

WINNING IN BUSINESS: WINNING IN SPORT: THE LINK?

*Written by Martin Fairn, Chief Executive,
Gazing Performance Systems International*

Strategic themes such as ‘high performing environment’, ‘going for gold’ and ‘the winning mentality’ are increasingly commonplace in corporate communications and motivational company seminars.

The world of business is desperately trying to emulate the characteristics of motivation, determination and commitment that are so evident in sporting success. There is little chance of this happening. As I encounter businesses across the world it becomes clear that whilst these lessons of sporting triumph are engaging concepts, the possibility of replicating them in business is a remote one.

The visible end of sporting success is truly intoxicating, for example, the gold medal, world record or team trophy. But what is less visible is the years of dedication and discipline that goes into the preparation of those individuals or teams for their moment of glory. The problem with business is that the focus on these ‘winning’ outcomes reduces the energy and commitment needed to allow those results in the preparation to be achieved.

This lack of attention on the consistent execution of key processes undermines the performance that could be achieved by most businesses. Discipline is often only related to punishment for poor performance and supervision is a ‘dirty word’ in the newly empowered business environment.

The business world is increasingly dynamic with global competition being part of the prevailing environment as opposed to a desired objective. Subsequently the challenges faced by businesses come from many angles and appear to be evermore complex. So has sport really got anything to teach the business world or should it remain as a rousing battle cry at the beginning of a new quarter or year?

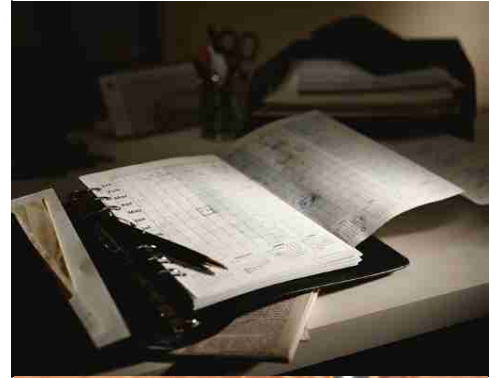
The answer lies, I believe, in the unstinting dedication to the development of simple basics in order that they may be executed superbly. In sport when the pressure is at its greatest, it is more often the individual or team that is able to execute their basic skills most effectively who will triumph.

Athletes and their coaches know this and therefore willingly accept the discipline required to attain those levels of execution under pressure. Perhaps it is a form of intellectual snobbery that prevents senior management teams and leaders from either recognising or accepting that ‘simple things done consistently well’ is the answer to their complex business challenges. Maybe they feel that the



gazing
performance
systems

**Gazing Performance Systems
International Limited**
Capital House 67 - 69 Johns Road
Isleworth Middlesex TW7 6NL
United Kingdom



“This lack of attention on the consistent execution of key processes undermines the performance that could be achieved by most businesses.”

www.gazing.com
E: gazing@gazing.com
T: +44 (0)20 8568 0298
F: +44 (0)20 8568 9782



answer must be more complex than the basic elements which are in front of their noses.

Gazing Performance Systems have developed an approach which aims to address the challenge of implementing basics within a business. Unfortunately there is no ‘silver bullet’, just a disciplined application of several key building blocks.

They are as follows:

- 1 Direction** – being clear about the strategy and ensuring people are aligned to it.
- 2 Skills and Knowledge** – providing people with the necessary knowledge and developing their skills to the required level.
- 3 Discipline** – tracking performance with clear indicators and a consistent process of supervision.
- 4 Threats** – assessing potential risks to performance and developing contingency plans.
- 5 Motivation** – creating an environment which fully captures the motivation of all the people in the business.

Overly simple you say? Maybe, but a close examination of many businesses indicates a consistent gap in all or some of the basic building blocks outlined above. Gazing’s simple 1-page performance maps and their associated tools offer one perspective on effective implementation of the basics when under extreme pressure.

Perhaps the link between high performance in sport and business is there if only we can look beyond the outcomes to the consistent execution of the basics!!

In fact the unique ‘1-page map’ format used as the platform for this perspective prompted Sally Gunnell to describe it as a “description of what happened to her mentally when she was both winning and losing!”



gazing
performance
systems

**Gazing Performance Systems
International Limited**
Capital House 67 - 69 Johns Road
Isleworth Middlesex TW7 6NL
United Kingdom

“**Gazing Performance have developed an approach which aims to address the challenge of implementing basics within a business. Unfortunately there is no ‘silver bullet’, just a disciplined application of several key building blocks.**”

www.gazing.com
E: gazing@gazing.com
T: +44 (0)20 8568 0298
F: +44 (0)20 8568 9782

