

Valuable News

The News Engine of Valufacture Solutions



Valufacture Solutions are Business Architects; professionals dedicated to the Art and Science of building businesses.

"Peak performance is a by-product of your mind and body working together in perfect harmony."

Driving Peak Performance: Developing Mental Toughness in Employees & Teams

Alan S. Goldberg in his book, *"Sports Slump Busting,"*¹ outlines 10 steps to mental toughness and peak performance that enable athletes to either break out of a slump or prevent one from occurring. Although Goldberg's reference point is athletes, the 10 steps are just as applicable to anyone or any team in business as they are to athletes. In this month's **Valuable News** we will cover the first five of the 10 steps outlined by

Goldberg in his book and will review how they may apply to the business environment.

Step 1: Ruling out Non-Mental Causes

According to Goldberg, "peak performance is a by-product of your mind and body working together in perfect harmony."² Before tackling the mental aspects of what may have caused the slump in the first place, Goldberg argues that a coach needs to make sure that the

slump is not due to physical, technical or tactical reasons.

Similarly, when managers are faced with declining levels of performance from individuals or from teams they should start by first looking at the skill and competency levels of their employees as well as the working conditions and the tactics employed by the team or the individual. The manager needs to find out if things have changed.

10 Steps to Mental Toughness & Peak Performance

Step 2: Establishing Self-Control

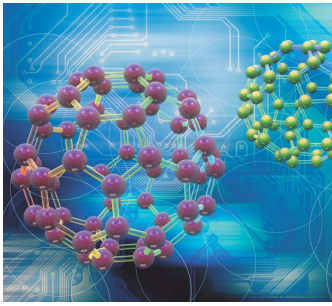
There are a number of factors that can result in a drop of performance; the loss of a sale or tender; not making targets or budgets; negative criticism from a client or customer, etc. Any one of these factors can lead to self-doubt, the erosion of self-confidence and ultimately a feeling of powerlessness. Goldberg stresses that 'attacking and erasing feelings of powerlessness'³ is the first important step mentally. In addition, he argues that 'trying harder and

spending more time not only will *not* cure the mind-based slump, but actually will make it worse!⁴

It is important that managers restore confidence and energy in their team and in the individuals that make up that team. Peak performance is not consistent, in that there will be bad times just as there will be good times; but it is important that employees keep that perspective. Whether the bad times will have a lasting impact on them will depend on their thoughts

(are they positive or supportive?); their self-talk (is it confidence-enhancing?); their focus (is it on controllables, on the process rather than on the outcome?); their imagery (do they 'see' what they want to happen?) Managers need to recognize the inner strategies of their employees and their employees' role in maintaining these performance difficulties if they (the Managers) are to help them back towards peak performance.

"Trying harder and spending more time not only will not cure the mind-based slump, but actually will make it worse!"



“To reach your potential, you must learn to consistently stay in the now.”

Valufacture Solutions prides itself on creating outstanding value for our clients. Should you need further discussion on reaching peak performance, please call us or drop us an e-mail.

Focusing on the ‘here and now’

Step 3: Developing a Championship Focus

‘To bust that slump and reach your potential as an athlete, you must learn to consistently stay in the now of your practices and performances’⁵ stresses Goldberg. He further adds that concentration has two dimensions, namely *time* and *place*. I have often seen salesmen break this rule of the ‘here and now.’ Generally their minds are focusing on their last or next appointment and their eyes are looking around the room trying to find a point of interest.

Managers should keep their team focused in the ‘here and now’ by enabling them to control their eyes, ears and mouth. There is a wonderful saying that the reason we were given two ears and one mouth is so that we can listen twice as much as we talk. Use techniques of focal points and routines to keep employees in the ‘here and now.’ Train employees to shift the focus of attention away from their heads to the actual experience of the action they are involved in.

Step 4: Dealing with Fears

Goldberg reminds us that ‘fear is probably the single biggest cause of choking in sports.’⁶ He acknowledges that when teams or athletes play not to lose, their fear makes them too careful. Peak performance comes out of a fearless, go-for-broke attitude.

Managers need to be aware of and understand what fears are inhibiting the performance of their employees.

The Cycle of Expectations:

Step 5: Expecting Success

Positive expectations lead to success which in turn leads to positive expectations. Negative expectations lead to failure which then fuels negative expectations and so the cycle continues. Athletes bust slumps by learning to expect success and to believe in themselves⁷. Just as positive beliefs will propel an individual towards success, negative beliefs will propel an individual towards failure.

Managers can break down beliefs by attacking either the employee’s or team’s experiences that have fueled these beliefs; their self-talk; or action. Shake up limiting beliefs by continually putting employees in situations that challenge their personal myths. Change negative self-talk by helping employees become aware of it and then help replace it with positive inner coaching. *(To be continued...)*

1. ‘Sports Slump Busting; 10 Steps to Mental Toughness and Peak Performance’ Alan S. Goldberg; Llumina Press (2005)
2. Page 9; 3. Page 25; 4. Page 24; 5. Page 49; 6. Page 78; 7. Page 101 (All page references taken from ‘Sports Slump Busting’)




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