

Leaders in today's business environment are constantly looking for new or better ways to win. Many markets are mature or are quickly maturing; pushing companies to further improve their quality while containing cost. Now with only moderate to low economic growth, organizations are pressured to accomplish more with fewer resources in order to maintain margins. Change in the marketplace is also accelerating and companies must quickly learn to be agile and innovative so that they can remain competitive. The impact to all of this has been increased workloads and amplified stress and conflict, which has created exhaustion and disengagement in the workforce. Finding what helps teams be inspired, positive and productive during these times has become even higher of a priority than it has ever been before.

The traditional approach companies have commonly taken has focused on improving the fundamental business processes and tactics that they have been trained to manage. This includes developing technical skills, processes and practices related to production, product development, customer support, finance and to a lesser extent sales and marketing inside their organizations. These are well understood because they are linear and taught in our schools while being tangible, observable and measurable. This approach has helped allow organizations to become more efficient, stable, and predictable, yet it has not been enough to really get ahead or deal with fundamental market changes.

In order to find where and how to move beyond these limits, we must look outside our current perspectives. As Einstein once said, "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them." By leveraging research in science, psychology, sports performance and consciousness, we have come to understand that the more intangible aspects of your business end up being the most fundamental drivers of your success. This is because they make up many of the processes that influence and create the majority of your business results. This can be seen in research done by Albert Mehrabian in the field of communication. He discovered the "93/7 Rule" which states that 93% of our communication is composed of our energetic context (body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice; while only 7% of what gets communicated comes from our content or actual spoken or written words. This shows us that the more subtle (and typically unconscious) context that most of us do not usually have proper distinctions or language for, end up being the driving aspects of how we communicate.

Companies have typically put only a secondary focus on these intangible areas of their business. These areas include: processes of managing stress, change, culture (the collective norms, values, behaviors and actions of an organization) and emotional intelligence (employee interpersonal skills and communication). They have often not been looked at as a primary way to improve results, but as something that is assumed that people can do well and/or figure out on their own. These areas require us to use much more of our right brain (creative, non-linear, intangible) compared to our left brain (logical, linear, tangible). The challenge has been that our education has mainly focused on developing tangible left brain concepts while the more intangible right brain aspects of business have not been formally taught. The ability to observe, quantify, measure and standardize these areas has been much more difficult because of their ambiguity.

Another familiar example you can compare this to is top professional athletes and teams, who have mastered the techniques of their sport and have come to realize that isn't enough to be the best and have the greatest success. Refining their technique has only given them small incremental improvements since they typically have already mastered the skills. Instead, they noticed that when they created the right environment (coaches, therapists, family, friends, etc.) to support themselves and gain regular feedback while developing their strengths and actively learning how to train and manage their mental and emotional processes, they had a significant jump in improvement of their results. Many athletes

attribute 80% or more of their success in improved performance by focusing in these areas. It has allowed them to more frequently be at their best when it matters most, leading to improved responsiveness and agility.

This same concept of enhancing sports performance through environmental, emotional and mental control also applies to business, which is quite different than how most of us have been taught. In organizations, one of the most powerful and subtle things to understand is that employees conform to the culture that leaders surround them with (which can be explained by the rule in quantum mechanics that states all matter conforms to the energy that surrounds it). Great teams are not necessarily the ones with the best individuals, but the ones where the individuals work well together through a culture of teamwork. Having the willingness to take this new perspective and approach, we can more accurately focus our feedback in the areas that are producing the greater part of our organization's outcomes. By tapping into, and creating awareness of these more intangible (and typically unconscious) areas, it gives us more clarity as to what is shaping our reality, experiences and results. Focusing our improvement in these areas will help give us the edge.

As the marketplace continues to change and become increasingly more dynamic, solely improving tangible areas alone has given small incremental improvements since companies are largely doing the fundamentals well. Business Performance Optimization (BPO) now allows us to make a much larger jump in performance by managing and improving an organization's results by focusing and developing the critical and ambiguous processes on your team. It gives us the core elements of what we must focus on to significantly improve our achievements and outcomes. It helps allow us to move to the place of being proactive instead of reactive. Each area built on the one that precedes it:

- **Business Processes & Results**
 - These are the foundational processes and practices (project management, 6Sigma, change management, marketing, etc.) for running a business.
 - Companies that do these elements well are disciplined in their execution which leads to a stable, effective, efficient, and predictably run organization.
 - Carrying out these functional and cross-functional processes, practices and technical skills (production, engineering, manufacturing, etc.) are done through effective problem solving, decision-making, planning, accountability and alignment.

