary dramatically.

What we know in theory and practice far too little in our lives is recognizing and profiting from the connection between how we feel about ourselves, the work that we do and the recognition we receive and give to others through performance well delivered.

In our Winter Issue of Head & Heart, we look at what we believe are fundamental truths about exceptional performance and how, through thoughtful engagement of head and heart, this exceptional performance becomes assessable to all of us, as individual, in teams and organizations.

Enjoy your read and the performance that may follow.

Dan Norenberg

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Thought Leadership

In Search of Performance

“The thing about performance, even if it’s only an illusion, is that it is a celebration of the fact that we do contain within ourselves infinite possibilities.”

Sydney Smith

During difficult times leaders often address company performance through a series of rationalization and reduction measures. These measures range from travel bans, eliminating corporate events designed to stimulate strategic renewal as well as laying off talent to “lighten the payroll burden.” Mediocre managers nod among themselves and quietly affirm that “they’ve done their part.”

Following this line of thinking, in the future we see “rationalization specialists” roaming the halls, the labs and production floors in an attempt to quantify resources and costs that could impact the holy grail of performance. Parts of this job might be easy, as it’s not difficult to identify head counts, the number of company cars, rents and costs of goods. But ask these rationalization specialists how much unrealized performance they have in their company and you’ll likely draw blank stares.

Do you see performance potential, in you, your team and your organization as something finite, or, as Sydney Smith shares, as infinite possibilities?

Peter Drucker was very clear how he defined performance when he said, “Every organization needs performance in three major areas. It needs direct results, building of values and their reaffirmations; and building and

developing people for tomorrow. If deprived of performance in any one of these three areas, it will decay and die. All three therefore, have to be built into the contribution of every executive.”

The search for higher performance today lies not in poring over the excel sheets night after night, but rather by investing in the values and development of people.

IBM’s CEO, Samuel Palmisano, understood Drucker’s message and used values based management to stimulate the bottom up transformational change needed to rescue their organizational performance. IBM used values based management to empower people to take decisions that supported complex collaborations (and performance) in IBM’s matrix organization. Look at them today.

Performance stagnates when leaders narrowly define it in terms of numbers only. Performance soars when its definition is expanded to include both values and development. These second two areas give people an incredible sense that they AND their work are meaningful to the organization and the organization shows an interest in their full potential through learning.

Dan Norenberg

Leading Self

Why landing on time is not the same as arriving on time

Choosing performance measures carefully, creates your desired behaviors and results.

In the late 1990s, I was UK-based and spent up to two weeks a month working abroad. On Friday evenings I would fly back into Manchester keen to get home and get the weekend started. The best thing that could happen was no delays. For this reason I flew British Airways; their service was reliable and punctual.

Touch down on the tarmac initiated a familiar routine. The plane taxied to the stand to the soothing sound of The Flower Duet from the opera Lakmé (BA's marketing tune at the time). The only interruption was the pilot happily announcing that we had landed on time or, even better, five minutes early.



But for me the journey was not over. Because baggage handling at Manchester didn't put the same value on punctuality as the pilot, it would take up to 45 minutes to get my suitcase. Over time, I became mildly irritated by the pilot's proud announcements. What's the use of landing five minutes early if passengers are waiting 45 minutes for their bags?

Friends and family pointed out that it's not the pilot's fault if the baggage handling is slow. True. But seen purely from my perspective (the customer), the journey time is from check-in (the point when I must be there) to picking up my bags up and walking out of the arrivals hall (the point when I can leave). Any other measures of travel-

ling time are of secondary importance.

For example, the actual flight time, the time it takes to pass through security and passport control and the time it takes to walk to the gate.

Performance is about figuring out factors like what you are doing, why it is done that way, what/who you are doing it for and how your part fits into the whole.

Let's take a person who works in R&D. Is high performance measured by the number of new products developed? Or is it the number of ideas which make it through the company's R&D pipeline? Or is it the number and quality of

ideas which solve a specific challenge that customers have? One thing's for sure: each one brings about different behaviors and results. The first measure puts the emphasis on creativity; the second measure on innovation which is internally "acceptable"; the third measure on innovating in the context of what customers need.

So, as a new year starts, a time of year when a lot of planning takes place, here is a quick tip. Once the plan is finished, look at the performance measures again and ask yourself: "Do these measures create the behaviors that I want in order to get the results our company needs?"

Steven Hunt

Point of View

The Performance of Nature

"Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished."

Lao Zi

If we want to look at the nature of performance, could it be helpful to turn the phrase around and use the "performance of nature" as a guide? It depends on your point of view.

At the moment, a lot of planning is going on in organizations around the globe. We all know that, without a plan, you might not accomplish anything or get lost on the way. Yet, as a colleague of mine recently said "a rose doesn't need an action plan to bloom."

What can we learn from this? I think it is captured in one word: purpose. A rose has a clear sense of purpose – to be a rose. No effort is wasted and everything it does serves that purpose – if it doesn't, the rose doesn't do it. This means that a rose would never try to be a rose AND a daisy, for it would fail at being a daisy and bloom into a funny looking rose.

Outside, it is winter and nature is resting and gathering energy. This doesn't mean that nothing is happening. I am learning from nature and using this time to get clear on my sense of purpose for 2010, so that everything needed, will be accomplished – nothing more and nothing less. I want to be purposeful. How about you?

Michael Couch

"Human subtlety will never devise an invention more beautiful, more simple or more direct than does Nature, because in her inventions, nothing is lacking and nothing is superfluous."

