

Building Resilience for 2010

To deliver exceptional performance in these difficult times, people need:

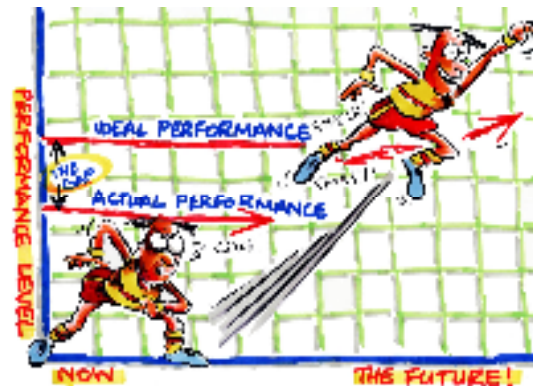
- **Clarity** – long-term goals and a sense of direction. This is made up of targets, objectives and a clear game plan, setting out the tactics to be used.
- **Focus** – a constant reminder of key activities and outcomes. A mix of the short-term and urgent and the long-term and proactive, which will need to be reviewed and refined regularly.
- **Encouragement** – focused 1:1 Mentoring and Coaching. This does not mean 'going through the figures' or 'having a chat' – but something rather more demanding and formalised for both parties, leading to a proactive action plan for change.

In most businesses, there is a requirement for yet more 'stretch' from people, who need to feel that they are able to perform at their best, in a positive environment. There is huge value in thinking through how **you** can help **your** people to cope with the pressures of a changing world, to have the mindset and behaviours of a winner and to build resilience or what has become known as 'bounce-back-ability'.

Moving from Actual to Ideal Performance

In sport, winners work hard to protect and pace themselves and engage in thorough preparation.

- They have robust self-belief, based on their ability to analyse success and to learn from failure, so that they can continually push the margins
- They give thought and effort to building their support structures (their 'Team You' – see over the page), a resource that they can draw upon as support and nourishment through difficult times
- They take time for real recovery



Self-preservation

There are many great examples of how sports people protect themselves – ranging from the Olympic Athletes who take their own food stuffs to major competitions and the rugby player who travels with his own pillows and duvet to ensure a good night sleep, to the boxers who live on 'competition time' in the days before an important bout in a different time zone. All of these performers are focused on detailed preparation, in a way that most of the rest of us are not. What could you do to challenge your company's cultural norms and help to give your team an 'edge' in this area?

Living like Role Models

We have high expectations of our sporting role models. We demand constant progress. We expect them to tirelessly work to develop and hone their skills. We require them to adapt to change, be positive, focused, prepared and match-fit; always 100% committed to the cause and of course, be well rested. There is a furore when fans discover that their heroes have been spotted out having a drink or clubbing the night before a match – "Don't they know how important it is that they perform well tomorrow?" we ask. How would it be if we were to judge ourselves by similar standards?

Sleep and Recovery

Research has shown what most of us instinctively know – that a good night's sleep before an important event is a crucial part of setting ourselves for success.

As a result, over 70% of sports people recognise that they need at least 7 hours sleep per night, while a survey of CEO's, COO's and CFO's showed that the same percentage thought that they could manage perfectly well with less – with around 10% claiming that they averaged less than 5 hours sleep per night. All of which feeds a culture of un-rested leaders and the myth that the draining nature of long working days can be easily remedied by applying the mantra of 'work hard, play hard', with R&R standing for Rest and Recreation, as opposed to Rest and Recovery.

Perhaps as professional business people, we should review the quality of our 'down time' (evenings and weekends), how far and how frequently we travel, how we use our time at conferences and on hotel nights away – with expense accounts and colleagues encouraging us to eat too much, drink too much and sleep too little – all feeding a macho, 'last man standing' culture.

Encouraging 'bounce-back-ability'

Building your own 'Team You'

'Team You' is made up of all those people who are able and willing to contribute to your success – your boss, mentor, network, colleagues, family and friends. Getting them 'on side' and letting them help whenever and wherever they can is seriously smart. What will you need to do now to make them want to bother to keep supporting you during your difficult times?

Preparing Thoroughly

There is great arrogance, as well as bravado, in relying on one's own ability to 'think on one's feet', to 'rely on natural talent' and to 'rise to the occasion' – which no longer cuts the mustard. Claiming that 'it'll be alright on the night' or that 'experience will carry me through' is no longer good enough. Sure, there are one or two entrepreneurs or inspirational leaders, who can survive on 5 hours sleep and deliver 'off the cuff' – but they must be seen as the exception.

No athlete with genuine ambition to beat the competition would turn up for an event and just expect to 'do it' – unfit, un-rested and not fully focused. Maybe in business, some individuals can get away with a lack of preparation, but to what extent are they really doing justice to themselves, their colleagues or their customers if they are not fully prepared and attempt to 'wing' such things as meetings, presentations or development reviews?

Living in the Present, not in the Past

In business, many individuals and organisations use their historical success as an excuse not to change what they do or how they do it. In difficult times, this complacency is likely to be found out. Indeed, as the weak fall by the wayside, many businesses are seen to have been successful historically, *in spite of* the way that they have been run in the good times – **not because of** it!

Is it right that in the current climate, we allow our people to operate at anything less than their full potential, condoning mediocrity and tolerating the loss of edge that can be the difference between corporate success and failure? Seeing ourselves as others see us and asking whether we are as great as we used to be or are well set to deliver on our potential in the future, might be truly illuminating.

How would you and your colleagues score yourselves with regard to the following?

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| ■ Self belief | ■ The ability to build support structures and grow a personal 'Team You' |
| ■ The ability to learn from success and failure | ■ Attitudes to preparation |
| ■ Attitudes to sleep, rest and recovery | |

Top Tips:

- Encourage your people to understand the importance of building their personal resilience
- Role model the behaviours that will lead to success
- Encourage them to take breaks and exercise and to think about their diet and rehydration
- Help them to understand how they can add energy and build a success culture in your business by becoming a 'zapper' rather than a 'sapper' of the energy of those around them
- Encourage them to strive for balance in their business and their personal life

For more ideas to help you or your team get organised and find clarity amidst confusion, why not take a look at: "**Time to Think – Seize Control of Your Time and Your Life**" by Mark Barnes (ISBN 978-1-85252-538-5).

Step System creates and supplies a range of coaching and training interventions, supported by blended learning and focused publications, delivering success in the areas of personal, team and organisational development.

For more information about Step System, our training interventions and other publications contact Mark Barnes: 0044 (0) 1608 685105 / mark@stepsystem.co.uk or visit: www.stepsystem.co.uk

Stop Press: In 2010, the Step System year will begin as previously with Mark delivering the keynote at the National Talent Orientation Camp for Gifted and Talented Athletes. In line with all of our work, this presentation will deliver exceptional performance through clarity, focus and encouragement.

