

PERFORMANCE VERSUS RESULTS

What's more important, a person's performance or the result? Which comes first? Does one lead to another? Obviously, the performance leads to the result, right?

If a person performs poorly, the odds of the results being achieved are less than if the person performed well. But what do most managers focus their employees on? The results, right? After all, we've been told over and over again that we need to set goals for our employees and for ourselves. Goals are great, but without a focus on performance, they begin to feel more like just a result that needs chasing. And rarely do people perform at their best when they are simply focused on the result. They perform at their best when they focus on the act of performing in a way that will end up achieving the goal. In other words, the goal or results are in view, but the day-to-day focus is on the performance that is going to lead to achieving them.

I'm not saying goals and results are not important. It's why we do what we do – a business that didn't achieve its goals will not be around long. Not achieving goals and results is not something that anyone wants. But goals and results need to be used appropriately to get the best performance out of a person. And, appropriate for one person is not necessarily appropriate for another.

I coach a number of elite-level professional race car drivers – Indy, NASCAR, and others. Do you think they focus on the result? You bet they do. These are people who are extremely competitive, and whose entire life and career is based on the last result they achieved.

When coaching these results-focused people, one of the most critical things I do is take their focus off the result and onto what they can control – their performance. When I ask a race driver, "What can you control? Can you control your competitors? Can you control the result of the race?" they get it. They realize that the only thing they can control entirely is their performance – and that their performance will ultimately have the biggest impact on the result. They know, from experience, that when they focus on the result – usually a lap time – they don't achieve the result they're after as often.

It's no different in business. Sure, set your goals – establish the result you want to achieve. But then focus on what the performance is going to need to be to achieve that result. For example, if you want one of your sales staff to hit \$1 million in sales this year, break that down into what he or she needs to do on a daily, weekly and monthly basis to achieve this. But not just the dollar amount for each day (anyone can do the math to figure that one out). No, break it down into what he or she needs to do performance-wise – the number of calls per day, the number of meetings, the types of conversations, the types of new clients found, etc. *Focus on the what you can control – your performance, your employees' performance, and the performance of your teams.*

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