
Way to Heightened Performance

*M.V. Sastry **

Introduction

Progress depends upon how we think and how far our actions are in consonance with our thoughts. The thoughts are limited to us. For others, it is our actions that matter. They evaluate us based on our behaviour and our actions. If our behaviour is different from our thoughts, we should correct ourselves. We should behave in the way that we expect others to understand us. If there is a gap between thoughts and actions, we should try to bridge the gap. It is only when we express our thoughts forcefully through actions, people will be able to understand us properly.

One of the key ingredients for success is carrying the people along and getting their cooperation. Life will be pleasant and the progress will be rapid if we love the people we work with. By being affectionate, the mind will be happy and peaceful and things will move smoothly.

Good behaviour, doing well to others and acting righteously, open up several paths that will be beneficial. Those together with their goals and abilities will enable them to reach greater and greater heights. Those who pursue wrong paths will have to pay the price in their lifetime itself.

Whatever may be the work you do, instead of doing it mechanically, if you start thinking how to do it better and with greater expertise, several wonders get created. Times keep changing. It is only those who keep sharpening their thoughts, will be able to overcome the changes brought about by time and move forward.

An attempt has been made to present here some points that will lead the way to heightened

performance.

To Get a Job

- Talk to successful Job-hunters (after finding out from friends who have found a job they love)
- Persist (send resume and follow up)
- Do not expect to find exactly the same kind of work (Find other lines of work that you can do successfully).
- Go after the job you really want the most (after talking to people who are in that line)
- Tell your acquaintances what you are looking for.
- Use telephone answering machine to tell what you are looking for and take contact numbers.
- Find a support group who will understand, advise and encourage you
- Go after many different organizations
- Concentrate on smaller organization
- Use the telephone to contact more people
- If one employer doesn't want you, move on to someone else

** Mr. M. V. Sastry*

Retd. DG(RD), MoST

*The Author is Recipient of 'Shri Ram Award',
'Rashtriya Gaurav Award' and
'Certificate of Excellence'.*

- Don't be wearied by rejection

Writing a Resume

- Write down the skills you have picked up, responsibilities you have undertaken and experiences you have gathered in your present career
- Point out how your present skills and experiences can develop further in your career
- Spell out how your abilities will be of use to the organization you are joining and the job you would be handling
- Mention past achievements
- Resume blunders like spelling/typing errors, missing dates for earlier positions held, inaccurate information for contact, poor formatting, long paragraphs and unnecessary personal information should be avoided. Do not apply if you do not have the skills and experience needed for the job.

To Succeed in an Interview

- Review your resume and prepare thoroughly (Know yourself and how you fit the profile of the job)
- Assess your technical skills
- Develop a list of sell points that highlight your skills and relevant accomplishments
- Find out the latest information of the organization to which you are going for the interview
- Attend a mock interview session with elders and friends
- Dress professionally
- Greet the interviewers
- Display a positive attitude. Be relaxed. Maintain your composure.
- Be alert and attentive. Answer to the point. Be articulate.
- Emphasize your strong points. Be self-confident.
- At the close of the interview, be courteous, thank the interviewers, and leave.

Work Ethics

Work place ethics comprise a set of ethical

standards that one is expected to observe when dealing with one's colleagues, clients as well as suppliers. These include guidelines and expectations on observing all laws and regulations, avoiding conflicts of interest, integrity, maintaining accurate company records, protecting confidential information etc. It is the employer's responsibility to ensure that the code of conduct is clearly understood by employees. Proper adherence to work ethics ensures happy employees and greater productivity. There is a direct link between ethics in the work place and employee satisfaction. The practice of values, focused and continuing education, training and development, and awards given to employees, will help build a healthy and positive environment. Keeping

Employees happy and satisfied results in low attrition and greater customer retention. The following would help as a guide:

- Ensure that leaders live up to the core values of the organization
- Be pro-active in cases where an employee blows the whistle
- Create adequate channels for people to report anomalies
- Reinforce an open work culture
- Encourage employees to live up to the work ethics

To Make Your Employees Happy

- Provide proper infrastructure (office space, drinking water facilities, air-conditioning, food in the canteen, toilets etc).
- A well-rounded pay package
- Proper relationship with the boss
- Challenging work environment
- Make the job role clear right at the outset

Winners

Dreamers are often the winners when they dare to tread against the beaten track and emerge triumphant in the long run. Strategic perspective, business acumen, business goal and people management, team orientation, networking and performance management would help to accomplish spectacular feats. So, dare

to dream, and win.

