



High Performance!

How to create a sustainable, profitable
business starting with Purpose

Suzanne Mercier

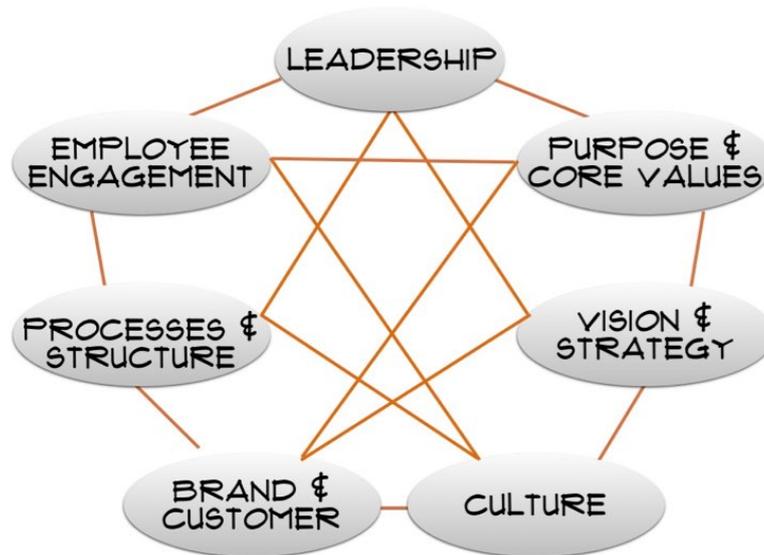


Purpose to Profit
Wholehearted Business

At a glance!

Focussing on high performance is more critical now than it has ever been. Our business environment is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. We need to develop companies that are focussed, resourceful and resilient in order to thrive in a highly dynamic market.

Seven disciplines contribute to high performance in any business, starting with Purpose. These disciplines influence each other and together enable the business to inspire all who work there to contribute at higher levels increasing positive social impact for the business, enhancing relationships with customers leading to increased advocacy and improving bottom line.



Model for High Performance: 2010 Suzanne Mercier

Research has proven that when companies start with Purpose, they consistently deliver higher turnover and profits than those who do not focus on creating meaningful work environments for their people.

Introduction

When people set up businesses, they are filled with hope at what they may achieve, and dream of the rewards that will come their way when they do .

Most, if not all, want to provide genuine value for customers, a secure future for employees and great returns for shareholders. No business person intends to be mediocre! They may even set out wanting to change the world in some way.

***Most businesses
set out
to be make a
difference***

Something happens along the way to achieving your Vision. They may be pressured by shareholders to increase returns. These business people may have accountants in the business opting for cost-cutting measures without knowing when to shift focus. They may become frustrated because staff seem to come and go with monotonous regularity. Competitors may out-manoeuvre them consistently. They may get too close to the business and not be able to see where the problems or opportunities lie.

A fast-moving, fast-changing external environment is certainly putting more pressure on the performance of our businesses. Under pressure the cracks can appear and the opportunities become obscured by the day to day challenges.

Just because the business - or individual - may not yet have lived up to its possibility doesn't mean it can't in the future. Starting now, each of us can recognise and capitalise on opportunities to lift performance.

What is High Performance?

According to the Boston Consulting Group:

“When you walk into a high performance organisation, you can feel the difference. Instead of just going through the motions, the people are energised. They are confident about their organisation’s strategy and the changes that are occurring rather than confused or resigned. They know what they are supposed to be doing and how that relates to the tasks of their neighbours. Your casual observations can be confirmed quickly by checking performance measures such as sustained earnings and market share growth at corporations, and in the nonprofit world, social impact.”

The concept of high performance has increasingly been included in management theory since the industrial revolution when the first notion that it could be important to focus on workers as well as other factors influencing productivity emerged. Increased understanding of what created high performance came from repeatedly pulling apart successful companies. The management classic “In Search of Excellence” from Tom Peters and Robert Waterman, published in 1982, popularised the notion of comparing high performing and low performing companies to identify key differences that made the difference in outcome.

Since that time, comparing companies to identify the differentiating practices and their impact on performance as well as bottom line has become the way to make a business case for factors that impact performance. Purpose is one of those key factors.



Why is it important now?

Who wouldn't want to lead a high performing organisation or work within one? The energy, the focus, the dedication and the confidence are self-perpetuating.

So why is high performance even more important now than it has been in the past?

