

Thoughts on the Psychology of Excellence

I. Performance Assessment & the Psychology of Excellence

Understanding all the drivers (and inhibitors) of human performance is essential to achieving personal goals and creating great teams.

Without total understanding and thorough assessment processes, there will be gaps in strategic problem solving and mistakes made about people development potential.

$$A + I - R = \text{Performance}$$

The drivers and inhibitors of performance can be captured in the following formula:

$$\text{Action (Accountability) + Inspiration - Roadblocks = Performance}$$

How do you build a high performance culture of success where team members are inspired and accountable, where they feel totally supported yet consistently challenged?

You have to maximize action accountability, maximize inspiration and minimize roadblocks (and/or the impact of them) repeatedly over time

$$[A_{\max} + I_{\max} - R_{\min}]_{\text{time}} = \text{Performance success}$$

A = accountability, action, achievement (mechanics)

I = inspiration (also purpose, vision, strategy - the keys to leadership)

R = roadblocks, resilience, resolution (barriers at the team & individual level)

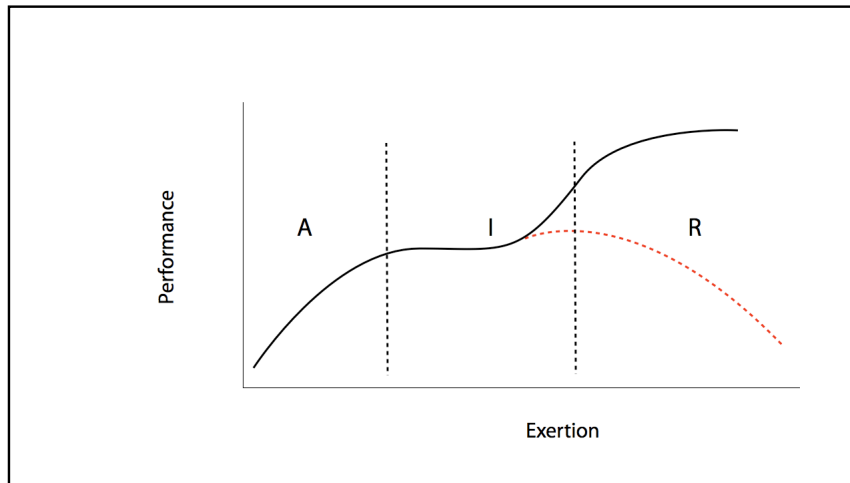
Implementing A + I - R effectively starts with a paradigm shift - you have to choose to think differently than you do now (then break down the model into the three parts)

At any given time you can look at objective measures of performance at the team or the individual level (what it looks like from the outside) and identify where in the equation there might be a problem that is creating the observable performance deficiency at both those levels

Is performance deficiency for an individual or for the team primarily an A-problem, an I-problem or an R-problem... or it may be some combination of all three

If you don't consider all three at all times in assessing performance, you risk wasting time and energy on unnecessary changes and ineffective solutions

Individuals can also use this formula for effective self assessment - where is the break down - is it in accountability around actions, lack of connection to purpose (inspiration), or is there a significant personal barrier (roadblock)



i. Success is simple: $P = A$

Performance = Action Accountability

(choose what you want, get busy doing it and persist until you achieve it)

To get people performing - you start with the mechanics - just sort out their responsibilities and deliverables and find a way to keep them accountable - the A-factor

ii. Humans are not simple - we want more: $P = A + I$

Performance = Action Accountability + Inspiration

We create the complexity

High Performance is abnormal - so we need to have purpose/inspiration (often driven by leadership) to keep us going

To keep people performing at expected levels and accelerate their progress and productivity takes something a bit intangible (in a team environment, this comes from leadership)... it is linked to purpose and it is all about inspiring your team. Inspirational leadership comes down to the words that come out of your mouth and demand high level competency in effective communication. For an individual, the key is to find ways of daily connecting to purpose, to the 'big why' that inspires. The I-factor can help reduce the amount of time to achieving high level success

iii. Humans are fallible: $P = A + I - R$

Performance = Action Accountability + Inspiration - Roadblocks

Individuals come with personal and situational roadblocks, which get in the way of performance

The biggest risks to performance success are the things you cannot see, which are hard to detect - the R-factor - personal and situational roadblocks; great teams acknowledge and support the resolution of Roadblocks; with good behavioural science, you can predict some of the unseen roadblocks and prepare in advance to navigate them effectively when they occur. For individuals, this is about practicing a non-judgmental mindset for your weaknesses and a possibility mindset for the things that get in the way - resolution often includes summoning the courage to ask others for help.

Great Teams and Individuals Drive A, Lead I and Manage R

Question:

If results are not where you want them - where in the equation is there an issue? You need to look at all 3 areas to understand performance

