



How to Achieve More by Learning Better

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High performance is not just about achieving, but learning!

You can no longer depend on what you've always done to achieve what you've always got.

We have to shift from focusing on *what* we achieve to focusing on *how* we achieve it.

If you expect to get the same results from doing the same things, you'll be sorely disappointed. You may get results in the short-term, but not in the long-term.

In an environment of accelerating change, you can no longer view yourself as an expert. Your knowledge, experience and insights have an increasingly short shelf-life with new ideas, new technologies and new business models upsetting the way things have been traditionally done.

Just look at the development of online retailing, AirBnB, Uber, Google, the rise of the smartphone to name but a few.

You have to learn and challenge yourself on an on-going basis.

Sam Walton, founder of Wal-Mart, viewed himself not as a definitive expert on retailing but as a lifelong student of his craft, always asking questions and taking every opportunity to learn. You need to do the same.

How would it be for you if you organized your time, energy, and resources primarily around the objective of learning, instead of around performance? How would your day be different? For many people, their daily activities – what they do and how they go about doing it – would be dramatically changed.

Becoming a learning person certainly involves responding to every situation with learning in mind. But it involves more than that; it requires that we set ourselves explicit learning objectives.

Look at your personal list of long-term objectives, your midterm objectives, and your current to-do list. How many relate to performance genre and how many relate to learning?

There is a company in California called Granite Rock, a stone, concrete, and asphalt supplier which has institutionalized the idea of having learning goals. Rather than having performance goals each employee is asked to set his or her annual objectives in the format:

“Learn _____ so that I can _____.”



By doing this people looking to not only improve themselves in what they learn, but in how they apply it. This is key.

If you cannot use what you have learnt, then it will not help you perform. Similarly, if all you do is focus on performing then you will never learn, and if you never learn you will be unable to adapt, and if you cannot adapt you will become irrelevant and obsolete.

It is not a matter of performance or learning, it is about learning *and* performance where learning is the oil which, when applied, improves the performance engine. If you let the performance engine run at full throttle with no oil you will end up with a broken engine, a broken business and broken people.

My question to you is this: what are you going to do to build learning and its application into the core of your business?