***Organisations
need to be more
resourceful,
resilient, engaging
and innovative to
thrive in these
turbulent times***

Times in business have changed and that change is accelerating. In the time I've worked in my own business, I've seen business practices change significantly in response to market and/or shareholder pressure. Cost cutting is the strategy du jour. As a result, many large organisations have restructured, freeing up the corporate futures of surplus executives and managers. Those who are left are required to take on more work for little if any extra reward other than the possibility of securing their jobs.

The US Army coined a term that describes our current work environment accurately: VUCA meaning Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous. This type of environment requires agility, reformulation of strategies, quick and accurate decision-making, courage and trust to name a few of the capabilities and qualities.

The challenge is this. According to McKinsey & Co., most organisations are wired for mediocrity and will go under in the longer term. Fewer than one-third of organisations actually succeed in their efforts to become more responsive to the economic, political, social and technological changes that continually beset business. It may not be a surprise to you to learn that the key reason for their lack of sustainable success is the common single-minded focus on short-term results: bottom line and return to shareholders.

Certainly there are external factors that influence longer-term performance: macro-economic forces, factors that



relate directly to their industry and even the pure luck of being in the right place at the right time.

However, there is another factor that accounts for about 50 percent of the performance differences between organisations that achieve and sustain high performance and those that don't. That is 'organisational health' - known as the ultimate competitive advantage.

According to the Organisational Health Diagnostic & Development Corporation, organisational health is defined '*as an organisation's ability to function effectively, to cope adequately, to change appropriately and to grow from within.*'

It consists of factors such as employee attitudes; behaviour of managers; the example set by leadership; the style, content and frequency of communication; the use of power and influence within the organisation; the ability to understand and appropriately address business problems; the level of innovation; the utilisation of organisational resources; the sense of cohesiveness or shared identity within the business to name some of the key areas.

In other words, 50 percent of the sustainable success of a business centres around the soft stuff; the stuff that many organisations shy away from because they believe it is not measurable.

Organisational health is essential for high performance. And high performance is the foundation of organisations that remain viable, ahead of the competition, financially rewarding and most importantly, which create meaningful work environments through contribution to a cause much larger than their own pockets.

What does a high performing business look like?

A high performing business or practice isn't perfect! It doesn't always have the right answers. Everything doesn't always run smoothly as clockwork.

What it does have is a **common understanding**, a sense of unity, a feeling of **meaning and fulfilment** that comes from doing work that matters. A high performing business has **resilience**, enabling it to bounce back when times are challenging. It has a **focus** and the **passion** to achieve the business Vision while serving the broader community. A high performing business led by Purpose doesn't have silos and provides a common language that **unifies diverse groups of people** to resolve differences and work effectively together.

Business at the speed of Purpose.
As the key driver of high performance, Purpose leverages the focus, meaning and fulfilment it engenders into a higher level of engagement, collaboration, innovation, and business success.

Some of the business outcomes from an embedded high performance framework in your business include:

- *Lower percentage of staff turnover* meaning the business can get on with what it needs to be doing rather than repeating the recruitment process.
- *An increased level of employee engagement* resulting in improved internal and external customer service, higher client satisfaction and advocacy, lower cost of doing business and higher turnover/profitability.
- *A greater willingness to engage in innovative practices.* Innovation has been found to be only 14% of business initiatives, 38% of turnover and 61% of profit¹. Innovation and even creative thinking can't exist in an environment where people are in competition not collaboration.
- *Improved problem solving and decision-making capability.* Purpose, Core Values and Vision provide a framework within which to evaluate challenges and

¹ Blue Ocean Strategy , Chan W. Kim and Renee Mauborgne

opportunities and a reason to go beyond premature closure and the first solution that comes up.

- *More effective use of business or practice resources.* As Purpose provides the overarching principle for a high performing organisation, it is the filter for how to spend the firm's resources - time, money, attention.
- *The ability to focus on the present and future at the same time* because Purpose informs choices in both time frames. This means that short-term decisions won't undermine longer-term performance.
- *Proactive employees.* High performing businesses attract sought-after talent and then provides them with the opportunity to do what they do best.
- *A higher success rate for change.* Nobody likes change. However, when it is clear that there is a reason for the change and that the process will be managed well guided by the firm's purpose, people get onboard.

