

"This book is an honest, intelligent and thought provoking guide for any leader looking to advance people and performance. It doesn't disappoint."

Michael Donahoo, General Manager, Grill'd Healthy Burgers

DEFINABLE MOMENTS

MASTER THE **MOMENTS THAT MATTER** IN LIFE AND BUSINESS



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Published by Broлга Publishing Pty
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National Library of Australia
Cataloguing-in-Publication data
Andrew Horsfield, author.
ISBN 9781925367959 (paperback)



A catalogue record for this
book is available from the
National Library of Australia

Printed in Australia
Cover design by Workingtype Studio
Typesetting by Elly Cridland

BE PUBLISHED

Publish through a successful publisher. National Distribution, Dennis Jones & Associates
International Distribution to the United Kingdom, North America.
Sales Representation to South East Asia
Email: markzocchi@brolgapublishing.com.au

Introduction

Leading
Saying no
Escaping a rut
Making partner
Pitching a project
Finding a fitter you
Running a business
Balancing a busy life
Building a reputation
Making the Test team
Winning the premiership
Smashing the sales record
Creating an inclusive culture
Educating the next generation

The jobs we want to get done are found at the intersection of what matters to us and what needs to change. These are the intersecting moments that we can impact every day, when we choose to pay attention to the things that move us, and motivate us.

This is the work we care about. This is the work worth doing.

Wherever performance exists, successful people, teams and organisations want to make it better. That is what makes them successful. They have a willingness to stretch themselves for something worthwhile. So when it comes to working with people and performance – the one question every client asks me is:

**How do we harness the potential of our people
to drive performance improvement?**

DEFINABLE MOMENTS

It's a great question because it demonstrates the aspiration to build a better future and it is probably the reason you picked up this book. You either have a problem you want to turn into performance, or believe that staying stationary is a dangerous posture for success and have an appetite to advance.

Either way, there is a performance gap. There is a discrepancy between where you are, and where you want to be, and this creates tension: positive tension that reflects our aspiration, ambition and desire; and preventative tension that uses fear, distraction and doubt to derail our effort. The presence of tension provides the catalyst for action. But it can also be the point where we become unstuck.

Pursuing what we care about can be daunting because work that is worth doing always has a hard part, a specific point in time when our aspirations for achievement are seriously challenged. This is the time when work can feel difficult, we feel stuck and performance can stagnate. It's also the precise moment we can put our skills to work to deliver the results we deeply desire.

These are the Definable Moments. When these moments come, either we define the moment or it defines us. Success has no middle ground. Choose well and we move forward, choose poorly and we drop back. Don't choose at all and we passively accept whatever comes our way. Putting our skills to work in the moments that matter is a simple idea but not a small idea.

This can fundamentally change the way we work, lead and live.

Accepting responsibility is a challenge because the results we seek usually involves working at the edge of our comfort zone, the place where results take risk, and risk reinforces our preference for safety. But it is clear from every success we see: in the Boardroom, on the sporting field, with the latest start up or the rock star who launches their latest album, those who secure their success learn how to step forward despite the presence of difficulty, doubt or fear.

Once this habit is ingrained we find our freedom.

When we find our freedom, we start making choices, and initiating actions, that serve our results. Making choices changes everything. We become the curator of our own success. The more choices we make, the more momentum we build, and the more opportunities we generate. We realise our gifts, redefine our work and raise the bar. The future is a function of where we put our attention. Employing a structure that promotes a performance orientation is essential to advancement.

SUCCESS HAS STRUCTURE

Failing to structure how we do our most valuable work means we burn energy on low value activities and don't have the energy for the moments that matter, the defining moments when we must overcome the pull of preventative tension and keep making progress. If our energy is not adequately managed, willpower turns into won't power and we stop doing the work that gets the job done.

Performance is impossible when we are unaware of the underlying structures that impact our success. Alternatively, understanding these structures improves our probability for performance. There are three elements that need be aligned for performance to be achieved: Performance, Potential and Interference.

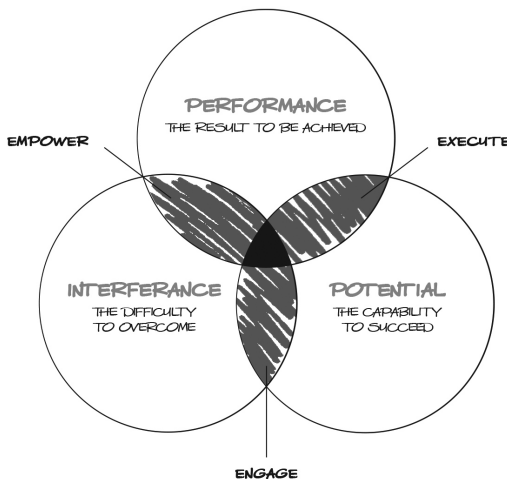


Figure 1: The three essential elements required for peak performance

DEFINABLE MOMENTS

PERFORMANCE - The result to be achieved

Success starts when we want the promise of the future to be more compelling than the premise of today. Motivation spikes when we are doing meaningful work. When we work to advance a shared purpose rather than protect an individual position or preference. Making our aspiration for achievement captivating can also mitigate the inertia that can occur in moments of difficulty or doubt.