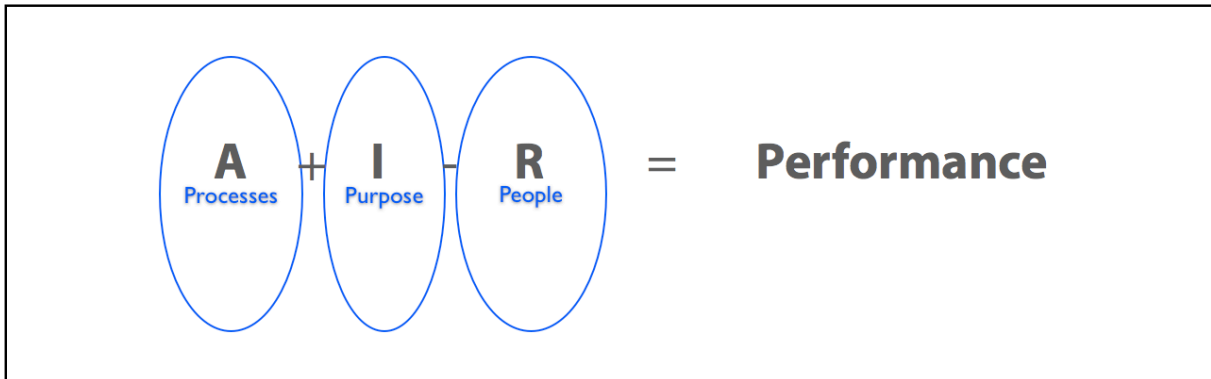
Performance failure occurs if:

(1) team or individual has **ineffective** systems in place for driving, tracking, assessing, stimulating, coaching and rewarding performance, or, there is a failure of integrity in what would normally be an effective system

(2) i. **leaders are inconsistent** at providing inspiration, because there is a lack of knowledge and understanding for human behaviour, there is a lack of skill/knowledge in high performance communication delivery, ego is getting in the way of following a path of self development, sometimes only lip service is paid to the human element in the team

ii. **individuals are inconsistent** with inspiring themselves because they get caught up in the normal rhythms of life, their brain chemistry tells them to relax when they don't feel pressure, and not to bother chasing something that is seemingly too big a goal; typically, individuals lose inspiration because they don't connect to purpose often enough

(3) people are **in-denial** about roadblocks, so do nothing to address them; there is inadequate support structure (professional services, psych, medical, etc) for resolution of roadblocks; or there might be support for resolution of roadblocks, but it is undermined by indirect and behavioural modelling which promotes denial



Success is achieved by $A_{max} + I_{max} - R_{min}$

Action Accountability is driven by effective systems/processes/mechanics

Inspiration drives purpose and is created by competent leaders

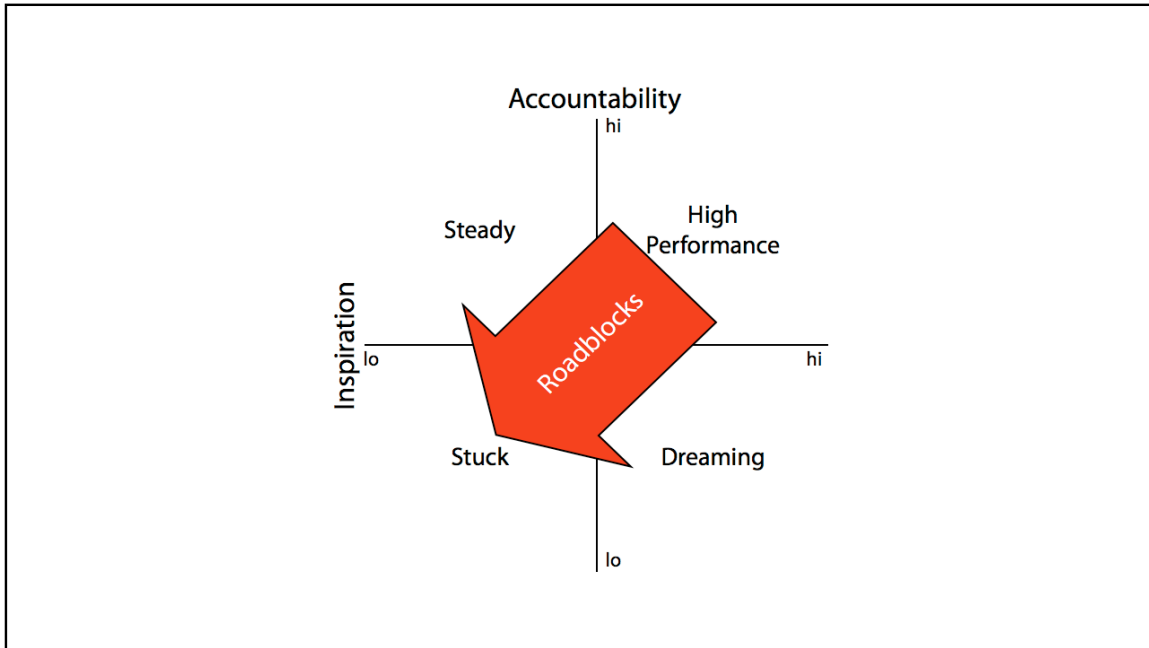
Roadblocks are about what is going on at the people level in your team and are resolved by proactive support

Positive A-variables = clear definitions of actions to deliver success + consequences for actions + clarity/logic/fairness of accountability system

Positive I-variables = consistency & regularity of inspiration (connection to purpose) + well developed communication competency + leadership attitudes of inclusiveness/openness to individual differences in purpose

Positive R-variables = support/resource availability to achieve resolution of roadblocks + leadership and team acknowledgement/endorsement/openness to model and encourage resolution (place high value on asking for help) + courage to admit to vulnerabilities and action to doing something about them

When roadblocks increase in magnitude, they can drag a person back into that trapped place of poor performance, similarly when you don't maximize accountability or inspiration, you will get pulled back down to being stuck



When you minimize or remove roadblocks and maximize accountability and inspiration, you set yourself and your team up for greatness