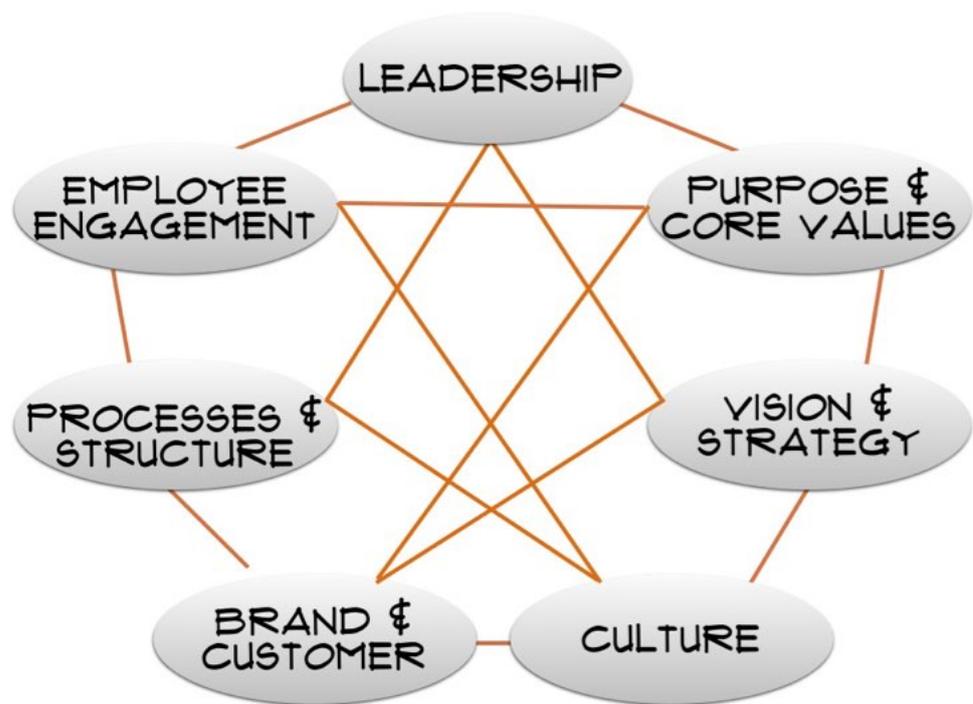
These are just a few of the outcomes you can expect to see in your business when you develop and embed a high performance mindset and framework.

If you're not enjoying these benefits, you may be underperforming compared with your potential. At the end of this paper is a checklist so help you identify whether your business or practice is under-delivering.



What factors can lead to High Performance?

Seven disciplines and outcomes influence whether an organisation will be high performing, surviving or somewhere in between.



Model for High Performance: 2010 Suzanne Mercier

Leadership

In his TED video, Benjamin Zander talks about opening up possibilities, in the context of helping audiences understand, appreciate and even love classical music. Zander likens his quest to that of a leader in business, having a Vision, having no doubt that the people within the business have the capacity to bring that Vision alive. His job as a leader is to create shiny eyes, a clear indication of excitement and engagement.

Leadership impacts every measurable dimension of business from corporate culture to performance of teams to employee engagement to the positioning of the business in the broader community and of course, to bottom line.

High Performing organisations have a productive focus on developing leaders to provide direction and drive urgency. And they ensure their leadership succession plan is in place.

Shiny eyes indicate a level of excitement and engagement. It is a leader's responsibility to ensure his/her employees have shiny eyes!
(Zander)

High Performing leaders are purposeful. They understand the power of emotional engagement and contribution back to the broader community and work to embed it in the business.

They are Visionary. They need to be in order to identify where the company can go in the market to live up to its Purpose.

Leaders in High Performing Organisations have a range of leadership styles they can draw on, depending on the circumstances and outcomes required. The command and control style that was popularised by Religious Institutions and the Army is rarely effective in today's business environment as it ignores the potential contribution from employees and undermines employee engagement. Servant leadership, where the leader takes the position of being in service to the company and its stakeholders, is a leadership style that has been popular for many years. A more recent leadership style - consultative, collaborative, empathetic, people-based - is an emerging style of leadership. This style - a softer style that is being increasingly embraced by both men and women - has been proven to contribute to significant increases in Return on Investment and Return to Shareholders.

The key to great leadership and high performance is leaders who start with self-leadership, who develop acuity around emotional intelligence, resilience, who take responsibility for

their own actions and reactions and who handle their own limitations so they can lead from a place of authenticity.

