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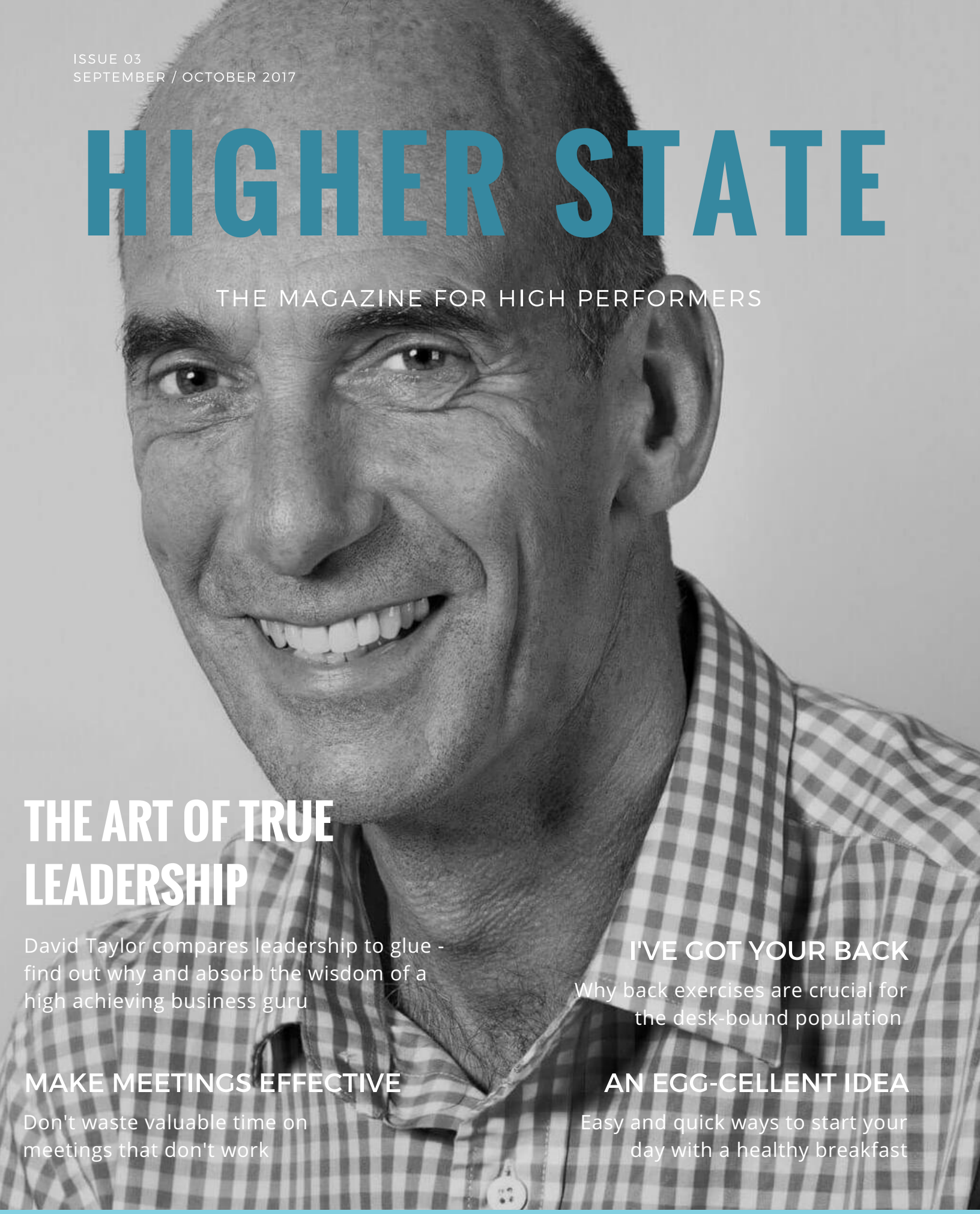
SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2017

HIGHER STATE

THE MAGAZINE FOR HIGH PERFORMERS



THE ART OF TRUE LEADERSHIP

David Taylor compares leadership to glue - find out why and absorb the wisdom of a high achieving business guru

I'VE GOT YOUR BACK

Why back exercises are crucial for the desk-bound population

MAKE MEETINGS EFFECTIVE

Don't waste valuable time on meetings that don't work

AN EGG-CELLENT IDEA

Easy and quick ways to start your day with a healthy breakfast

HELPING TEAMS TO EXCEL

Edition 3, September / October 2017

Welcome back!

