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PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES DELIVERED

XeP3

Building and Maintaining Organisational Energy for Adaptation

August 2021

www.bevingtongroup.com

Business Model Design • Process Improvement • Change Management

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Our proposition here is that dealing with rapid change involves management of energy and ultimately "focus"

Your own energy levels

Peer agreement on "focus"

- Influencing your peers and encouraging collaboration across silos
- Peers to support "focusing"

Personal Energy Sinks and Energisers

- Avoiding the contexts that "suck energy" and building personal energy to lead the changes

Leadership work – what you do to lead your team

- Direction setting for the team
- Stressing the purpose
- Explaining context
- Setting objectives
- Being clear on feedback

Organisational Energy

- Apply the latest in in organisational energy thinking
- Understand what are the things that get in the way

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Our journey will be as follows

- Start with personal energy – if you don't have it, it's hard to lead the organisation to high energy levels
- Then the theory and practice of organisational energy – this is likely to be new for most of you
- Then removing the waste and clutter – this just gets in the way
- The some suggestions on what to do at the team level

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Focus to spend your energy well and build more energy

"It is not that we have a short space of time, but that we waste much of it. Life is long enough, and it has been given in sufficiently generous measure to allow the accomplishment of the very greatest things if the whole of it is well invested."

SENECA, "On the Shortness of Life"

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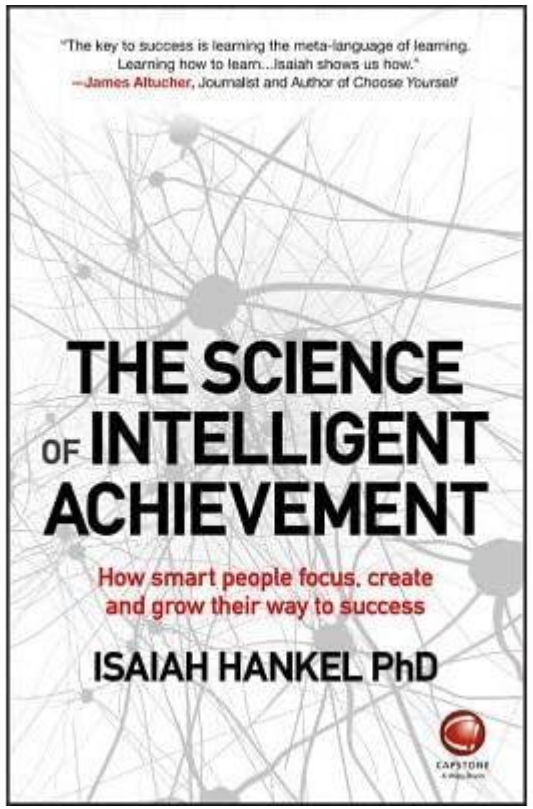
Let's start with some of the published work on the importance of focus



Key points in this book

- Mental energy is a precious resource. You have 5-7 hours of effective cognitive performance a day – how will you use it?
- Consciously decide how to spend your time (Hankel is NOT a fan of social media)
- Spend time thinking and then acting, not worrying
- Invest some time in assessing how you are spending your time
- To avoid worry
  - Have a plan (plans committed to paper work best)
  - Find the funny side AND
  - **Reframe**

Reference: Hankel, I. (2018). *The Science of Intelligent Achievement: How Smart People Focus, Create and Grow Their Way to Success*. Germany: Wiley.

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The world's most successful productivity writer, Covey, is a firm advocate of "focus"

	Urgent		Not Urgent	
Important	**Quadrant I**		**Quadrant II**	
	Activities	Results	Activities	Results
	• Crisis • Pressing Problems • Deadline Driven	• Stress • Burn-out • Crisis Management • Always putting out fires	• Prevention, capability, improvement • Relationship building • Recognising new opportunities	• Vision, perspective • Balance • Discipline • Control • Few crises
	Do		**Plan**	
Not important	**Quadrant III**		**Quadrant IV**	
	Activities	Results	Activities	Results
	• Interruptions, some callers • Some emails, some reports • Some meetings • Proximate, pressing matters • Popular activities	• Short term focus • Crisis management • Reputation – chameleon character • See goals / plans as worthless • Feel victimised, out of control • Shallow or broken relationships	• Trivia, busy work • Some email • Personal social media • Some phone calls • Time wasters • Pleasant activities	• Total irresponsibility • Fired from jobs • Dependent on others or institutions for basics
	Delegate		**Eliminate**	

Reference: Covey, S. R. (2013). *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change*. United Kingdom: Simon & Schuster.

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Naturally, if you are going to focus on Quadrant II – you need goals for each role you play

- As a son/daughter/partner
- As a friend
- As a professional
- As a citizen
- As a human being!