Managers

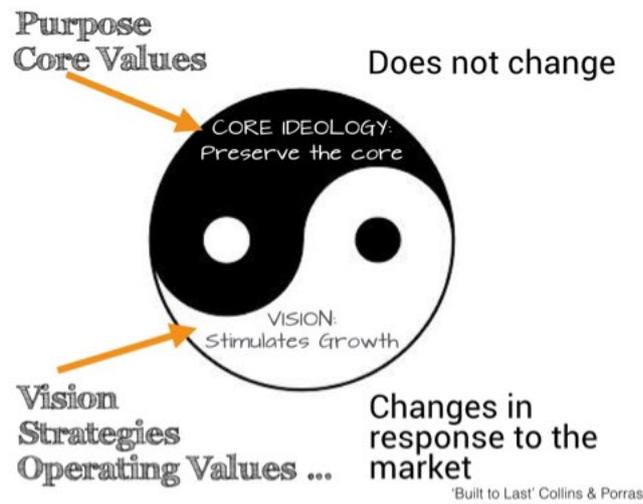
In High Performing Organisations, managers have been taught how to manage effectively, understanding their role in creating employee engagement ... or not. They live up to their responsibility to embrace and translate the strategy that supports achieving the business plan and ultimately, the Vision.

Purpose & Core Values

When I talk to companies about why they exist, the first and most common response I get is "to make profits". With that response, they're virtually guaranteeing that their business will not live up to its possibilities. Let me share an example that came from Conscious Capitalism. My body cannot live unless it creates red blood cells. However, the purpose of my life is not to create these critical red blood cells. It is the same with organisations. They cannot exist if they don't make profits, yet that is not the reason for their existence.

So Purpose is the reason the business exists; the contribution it makes to the broader community. Purpose provides the context for the business. It provides emotional connection for all who work in or with the organisation. Purpose orients every decision employees make. It guides evaluation of business opportunities through the questions "Does this opportunity align with our purpose? Does it demonstrate what we stand for? Are we operating with integrity?"

Values provide guidance on expected behaviours and mindsets within the organisation. Core Values are the identity statements of the business. Who are we? What do we stand for? What do we hold sacrosanct? They are inviolable once identified.



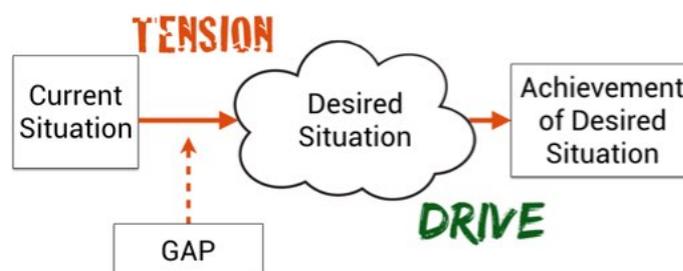
Purpose and Core Values form the Core Ideology for the organisation and once agreed, they do not change. They are the essence of the business and influence every area of the organisation.

Vision & Strategy

Vision, Strategies, Operating Values, Business Plans all bring the Purpose and Core Values alive in the current market conditions. As the market changes, they may need to be adjusted to reflect the evolving circumstances.

Vision is the mid- to longer-term significant goal (or BHAG - big hairy audacious goal) that the organisation seeks to achieve. The BHAG needs to be a stretch in order to set up sufficient tension to drive action.

Principle of Tension



You need a big enough gap between the current situation for the business and what the business seeks to achieve to experience the tension. When that happens, and where the Vision is compelling, the tension translates through to drive to achieve.

Vision is not static because it exists to express what the organisation seeks to achieve in a dynamic market.

Vision is translated into broad strategies that will achieve the goal. Then the vision is chunked down into steps and commonly time frames which, if achieved, deliver the Vision. Business Plans for a 12 month period are the usual outcome. And those business plans need to be cascaded throughout the company so each employee knows how his/her work contributes to achieving the Vision.

***‘Culture eats
strategy for
breakfast’***
Peter Drucker

Key Performance Indicators (KPI’s) tell people within the business what they need to focus their attention on in order to fulfill expectations of performance in their role. These KPI’s are linked to the business Vision, the resulting strategies, the company values as well as each specific role within the organisation.

Vision, Strategies and Business Plans, need to be aligned with the organisation’s Purpose.