We're back for Edition 3 of Higher State magazine! It's been incredible speaking with so many remarkable high performers this year - all with their unique ways of achieving success.

Every two months, I share actionable tips, tools and strategies to help you to bring your best self to work - so you can achieve results in less time and with less stress.

We explore business productivity but also mental, physical and emotional strategies to help you and your teams to optimise performance.

This month, we're talking to David Taylor - a remarkable business pro who puts 100% into his work and personal development, whilst also ensuring he brings out the best in others.

If you want to raise your game and learn from other high performers, this is the place to be.

Abi

Productivity - Psychology - Physiology

ENABLING PEAK PERFORMANCE @ WORK

Talk to Abi if you're looking for fresh, innovative ways to boost team performance, productivity, engagement and results.

Abi helps high achieving executives and teams to **get more done** – with **more focus, more energy and less stress**.

Teams are given the tools to develop long-term high performance habits using a combination of strategy development, workshops and coaching.

Abi focuses on **Business Productivity** strategies to enhance team performance, whilst also drawing on **Psychological** and **Physiological** drivers. This 360-degree approach enables team performance to be optimised from all angles.

Every business is different and each individual has unique needs and drivers, so it is important to identify these in order to achieve powerful results.

Abigail is a Chartered Banker with a 1st Class Honours Degree in International Management. She is also a qualified Master Personal Trainer, Pilates instructor and Precision Nutrition certified coach.

Could your team perform better?
Ask about Abi's workshops, coaching and strategy solutions to optimise productivity, engagement and results: abi@abigailireland.com.

www.abigailireland.com

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CLICK HERE for ways to sleep better and wake up sharp

READY FOR POLE POSITION?

Remember the famous quote by George McFly in the Back to the Future movie? ***"If you put your mind to it, you can accomplish anything."***

Well, **David Taylor** lives and breathes this philosophy. He leads an incredibly full life where he gives 100% to everything he puts his mind to.

Business Coach. Mentor. Board Member. Investor. *Brilliant* storyteller.

Buckle up and enjoy the ride!

David and co-driver winning the award for 2nd in class (National Series)

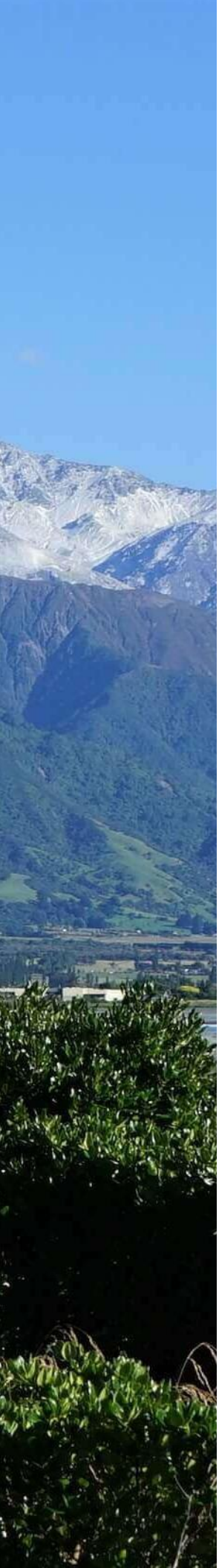
"WHEN YOU SHAKE A TREE & APPLES FALL OUT, IT'S UP TO YOU TO PICK THE RIGHT ONES."

DAVID TAYLOR

You will instantly sense from David's photos that he loves to live life to the full. He is also one of the best leaders I've come across, with a disciplined approach and a genuine passion to help others to succeed. Originally from Scotland, David has worked internationally as a corporate banker for over 40 years - leading teams across a number of areas and through challenging times. He now resides in a beautiful part of the South Island, New Zealand, where he sits on six Boards and brings his expertise to businesses all over the region.

Abi's Observations: *David is one of the best mentors I've ever worked with. His wisdom, sharp focus, clarity of thought and down to earth nature serve him well - reinforcing his reputation as a highly respected, popular and unbiased leader. He brings maximum energy and passion to everything he does - inspiring confidence in others and a belief that anything is possible if you put your mind to it.*

Key Takeaway: Achievement takes hard work, focus, commitment and consistency. Not to mention passion and patience. It might be easier to keep doing what you do, but true high performers never stop learning or pushing their boundaries. Get out of your comfort zone, stretch yourself & seek opportunities to grow wiser.