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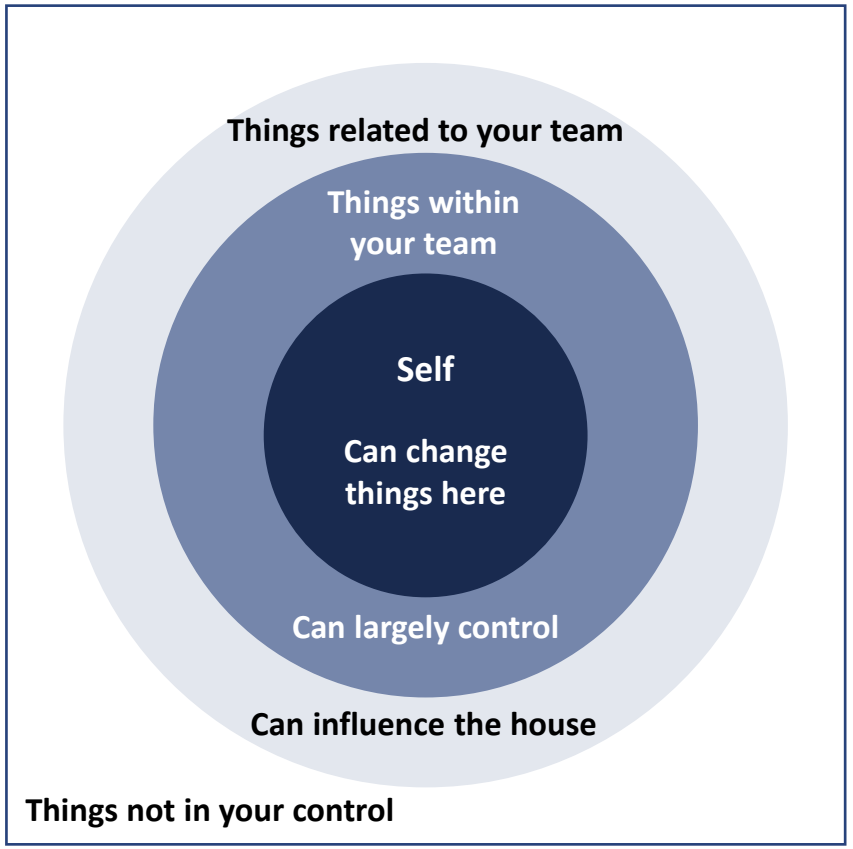
Focus on things you can control, or materially influence, to be really impactful with your energy

Concentric circles of control and influence



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So – the first message – there is a strong relationship between energy and focus

Note – this applies for you personally, your team, and your organisation

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But what sucks energy from us?

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Focus helps with energy, but bear in mind that negativity is “enervating”

Dr. Hankel contends that listening to criticism too much doesn't enhance your critical faculties, but actually damages your ability to reason

- Evidence comes from the proceedings of the Royal Society 2010

Hankel references Dr. Robert Sapolsky’s research that after 30 minutes of negative thinking, neurons in the hippocampus begin dying

Areas of the brain related to problem-solving do not do well under continuous negativity

Yet, to be always surrounded by positivity would lead to bad outcomes (low resilience and denial of problems) SO it is a balance.

- One trick is to be careful who you hang out with and make sure that these are NOT people who have ONLY negative things to say or contribute

- Seligman, in work on “Learned Optimism”, proposed that optimists
  - Consider problems as generally temporary
  - They are not necessarily caused by them
  - BUT we have the freedom to choose how we respond to them

Reference: Seligman, M. E. P. (2018). *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life*. United Kingdom: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

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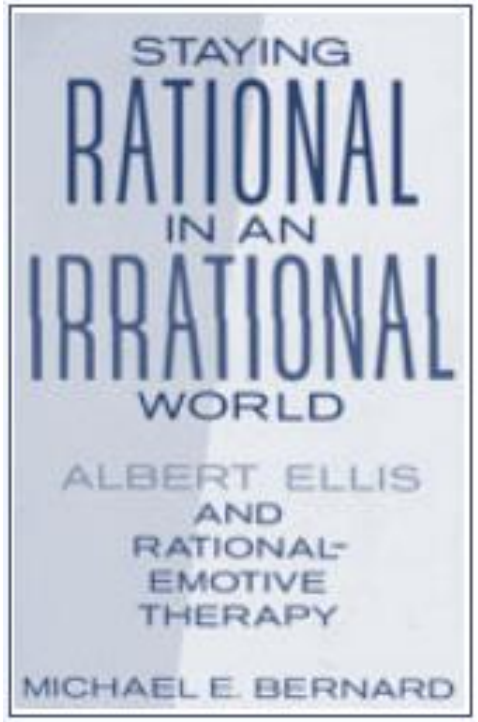
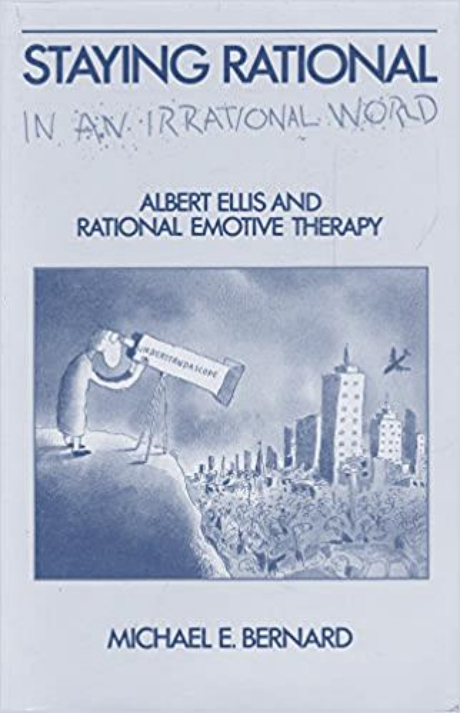
Where we are our own source of negativity, reframing is a potential strategy

