

Generating That Elusive High Performance

David Braithwaite – QIA Consulting Ltd



2007

Generating that Elusive High Performance

Rather than describe how to manage better, lead better or introduce the latest management thinking, we thought we'd approach this from a different perspective – 'outcomes'

When people talk about **'high performance'** - it can mean different things to different people – indeed it is all relative. However you know it when you see it, when it excites you, when it rewards you, when it fulfils you – whether it's your **'high performance'**, your teams or your organisation.

What does it feel like?

It could be:

Growth = revenue expansion

'High performance' is measured by growth, growth in sales revenue or in market share. Action has been taken which results in the team, you and the organisation changing or increasing its activities to improve top line performance

Generating Profitability

'High performance' also manifests itself in profit improvement, whether that's changing from loss making to profit, achieving or exceeding the profit expectations or it may be simply be one team within the company exceeding their or your expectations in generating cash

Positioning for the future

There are many instances where **'high performance'** simply derives from actions aimed at future opportunities which either creates the situation where an organisation can move forward or sustain existing momentum.

Maintaining longevity

True performance is normally recognised when organisations sustain performance over the longer term – regularly turning in performance exceeding expectations of both shareholders and customers – normally accepted as a 5 to 7 year period.

Consistency

Taking all the above factors into account, growth, profitability, positioning for the future and longevity - the essence is how does this stack up to the market and competition – if everybody else in the world is doing the same – then you aren't exceptional – there's room for improvement.

All these attributes of **'high performance'** can be observed, measured and improved – generating an improved sense of sustained competitive advantage and ticking all the boxes, doing all the checks and balances, confirming all the metrics, but there is something else which is the icing on the cake, the real fulfillment, the real sense of achievement.

This is to do with winning hearts and minds – creating the winning mindset

Within any organisation large or small - there are people and teams who are able to move forward, progress and win – how do we generate and encourage this behaviour?

What makes a high performer?

Thinking and Acting

High performers not only think and analyse situations and solutions, they deliver, follow through and ensure the solutions are visible, engage others and sustainable. This has one unequivocal advantage it generates momentum in others to follow suit, either as a genuine feeling to join in and embrace the behaviour or as a negative reaction 'not to get left behind'. Either way action happens. Tame the inherent contradictions in successful business



management by finding ways to be both visionary and execution-minded; to maintain stability while managing change; to achieve control yet remain flexible and adaptive.

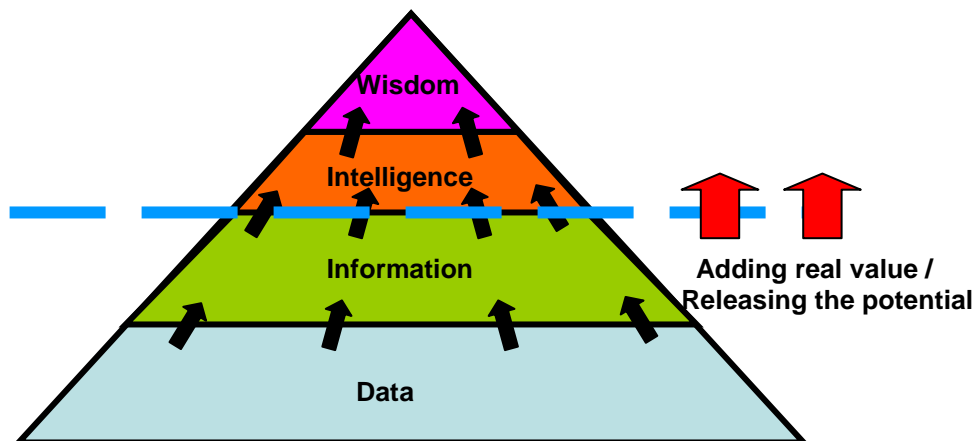
Multiplying Talent

Success and higher productivity centres around the way people and teams are trained, developed and engaged. This ensures sustainable long term results. The final part of the jigsaw to add to this talent pool is the critical aspect of recruitment. Attracting the right people, with the right drive and attitude is more critical than possessing the appropriate technical skills. Technical skills can be taught quicker than attitudes can be changed.

Achieve extraordinary levels of employee productivity through differentiated approaches to recruiting; identifying and developing talent; growing leaders; and supporting the optimal performance of the workforce.

Using The Technology

The key is the value of the data and how it is used - not the data itself. As you can see from the pyramid below, data is the building block not the end result.



Having the data is fundamental, however translating the data, analysing it and transforming the data into valuable information requires the effective use of IT. It means your systems need to be aligned to your objectives and measures. You can then turn that information into intelligence. This is the critical step. Turning information into intelligence creates real value and releases the potential focussing the organisation in the right areas on the right objectives.

As the organisation matures and the information flow creates the intelligence for the organisation to act in the right manner, so you then create wisdom within the organisation. This manifests itself

either with the individual or with the team. This wisdom is the key to sustaining improvement and success over the long term. In essence -

Regard IT beyond a tool for controlling costs - understand IT is the link for capturing the value of information – to create this wisdom.

Measuring The Right Things

Manage a selective scorecard aimed at sustaining the competitive essence. That competitive essence can be focussed internally or externally. The specific metrics are only half of the equation - the other half is how you use the metrics. Simple methods work – make the measures:

- **Visible**
- **Consistent**
- **Clear**



Use them in operational meetings, in developing your strategies, in your team's objective setting

Achieve significantly greater ROI by identifying, measuring and leveraging intangible assets unique to the business, as well as tangible assets.

Keeping The Organisation On Its Toes

Find ways to keep the organisation on their toes – doing the work well, how to incrementally improve, how to radically change. Keep on their case – don't make life too comfortable. Use sources such as customers, competition and shareholders as generators for change.

Vouchsafe the future of the organisation by infusing the business and its employees with a dedication to improvement through learning, an openness to change, and a passion for, as well as skill in, execution.

Just remember !!

“Once you think you've won you've lost”

Some final thoughts about obtaining this enhanced performance

Leaders talk about pulling the right levers, putting the right organisation in place 'mechanics of the project'. This is well known and widely executed – the difference comes from the 'dynamics of mobilising energies'. Unleashing this energy – it's about delivering the elements above to generate and nurture high achievers

A Summary

Let's be clear – don't throw the baby out of the bathwater – many things you do well, however other things can be done better - getting more out of your immediate team and the wider employees – creating high performance has to be critical to success.