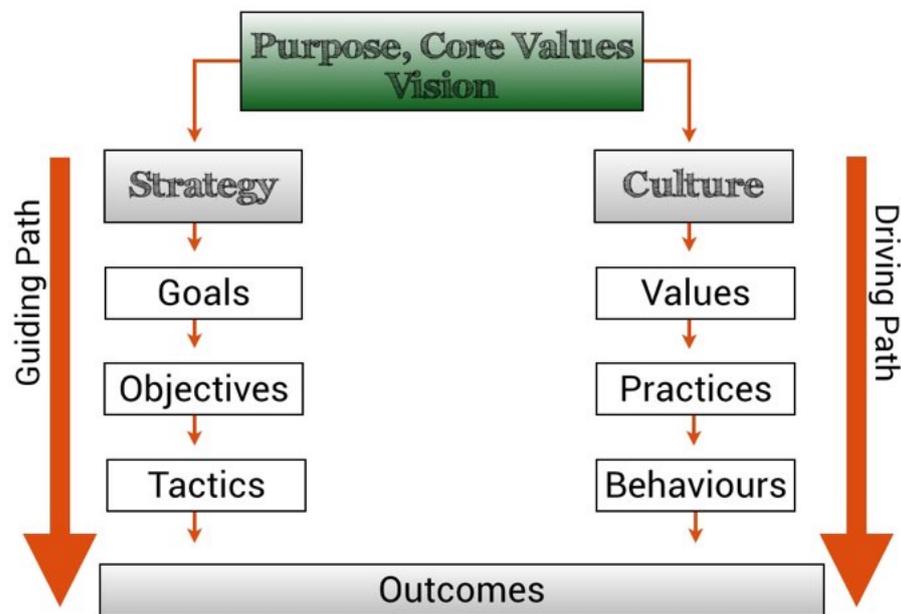
Culture

Culture is defined as the behaviour of humans within an organisation and the meaning attached to those behaviours (Wikipedia). It encompasses the company vision, its values, its norms, systems, assumptions and beliefs. It is demonstrated by symbols, language, environment and habitual behaviour.

According to Harvard Business Review, ‘...culture can account for 20-30% of the differential in corporate performance’ when compared with companies that don’t have a strong culture.

Peter Drucker famously quipped “Culture eats strategy for breakfast”. The term was popularised by Mark Fields who was president at Ford Motor Company. What that means is that if culture and strategy are separated, the success of the organisation is threatened. Why is culture more important, or even equally important, to strategy?

- ▶ HPO’s recognise that anyone can copy strategy, but culture is hard to emulate.
- ▶ Culture & strategy go hand in hand. The strategy needs to be defined, then HPO’s ensure that their culture supports the strategy.



Adapted from Torben Rick by Suzanne Mercier, 2015

Culture and Strategy need to feed each other.

A company’s culture is guided by its values. Too often, organisations decide what their values are without translating those values into the practices and specific behaviours to bring them alive. When that happens, a schism opens up in the culture between stated culture and the ‘unwritten ground rules’ which express what’s really

important in this organisation and 'how we do things around here'.

Values don't need to be original. They do need to be authentic. And they need to represent how the organisation shows up, what behaviours are expected and allowed which, in turn, create a fertile environment for the business strategy ... or not.

In short, culture tells employees how to behave when their manager or CEO isn't in the room. It is shaped to achieve the strategic goals of the organisation.



Customers and the Customer Brand

High Performing Organisations are customer-centric. They understand the needs, wants, expectations and desires of their customers and translate them into a customer experience that exceeds their expectations. They then build their internal processes around that experience.

Purpose provides the context for that customer experience. The Vision brings the customer experience alive in the current market dynamics. HPO's build their systems and processes around delivering the unique customer experience. Their culture guides employees on how to interact with customers and to create that desired experience. The level of employee engagement within the business dictates the extent to which employees will go to deliver the customer experience.

The customer brand captures the brand promise and is the bedrock of all brand communication.

Employer Brand

HPO's recognise their employer brand is a core asset to the business. It enables them to attract highly qualified and capable talent. The employer brand is a reflection of the inspiration created by the business Purpose, the degree of

tension within the business Vision, the alignment of strategic direction, the support of business culture, the degree to which the business lives its values and the level of employee retention and engagement.

In HPO's all these factors are aligned and the critical role of people in bringing the business alive is both recognised and appreciated. Staff willingly advocate working with their employer to others, the sign of a strong Employer Brand.

Systems and Processes

Systems and processes are the way organisations capture and are able to duplicate a particular task within the business. Systems and processes increase efficiency and make it far more likely that a consistent result can be delivered. High Performing Organisations have systems / processes around:

- ▶ **Purpose and Core Values:** HPO's systematically step back from the business to look at it objectively. They will have engaged in an initial process to identify and articulate their Purpose. The next step in that process is to help employees at all levels understand what the Purpose is, what it means and how they can bring it alive in their role. They also have processes to guide employees to translate the core values of the business into specific behaviours.
- ▶ **Vision & Strategy:** High Performing Organisations have processes to stay current on the effectiveness of their Vision and Strategy in light of existing market conditions. They measure progress against predetermined critical success factors.
- ▶ **Culture:** HPO's have systems and processes to keep their finger on the pulse of their culture to ensure the culture continues to drive strategy. They regularly measure employee perceptions of what the business stands for. They ensure their leaders demonstrate the



culture to avoid the schism of unwritten ground rules referred to earlier.

