ISSUE 06
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HIGHER STATE

THE MAGAZINE FOR HIGH PERFORMERS

THE SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS

Learn how ex-lawyer Helen Pattinson took a risk and created Britain's most innovative chocolate brand

EAT WELL AT CHRISTMAS

It's that time of year - stay on track through the festivities

KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON

2019 is looming but have you achieved your goals this year?

DO LESS TO ACHIEVE MORE

Focus on quality over quantity to see real results

Xmas Edition

There are under two months to go before a whole new year starts....so, have you looked back over your 2018 goals and what you set out to achieve?

If not, now is the perfect time to reflect and plan how you're going to give that goal-getting a final push. It's not about all or nothing - it's about PROGRESS. Even if you haven't quite done everything (or anything!) you intended to, it's never too late.

We often adopt an all or nothing attitude, and given that it's hard to do anything perfectly, we can default to choosing the "nothing" path over the "progress".

So, do yourself a big favour and focus on progress over perfection. You still have time to create change for yourself, your teams and your business. Review those KPIs, break down large targets into actionable chunks and give it your best shot over the next 60 days. Then, when 2019 comes around, you can continue to build on what you've started.

Abi

HELPING TEAMS TO EXCEL

Edition 6, November / December 2018

ENABLING PEAK PERFORMANCE @ WORK

Is your team focused, productive and getting results?

Are your people energised, forward-thinking and high-performing?

Abi helps executives and teams to **build high performance habits** and achieve results with more focus, more energy and less stress.

Abi's unique High Performance Formula is a 360-degree system that enables teams to achieve top performance - addressing Business Productivity, Psychology and Physiological factors.

Combining her extensive business experience with skills as a fitness and nutrition professional, Abi can help you to take your team to the next level.

Speak to Abi about in-house programme development, performance coaching, workshops and training.

WHAT'S IN STORE

04 Work with Abi
05 Productivity: Stop Throwing Spaghetti
06 Mindset: Progress, Not Perfection
07 Fitness: How Exercise Can Hurt
08 Nutrition: Christmas Health Hacks
09 Spotlight on Helen Pattinson

CLICK HERE for a Productivity 101 Masterclass

WORK WITH ABI

Ready to raise your team's performance, productivity, engagement and results?

Abi works with organisations to amplify team performance and productivity through workshops, coaching and strategic in-house programme development. She focuses on business productivity strategies whilst also incorporating psychological and physiological drivers of top performance (for example, mindset, attitude, exercise, nutrition and sleep).

Abi's corporate career led her to work internationally in private equity deal origination and acquisitions, banking, strategy and business management for over 13 years. She has also established her own businesses in the wellbeing and education fields, using her skills and experience as a Master Personal Trainer, Nutrition Coach and Pilates Instructor to bring a unique offering to clients that covers all angles.

Abi's 360-degree **High Performance Formula** can be applied to any team to boost productivity, energy, focus, engagement and quality results.

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, lift performance and achieve business objectives
- **CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE**

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PRODUCTIVITY: STOP THROWING SPAGHETTI

Do less to achieve more

Although it can seem counter-intuitive, it pays to be smart and get really focused on the big ticket items that will deliver results. In this day and age, we often go hard with lots of different strategies at work - it's like throwing spaghetti at a wall and hoping something will stick.

You may already be in the thick of things, but take the next couple of months to review what you are working on. What is going to have the biggest impact and what can you take off your plate?

Then, be ruthless and work out what you can dump, delegate or defer as 2019 kicks off.

If you have too much going on at once, you'll be the victim of mind clutter, disorganisation and a massive loss of focus. Being busy does NOT mean you are productive, so reassess your activities and make plans to do less next year but to do everything to the best of your ability.

Remember, it's about quality and not quantity.

Abi has worked closely with and advised senior executives on strategic direction, business improvement, colleague engagement and effective leadership over the years. For help to raise your team's performance and productivity, send a message to ask@abigailireland.com.