Ensuring Customer Satisfaction

You need to develop a deeper understanding of what really drives the customer. Exit surveys offer generic and unhelpful feedback about reasons. Any company that relies on long-term customer relationship must focus as much energy on retaining customers as they do on acquiring them. One should try to understand the relationship among customer experience, customer perception and customer behaviour. Root causes of performance deficits should be identified and dealt with.

How Not to get Spun by What you See or Read

- Acknowledge that life is full of little tensions. Handle it moment by moment by taking a deep breath and getting some perspective
- Think more about your kids than about yourself, while they are around
- Be fearless. How we perceive and process information depends upon how it is presented, positively or negatively.
In your fight against fear:
 - Compare the hype to the facts. A little healthy skepticism is in order.
 - Be wary of pictures (Just because someone is crying doesn't necessarily mean she is telling the truth)
 - Don't let impressive-sounding jargon convince you.
 - Always ask, is there a specific agenda at work in this story?
 - Watch the disclaimers. 'might' or 'could' doesn't mean that you or your family are really at risk.
- Do not be carried away by advertisements and spend a fortune on appearance.

No body is perfect. The people important to you already like the way you look. They like you more for what is going on inside than what can be seen on the outside.

Fighting with Anger

- Keep away from those who irritate you. Do not recollect incidents that cause sorrow.
- Take failure supportively. Learn a lesson and

move forward with improved methods.

- When you get angry on a friend, do not resolve in the heat of the moment that you will never speak to him. When you think later coolly and calmly, you may find some lapses on your part.
- Keep solving the issues in the order of their importance. Then, you will not be subjected to pressure.
- Talk pleasantly and establish good relations with others. That will keep the environment happy.
- Do not give importance or get agitated about unnecessary criticism.
- Cultivate a sense of humor. It converts agitated environment into a normal one.
- When you are agitated, relax from the work.

Managing Change

Effecting change in management processes is essential for companies that want to stay active in their markets or in the minds of their customers. To produce the right kind of change, an organization needs to focus on both structures and values, on both tasks as well as aspirations. The dynamics involved in organizational change include the five S's- Shared values, Signals, Skills, Structure and Systems. They are interconnected. For change to be successful, we must focus on all of them. Some key elements of the process are:

- Identifying an owner (CEO/Promoter who is completely convinced and enthusiastic about the need to change)
- Being aware that there is bound to be resistance from within the organization
- Appointing cross-functional, cross-divisional project team, to drive the change project
- Devising an intensive training programme to enable employees to adapt to the changed environment
- Devising a reward and recognition programme to implement this change
- Continuous review of the project to quantify the benefits.

Solving Problems

The ability to identify problems and devise

imaginative responses to them is crucial to good performance. Problem solving includes the following steps:

- Define the problem and isolate the root cause
- Specify your objectives
- Identify alternatives, evaluate them, and choose one
- Implement the solution you have chosen, adjusting it as needed
- Verify that the problem has been solved.

To arrive at a high quality solution, the following are needed.

