Thriving in an Uncertain Economy

by Rich Campe

Your budgets and staff have been cut, but you’re still expected to improve team performance, and in record time.

In times like these, focus and accountability aren’t luxuries. They’re necessities.
“In tumultuous times, there’s something that separates those who do well from those who don’t—a culture of people who share a set of values, have very clear responsibilities, and, most of all, perform!”

Let’s face it. We are in the middle of an economic storm, and most people are doing their best just to hold on. Sure, at some point, things will be better, but unless your pockets are deep and your corporate culture is strong, simply “holding on” might not get your business out of the storm alive.

Success isn’t about building a better mousetrap. It’s about building better performance. In uncertain times, there’s something that separates those who do well from those who don’t—a culture of people who share a set of values, have very clear responsibilities, and, most of all, perform!

Research has shown that three factors are the key drivers of success, not only in the world of business, but in life as a whole. Those factors are: 1) Self/People Awareness and Outcome Clarity, 2) Intentional Action and 3) Accountability. I’ve further broken these down into tenets for performance success.

1) If you understand your people, the change you can make in them will turn into an exponential change that they’ll make in your company. And that goes for every level at your company: the individual, the team and the organizational level.

2) If you have clarity about an employee’s strengths and weaknesses, then the gaps in their performance become obvious, and the road to success maps itself. Everybody needs to know the role they’re playing or you risk redundancies and gaps.

3) If you have clarity about your goals and desired outcomes, then every question will answer itself before it even gets asked. With the economy racing at lightning speed, you need to get to the essentials that must be done well, rather than failing at all of them.

4) If you approach improving performance objectively, you minimize the conditions that contribute to failure. Beware the biases of insiders. They will hold you back from creating effective and lasting change within your organization.

5) If you hold everyone accountable, you maximize the conditions that contribute to success. Accountability provides for the constant reevaluation of goals and outcomes, and provides an ongoing “push” toward success.

1. PEOPLE: The difference between sinking and surviving is the performance of your crew.

Your people are your most valuable asset. They are the biggest drivers of productivity (or lack thereof) in your company. In fact, improving the performance of your employees can create all kinds of positive results for your company, like:

- improved customer relationships
- improved corporate image
- improved perception/broadened perspectives of employees
- improved internal working relationships
- improved performance/team operation
- improved work atmosphere
- improved sales/client retention
In an economy where budget belts are being tightened and staffs are being slimmed down, you must learn how to do more with less. That means you must know two things: 1) to what level are my employees performing now, and 2) what are they capable of?

I run into this all the time in my practice; people are mismatched for what they have and do. If you look at anyone who accelerated beyond what most would think is possible, it’s because they continually developed their natural strengths and minimized their weaknesses. Take for example Leonardo Da Vinci, Pablo Picasso, Frank Sinatra, Tiger Woods. (The list goes on and on.) My point, learn your natural areas of strength and develop them like crazy. I always hate to see people waste a good portion of life trying to become something they are not. Tragically, they don’t take the time to discover, develop and embrace their natural strengths. Also, learn your weaknesses and make sure you have a way to manage them. Again I did not say develop them… I said learn a way to manage them so they do not interfere with your success.

2. ROLE CLARITY: Who comes before what. Once you understand an employee’s strengths and weaknesses, you’ll know where they fit.

What motivates your employees? What drives their decision-making? What guides their actions? What determines their behavior? The connection between thinking and behavior is well established. Change a person’s thinking, and you will change their actions. Unfortunately, there is no “one size fits all” solution for changing behavior.

Each and every one of us has a unique set of value judgments, guiding our individual ability to determine the rightness or wrongness of a situation. The clearer you understand a person’s thinking, the more effective you can be in guiding their behavior away from bad habits (which drive failure) toward good habits (which drive success.)

Getting employees to perform to their full capacity means getting inside their heads and understanding what drives them as an individual, as part of a team, and as part of your organization. Once you’ve done that, you can determine the gap between an employee’s day-to-day performance and his or her true potential. Then you can set a plan in place to get them there. “Put them in the right mindset” and provide them with the proper tools for success. Do that and there is little that can’t be accomplished.

3. OUTCOME CLARITY: To be able to concentrate on first things first, you have to know what not to do.

Have you ever felt that gnawing feeling in the pit of your stomach? The feeling that something is just not right. Maybe it’s effect is a lack of sleep, over eating, under eating, getting mad a someone, drink-
ing alcohol or some type of drug, just being silent or a host of other less than positive effects. Maybe you attribute the root cause to a poor relationship, lack or finances, lack of good health, or overall confusion about life and your journey.

I can tell you from working with thousands of coaching clients and my own experience that any time I or anyone else has that sick feeling in your gut it’s because you are part of the effect. Let me explain in more detail. Maybe you lost your job and you have that sick feeling in you gut or maybe finances are low, bills are due with little money or maybe your starting your own business. The feeling we get in our gut that does not feel so good is a warning sign. Let me say that again… the feeling in your gut is a warning sign to say “hey your currently a part of the effect”. The key anytime you feel this type of anxiety is that you need to quickly move from the effect to the cause. As human beings we are wired to “BE,” not to just simply “DO.” We are NOT just on this planet to be part of the environment with little or no choices. That is why we have a brain that is set up to make decisions and choices.

Making the right decisions and choices means we must know our end goals before we reach them. After all, freedom isn’t the right to choose any answer, it’s the ability to choose the right answer. Making the right decisions and choices means we must be consciously formulate an effective longer-term strategy to help guide us in making those choices day-to-day.