MINDSET: PROGRESS, NOT PERFECTION

Get away from that all or nothing approach

2019 is just around the corner and, like many of us, you're probably wondering where on earth the year went. You may also have forgotten about the goals and good intentions you set on 1 January 2018. Perhaps you started off well but then got sidetracked and never jumped back on the bandwagon.

Nevertheless, it's time to be brave and revisit your 2018 goals.

Tip for 2019 planning - write down what you want to achieve so you have something you can refer back to as the year progresses. Really visualise that goal.

Ditch that all or nothing mindset that tells you that you may as well quit. The mindset that says you haven't done what you intended to and it's nearly the end of 2018, so why bother now? You may as well give up entirely and try again in 2019....

Instead, take this approach. You can get a headstart on 2019 if you get the foundations in place now. Plan, prepare and start taking action on your goals now. You have two months to enjoy the process and take small steps (it doesn't matter how small, as any forward shift takes you closer to your goal). Once 2019 arrives, you'll be ahead of the game.

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: HOW EXERCISE CAN HURT

You can have too much of a good thing

High performance is a fine art which requires the skill to know when to push and when to slow down. This is perfectly relevant for fitness too.

There are times in life when you have the energy, determination, purpose and health to push on and take performance to the next level. There are also times when it pays to slow down, recalibrate and rest before ramping up again.

In a world of speed, we often forget to slow down and listen to our bodies. It's all about doing more, doing it faster and doing it harder. Pushing ourselves to our limits.

This isn't always productive or smart.

So, this week, learn to exercise in a way that supports your body and mind. Bring more balance into your life. Remember that strength, suppleness and stamina are all required for peak physical performance. Learn to stretch, learn to nurture your muscles and look after your bones. Don't just focus on how much you can lift or how fast you can run.

Try Pilates, gentle yoga, tai chi or swimming at least once in the next week to balance your body and mind. It may be difficult to slow down at first but taking time to master technique, proper breathing and all-round physical performance will enable you to outperform when you get back to hitting it hard at the gym.

Abigail is a qualified Master Personal Trainer, Pilates Instructor and certified Precision Nutrition coach. She integrates Physiology into client performance strategies and workshops.
To learn how physical wellbeing impacts performance, email abi@abigailireland.com.

www.abigailireland.com

NUTRITION: CHRISTMAS HEALTH HACKS

There's no point forcing yourself to be super healthy at this time of year if it's something you usually struggle with.

Building good nutrition habits takes time and patience. Instead of opting for the latest diet trend or swearing that you won't drink too much, try to focus on one small thing you can easily introduce over the festive season.

By taking this approach, you can still enjoy the celebrations in a guilt-free way whilst feeling confident that you're enhancing your health and wellness.

Moreover, you won't be starting from scratch when January swings around - or having to "punish" yourself by eating healthily. It will just be part of who you are and come naturally to you. Sound good?

Ok, pick a habit below and run with it...

1. Have a green salad instead of chips

2. Ask for a side of steamed vegetables when eating out

3. Opt for fresh mint tea after dinner instead of coffee

4. Put your fork down between bites and eat slowly

5. Have a green smoothie every day

Make food choices that sharpen your mind. *Find out more about workshops, coaching and programmes for your team: abi@abigailireland.com.*

LIFE IS LIKE A BOX OF CHOCOLATES

That's right, you never know which one you're gonna get. Regardless, be present and savour every moment.

Christmas is coming up and the festive spirit is here to warm up the cold winter days.

A mug of steaming hot chocolate is the perfect drink of choice at the end of a long day, and Christmas just wouldn't be Christmas without the chance to indulge in delicious chocolate treats.

On that note, what could be better than an interview with real life Willy Wonka, Helen Pattinson - co-founder of award-winning British chocolate company **Montezuma's**.

Let's dig in...

