

assess the chances of success, given the various constraints in play, as being virtually zero.

In some cases, leaders refuse to acknowledge that the problem is not the performance of the team or the individuals within it, but rather with their own goal setting. In such scenarios monthly meetings are held where the leader demolishes the team for under performance, resulting in a demoralised workforce and a total loss of respect for the team's leadership.

***“The leader defines their own achievements as total commitment to the team's success and devotes all of their efforts to securing this.”***

The founding father of the study of management, Peter F Drucker, identifies how effective team leaders need to act and think if they are truly committed to the team's success. He said: “The leaders who work most effectively, it seems to me, never say ‘I’. And that's not because they have trained themselves not to say ‘I’. They don't think ‘I’. They think ‘we’; they think ‘team’. They understand their job to be to make the team function. They accept responsibility and don't sidestep it, but ‘we’ gets the credit. This is what creates trust, what enables you to get the task done.”

Essentially, leaders who talk ‘I’ rather than ‘we’, are normally either self-promoters, lacking in confidence and self belief, or actually fundamentally do not understand the function of leadership.

***“The leader selects a team based on the very best people available, subject to any constraints that they may have.”***

I have often mentioned in this series of articles about the importance of the recruitment process in establishing effective organisations. It follows that establishing an effective recruitment process and selecting the very best possible candidates for the team is critical.

Of course, many leaders do have constraints within which they need to work. The most obvious constraint – but by no means the only one – is the availability of finance. For example, in the Premier League, Manchester City's net spend – players bought less

than players sold – has been more than £400m between 2006 and 2011. Compare this with that of their near neighbours Blackburn Rovers whose net spend in the same period has been minus £35m. Given this vast gulf in spending ability, it is clear to see that Manchester City is in a far better position to access talented players. As a consequence, it would be unfair to judge the respective merits of both teams' leadership as though on a level playing field.

Similar constraints exist in business and all that can be expected of any leader is to recruit the best people given the constraints that exist.

***“The leader leads, coaches, teaches and manages both the team and each individual to achieve the very best they are capable of – given any relevant constraints.”***

It is important that terms such as the ‘very best’ should be defined and communicated in a clear and concise way. In helping to achieve this, a leader should focus on the process of improvement and not on the ultimate goal. This empowers the leader to make a valuable contribution to an individual's success – every minute of the day.

Many people find the transition from team member to leader difficult. They find it distinctly uncomfortable to be in a position where the efforts of others take precedence. However, more adept leaders understand that a key role is that of a **teacher** and, as put by John Wooden, they “must never forget that he is, first of all a teacher. He must be present, diagnose

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**True success only comes to an individual through the self satisfaction in knowing that you gave everything to become the very best that you are capable of. In the final analysis, only the individual himself can correctly determine his success. You may be able to fool others, but you cannot fool yourself.**

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and correct. He must continuously be exploring ways to improve himself in order that he may improve others...”

Effective leaders must ensure there are processes in place for planning, preparation, practice and performance. Within these processes should be a focus on continuous improvement. This has become a feature in modern business life since it was popularised by Japanese industry, where it is known as ‘Kaizen’. The goal is to improve processes and products over time, taking care to maintain improved performance levels while seeking out further opportunities for improvement. Whilst very powerful, I have to say that I have seen very few successful continuous improvement programmes in business and even fewer that are truly focused on the improvement of an individual's performance.

However, in sport, continuous improvement is a necessary process conducted by all top performers. For example, Johnny Wilkinson ensured that he was coached by the best kicking coaches in the world and practised hard to achieve perfection. “Each week leading up to the big day, I hit about 250 to 300 practice place kicks alone. I average 200 to 250 punts using my left foot and exactly the same number using my right. A daily total of 20 dropped goals with each foot and 15 to 20 restarts, six to seven times a week, would pretty much constitute a solid pre-preparation build-up. That makes a total of about 1,000 kicks to prepare for just 20 – kicks in the game. That's near enough 50 rehearsals for each single defining event,” said Wilkinson.

## Quick Read

- Defining success in the world of business can be difficult with little to measure against
- Leaders should create an exciting vision for their company and set attainable goals for staff
- Bosses should think and work with a shared mentality to achieve a better chance of success
- Companies should aim to create the best workforce available to their resources
- Effective leaders must ensure there are processes in place for planning, preparation, practice and performance all in place
- There should be a constant and consistent review process which focuses on improvement
- Successful leaders have not been ‘born to lead’ – they effectively develop ways of managing people.

***“The leader needs to review individual and team achievements based on the definitions of success, as defined above, and take any corrective action necessary.”***

The important point to note here is that the review process is not a biannual appraisal, but a constant and consistent review process that is focused on improvement.

## Born to lead

We have all heard the statement, ‘they were born to lead’. Fortunately, in the vast majority of cases, leaders are made and not born – that is they have to learn the art of leadership – it is not an innate talent that exists in just a few.

I believe a great starting point on this learning process is to adopt the fundamental definition of success created by John Wooden – it focuses all of us on looking to make the best use of our talents and for those in leadership positions to assist others in doing the same.

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