

Solutions for Work and Life: Measures of Success

February 1, 2007

In this issue, I ask you to consider what effect the choice of your "measure of success" has on the actions you take in your business or life, and how you think about them. I would love to hear your experiences with changing metrics.

With the Chinese New Year approaching, take advantage of our New Year's offer, and enjoy an interesting look at the effect the lunar New Year has on Chinese society.

Have you heard about the research that suggests that women may face a glass cliff in addition to a glass ceiling? I'm not so sure. Read a bit more about the research below.

On the Bookshelf

Recent studies of how the brain functions have led to fascinating insights into how people change, and as leaders, how we can facilitate performance at work. ***Quiet Leadership: Six Steps to Transforming Performance at Work*** by David Rock provides a practical guide to helping people improve their thinking. If you have found yourself having the same conversation with the people you manage, over and over again, consider taking another approach. By basing this work on his experience, observations and the latest research into the brain, David Rock has provided a unique approach to leadership.

[Learn more at Amazon about Quiet Leadership](#)

Measures of Success

What happens to a business or life when you change the measure of success?

When I was establishing my business, I struck upon targets that defined success for me. This was not a simple task and required a fair amount of soul-searching. I set goals for 6 months, 12 months and 36 months. The timeline was a bit loose, but I knew that I would be able to achieve the 6 month target; I figured that I would be able to achieve the 12 month target; and I had no idea how I would achieve the 36 month target, but it would come. I was not wedded to the timeline; in fact, I was not at all sure that the targets were achievable in those timeframes. Nonetheless, I wrote down the targets; I shared them with people central to the business. I was on my way.

The targets were defined in terms of business revenue – money. Yet, when I talked with people about what I was doing, I frequently commented that the money was not that important. More than one close friend challenged me, "is money why you're doing this?" The answer was no, but the money represented a level of achievement; and so, I continued on my merry way; noticing that as the money did not flow, I was feeling disappointment and dissatisfaction, rather than relishing the success I was achieving.

One of the advantages of having a coach is that they do not let inconsistencies pass, at least not for long. My coach challenged me to consider whether there were other possible measures of success that better aligned with why I am in this business. As all good coaching questions are, this was thought provoking. If I

attest to having defined why I am here – my purpose in life – and it does not have any emphasis on money, why is that the measure of success for my business?

Looking at what I gain from this business besides revenue, it is the satisfaction and joy of helping people; of being a part of people improving their lives. It was easy then to restate the goals around the number of people I can help through my coaching.

Which leads us back to the question, “what happens to a business or life when you change the measure of success?” In this case, the focus shifted from an uncontrollable outcome (the revenue) to controllable events. The focus shifts from the outcome to the process (and the former statistician in me says “duh!”). Let us get more concrete. A trial session may not result in immediate or any revenue, but it does help someone if I have done my job well. The trial session that does not convert to a paying client is a small part of my success; rather than a \$0 income failure. And that session may lead to a coaching agreement in the future. The blogs and newsletter do not generate any revenue, but they do, I hope, help someone.

Ah, but the businessperson says, that is fine, but you need to make money; it is an important measure. Well, like the manufacturing or quality engineer, perhaps what I need to do is to trust in the process. The process says that I need to establish a fair price for my work. The process says that I need to develop credibility and a base level of clients that can lead to subsequent referrals. The process says I need to have a structure for getting, conducting and following up from trial sessions. The process says I need to have structures around the coaching practice. If I succeed in the processes, can I trust the outcome (eventually money) will follow?

Only time will tell. In the meantime, it is more fulfilling to look at every step as a success; to evaluate the business building in terms of helping people improve lives, rather than how much money I made today.

Do you have any examples where changes in your measures of success had an impact in the conduct of your business or life?

Free Coaching

If you have not tried coaching, why not see what it can do for you? We offer complimentary coaching sessions to explore your goals, look at what may be getting in your way, and identify next steps. You are sure to walk away from the session with new thoughts, improved clarity around your goals and energy to move forward.

Our New Year's Special Offer runs through February 15. Give yourself or loved one coaching as a great Valentine's Day gift.

[Learn more about Free Coaching](#)

Year of the Golden Pig

Golden pigs, red lanterns and fireworks denote the approaching lunar New Year in China. This will be the Year of the Golden Pig and those born under this sign will have much prosperity. So with the number of pregnancies skyrocketing ahead of

this time, we find interesting newspaper headlines. Read more in my blog...

[Teachers Pig Out on Pregnancies](#)

Do Women Face a Glass Cliff?

Researching the phrase "glass cliff", I found the traditional "glass ceiling" and the newer "glass escalator" (for the men), in addition to numerous news report on the glass cliff phenomenon. As the news would have us interpret recent research, once women succeed in breaking through the glass ceiling, they face a greater likelihood than men of gaining a position with a high risk of failure, and highly visible failure at that. But can we really draw these conclusions from the research?

[Testing the Glass Cliff](#)

By learning how our brains function, we become more adept at changing ourselves and influencing others. As part of my credentialing process I am researching brain-based coaching, so expect to see more on this topic and reflected in my coaching over the next few months.

I would love to hear from you. Please let me know what you like and do not like about these newsletters.

Xin nian kuai le -- Happy New Year!

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