POTENTIAL - The capability to succeed

Potential plummets when we try and mandate certain behaviours to try and make results happen. We excel when work is inherently motivating. Rather than focus on the difficulties or deficiencies that prevent performance being realised, we direct our talents to the work that matters and makes results happen. We invest the assets we have in higher achievement.

INTERFERENCE - The difficulty to overcome

Obstacles play a useful role in any performance-based activity. Without the hard work there would be no value. Identifying the circumstances that can drain our energy and derail our effort, means issues are moved from the subconscious to the conscious, which can then be conquered. We become the creators of our own reality and find the platform to perform our most valuable work.

Maintaining alignment between each of these three components is what makes success so hard to achieve. We might achieve alignment on all of them some of the time, some of them all of the time, but rarely with all of them all of the time. When we experience misalignment, we make the mistake of working on issues in isolation, when in reality they need synchronisation. This imbalance then goes on to create a series of unintended consequences that restrict results being realised:

- i. If the Performance to be achieved lacks clarity, or is not compelling, we lack the motivation to make a meaningful contribution, so fail to engage.

2. If we lack the high performance habits that amplify our Potential, we fail to empower the appropriate behaviours required for achievement.
3. If we ignore the Interference that distracts our energy and details our effort, our willpower turns into won't power, and so we fail to execute.

Our ability to identify the definable moments, and be brave enough to impact them, is the key to advancement. Committing our skills to pursue advancement is what enables us to achieve. This rarely presents as a positive opportunity to perform. Most of the time results get disguised in difficult work. Work we choose to seek out if success is a serious aspiration.

FINDING YOUR WAY

We are living in a world where there is an abundance of information, and a shortage of attention. Choose any subject and you can Google it, read about it, download an iPhone application for it or find the seven steps to achieving it. Access to information is abundant and so knowing what to do is no longer the currency of performance. Despite this, we seek out sound-bite solutions and secrets to success because we are time poor and task fatigued.

This book will not provide you with quick fixes or fast solutions.

Great chefs rarely follow recipes. They take the time to understand ingredients. They cook amazing meals by understanding how food works. How it interacts with heat or cold, other flavours, stimulates the palate or is enhanced with seasoning. This book works in a similar way. The pages explore the essential ingredients for advancing performance. Creating the recipe is up to you. Success is too sophisticated to prescribe a simple formula for everyone to follow.

While I suggest you start at the start, finding your own way might mean flicking between chapters that interest you. If that approach works for you, here is an overview of each chapter to help you peruse the parts that matter most to you.

DEFINABLE MOMENTS

CHAPTER 1 BETTER, NOT SMARTER

The results we seek often take risk. This chapter explores how trying to mitigate risk can lead to seeking out strategies that make us smarter, but not necessarily any better. This results in a performance liability that limits potential.

CHAPTER 2 WORK WORTH DOING

Work worth doing always has a hard part. Difficult moments that can derail the most determined personality, because they stretch our skills, as well as our sanity. Defining these definable moments is the key to advancement and success because it provides the ultimate competitive advantage.

CHAPTER 3 SUCCESS HAS STRUCTURE

When there is a discrepancy between where we are and where we want to be, tension is created. Delivering high performance means maximising performance tension and minimising the tension preventing progress. Understanding how this can be achieved, significantly impacts the results we can achieve.

CHAPTER 4 NO MIDDLE GROUND

Success has no middle ground. Results get realised when we commit ourselves to the moments that matter. This becomes much harder when we relocate our responsibility for results to someone or something else. Delivering results is all about the decisions we make, the actions we take and the outcomes we serve.

CHAPTER 5 BUILD SUCCESSFUL HABITS

Being good some of the time is easy. Being good all of the time is how success gets sustained. This means moving beyond the usual motivational hot air that sounds good but rarely does much good to build a series of habits that help secure new levels of success.

CHAPTER 6 MAKE MOTIVATION MATTER

Feeling a sense of progress fuels performance. When we see the effort we are making is moving things forward, we continue to invest our effort in that work. This chapter highlights the importance of recognising the smaller efforts that make results happen to drive motivation and sustain meaningful momentum.

CHAPTER 7 DO THE WORK

Most of the time results are disguised in difficult work. Work that demands we pursue what matters, stretch our existing skills and forge ahead in the face of doubt. The definable moments which provide a positive opportunity to advance performance.

Being a discerning reader means accepting the invitation to be brave, and recognising the circumstances you need to impact, to achieve what matters to you. The starting point for any meaningful change is being able to see the reality you are creating. Then, accepting the stretch associated with achievement, knowing the results you seek will involve some risk.

Reading, of course, is relatively easy. Acting on ideas is another thing all together. So grab a pen, make notes in the margin, highlight sections, record what inspires you in your journal, or take the idea that arises to a team meeting. Insights are always improved when we take action.

Okay. Here we go.