- Meticulous thought at the problem – definition stage about the problem’s real constraints
- Lively thinking to continue throughout the problem-solving process
- Problems which are so vexing that it is not clear they even have a solution should be classified and dealt with differently

To Enhance Creativity of Employees

- Recognize their efforts and make them feel special
- Give them the independence to do things their way
- Keep them excited with crucial projects

Service Sector Job Versus Own Business

(a) Service Sector Job

Advantages

- Regular, systematic and secure
- Involves less risk
- Guidance from people working above or with them
- Working hard shows results

Disadvantages

- Curbs creativity and trying out new things
- Adaptability is needed

(b) Own Business

Advantages

- Allows you to work for yourself (A more satisfying option)
- Independent, flexible and dynamic career path

- Not answerable to any higher authority

Disadvantages

- High risk job
- More at stake financially
- Not sure of the results

Product Life Cycle Management (PLM)

The performance of a product is the driver of the product lifecycle. PLM is a set of technologies incorporating design, simulation and testing information, manufacturing data, and even customer relationship management/sales data. By increasing an enterprise’s flexibility and agility to respond swiftly to changing market pressures and competitors, PLM helps companies:

- Deliver more innovative products and services
- Reduce costs, improve quality, and shorten time to market, while achieving the targeted return on investment
- Establish more comprehensive, collaborative, and improved relationships with their customers, suppliers and business partners

PLM solutions can improve business efficiency by providing

- Dramatic reductions in time and cost of product changes
- Significantly shorter product cycles and lead times
- Decreased scrap and rework during production
- Improved productivity in design engineering

PLM is finding acceptance primarily among manufacturing companies simply because of globalization and the accelerating speed of technological change that has placed a premium on manufacturers’ responsiveness to market developments and customer demands. There is no need to rework the entire product as PLM can help pinpoint errors, optimize stages of the product thereby creating economic value.

Developing A Pool of Productive Employees

Apart from qualifications, people with positive attitude should be selected. They must have a zeal to learn and unlearn, stretch beyond defined boundaries and a will to strive for excellence. To develop the employees, a process called IDP (Individual

Development Plan) must be followed to collect inputs on the individual, his or her strengths, weaknesses, aspirations etc. This helps to identify gaps, which can be addressed via job rotation, mentoring, multi-skilling or simple training. Individuals with potential can be given roles modelled on their future aspirations and the organization's needs.

Success Mantra

The most important success mantra is dynamic will power. All other ingredients flow automatically. Our bad habits are the ink marks on the graph of life due to past karmic impressions. Use your strong will power to break out of this trap. No problem is big provided you realize your infinite potential. Problems are part of the journey called life. God has given us the infinite power of the mind to overcome them. Strong determination buttressed by will power is the key to success. Fuel your right actions with the fire of will power. Keep patience, persevere and toil. Be the captain of your destiny. Pray to God to ensure that human effort is backed by Divine Grace.

Motivating Marginal Workers

Marginal workers are those employees who meet your minimum performance standards but rarely exceed them. By establishing realistic job specifications and not compromising when hiring people—even when there is a desperate need to fill the job—the chances of selecting people who will succeed on the job can be enhanced. However, despite a thorough selection procedure, some of the hired might not perform to capacity. The supervisor should make sure that the new worker knows what he is expected to do. He should be patient and make every effort (additional training, coaching, special attention etc.) to salvage the trainee during the probationary period. The following would motivate them to high levels of performance:

- Learn about their desires and goals and make efforts to ensure that they can achieve them. Let your employee know what he must do to attain these goals including maintaining a high performance level, taking additional training etc.
- Eliminate boredom by enriching their job functions (Seek their ideas to make work more interesting and effective)

- Assign them to special projects to foster innovation and creativity
- Try enlisting seasoned employees to new projects or as trainers/mentors for new hires

Grievous Sins

The nation today is affected by the consequences of seven grievous sins. They are: Business without ethics, Politics without principles, Education without character, Religion without sacrifice, Wealth without hard work, Human existence without regard to the scriptures, Devotion without austerity.

Social responsibility is a part of morality along with business ethics, which, spells out what an organization ought to do. One should perform business functions efficiently so as to provide goods and services of requisite quality to society at reasonable cost and at the same time earn as much profit as possible. Business organizations are a part of society and have to serve societal interests rather than narrow economic objectives of making profits by hook or crook. They have to take care of morals, values and business ethics to have goodwill and standing in business. If a businessman desires to become a business leader, he has to sacrifice his own pleasures and give time to his shareholders.