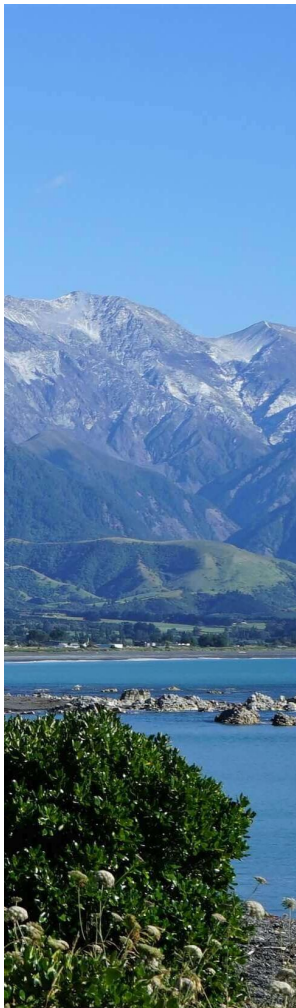
HERE'S DAVID

Tell me about your path to where you are today – you've had a very 'full' career over the years and you've achieved a lot.

My first job was as a butchers boy riding the bike, with a basket up front and delivering meat to customers. I sought out the work myself but, at age 10, was too small for the bike! The butcher promised me I could have a job when my feet could touch the ground if standing astride the bike. I often tried the bike for size and, at age 11, I got that job.

I stayed there for 10 years, working at weekends and during holidays. I was promoted to shop van driver as the bikes were phased out! I had started work as a junior in Banking at age 17 but continued the Saturday deliveries as I enjoyed the many friendships I had made over the years.

I was an 'old school" bank employee learning the ropes from the ground up. That meant being the office junior and doing many things for many people, and being at the bottom of the career rung. I had no career path planned, just a mindset that was to be the best I could. I progressed through the clerical grades mostly through effort and determination to show I was both able and willing to do more. I was not strong academically and left school at 16.



Education just didn't suit me but I was to discover later that I was quite simply a person who learns by doing, discovering and thinking about other options. The traditional model of textbooks and the teacher telling, not showing, did not engage me.

Study for Banking exams was via evening classes. That was challenging for me and I took 7 years to complete my Banking Qualifications. The qualifications were deemed essential for progressing and, having completed that hurdle, my ability to make career choices was so much easier.

I discovered I had a method that worked – **Aptitude**, **Attitude** and **Application**.

I focused on areas where I had a natural aptitude, I adopted and demonstrated the right attitude to be successful, and I applied all my energy and effort to the task. I have retained that guiding set of principles to this day.

What barriers and/or obstacles did you face in your career? How did you overcome them?

Banking was very institutionalised and hierarchical in my early days. I remember once being told by an English teacher that I was hiding my light under a bushel. After I worked out what that meant, I understood that we cannot shine if we are not able to be seen.

I was always the first person to finish anything, the first person to volunteer, the first person to tackle a problem and the first person to offer a different way to do things. I wasn't pushy and was always careful not to offend others or appear to jump the queue. I began to watch, listen and team up with experienced people. I started asking if I could learn what other people did. I sought out secondments to other areas, departments and became recognised as someone that could be trusted to do a good job and could step up in emergencies.

I often felt I was stretching myself a little too far and that I might fail. Something kept that fear in check and - as I was put in new and challenging roles - I reflected on previous times where I had overcome difficulties and had successes. That gave me more confidence.

Did you have mentors and coaches to help you along the way?

I created a mentor pool. The mentors probably didn't know it and there was no formal support network. I identified a couple of role models and tried to emulate their leadership style. I had my fair share of untrained managers and learned very quickly how not to do things!

Later in my career when formally holding Team Leader roles, there was support in a Leadership Development Programme which helped shape and improve my natural style.

What are your top 3 values?

Hope, **Trust** and **Compassion**. A leader that lives these values will build great teams and will energise a business. Break any of those values and the ability to lead will be compromised, possibly irreparably.

If you share Hope with others, you can lift a whole team. People can move forward if they have Hope. If they don't, they can head into a downward spiral of despair and things become more complex than they need to be.

Trust cements everyone or can break the team. Without Trust, you're on the back foot and it is very hard to get it back.

"I own it. It's as simple as that. My inner genes drive me to do things the best I possibly can. - DAVID TAYLOR

In **my rally driving**, I have to have blind trust in my co-driver – literally. If I don't listen, we're going to crash.