- ▶ **The Customer:** HPO's know their customers intimately and have processes set up to stay connected. They know where to find them (processes to understand their life style, purchasing behaviour, media preferences), how to acquire them (business development & sales processes), what their needs, wants and preferences are (marketing), how to get the product or service to them (distribution), how to handle customer enquiries or complaints (customer service and/or call centre), how to keep track of them, build a solid relationship with them, ask for referrals, thank them for their advocacy, to name a few areas.
- ▶ **Product / Service Innovation & Development:** HPO's recognise the power of innovation to create sustainable competitive advantage and higher levels of profit than cash cows. They set up systems around how the business goes about identifying opportunities, evolving existing products & services, and innovating to be at the leading edge of their industry.
- ▶ **Brand Management:** HPO's regularly check in with their customers to ensure they are delivering beyond expectations and to ensure their brand personality is being perceived accurately. They have guidelines or processes for every interaction the customer has with their business to ensure they are delivering a consistent experience. The organisation may have a style guide that lets people know how the brand is to be represented, where, what it needs to look like and any caveats that may apply.
- ▶ **Employee Engagement:** HPO's take clear action to increase or decrease employee engagement. They are focussed on consistently increasing employee engagement, recognising the importance of the

discretionary effort employees can contribute which directly impacts bottom line.

Employees perform better when they know what is expected of them, the resources they have available to achieve that outcome and set them up for success

A strong influence on employee engagement is knowing what is expected of their performance. Employees need a clear indication of what they need to focus their resources on so they can achieve their outcomes and contribute to achieving the Vision. Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) are metrics used to help business define and measure progress towards achieving its objectives. They are a system of performance guidance and assessment that tell people how to behave and what to focus on. KPI's are linked to Vision, business strategy, company values and the specific role of employees in the organisation.

Many of these processes come under the auspices of the Human Resources and Learning & Development Departments. Employee engagement starts with the recruitment and induction processes and continues through to the experience employees have working within the company. Managers have a high level of impact on their engagement.

HPO's have processes around recruitment, bringing new recruits onboard, job skills training, management and leadership training, setting up and populating coaching and mentoring programmes, remuneration and benefits for roles, the way promotions are allocated and advised. One of the key focuses for HR and management is employee engagement and how that can be increased.

- ▶ **Financial Systems:** HPO's manage their capital and cashflow exceptionally well. Their systems cover everything from the way petty cash is handled to the billing system for clients, terms & conditions for payment, the way the company handles its assets and limited resources, the way it identifies dividends and distributes



them to shareholders. A process is used to guide salary increases, bonuses and other remuneration.

Structure

HPO's structure their business in a way that reflects their strategic imperative. They may be focussed on regions, channels of distribution, client size and engagement or some other method of evaluating and marketing their business.

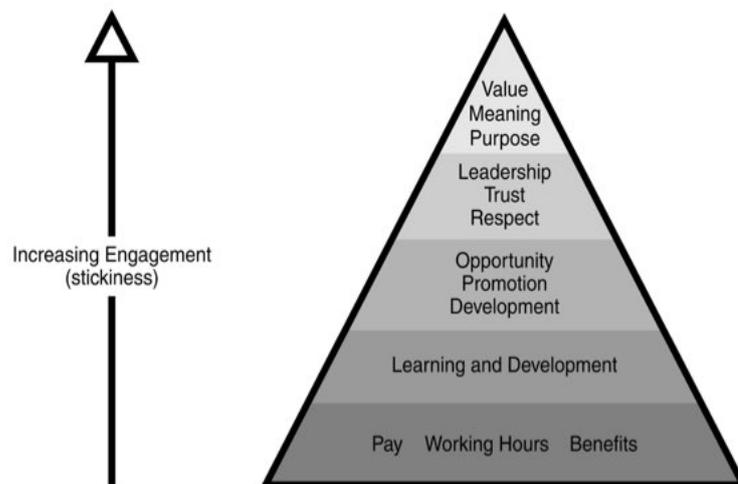
Internally, the structure may be a traditional hierarchy while including the informal relationships that drive outcomes. Or it may be a matrix structure with individuals reporting to multiple managers across differing areas of responsibility. However, it is more common that HPO's are relatively flat with few layers separating the CEO from the front line. In this case, authority, responsibility and control are widely distributed throughout the company.