So many treats in store at Montezuma's

"SAY YES TO STUFF, PUT YOURSELF OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE AND SQUEEZE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN INTO EVERY DAY"

HELEN PATTINSON

Helen Pattinson has succeeded in building a Great British chocolate brand that excites the senses and tickles the tastebuds. If you've ever entered into a Montezuma's store, you'll be spoilt for choice.

However, to create such a unique and quality business takes time, commitment and resilience. Things don't always go to plan and true high performers like Helen accept and embrace the challenges that pop up on the road to success.

Abi's Observation: *Helen has such a refreshing and down to earth manner, which clearly flows through into the way she runs her business. With an incredibly upbeat and positive nature, it's not a surprise that Helen could turn things around when faced with difficult times. Helen's story demonstrates her ability to face setbacks head on and bounce back in style.*

Key Takeaway: When things get tough, it's important to keep your eye on the ball and have a clear idea of what you want to achieve and, most importantly, why. Easier said than done, the ability to focus is one of the most crucial skills of high performing teams and individuals.

HERE'S HELEN

Could you give a brief outline of your career path, from where you started out to where you are today?

My career in food is as much a surprise to me as anyone I grew up with. My passion was always for sport and those were the lessons I enjoyed at school. It was fortunate that I did well enough academically to stay under the teachers' radars!

Fast forward a few years and after falling flat on my face with pretty poor A-levels, I re-took a couple with the stark realisation that I couldn't keep passing exams on the "night before" revision strategy which I had previously pursued. I managed to land a place at King's College, London to study Maths and Business Studies. I learned to love studying and became pretty good at it, walking out of King's with a First. However I still had no idea of what I wanted to do except that my Business Studies had included a couple of courses on Law which I had really enjoyed.

After a two year conversion course at the College of Law, I finally entered the real world of work and started as a trainee Solicitor in a London law firm.

I absolutely loved studying law; this really involves reading a lot of case law which translates as a whole host of stories about things that have gone wrong and ended up in Court. But as soon as I started my trainee contract, I could see that the road to the interesting cases and clients was an extremely long and not a very exciting one.

When Simon (my now husband) joined the same law firm, we quickly talked each other out of our legal careers and gave it all up to embark on a life-changing trip to South America.

Was there a lightbulb moment that led to you starting Montezuma's?

While travelling in Argentina, we were desperate to come up with a business idea which meant we didn't have to come back to our old lives as lawyers. We had loads of mad ideas but then one day, in the middle of the Argentinian lake district, we discovered a town filled with chocolate shops.

It was obviously a local speciality, but we were so taken aback by the retail theatre going on and the incredible range of chocolate that we were immediately obsessed by the idea of creating a chocolate business.

What were your biggest challenges and how did you overcome them?

We have had so many challenges, in the early days, every day brought a new challenge and in the end, you become very good at problem solving at speed!

One of our biggest challenges hit us very early on, before we had even sold a bar of chocolate. Having written a whole business plan around a retail business model, sourcing all of our products from chocolate makers in the UK, the largest producer we had found went bust before we'd even opened the doors to our first store in Brighton.

We had a ridiculous 24 hours on discovering this, during which we worked out what on earth to do and then decided that the only way forward was to make the chocolate ourselves. We taught ourselves to make chocolate with the help of ingredients and machinery suppliers and the very basic Internet as it was then.

It was awful and so frustrating, anyone who has worked with chocolate will know how hard it is to get it right, but when you do, it feels like a miracle!

"...have a clear strategy and make sure everyone feels like they own it so it becomes their strategy too." - HELEN PATTINSON

Making all of our own products has given us a full understanding of the process and a lot of credibility along the way so we have never regretted it - it has just made the business a lot more complex than we originally planned. So with the benefit of hindsight, it was the making of the business as it is today.

Simon and I still dream up most of the new product ideas, with a lot of input from customer feedback, staff ideas and considering foodie trends. We rarely make chocolate anymore but sometimes I long for those days of hand-making bars of chocolate to shiny perfection!