Leonardo da Vinci

Word Watch

Performance

"Performance" comes from "perform" which means to do.

A more extensive definition of 'perform' is to complete a prescribed course of action. Search a little deeper and the dictionary distinguishes between "perform" and its synonyms with the following explanation, "Perform is... often applied to an ordinary activity as a more formal expression than 'do', but usually implying regular, methodical work."

The presence of words like "completion", "regular" and "methodical" imply that it is possible to know whether the job is finished or not, the time it takes and the process it involves. For people who take this view, it is almost irresistible to assume that we can control every aspect of performance. Their mantra: "If it can't be measured, it can't be managed."

This creates an artificial reality, an incomplete picture of what is actually going on.

Early on in my career, I worked for a training company that was ISO 9001 certified. The trainers had to write down exactly what they did four times a day. It did not matter whether the training was excellent or poor. As long as the form was filled in, my managing director was happy because it satisfied the established ISO standards.

This relentless drive to make sure we "ticked the boxes" was a triumph of process over quality.

It also taught me two invaluable lessons. Firstly, performance is more than just ticking boxes and observing rigid processes. Secondly, the real work of a leader is what happens after you have ticked the boxes.

Steven Hunt

Leading Others

Performance Excellence

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."

Aristotle

We are all after excellence, are we not? But what are the dynamics of performance that generate excellence? As leaders, we need to be very clear what standards of performance we are expecting and whether we are creating the conditions in which they can prevail, especially if we are demanding excellence.

"We are what we repeatedly do." Aristotle is stating this as a dynamic



of performance, as one of our intrinsic human characteristics that drives our behavior. He is saying that we are defined by what we do and who we are defines what we do. The quotation is giving us a profound insight into human performance, that we deliver excellence only when we are doing something that has become deeply ingrained within us i.e. our behavior has become natural and effortless. But what needs to happen for our acts to become habits and for each of us to become excellence itself?

The challenge of this article on Leading Others is that there is no formula here. How a person chooses to do something and how it then becomes habituated into high performance is a

deeply personal process. As leaders, we must recognize this and also, in the bigger picture, be constantly aware that excellence does not last forever. Like everything else, excellence too has a life cycle. For me, this is one of the most frequently ignored dynamics of performance. What we may consider to be excellent is always running, as we are all too aware, especially of late, in the context of continuous change. So the relevance of the performance within an ever increasing pace of change needs ongoing review. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it?" No longer a useful dynamic in today's world!

The desire for excellence comes initially from within the psyche of the individual and then is sustained by the way they process their own experience of data gathering, planning, action, reflection and learning. We cannot be forced to be excellent as Aristotle reminds us. The challenge of generating organizational excellence for leadership can only be built from within their organization, through the building of discrete personal relationships with each of their key followers. We have learned that, however much executive leadership strives for excellence, it cannot be imposed top down. It comes "individual-out."

This can only happen when leaders truly understand the "habits" of their followers and coach them to release their natural drive to attain excellence.

Ed Norman

Leading Organizations

High Performance Culture – one size fits all?

"The ultimate test of management is performance."

Peter Drucker

"High performance culture" is a leadership mantra. It is a seductive sound bite. Its intended meaning is likely to go unchallenged.

The performance of a business today is largely a result of the performance of previous management. This means that the true measure of management performance is about doing a good job in preparing today's business for the future which will need to include performance in: appropriating capital, people decisions, innovation and strategy. Or do we mean "bottom line" performance which measures "business performance" rather than management performance?

Many organizational leaders tend to be "bottom line" focused, many would say by necessity, and their goal is to find ways of "processing human efficiency" and to find keys for the replication of effective human behavior. To lead in this way demands that human performance is measurable and to do this means that the dynamics of performance i.e. the constituent elements or the "specific forces that produce effective motion" need to be identified and defined. This theme formed the basis of FW Taylor's "Scientific Management." He was aiming



to raise standards of efficiency and to attach pay to productivity in a way deemed to be fair. These concepts were then applied to the analysis of "successful management performance." This work led McClelland and Boyatzis, amongst others, to develop competency models which have been widely used in attempting to build organizational culture and to measure and develop individual performance.

The key question is "If the ultimate test of management is performance, then is this interpretation of the 'dynamics of performance' the most effective way of creating a sustainable high performing organization?" Our consultancy experience shows clearly that many leaders gain value from these processes but many, whilst having the dynamics in place, give them scant regard.

In our competitive environments today, my message is that we need to re-think how we **interpret and organize performance so that we capture the hearts and minds of all our diverse talent** and to be sure that we are building the performance culture we really need, not just for today but for tomorrow.

Ed Norman

Food for Thought

"Great works are performed, not by strength, but by perseverance."

Samuel Johnson

Leadership Facts and Figures

Does it matter, in terms of performance, if people have more good days than bad days?

Teresa Amabile and Steven Kramer's new stream of research, based on more than 12,000 diary entries logged by knowledge workers over three years, reveals the dramatic impact of employees' inner work lives - their perceptions, emotions, and motivation levels - on several dimensions of performance. People perform better when their workday experiences include more positive emotions, stronger intrinsic motivation (passion for the work), and more favorable perceptions of their work, their team, their leaders, and their organization.

Challenging Situations?

What challenging situation would you like us to deal with in a future issue of Head & Heart? Get our perspective.

Send us an e-mail at:
headandheart@nvision-learning.com

We will of course ensure that your challenging situation remains anonymous.