- **Emotional Intelligence & Personal Awareness**
 - These are the elements that help us expand our awareness of our surroundings as well as allow us to work constructively through emotionally charged situations which are often carried out through our unconscious habits.
 - These are the most primary elements we need in order to achieve consistency in the results of individuals and teams by optimizing our personal energy while minimizing the negative impact we have on others. These skills and techniques are typically learned from experience with little or no formal training.
 - Some examples of these elements include: ability to handle stress, awareness of emotions, personal working styles, communication styles, facial expressions, body modes, tone of voice, impact on self and others, strengths, weaknesses, unconscious habits, individual context and underlying energy.

- **Business Culture & Organizational Awareness**
 - These are the strategic and most primary elements to achieving overall optimal performance in an organization. Great leaders manage these well, often are unconsciously

- competent, and have typically learned these techniques for understanding and managing group energy through experience and/or mentorship.
- These are some of the most critical elements that are needed to be done well in order to become proactive, innovative and agile by enabling high levels of cooperation and synergy across the organization
- A high impact leader is sensitive to the cultural context and tracks and manages the energy level of the group and individuals. This includes being aware of the buy-in to the mission, strategy, vision, organizational values, teamwork, employee engagement, cultural norms, habits, generations and employee satisfaction.

Why is it Important?

It is essential to understand how each of the three core areas of the BPO methodology can impact your business. Emotional Intelligence & Personal Awareness and Business Culture & Organizational Awareness are usually very intangible and non-linear which require using our right brain. With our limited training in them, both the value and impact of less than optimal performance in those areas are poorly understood and often underestimated. With each area having a degree of ambiguity, it helps to understand what it really costs you because they are not defined, measured and performance managed.

Business processes and results are the foundation of every organization. Even in the best of times, 87% of new businesses in the US fail within 2 years with most businesses only lasting between 10 – 40 years. So, when times get tough for organizations, the most common response is to downsize and cut cost. When taking this approach companies often struggle by cutting too much or too little, leading to poor results over the long run. Instead, this approach can end up making an unintended backlash by creating insecurity, increased anxiety and stress while lowering employee morale. This all ends up diminishing performance, especially when it is unexpected and abrupt. Making sure your business is doing the fundamentals well does help create much more stability and longevity. A big part of that is making sure your organizations stays aligned, accountable and disciplined in standardizing recurring activities.

Emotional Intelligence & Personal Awareness are critical for having consistency in our personal performance and results. Top performing athletes and teams who have good skills win more often when they are more aware of their strengths and when they learn to manage their emotions more effectively than their competitors. The same is true in the corporate world. People who know their strengths and remain calm during difficult circumstances are more productive and create less negative impact by their actions. Looking at the effect that stress has alone, the National Institute of Health says that it costs businesses nearly a quarter of a trillion dollars per year. This number can be more clearly understood by looking at a 2001 Gallup poll that shows less than 30% of American workers are fully engaged at work, approximately 50% are not engaged and about 20% are actively disengaged. Also, when looking at people's ability to be self-aware, studies show a correlation between high self-awareness and high performance and vice versa for low self-awareness and low performance. When organizations actively develop self-awareness and learn to work constructively through emotionally charged situations they become more effective by increasing engagement and personal performance leading to better business results.

Business Culture & Organizational Awareness are the keys to making a quantum leap in team and organizational performance. Studies show that up to 90% of a company's strategy is not fully understood or executed. Organizations that are able to clearly define their mission, vision, and guiding principles and communicate this consistently across the organization increase the average profit per employee by almost a factor of four. Also, research shows that companies with strong business cultures that addressed all stakeholders and empowered managers at all levels dramatically outperformed other

companies by wide margins in revenue growth (682% vs. 166%), stock-price increase (901% vs. 74%) and net income increase (756% vs. 1%) over an 11 year period. When organizations actively develop culture and organizational awareness they have the ability to proactively solve issues before they become significant, remain present with changing market dynamics becoming agile and innovative.

What are the Benefits?

BPO takes a variety of practices—that, on the outside, have little apparent connection—and combine them in a way that no one else does. The end result is a quantum change in how your business moves and a new way of approaching change and human potential. As organizations start to define and improve the ambiguous aspects of their business they can see dramatic results. Some benefits include:

- Optimizing productivity and engagement through decreasing conflict and stress allowing for better teamwork and communication.
- Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of core business practices and processes.
- Increasing agility and innovation through using best practices for change and conscious creation of context and culture.
- Helping improve productivity that will give more consistent and sustainable results.
- Lowering cost with the standardization of recurring ambiguous activities.
- Increasing revenues and effective support and service of stakeholders.