In a dog-eat-dog economy, you’ve got to put first things first and there is a need to be able to quickly respond to the unpredictable hurdles that are constantly in your way. But doing what’s right (by knowing “what not to do”) in those situations can mean conserving valuable resources, strengthening the substance of your company and helping insure you’ll last out the storm.

4. OBJECTIVITY: Beware the biases of insiders!

I have a friend in the advertising business who has received the following direction on a number of occasions— “I want you to think outside the box on this one.” His standard reply to this command is, “Whose box. Mine or yours?”

As humans, by nature, we cannot completely divorce our feelings from our judgements and decisions. After all, feelings are part of being human. More so, our feelings can distort our objectivity. Think about your employees and co-workers. Who among them is your favorite? Your least favorite?

There is a danger in a “two-hatted” relationship, where an individual is playing more than one role. This can lead to ethical dilemmas, especially when one of those hats is worn while determining who needs improvement or enhancement, who doesn’t, and by what techniques you will go about doing this."

There must be someone at table with NO preconceived notions or assumptions about your people or organization, no biases and no hidden agendas. Their view of your people, processes and organization must be “bias-free” and 100% of this person’s loyalty must be on the company’s behalf.

5. ACCOUNTABILITY: The race toward success is not a sprint. It’s a marathon.

Coming out of the gate, any kind of internal performance program is going to naturally have a lot of energy. There is going to be a lot of momentum behind it. But there is a tendency for employees and companies to accidentally slip back into their old ways, especially when they are concerned with the immediate day-to-day needs of the company.
We all need an objective third-party point of view or coach at some-time in our lives. As a “non-employee,” this person won’t be distracted by the company day-to-day and will be able to maintain a focus on moving the company and its people toward their goals and keeping everyone accountable to the plan that has been set in place for success.

The other accountability component this “non-employee” can maintain is to provide an ongoing methodology for keeping a momentum of change happening. This detachment and objectivity allow for constant reevaluation, the setting of new goals and benchmarks, and ongoing support for reaching those evolving goals and benchmarks.

**The five tenets for success in a single solution.**

Imagine you’re in a forest and there are unseen obstacles in all directions (rivers, animals, mountains, just to name a few.) The truth is, you can’t even see the forest through the trees, much less the obstacles beyond them.

Now imagine there’s a helicopter above the forest, guiding your people through the forest, lowering in the tools and supplies you need to overcome the various obstacles you’ll encounter along the way. That’s the power of coaching.

Coaching is about success acceleration. In fact, choosing not to rely on the experience and insight of a coaching firm might be weighing you down, slowing you up and bringing you face-to-face with obstacles you shouldn’t have had to confront in the first place. In fact, over 50% of Fortune 500 companies are providing coaching to their staff, and 59% of budgets for coaching are increasing by more than 10% annually.***

Lift the burden off of you and your people and put your trust in a coaching program. You’ll find yourself on a positive track to come out of the storm stronger, smarter and on course toward a much brighter future.

---

**Factors Impacting Effectiveness**

Detracting Enhancing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Relationship</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Feedback</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Assessment</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants’ Commitment</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager’s Support</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant’s Availability</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Support</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Issues</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Executive Expectations**

- Challenge: 78%
- Different Perspectives: 78%
- Fail Me, Won’t Miss Me: 85%
- On a Winning Board: 91%
- Objective Feedback: 6%
- Didn’t Miss Us: 22%

---

RICH CAMPE, CEO & FOUNDING PARTNER, PROADVISOR COACH (www.proadvisorcoach.com)

Rich, an avid entrepreneur, with 18 years of international and domestic Sales and Sales Management experience, bestselling author and a graduate from North Central College in Naperville, IL with a double major in marketing and communications, Rich founded Rich Campe International, Corporate and Personal Coaching, which is now Rich Campe International / DBA ProAdvisorCoach. Rich is a serious entrepreneur who has started, owned and sold Verizon Cellular stores, Real-estate companies and nutritional companies, to name a few. Rich has served as a board member for SMU (Southern Methodist University) MBA mentor program and has been invited to speak at multiple business conferences where he has shared the stage with world and business leaders such as President George Bush Sr., Les Brown, Tony Robbins, Zig Ziglar and a host of other CEO’s and influential leaders.

Rich graduated as a Certified Coach with Tony Robbins in 1991 and served as part of the original Jim Rohn International Coaching team for several years. Rich is a very successful business owner and entrepreneur; however, his real passion lies in helping people reach their true potential. ProAdvisorCoach clients include a host of companies such as... Bank of America, Woodbury Financial, Northwestern Mutual, AXA, Ameriprise, Hartford Financial, Planco and ING to name a few.

Rich has a clear passion for business entrepreneurialism that brings good fortune to all that he is involved with, and his passions don’t stop at business. Rich is a Certified First Degree Black Belt in Martial Arts and a dedicated husband and father (wife Catherine, daughter Camden, and son Lawson). When he isn’t chasing down opportunity, he can be found hanging with the family, who give dad a run for his money... biking, snowboarding, wakeboarding, golfing, hiking and running with their dog Chloe!

---

* Blanchard Companies, ** Manchester 2003, *** Institute for Executive Development

---

Over 50% of Fortune 500 companies are providing coaching to their staff, and 59% of budgets for coaching are increasing by more than 10% annually. The ROI of coaching is clear.