When I mentor people, I want to feel that Trust, I want to give Hope.

Compassion is about understanding situations people are in, helping them deal with those situations in a way that is compassionate. It doesn't mean being seen as a soft touch or that you give people what they want because you are a nice person.

I sometimes have to make harsh decisions but I execute in a compassionate way. Sometimes the message we have to give to people can be devastating – so it's important to think about the other person's feelings.

How do you define success?

Doing the best you can and learning on the way. I put passion into all I do – for example, when I sit on a Board, I do what is best for the business. I'm proud of what I do and I take responsibility.

What do you think it is that makes you care so much about your work?

I own it. It's as simple as that. My inner genes drive me to do things the best I possibly can. Every time. It's how I am. I do everything to the best of my ability.

I was 31 when I ran my first marathon, after having smoked for 19 years. I quit smoking and decided I could run a marathon. So I did – in 3 hours, 5 mins. I did a half marathon at 32 and completed it in 76 minutes – within 18 months of having never run in my life. I put my mind to things and I want to do the best I possibly can.

Catching up with a client at the vineyard

It's the same with my rally car racing. I want to do something different and do it well. I'm the oldest rookie by far – the average age is about 24 and then there is me. I'm determined, however, not to be the rookie who is last in the field!

What do you think are the characteristics of a good leader?

A leader should be a catalyst for others to grow. Leaders must take risks and allow others to learn. Encouraging others to use their natural attributes and work as a team creates powerful outcomes.

"A leader should be a catalyst for others to grow."

Leaders should plan for and identify their successor. I like the notion of a leader being the glue in a team. A key component that holds everything together but not necessarily the most obvious element.

Also, not everyone in any situation thinks and acts in the same way as the person trying to lead them – so you need to be aware and think your way through that. I think you can moderate your behaviours whilst your core drivers can stay the same.

You've always been invested in the personal and career development of your team – why is this important to you?

There is nothing more rewarding than seeing others grow in their role. Investing in people helps build strong teams, great communities and personal wellbeing.

Sometimes that investment can be stretching, sometimes challenging, but nearly always it repays itself many, many times over. Nurturing talented people has a wide and positive impact for teams, individuals and their sponsors.

With Daniel & Sarah Jenkins at the Kaikoura Cheese Factory - one of the businesses that David has invested in.

When I reflect on my Banking Career, I feel some pride that I have been able to help a number of colleagues achieve their true potential and overcome obstacles.

I've been lucky to learn a lot in my life so it would be a shame not to share that with others.

If I'm happy to get out of bed in the morning and do what I do when I'm 80 – if others value it – then that's fine. I'll stop when I stop giving value.

Making a decision to start Positive Potential and then Catalyst Capital was about using my skills and experience to help others, whilst also getting enjoyment, motivation and enthusiasm out of doing it. I don't back losers and I choose my clients based on the opportunity they bring for themselves and for me. There's no rush.

How do you prioritise the things on your daily to do list?

The most important things on my list are the ones that will make a real difference. My list might be long some days but it is often filled with things of little real importance.

My client relationships are top of mind in everything I do. They come before the administration, before the urgent requests or favours.

I will ruthlessly select the areas that need my focus by assessing the value to my client and to our relationship. I will stretch and adapt to ensure my client feels they have my full attention.

I am never late in delivering on promises and I never add on any hidden charges.

Winning the Rally Award for 1st in Class (National Series)

David and young co-driver Jared working on rally notes

Businessman, mentor, Board advisor, coach and investor

How do you stay focused?

I am fortunate that I can select who I do business with. I engage with clients who I believe are capable of more, who want success and who will work towards that in a positive and energised way. I seek out businesses that hold opportunity, that are building teams and that will make a difference to their communities.

And are you calm under pressure?

I have developed an ability to keep calm when the going gets tough. I do get frustrated when there is unfairness or where there is a lack of integrity and I will call those behaviours out.

I have experienced situations going wrong and sometimes spiral out of control - particularly in businesses suffering financial stress. I try to isolate the personal impacts in a situation and look to resolve or mitigate those before looking for solutions to the real crises.

Separating those two elements can ease a path to the pressure points and can give people hope.

How do you maintain a good balance between work and life?

I have been in some sort of employment for over 50 years now and I have yet to get that balance right. It gets easier as you build confidence in what

"I have an ability to keep calm when the going gets tough"

you can do, as you create support networks (professional and personal), but ultimately there will always be times when the balance is not how you might wish. Having other things in your life that take you out of work mode are helpful. That can be sports, volunteering, taking on a project or grabbing some time away from the office to simply have a coffee and cake.