How Does It Work?

BPO uses a synthesis of diverse perspectives from leadership, change management, science and performance improvement and tailor them to your situation and team. This approach emphasizes the use of standardized best practices for change, teamwork, alignment, leadership, communication, stress and conflict management that allow everyone in your organization to function at their best, even in the most difficult circumstances. Integrating the BPO custom tools and practices with familiar business methodologies makes it easy for your organization to assimilate and utilize this approach within the existing structures of your organization.

This methodology distinguishes the critical processes and helps standardize the more intangible areas of your organization. It shows how these factors help create business results such that they are simple, clear and understandable. This enables organizations to make these critical, and typically invisible elements, visible and tangible. Companies can know what processes matter most, which ultimately will enable them to take their business to the next level.

This approach works well because it is built from a very broad range of ideas, concepts and personal experiences that give us the clear distinctions and processes required to optimize your business. Structured projects are developed with clients using principles and ideas from the following disciplines:

- *Generational understanding*: using personal experience and applying generational research done by Tamara Erickson allows us to use ideas that are effective and resonate strongly with people ranging from the many different generational groups in the workforce today.
- *Real-world experience*: leveraging our personal experiences from working in positions from the bottom of an organization all the way up to executive and CEO level positions, we apply an insider's view and 'real-world' approach that is proven successful.
- *Systems theory*: applying relationship and team dynamics research done by John Gottman, Arnold Mindell and the Organizational and Relationship Coaching (ORSC) materials from the Center for Right Relationship, allows us to incorporate the best materials in understanding how

the dynamics of teams and interpersonal relationships work most effectively.

- *Emotional intelligence*: applying psychological research done by Albert Mehrabian, Daniel Goleman, Marshall Rosenberg and Martin Seligman helps us understand the best practices in how to work with others constructively in emotionally charged situations, managing personal emotions in times of stress and in relating to others to produce consistent results.
- *Enneagram & Instincts*: applying the research done on the Enneagram model by Gurdjieff, Ichazo and Naranjo helps us understand our personality style, inner motivations, strengths, challenges and stress patterns to help us become self-aware.
- *Consciousness*: applying research done by David Hawkins in human consciousness helps us to become aware of our unconscious personal patterns, the intention and purpose we put into the actions we take as well as understand what are the most powerful principles we must apply to operate at the highest levels of human potential.
- *Quantum science*: applying scientific research in physics, biology and chemistry done by Bohr, Wheeler, Schrödinger, Einstein, Lipton and Prigogine gives us the language, distinctions and reasoning why focusing on the energetic or qualitative aspects of your organization are the most primary factors to your success.

How Do You Get Started?

Using this approach starts with observing closely how things work through discussions and interviews along with measuring the organizational culture and personal practices of the team through specialized assessments. This helps identify the vital few changes that will have the greatest impact. Work is then done with the leadership team to tailor a program that is just right for you and your unique situation. Leveraging the disciplines of coaching, training, mediation and consulting along with project planning that uses frequent reinforcement and development helps ensure success.

Teams and individuals realize their potential by focusing on internal patterns that people don’t give much thought to—but that have an enormous impact on their how they do everything. Catching everyone at their best and helping them see how to be there more often is central to this approach. Time is taken to help people realize the importance of putting intention into everything they do. Leaders are better able to then create an environment for optimal performance by making the invisible elements of the culture visible. This helps shift the culture and bring out the best in people by allowing them to be who they really are and let go of limiting habits that keep them from being the best they can.

When comparing conventional approaches to the BPO approach, you can notice significant differences in how to go about improving your performance more powerfully.

Conventional Approach	BPO Approach	Advantage
Focus mainly on what isn’t working	Focus mainly on what does work	Leverages strengths and keeps people motivated to achieves better results
Focus on technical skills	Focus on energy and emotional skills	Maintains the focus on the real ‘root cause’
Manage conflict	Embraces conflict	Removes blocks to move faster and increases alignment to improve productivity
Mainly uses a directive approach	Mainly uses an influencing approach	Increased buy-in helps inspire people to develop better solutions that are ‘win/win’

Attempts to control change	Actively uses change to realign	Creates high agility and innovation to better handle changing market dynamics
Focus on changing the results	Focus on changing the ambiguous processes	Creates sustainable results and allows you to propagate change more effectively
Focus on parts – functions and projects	Focus on the system – cross functional processes and practices	Makes the interconnections more visible so that the true impact can be seen
We do it for you	You do it for yourself with our support	Allows people to take effective action on their own which increases their effectiveness
Things are happening outside our influence	We create our own reality	People are more empowered to change things