You created and grew an exciting and successful business. What do you think makes a good leader?

It's taken me a long time to work this one out...in the early days, I just assumed that everyone on our team would understand our goals and know where we wanted to take the business - but that takes clear communication and I just wasn't very good at it.

The key is obviously to have a clear strategy and make sure everyone feels like they own it so it becomes their strategy too.

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

Ten years ago, Simon and I brought in a part time FD to help us instil some discipline in the business.

Trevor turned out to be much than an FD to us, a bit older with a lot more experience, he has become a mentor who perhaps sanity checks some of our mad ideas sometimes!

"My work and life values would be identical."

Getting ready for Christmas in style

What are your top 3 values in work and life?

My work and life values would be identical, I don't think it's possible to be a different person at work!

They are:

Friendly - As we say in the business, a smile costs nothing. I can't stand people who are snobbish or feel they are superior to others. I will talk to everyone, it's amazing the life stories you hear when you bother to ask people the right questions.

Positive - I am a naturally positive person, I always think the best of people and have enormous amounts of hope.

Get involved - Say yes to stuff, put yourself outside your comfort zone and squeeze as much as you can into every day, life is too short to say no.

You have a packed personal and business life. How do you prioritise effectively whilst also maintaining a good balance between work and play?

Firstly, I'm not sure anyone ever believes they have struck the right balance between work and play - I certainly don't and get it wrong all the time.

For me, the most important thing at the moment is making sure I spend time with my family. My three daughters are growing up so fast. I can't bear the idea that they will be gone and I will have missed this massive phase of their lives. So sometimes work stuff has to give way to just being at home when I know there is still work to be done.

But I do also believe that you have to do something for yourself to keep this balance in check. For me, that will be getting some exercise, whether it's a bike ride or a run, that's what makes me happy and keeps my stress levels at bay so I would say it's not a luxury, it's a necessity!

Innovative. eye-catching chocolate from Montezuma's

And finally, having children does make you learn to delegate. Our business has grown because we have delegated large parts of our roles to much more capable people than ourselves.

How do you stay focused?

I just love what I do and what we've created so it's not hard to stay focused on the job at hand - to become Britain's Greatest Little Chocolate company!

Do you have a typical morning or daily routine?

My day normally starts around 6.30am getting three children up and ready for school, along with the right combination of bags, musical instruments and sports equipment! Coffee will be involved early on.

When I eventually get to my desk by 8.30am, sometimes I feel like I've already done a full day so another coffee, and most likely some chocolate scavenged from the tastings boxes, followed by catching up on emails and having a few discussions with people normally takes me to about 10.30am.