Employee Engagement

High Performing Organisations (HPO's) recognise the power of employee engagement and focus their attention on increasing the percentage of their workforce that is highly engaged.

As mentioned above, employee engagement relates to the degree of connection an employee feels with the company he/she works for, and translates through to the level of effort he/she is willing to put into the job. That discretionary effort leads to higher levels of productivity and performance, to improved internal/external customer service, to an enhanced customer experience, increased advocacy and ultimately to improved bottom line.

Hierarchy of Engagement



Research conducted by Roffey Clark in 2003, found that more than 70 percent of employees are looking for more meaning at work. In exchange, they will provide increased motivation, loyalty, creativity and productivity to employing organisations that provide meaning at work. Meaning at work comes at the intersection of the individual's sense of self, the degree of connection the individual feels with the organisation and what it seeks to achieve and finally, with society and the opportunity the organisation provides for the individual to contribute to society. In a report on the research by Penna Plc, a model was offered to show how organisations can create stronger employee engagement:

Engagement increases as the organisation delivers at higher levels. pay, working hours and benefits which are considered to be important are, in truth, only hygiene factors. When the pay is adequate in the mind of the individual, the remuneration and benefits are no longer motivating. HPO's know they need to deliver at the level of Purpose and Leadership in order to create high levels of employee engagement.



The role of Purpose is to create meaning and fulfilment

Twenty years ago, I came across the concept of Purpose.

I had recently started my own business and a friend asked me why. My decision had many layers and the one that struck me most strongly in that moment was "I want to bring more heart and soul into business". I had not long before resigned my position as a Director at George Patterson Advertising citing other interests. However, the truth was, the advertising environment at that time - and in my experience - was inauthentic, macho, highly competitive, political and lacking in fulfilment.

From consulting in the area of marketing in my own business, I wound up returning to advertising at the request of a client when he needed support for a joint venture his company had with British Airways. Creative Campaigns - and the branding work we did in the agency - was the first time I consciously considered Purpose for my clients.

My first personal experience of the power of Purpose came when I set up Bite Size Skills (BSS) driven by the high rate of failure of small to medium enterprises (SME's). BSS was an educational club for owners of small business and its purpose was to support these business owners to be successful. I was very excited about the concept and talked about it to whoever would listen. Friends, colleagues, family ... they came from far and wide to help me with the logistics

involved with BSS. These generous people were emotionally connected to what I was seeking to do; they took it on board as theirs. Indeed BSS was never mine; it belonged to the community. BSS was my first experience of the high level of engagement that comes when people are inspired by what the business is seeking to achieve; by its Purpose.



Purpose has come of age

Moving beyond the industrial age, as the concept of high performance continued to develop, Purpose was alluded to in terms of creating meaning at work. However, it wasn't put on the map until "Built to Last" (1994, Jim Collins & Jerry Porras) and the followup "Good to Great" (2001, Jim Collins) took the management market by storm. Purpose was part of the reason these companies were great and built to last.

Companies that start with Purpose and create a strong emotional connection for their employees significantly increase their bottom line, in some cases by as much as 400%

The power of Purpose still wasn't recognised until books such as "*Firms of Endearment: How world class companies profit from Passion and Purpose*" (2003, Raj Sisodia, David B. Wolfe and Jagadish N. Sheth), "*Meaning, Inc.: The Blueprint for Business Success in the 21st Century*" (2007, Gurnek Bains), and "*Purpose: the starting point for great companies*" (2008, Nikos Mourkogiannis) published research data proving the higher performance of purpose led companies that created high levels of meaning and fulfilment for their employees and other stakeholders.

Still a majority of organisations focussed on the hard stuff; the stuff that could be easily measured and which they could understand directly contributed to the bottom line.

I have been fortunate to work with some forward thinking companies - or should I say forward thinking CEO's - who understood what I was saying and were willing to go down that path, with great results that definitely were measurable.

Purpose is indeed the starting point of great companies.

Led by Purpose, what does high performance bring?

High performance and the factors that directly contribute to it create:

- ▶ **Clarity around who the business is and what it stands for** - Purpose, Core Values and Vision - so people can engage emotionally with what the business is seeking to achieve and have the means to make their unique contribution. They understand what is expected of them in terms of their work and their behaviour, together with why their work matters.
- ▶ **A culture that invites and supports performance** at the highest level including the perceived high risk area of innovation.
- ▶ **A comfortable sit with diversity** in all its forms: thought, gender, race, religion, education, status to name a few.
- ▶ A clear understanding of the **desired customer experience beyond expectations** and how to create that experience consistently.
- ▶ Increased levels of **customer satisfaction and advocacy**.
- ▶ **A brand that clearly represents who you are** and what you stand for in the minds of customers as well as current / future employees.
- ▶ A structure and processes that support the flow and the delivery of **consistently high quality work** across the business.



