

Other People Factors in Performance Improvement

The following people factors, which officials must pay attention to for themselves as well as for their team, vital to positive performance improvement:

- Positive attitude
- High self-esteem and positive self-image
- Good communication skills
- Continuous learning
- Health and well-being
- Motivation
- Goal setting
- Relaxation
- Visualisation
- Personal value system

POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Many authors, consultants, and speakers talk about how a positive approach and attitude will lead to positive things happening for you. Think positively, and your performance will definitely improve. Help your officials to do the same. A positive attitude will open other doors to success.

You must have a positive attitude toward yourself first, and then toward everything you do and everyone you meet. Say positive things to yourself every day (affirmations), and talk to yourself in a positive manner (positive self-talk).

HIGH SELF-ESTEEM AND POSITIVE SELF-IMAGE

What you think of yourself speaks volumes about who you are and how people respond to you. Having high self-esteem establishes a positive achievement cycle in your life. Your positive self-image attracts other people to you. These people want to be around you and, either consciously or unconsciously, they want to help you succeed. Because of all this, your performance improves.

As an official, you can build your own self-esteem while you are building the self-esteem of your team. Do things that feel good and right for you and that generates the same feelings and responses in other people. If you want other people to make you feel good, which builds your self-esteem, do something to make other people feel good first. You can always be successful at building your own self-esteem if you help others build theirs first. And you can always improve your performance by helping other people improve theirs.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Successful officials are also great communicators. They can convince, influence, and persuade others to play to the spirit of the game. They can communicate their rulings and messages to players as well, enlisting their help to achieve these goals. Successful officials are excellent listeners. In fact, if you ever want to be remembered as a great official, just listen.

Communication is only effective based on the response you get. If you do not get the other person to respond the way you intended or understand what you expect regarding performance, then you have not been an effective communicator. Poor communication is one of the main causes for officials not accomplishing what they set out to do.

Communication is also the key to success in all interpersonal relationships. It is a foundation element of the people side of positive performance improvement. How do you get to be an effective communicator so that you can help people improve their performance? You learn about others. Learn their speaking style, the words they use, and the outcomes they are looking for when they communicate. Feed this back to them by adapting your style and you will see a magnificent change occur as you develop a rapport. You will get to the point where you think you know what other people are going to say before they say it—but stops short of the point where you act on that belief rather than on what actually gets said.

CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Successful people are constantly learning and do everything possible to learn whatever they can about their game or sport. Not only that, they enjoy being mentors and coaches to other people who are motivated to learn for life. Successful sporting organisations promote this behaviour among their members. So, regardless of where you stopped your formal education, now is the time to start learning again. The more you learn, the more you will improve.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Take care of yourself. Eat right, think right, get enough exercise. When you look and feel good, the world seems to be a better place. People who are healthy and well perform better. They have more energy and more stamina, and they can deal more effectively with stress.

Most performance issues or problems have a stress component related to them. People under too much stress—or too little for that matter—do not perform as well as they should. In fact, performance suffers significantly in most cases. One aspect of the relationship between health and top performance is determining your optimal stress or arousal level for a particular performance. Also, when you are well, you manage your stress better, which enables you to perform at a higher level.

Managing your stress may be as simple as relaxing a bit more instead of trying so hard. You may have to review what is causing your stress and eliminate some of the sources from your life. To be a top performer, be well, do well, and live well.

MOTIVATION

Stacks of books have been written about motivation; it is vital to successful performance improvement. The door opens wide for you when you are intrinsically motivated which means your desires and your satisfaction with performance come from within, not from some external source of reward.

You need to determine your level of achievement motivation. What is it you truly want to achieve, and how much are you willing to risk getting it? Do you want to be involved in tasks that are so simple anyone can achieve them, or do you want to be involved with accomplishing something with a moderate to high degree of difficulty? Your answers to these questions will identify your achievement motivation related to your performances.

Another aspect of motivation involves its direction. Do you have a fear of success or a fear of failure? Are you willing to put more effort into achieving pleasure, or will avoiding some sort of pain motivate you to action? These are real factors in determining how well you use this key to performance success. You must know what causes you to act, how you interpret your actions, and what you plan to do about similar situations the next time.

Another thing that makes motivation work effectively is developing your own reward systems. When you determine the rewards for your performances, you stay intrinsically motivated. If you establish external rewards, or let your sport or club establish the rewards for you without your involvement, you will find your motivation and your associated performance levels decrease over time. So make sure you know exactly what you want when you succeed and how you will reinforce and reward yourself.

GOAL SETTING

Goal setting is closely aligned with motivation. Most people never set goals. Of those who do, less than five percent actually write their goals down. It is this five percent of people who have a purpose in life that they are committed to.

Write down your goals for performance improvement and be specific about the outcomes you want to achieve. What will goal attainment or success look, sound, and feel like? What are the measures that will let you know your performance has improved? How will you know you have got the exact outcome you wanted?

Make all your goal statements personal, measurable, and set within a reasonable time frame. Make sure they are outcome oriented rather than action oriented. Statements about what you are going to do tend to leave out what you are going to accomplish, so they are not enough to guarantee goal attainment and success. You need to have outcome-oriented criteria for success so that you will know exactly when you've achieved your goal.

RELAXATION

Relaxation helps you visualise your way to successful officiating, manage stress, engage in positive self-talk, build and rebuild your self-image, and train your mind and body for peak performance. You need to engage in some form of relaxation every day.

Whatever you do to relax, realise that tension, stress, and relaxation cannot coexist. Usually, when people are trying to improve their performance, they end up trying too hard. The result is increased stress, pressure, or anxiety and a less-than-stellar performance. If you just relax and let things happen (let them flow), you will find that your performance will keep improving.

All peak performances come when your mind and body are in a state of relaxed alertness. You are ready to perform at your peak and you are willing to let your mind and body work together without conscious intervention. This is the state of flow, in which your body and brain systems work together perfectly. It is that desired state that everyone tries to attain. You feel like you are not even trying at all. Successful performances just happen. So relax, enter a state of flow, and achieve and improve.

VISUALISATION

Visualisation is the process of imagining yourself improving and being successful. Since real memories and imagined events feel the same, when you picture yourself improving and being successful, at some level your mind will accept that picture as fact. Then it will do everything in its power to make that image a reality.

Visualisation is a skill that can be developed and nurtured. It can be used to erase bad past performances and to develop future positive behaviours. Witness the performance breakthroughs that have been achieved by skilled practitioners of neurolinguistic programming (NLP). NLP is a branch of psychology and human performance that involves language (linguistic) to program the nervous system (neuro). NLP focuses on how you code experiences (performances) in your mind and memory. Much of what makes NLP so effective and successful is its use of visualisation as a behaviour change medium.

Also, when you combine visualisation with relaxation and goal setting, you establish a pattern that leads to continuous self-improvement, successful performance improvement, and achievement.

PERSONAL VALUE SYSTEM

A personal value system is the most important key to performance improvement and your ultimate success. Without a value system, you will not be able to make decisions, define your true purpose in life, and carry out the behaviours necessary to achieve your goals.

Values are the foundation for all you do. Your decisions and behavioural choices are based on your value system. You choose the people you associate with and relate to based on your values. When your behaviours don't match your values, you feel uncomfortable. The result is poor performance, a deteriorating relationship, or a negative attitude toward yourself. Identify your values, clarify them, and understand how they relate to your officiating performance. Then you will see great performance improvements as your value system guides your achievement behaviours.