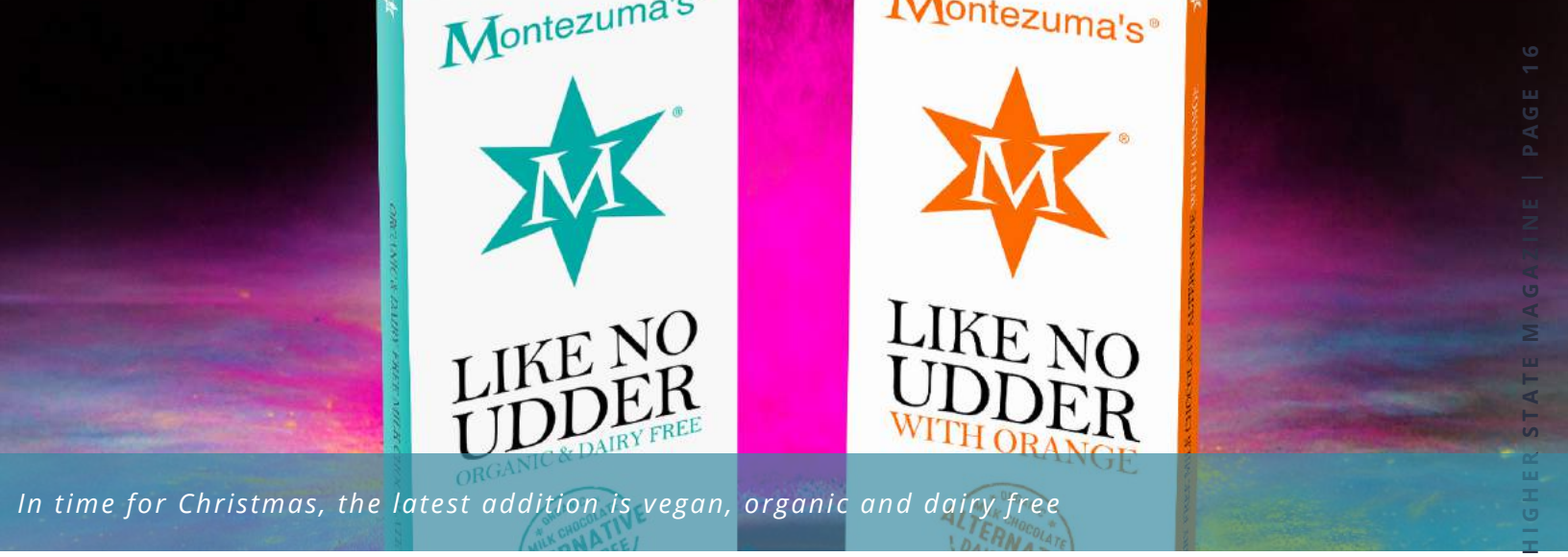
I will sign off some new product designs or have meetings about the next season that we're looking at (starting from 18 months ahead of the actual season). Then I may catch up with our retail manager to hear about how the shops have been performing and discuss their next focus themes as well as have a meeting with our E-commerce manager to discuss online performance and strategy.

More chocolate (and probably coffee) will be consumed throughout the day and I will try to head off at 4pm so that I can be home for the children. But it should go without saying that no day is the same!

What does high performance mean to you?

High performance to me is not just about money. In the early days, when you and the business have no money, all the goals are focused on driving the business to profitability.

But now that we have that and the business is in a very comfortable place, for me the goals have changed and high performance is much more about happy teams, creating a fun place,



In time for Christmas, the latest addition is vegan, organic and dairy free

giving back to the community and of course making sure that everyone can choose Montezuma's if they wish. Maybe it's a sign of age but success is not just about how much money is in your bank account!

Do you have a role model?

I was always a big Anita Roddick fan, right from an early age. What she did to create The Body Shop in the 70's was ground-breaking in so many ways. I read all of her books while I was growing up and my only regret is that I didn't get to meet her.

Coincidentally (or maybe not!), I am now a trustee of the charity she set up, the amazing Children on the Edge (**http://childrenontheedge.org**), which is an incredible entrepreneurial charity helping marginalised children around the world.

What's next for Montezuma's? You have an exciting new range coming out later this year – tell us more.

We are always developing new products and the challenge for us is keeping the range at a manageable size! But I am really excited to be launching our Like No Udder bars very soon. These are designed to taste like milk chocolate but without a cow in sight! So perfect for people who are avoiding dairy but also for our vegan fans who already enjoy our dark chocolate bars and can now have something a little sweeter.

Find out more at www.montezumas.co.uk/

"Success is not just about how much money is in your bank account!"

Get in touch to learn more about the superstars we feature in Higher State.

Know someone who lives and breathes high performance?

Send your thoughts and suggestions to abi@abigailireland.com

"BE SO GOOD THEY CAN'T IGNORE YOU."

STEVE MARTIN

Thanks for reading Higher State! Look out for Issue 07 in January.

What elements of performance and productivity would you like to hear about next?

Send me your views so I can bring you more quality content in the future.

In the meantime, stay productive!

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