

## **PST bares the truth about People and Performance Management myths & reality (#1 of 3)**

A well executed performance management system can deliver tremendous results. We've seen it deliver hundreds of millions of dollars in value in months. Today it has become an important tool in building an organizational culture of choice, and delivering great results.

What we've also witnessed is that it's not very common to have a good "road map" when embarking on setting up or executing a performance management system. This series of three white papers is written as a guide to help you avoid common mistakes and address critical steps in dealing with the people, process and technology side of performance management.

This white paper series addresses belief systems and expectations about how people will respond to the introduction of a [performance management software system](#). Each guideline is described in terms of a myth (inaccurate belief system that will get you into trouble) and reality. The expectation is that by helping you adopt an accurate perspective, it will guide the rest of your approach, expectations and approach towards a successful outcome. Let's get started:

1. Understand that [performance management is really a nice term for the reality of a gritty, unending push for high performance](#). Think about it, no one spends money on performance management with the goal of reaching mediocre performance. For the rest of this white paper, translate the word performance management into the climb, the drive, the engagement and negotiation through resistance in pursuit of improved performance.

For some the thought of creating higher performance looks like a palm-sweating battle. It can certainly have that at times. It also has times where you get a tremendous sense of accomplishment and relief as obstacles are removed. Inevitably it has both a push and pull component. Let me explain.

You generate a pull that draws people to higher performance when you remove their discomfiting obstacles and clearly identify what's in it for them. You generate a push when you enroll one or more people to lend their support, the power of their position, and ultimately their insistence with others when being tested, that "Yes, we are going to use the new processes and tools required to achieve a higher level of performance."

**Myth:** Performance Management is an easy-to-apply improvement process.

**Reality:** Performance Management is a gritty push for people to perform higher than they have previously to date.

2. A second common misconception is the *belief that performance management and the pursuit of high performance is a static state*. You know. Once you've got everyone comfortable with the new way of

working, they'll keep doing it on their own. Read this one very carefully – High achievement is not a self sustaining state for over 90% of the population. For most people it's an occasional event, usually prompted by an impending deadline, threat or unusual opportunity. Stop pushing for high performance and high performance drops to something less.

Does that mean most everyone needs someone to support them, recognize them and hold them accountable to regularly hit "home runs?" The answer is "Yes!!!" Think of managing to high performance as similar to piloting a hot air balloon. If you don't give it regular energy (heat) it stops creating lift and you descend. To use a sports example, no professional team competes without their performance management embodied in a coaching staff.

**Myth:** Once you get people to a high performance level, it will be self sustaining

**Reality:** High performance requires periodic, but regular, support, recognition and accountability - period.

3. Managing for high performance quickly gets at your definition of human nature and human potential. If you haven't guessed it yet, we are strongly on the nurture, not the nature, side of human performance. Stated another way, high performance is something that requires some essential skills and capacity (nature), but it's never enough without someone, some environment, providing a role that nurtures that capability.

But here's where it gets convoluted. As much as we need the nurturing, the coaching, the challenging, to perform at our best, human nature is such that we both resist the accountability and visibility that accompanies performance management. So plan on people both resisting the process at one or more times, as well as delivering better results than they would without performance management.

**Myth:** People welcome the accountability and visibility that comes with performance management.

**Reality:** Resistance to performance management in pursuit of high performance outcomes is normal and to be expected.

4. We have one more belief system to review with you in this area. It's the belief about what it takes to get people up the performance curve. We describe it this way, high performance is something you invest time and resources in, not assign or purchase as in a software or a workshop. Let me say it another way, simply put, follow-through in this area doesn't occur without consistent follow-up. Back to a sports analogy, you don't get a basketball team to play "above the rim" by buying them new basketball shoes, or by simply assigning/telling them the new requirement. You do it with practice, feedback, coaching and accountability.

**Myth:** Getting your team to a higher level of performance doesn't need to require much of your time, just get the right consultant, and/or the right software.

**Reality:** High performance requires regular investment in the form of both support and walking the talk from whoever is driving it.

This is part one of a three part series addressing the People, Process and Technology aspects of performance management. You can find the other issues at <http://www.managepro.com/resources.white.papers.html>.

The author of this series, Rodney Brim, is CEO of Performance Solutions Technology (PST). PST develops and assists organizations in deploying performance [management software solutions](#), and presents these guidelines based upon our work with 1,000's of companies to help ensure your success and avoid common myths in the pursuit of performance management. Performance Solutions Technology is found on the web at <http://www.ManagePro.com>