- ▶ A higher level of **employee engagement** resulting in the ability to attract quality talent in a competitive market, a significant reduction in employee turnover, as well as increased productivity and performance from a higher proportion of employees.
- ▶ **Longevity.** Companies that focus on high performance starting with Purpose, engaging their people and creating a high performing culture create sustainable businesses that perform well into the future at consistently higher levels and for longer time than those that do not.

The ultimate gain from high performance is bottom line and shareholder returns even though they are not what high performance companies driven by Purpose focus on.



Are there opportunities in your business to increase performance?

As you read through this White Paper, did you experience any moments of recognition? Were there any areas that jumped out at you as possible opportunities to improve the performance in your organisation? Or are you perhaps curious to learn more about high performing organisations?

If you would like to explore high performance as a way of enhancing the impact, longevity and bottom line for your organisation, contact me for an obligation free meeting.

This wouldn't be any 'get to know you' meeting, although that's an option if you choose. At that time, you can bring a problem (pain point) you'd like to resolve or make progress on or an opportunity you'd like to capitalise on. In the one-hour, we can explore some pertinent questions such as what you've already done, what worked, what didn't work and develop some practical ways in which you can move forward on your issue.

Please let me know if I can be of service.

Profile: Suzanne Mercier



Suzanne is a performance catalyst working with organisations and individuals to help develop their potential. She is Australia's expert on identifying and moving beyond limiting mindsets including the Imposter Syndrome, a key barrier to performance. Her focus on helping establish high performing organisations and removing the barriers to performance for talented Leaders and Managers has improved employee engagement and enhanced performance at every level !

As the first woman on the Board of Directors at George Patterson Advertising and a strategy planner for the agency, Suzanne created maximum customer engagement for leading brands in banking, food, cosmetics, animal products, beverages, fine china and crystal.

In her high level marketing roles with Coca Cola Amatil and Schwarzkopf, she was responsible for the launch of several well-known fast moving consumer goods brands that remain on the shelves today.

For more than 20 years, Suzanne has run her own business and for the past 15 years, has focussed on speaking, training, coaching and facilitative consulting to create sustainable and profitable organisations & associations. Her Clients come from a wide variety of industries including shopping centre management, higher education, financial services, insurance, technology, heavy equipment, health, fitness, cosmetics, commercial real estate, publishing and industry associations.

Suzanne develops and delivers transformational keynotes, experiential workshops, facilitative consulting, mentoring and executive coaching designed to shift mindsets that block success, to free leaders up to transform their impact, to improve management capability, lift sales results and identify potential to enhance business performance.

She is a thought provoking speaker and a published author. Her most recent book "Liberate Leadership. How the Imposter Syndrome undermines leadership capability and what to do about it" was released in August, 2012.

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Short Checklist of Symptoms that may indicate an underperforming business

- Lack of Purpose in the business
- Disproportionate focus on short-term results, often at the expense of the longer-term health of the business
- Low turnover and / or poor profitability in the business or practice
- No/poor Vision for the business, therefore no clear direction
- A disconnect between the Vision and what people do on a day-to-day basis
- The business or practice is underperforming relative to the market, the competition and its own potential
- Leaders aren't leading with generosity towards their people, or with recognition and respect for what they contribute
- Poor decision-making or no decision-making at the top of the organisation (risk averse; acting prematurely without the facts and information; lack of consultation with key people; too much consultation ...)
- A schizophrenic culture where the stated values and the Unwritten Ground Rules (how we do things around here) are very different.
- Managers are micro-managing their direct reports and not doing what they should be doing. (Hint: they haven't been trained to manage people)
- Or, they have unrealistic expectations of their people without setting them up for success
- Managers don't recognise and develop the talent of their existing staff
- High staff turnover (HPO's have 5% turnover or less)
- Inability to attract high quality staff
- Low morale and engagement
- Culture of conflict; no personal responsibility or accountability is taken; blame is common
- Staff are reactive – rather than proactive – in terms of carrying out their roles and responsibilities
- They have a 'union like' mentality with little flexibility around hours and tasks
- Lack of co-operation, consultation and collaboration amongst different areas of the business (silo mentality)
- Gossip in the absence of transparency and communication
- Resistance to change
- Lack of genuine diversity
- Poor customer / client retention
- No well defined customer experience or pathway to business development.