When on holiday I always leave an out of office message which informs clients I am away, that I will read their message but that they should expect I will take 36 hours to respond. I then allocate a specific time to review email traffic and, where I can, I will reply with a holding option.

My clients respect that they get my full attention when I am working and that my time out is just that - time out.

Do you have a typical morning ritual?

Yes I do. Have some breakfast cereal and a coffee, check the news, what's going on Facebook, review my diary and plan what needs attention first.

David's favourite place for a coffee and catch up

What does peak performance mean to you?

Working effectively, efficiently and getting results that are as planned or better. At the end of a task having confidence that it can be replicated and improved and has been of value to the recipient.

Do you have any role models?

I modelled much of my values approach to work on a Manager at Bank of Scotland (Sandy Cameron) who, when we worked together, was considered very young to hold a senior leadership position and who brought an approach to team leadership that was inclusive, stretching and rewarding. I have some others that I respect and admire that are well known.

Jackie Stewart - former World Racing Car Driver who is an ambassador for the sport, a change agent for safety, a compassionate individual while intensely competitive for himself and those in his team.

Bob Geldof - musician and world influencer who changed the way we all thought about poverty and who is outspoken when bureaucracy hinders positive action.

Nelson Mandela - former World Leader who brought his people together, gave them hope and helped achieved acceptance and democracy in a peaceful manner.

> "Investing in people helps build strong teams, great communities and personal wellbeing."

What did you want to be when you were growing up?

I had some thoughts of being a Naval Officer. I have some colour blindness however which made that option more than difficult.

During senior schooling I was focused on making money to own a car, holding down four or five part time roles, at the same time. Working as a butcher's boy, a gardener, petrol pump attendant, barman and hotel porter.

Finally, is there a book you'd recommend we read?

Zero to 60 by Tony Quinn (he grew up in the same city as me in Scotland and attended the same senior school although, until very recently, I had not met him).

His book tells of growing up in a wooden caravan in Scotland and his journey to become a self-made millionaire and petrol head who owns Darrell Lea Confectionery, two New Zealand Car Race Tracks and who sold his VIP Petfoods business for over AUS$400m in 2015.

"I've been lucky to learn a lot in my life so it would be a shame not to share that with others."

~ WE'RE AT THE FINISH LINE ~

Know someone who lives and breathes high performance?

Get in touch to learn more about the superstars we feature in Higher State magazine.
Email: abi@abigailireland.com

David rallying with the Honda Civic

PRODUCTIVITY: MEANINGFUL MEETINGS

It's time to break the cycle

Sometimes we head into the week feeling pumped and ready to tackle work head on. It's pretty frustrating when unexpected meetings start dropping into the calendar or when you sit through a meeting that drags on and on with no real purpose or outcome. So, what to do?

Become more curious. Before committing to any meeting, make sure you know what it's about and whether you *really* need to be there. Be honest.

A meeting may be a worthy use of your time but there may be better ways to achieve the same results. For example, instead of spending three hours in a team meeting to brainstorm ideas, could you individually gather your thoughts in advance and share with each other electronically. Then use these ideas as a starting point in a shorter, more focused meeting to progress and refine your ideas.

Abi's career has involved advising senior executives on strategic direction, business improvement, and effective operations. For help to raise team performance, email Abi at abi@abigailireland.com.

And...ACTION!

Review your calendar for the week ahead and ask youself the following questions:

Can I opt out of any meetings?
Can someone go in my place?
Am I adding value?
Am I getting value?
Is the agenda clear?
What's the desired outcome?

MINDSET: BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND

The key to achieving high impact results

Steven Covey was spot on when he chose "Begin With the End in Mind" as the second of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* in his best-selling book of the same name. By having extreme clarity on your vision and end goal(s), you will consciously and unconsciously make decisions every day that drive you closer to achieving what really matters to you.

Covey continues to explain that "all things are created twice" - they are created in the mind before they become a physical reality. Therefore, you must know what you want if you are to get the results you seek.

The greatest athletes, performers and business leaders visualise their success long before it is a reality. Conor McGregor, the UFC superstar, is a huge advocate of visualisation and using this technique to successfully turn all of his dreams into reality. He even had a huge mural painted of his August 2017 fight against Floyd Mayweather to help him mentally prepare whilst training. It may seem woo-woo, but if visualisation works for McGregor, it's good enough for us!

