

Supporting a Top Performer

Hitting the Limits

Top performers will get results in their area, but there are sometimes limits to their ability to **continue expanding**.

In some instances, it is unrealistic to expect a top performer to continue increasing the results they produce without some additional support. Here are some tips in this area.

Measuring Results

An effective person will always measure their results. Only in this way can they know how effective they are.

When Results Go Down

Effective people, for instance, get **very interested** in why the results were not as good this month as they were last month. They want to know **what caused the downturn**, so as to make corrections and improve their future results.

1. If it is within their own sphere of control, they can make the changes themselves.
2. If the poor results stem from outside their immediate area, they will want to liaise with that area (perhaps becoming very demanding) in order to try to correct the situation.

Ineffective people are often **not even aware** of the fact that the results were worse this month than

last. They do not see “results” as an important part of their lives.

And, if you point out that their performance is not as good this month, they will tend to blame it on other people, or the weather, time of year, etc.

When Results Go Up

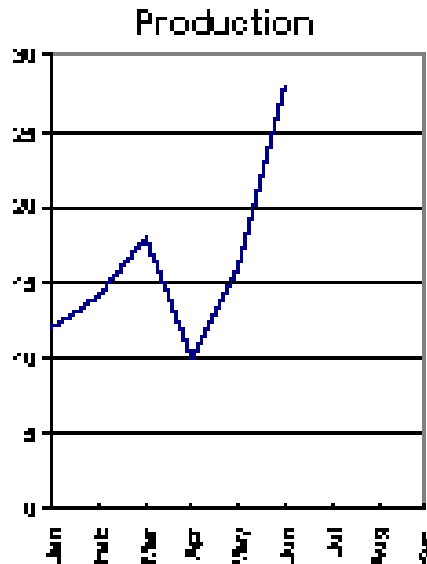
When performance is better from one month, week or year to the next, the top performer also wants to know why this happened.

- What was successful?
- Can it be repeated?
- Can it be strengthened?

They want to know what was different, so they can use that knowledge to drive the results even higher.

They know that if they don't measure their results in sufficient detail, they will not be able to perform such analysis and will miss some golden opportunities.

The poor performer, on the other hand, doesn't even notice that the results went up. They miss the point altogether. Watch out for people who don't know what their results are!



Capped Results

Be aware, however, that many activities have **physical limits**. One can get the production up to a certain level, but there can come a time when

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a ceiling is reached. This is more evident in some activities than in others.

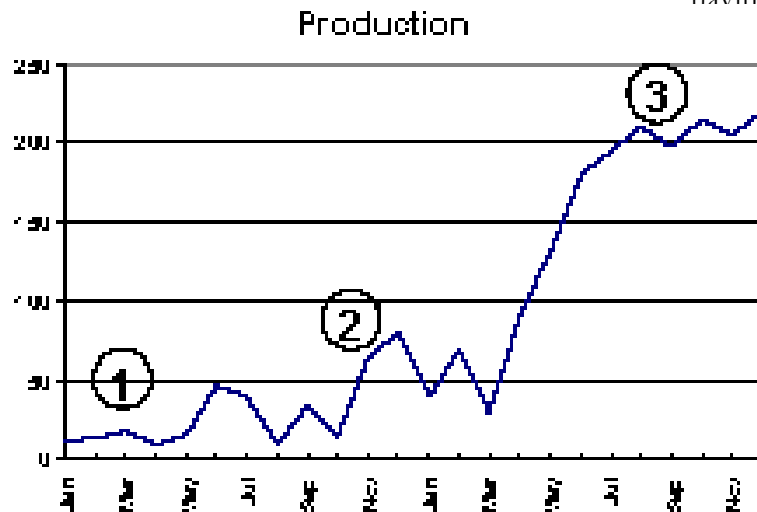
A ditch-digger, for instance, eventually runs into the physical limitation of the quantity of soil that one person can dig in a day. They may be an extremely productive top performer, but there is still this physical limit. The same could be said for a typist or any other job involving physical work.

In sales and marketing, the physical limitations are not so obvious, but they can still be there. And that's when the performer needs support.

Statistics Show It

Let's look at this in terms of the statistical results. (See graph on the front page.)

- 1 When starting in a new area, there is a learning phase. The employee is finding their feet and the results may not be in their best range.



- 2 As the performer gets into the swing of things, you may see some ups and downs as they find out what does and does not work.
- 3 Sooner or later, the results will move up steeply and settle into a new range, well above where they had been in the past.

You are now looking at a top performing individual who is running at maximum for the current conditions. They are totally in control of their area and can churn out results of **consistently high quantity and quality.**

When you see this, it's time to act!

This is the subject of another **Value Add**: "Keeping a Top Performer". When an effective employee reaches a peak, and finds they are unable to continue expanding, you run the risk of eventually losing them.

Find a New Game

Here is someone who needs a new game. They either need a new mountain to climb, or you need to find a way to **make their current mountain bigger.**

When you find yourself in the enviable position of having an employee who is driving the production through the roof, you should recognise how valuable this is and be prepared to **invest in that person's talents and ability.**

Assuming you are not planning to promote them to a higher level of responsibility, the other solution is to invest in some sort of additional support. You need to make it possible for them to drive their results even higher, breaking through the physical barriers which may be hindering their ability to increase performance.

This additional support could be in the form of **better tools** to work with and/or the **assignment of staff support.**

Better Tools

Consider the ditch-digger who has maxed out their daily production. They would achieve more if you

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provided a mechanical shovel to empty the ditch faster than by hand.

The typist might be able to produce more if they had a faster printer or a better PC to work with.

The salesperson or service technician might benefit from tools like a laptop computer or mobile phone to give them faster remote access to their central database.

Whatever it is, the cost of such support tools is minor compared with the increased production the top performer will be able to achieve with the extra help.

You should also consider what it would cost if you lost your top performer because they found a “better opportunity”. You would then be faced with the prospect of training someone up to that same level. It’s always much more cost effective to keep the one you have, than to train up a new one, no matter how good the new person might seem.

Staff Support

When you have someone who is obviously effective, assigning some additional staff support to them can be a very canny investment.

Once again, when you see one of your people producing results of a **consistently high quality and quantity**, you need to recognise how valuable that is. And when their results move up to a new high range and stay there, it’s time to look at giving them whatever support they need to **move it on up again**.

In sales this might mean giving the top performer some admin. help, or a dedicated telemarketer to set up the leads for them.

Whatever it is, if it will free up some of that person’s valuable time and allow them to work their special magic on their main area of operation, this is what is needed.

Support your top performers!