To Achieve Something

To achieve anything, the first prerequisite is self confidence. With self confidence, one has to put in the needed efforts to get good results. One should fix up a goal and try to know as many things as possible about that. Mere knowing alone is of no use. One has to put the knowledge to practice and achieve the goal. With knowledge, one passes from the mental stage of impossible to the state of possible. Want of courage to tackle is the impediment to victory. The third stage is making the first attempt with fear of consequences. What is needed is to get going with optimism, positive thinking, courage and determination. Even if you fail, you will be wiser with the experience. Failure is a valuable learning experience. Take care that the mistake is not repeated. First, change your thinking. Cultivate the habit of taking decisions. Keep trying boldly, each time with improved methods. One is a failure only when he stops trying. With such an approach, you will certainly succeed sooner than later.

To be a successful professional, apart from academics; diverse thinking, value system, effective communication and social responsibility are required. Ambition is the path to success, persistence with hard work is the vehicle you arrive in.

Decision Making

The following would help in taking a proper decision:

- Know about the issue including the reasons behind it
- Collect details
- Find which are relevant and which are not, examine and arrive at a possible solution after analyzing dispassionately without your likes/dislikes getting into the picture
- See if there are other alternative solutions
- Select the best alternative after analyzing with a cool mind the short term/long term gains/losses, how far/how well you will reach the goal and the requirement of resources for each alternative
- Do not take a decision in a hurry or when you are excited or angry
- Implement the decision after fixing a time frame
- Review periodically effectiveness of the decision.

Conclusion

Globalization, liberalization and privatization, together with rapid strides made by Information Technology, have brought in their wake intense competition in every field of activity. To be able to face the competition and come out successful, a high sense of professionalism is called for. Professionalism is about setting high standards, showing self-belief, making the most of opportunities and sharing the rewards of success. For any company to succeed, the following are essential:

- (i) Building a sound company culture
- (ii) Adopting marketing approach
- (iii) Overall development of its employees
- (iv) Effective knowledge management

Instilling and practicing four basic corporate values viz. Integrity, Leadership, Dedication and Delivering quality product/service will create an observable corporate culture. Treat clients like royalty,

and treat your employees better than royalty. Marketing approach is not limited to putting up hoardings. It is a search for excellence, to give and serve the best. Product/Service forms must alter to meet changing customer needs. The customer looks for regularity of service, empathy, reliability, faith and trust. For achieving success in any mission, knowledge in that particular field and management is no doubt an essential pre-requisite but the factor that will contribute largely to success is overall development of the personality and getting the best out of a team. By rejuvenating themselves at physical, mental and spiritual levels simultaneously, people can enrich their individual lives and also bring about lasting change in their attitudes. This brings about an overall well being in human life and goes a long way in fulfillment of one's aspirations. Knowledge management is receiving attention because of the competitive pressures that are forcing firms to explore all technologies to make their organizations work smarter. All the knowledge of the organization will have to be stored and used regularly to ensure accuracy in all transactions and decisions. In this millennium, effective knowledge management will be the difference between the winners and the also-rans in the corporate world.

In order to become/remain a global player, a company has to address itself to three key issues viz. quality, consumer satisfaction and lowest possible cost of production/service. The way to increase productivity and reduce cost per unit is doing the same thing in less time—turning things around faster. Adopt and adapt to new knowledge. Productivity enhancement can be done by:

- Connecting knowledge to work (learning and adopting the best practices and latest management principles)
- Leveraging the power of peer net works (learning from other peoples' experiences and avoid reinventing the wheel)
- Put CID (Communication, Internet, Desktop) technology to work for you. Automate your routine work so that you have time for the bigger issues.

If you are good at your business, you will get good business. Consistently delivering value to the customer is a must for enhancing the market share and reputation. Take care of your employees; they will take good care of customers. A satisfied customer is your biggest propagator.