For more McGregor-Mayweather wisdom from the boxing arena, click here.

Mindset is just one aspect of high performance. If you want to be more productive and achieve more in less time, register for ***the FREE 10 Day Productivity Challenge that kicks off every Monday. One quick & easy challenge each day for 10 days to help you get on track.***

FITNESS: WATCH YOUR BACK

Get those shoulders away from your ears!

You may not be able to see it, but it doesn't mean you should neglect your back.

Whilst many office workers exercise regularly, surprisingly little attention is paid to back health. Cardio, chest and bicep workouts are usually much more appealing to the typical gym goer.

So, what's all the fuss about? Here are some reasons why it pays to give your back the attention it deserves:

1. Posture: Weak back muscles struggle to hold your shoulders in a decent position for very long, so the result is that you end up with a stooped upper back and shoulders that curve forwards. This is aggravated even more by computer work, where your shoulders are constantly pulled forwards as you type away on your keyboard.

2. Body Language: As unfair as it seems, it's human nature to judge people on appearance and first impressions. A slouching posture does not exude presence and confidence so it pays to develop a strong, upright stance that aligns with high performance.

3. Aches & Pains: If your back muscles aren't strong enough to hold your shoulders back and down, they overstretch as they are pulled forwards. This creates undue strain and is often a cause of upper back and neck tension for office workers. Insightful!

Abigail is a qualified Personal Trainer, Pilates instructor and Precision Nutrition certified coach. She addresses Physiology when developing performance strategies and workshops for clients.
To learn how physical wellbeing impacts performance, email abi@abigailireland.com.

NUTRITION: EGG-CELLENT BREKKIE DISHES

Abigail takes a comprehensive approach to high performance - focusing on business productivity tools and strategies, but also mental, physical & emotional factors. ***Make food choices that sharpen your mind.*** *Find out more: abi@abigailireland.com.*

Eggs are a brilliant, versatile food source that can help you to power through your day. They are inexpensive, packed with nutrients and a great natural source of protein.

Eggs help to induce feelings of satiety (fullness), meaning that you can keep going for longer without hunger creeping up on you.

Finally, eggs are super easy to prepare in a variety of ways, so you won't get bored!

Always choose free-range (and organic if you can).

SOME BREAKFAST EGG-AMPLES

- 2 hard-boiled eggs with a cupful of raw baby spinach leaves
- Scrambled eggs with mushrooms and steamed spinach
- Omelette (with red onion, grated tenderstem broccoli, cherry tomatoes and sliced green chilli)
- Poached egg, smoked salmon and wilted spinach on multigrain or sourdough toast
- Breakfast pancake (smashed banana, egg and protein powder mixed into a batter and pan-fried in coconut oil)

RAISE YOUR TEAM'S PERFORMANCE

Do you want to lift team performance, productivity, engagement and results in your workplace?

Abi works with organisations to amplify team performance and productivity through workshops, coaching and strategic programmes. She focuses on business productivity strategies whilst incorporating mental, physical and emotional drivers of peak performance.

Abi enjoyed a decade in financial services before building her own businesses in the education and wellbeing fields. Her career took her on a journey through private equity, corporate banking, strategy and business management with major banks in London and Sydney.

In her corporate and entrepreneurial work, Abi learned how **effective business skills**, **psychology** and **physiology** combine to optimise productivity, energy, focus and the ability to deliver results that matter.

1 WORKSHOPS

- Practical, value-packed workshops that have an immediate impact on productivity and create a lasting, high-performance mindset
- Foundation level workshops focused on Business Productivity, Nutrition, Body and Mindset OR tailored staff/executive workshops catering for specific business requirements
- **CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE**

2 COACHING

- Tailored coaching sessions for individuals and small groups, typically in the weeks and months following workshop sessions - designed to promote accountability and embed long-term performance habits
- Opportunity to tackle issues & roadblocks that sabotage performance
- **CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE**

3 STRATEGY

- In-house programmes and initiatives tailored to organisational and team requirements - research, analysis and strategy development
- Design and development of solutions to increase productivity, lift engagement, boost performance and achieve business objectives
- **CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE**

"EXCELLENCE IS NOT A SKILL. IT'S AN ATTITUDE."

RALPH MARSTON

Thanks for reading Higher State! Look out for the next issue in November 2017.

What elements of performance would you like to hear about next? Send me your feedback so I can bring you more quality content in the future.

Stay productive!
Abi

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