

*“There is a difference
between an excellent
athlete and a gold medal
winner...a good executive
and a world-class CEO...an
average manager and one
who motivates each staff
member to peak
performance.”*

Jim Hennig

Create the Edge

Motivating yourself and your team for
peak performance

A Crestcom International White Paper

White Paper 101 – Create the Edge: Motivating Yourself and Your Team for Peak Performance

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People every day search for the simpler solution. Sometimes, the answers are so simple. Want to have more energy and creative thoughts? Get more sleep. Want to improve your golf score? Practice. The answers might appear to be obvious. Want more light? Turn on the light switch. The fact remains that people know the switches for achieving personal or business goals but for lack of discipline, perhaps, choose to remain in the dark.

A little difference is a big deal

**"There's very little difference between people,
but the little difference makes a big difference!"**

—W. Clement Stone, insurance tycoon and author

Most learn through experience. Advantage comes from moments of discovery, and the smallest insights can trigger monumental improvements. Little differences come as individuals hone skills and shift attitudes and perspectives. Successful people create time to learn, and successful companies ingrain learning as an expectation .

Create your slight edge – the unique "little difference" that will make the "big difference" in your career, your people and your organization. Let's explore four directions.

Look behind

Reviewing your professional and personal past can be one of the most effective ways to change your future. Take a pen to paper and list your memorable successes and failures.

Entrepreneur magazine published an articles with the title, "Failure Is the Seed of Growth and Success." That's easy to prove, but the title is a euphemism for not doing dumb things twice. It's even better when we can learn by watching others.

The most simple exercise that you can do or coach members of your team to do is to list three positive personal experiences that you achieved because of your talents, skills, or ethic. Beside each, list specific actions you can begin implementing today to duplicate those successes. If somebody on your team is especially talented in a specific area, the fastest way to build on

successes of the past is to put that person in roles or situations where they can best apply their skills. And, keep doing that! Make the same personal list about three mistakes or weaknesses, and determine three concrete actions that will help you eliminate those obstacles.

Look beyond

A classroom of 25 Kindergarteners sees 25 different possibilities in a dot on a blackboard: a star, a bug on the windshield, a telephone pole from above! In a classroom of 25 high school students, they all see a dot on a blackboard. When do we lose that childlike ability to look beyond the obvious and to trust our inner voice? Looking beyond requires overcoming several mental blocks. Stay tuned....

Look ahead

Peak performers approach goal setting in four common ways:

1. Create higher expectations. Your goals can be bigger.
2. Visualize. How do you create clarity? Try imagining what the realization of your goal will feel like, smell like, taste like, and what it will be like. The more the picture seems real to you, the more likely you are to execute.
3. Measure and chart your progress. To whom are you accountable? How do you know when you've succeeded?
4. Have strong motives. An expressed goal is insufficient if you're not serious about its accomplishment. Why do you want to achieve it?

Look within

Peak performance comes from within. Sometimes people try to separate physical behaviors from spiritual behaviors. Call it what you may, the reality is that people driven to achievement have clarity and purpose, and those cannot be manufactured by others. We filter our decisions through our own governing values. What are your governing values? What is your purpose?

Mental blocks

There is a cliché often portrayed in movies. The cliché involves a chase where in one turns down an alley only to discover a wall. This is a predictable storyline. It's just as predictable that alleys and walls live in our minds and create barriers to finding answers.

Barrier 1: "There is only one right answer"

French philosopher Chartier said, "Nothing is more dangerous than one idea, when it is the only one you have." Paul Torrance echoed similarly said, "The first 75 percent of ideas on any subject are less creative."

Peak performers always look for the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th right answer.

Barrier 2: “Be practical! Be logical!”

Let go of logic – at least at first. If you think of creating new ideas, there are two stages in the process: The beginning stage or germinal stage, and the action or practical stage. Free-form thinking is most helpful in the beginning stage, and structured thinking is most helpful in the practical or action phase.

When you think of dream, metaphor, ambiguity, play, fantasy, hunch, you engender innovative or free-form thinking. This is necessary in the beginning stages and leads to creativity and innovation.

Barrier 3: “Follow the rules.”

What comes to your mind when you think of these three individuals? Beethoven, Copernicus and Napoleon? The very reason that you recognize each of these names is that they each achieved peak performance in the same way—by breaking rules or traditional ways of thinking. Beethoven broke the rules of composing symphonies; Copernicus broke the traditional thinking that the earth was the center of the universe; Napoleon broke the rules that govern warfare. They each wrote new rules for better performance.

Barrier 4: “To err is wrong.”

Thomas Watson, founder of IBM said, "The way to succeed is to double your failure rate."

The home-run king of his era, Babe Ruth, led all of his contemporaries not only in home runs, but also in strikeouts. He had 1,440 of those – more than he had home runs! Most peak performers have failed more often than the average person, but they have learned from their failures – and built on them. As a matter of fact, how they recovered from and learned from failure was the key to their success.

Action

Peak performance is about choices. Turning on the light switch to discover light is no longer a revolutionary idea as it was in 1884 when the light switch was invented. Looking behind, beyond, within, and ahead are no more revolutionary. But whether or not these simple activities happen is the small differentiator that often distinguishes those who achieve and those who don't.

The content was adapted from a Crestcom International training session by Jim Henning.