Reframing is necessary because we tend to think **rationally**





- Step back and look at your situation
- Remember it is rarely as bad as it first appears
- We often catastrophise about things that are unlikely to happen OR we can cope with it even if they did happen. So, consciously assess the probabilities of the worst case outcome (and discover that disaster is unlikely)
- Consider that you can probably handle the worst case outcome
- Reframing – what is not wrong with the situation? How can I turn it to my advantage? What can I learn?

The secret is having a plan, retaining your sense of humour, and reframing as we have just described

Reference: Bernard, M. E. (1991). *Staying Rational in an Irrational World: Albert Ellis and Rational Emotive Therapy*. United States: Carol Publishing Group.

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There are energy “enhancers” and energy “sinks” (The Roger Guide)

Enhancers

- Purpose alignment
- Journals (e.g. Gratitude Journal)
- Reframing
- Rationality (R.E.T)
- Exercise
- Fresh food
- Regular sleep
- Meditation
- Mini-breaks
- Healthy relationships
- A sense of humour
- Sunlight
- Fresh air

Sinks

- The “unexamined life” (Plato, Socrates) - Lack of purpose
- Hedonism (unadulterated)
- Lack of exercise
- Lack of rest (stress and rest)
- Poor relationships
- Digital distraction
- Failure to prioritise (things to achieve today or tomorrow)
- Upper and lower boundaries
- Ruminating worry
- Existential angst
- Absence of philosophy

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Some starting points for focus (just the beginning!)

1. Be clear on your missions

2. Be clear on your "projects" – they should be related to your missions

3. Be clear on what you can and cannot control

4. Seek feedback on how you spend time – and assess your own use of time via
   - Covey's 4 quadrants (say by looking at your diary and how you spend time)
   - An XeP3 Job assessment on yourself

5. Create "Implementation Intentions" in order to make the change

6. Review your "Implementation Intentions" each evening

7. Set aside time to "sharpen the saw"

8. Use this time to do things like
   - Coach people so that you can delegate (just delegating to an unskilled staff member is unlikely to work out well)
   - Ensure you are not the most commonly used decision maker
   - Ensure you are not the most commonly used sign-off authority
   - Get "overview" metrics so you know where to look for risks, issues and opportunities
   - Structure time in your diary for "own work"
   - Leave plenty of time to work on the team (turnover will burn your times)

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Organisational Energy – A valuable framework

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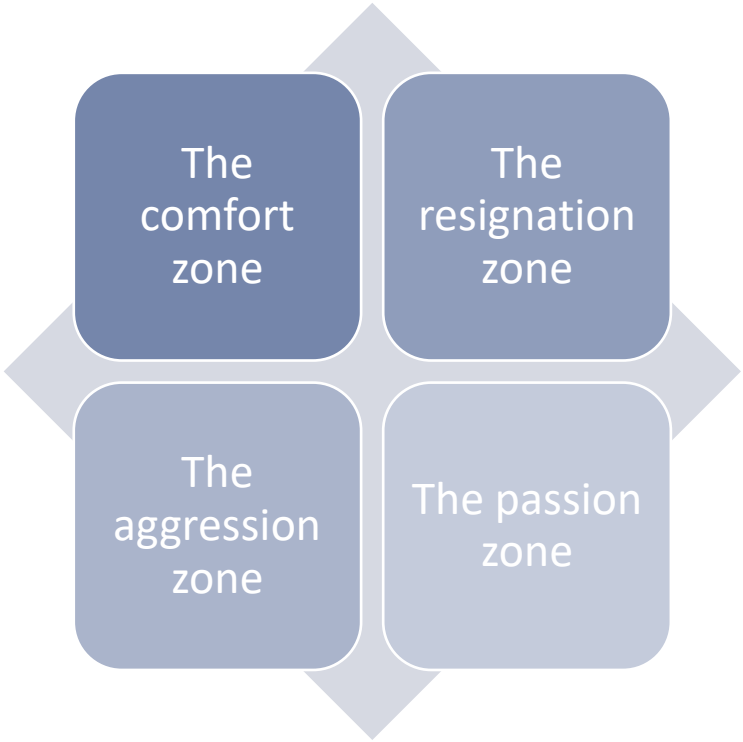
It has never been more timely to consider the Organisational Energy research of Bruch and Ghoshal

- Organisational energy dramatically impacts an enterprise's ability to **sense** and **respond**
- High energy organisations have a link to **high performance** and **survivability**
- There are **four energy zones** that most organisations find themselves in



- The ***aggression*** and ***passion*** zones deliver the best results
- There are two broad strategies to get to either passion or aggression
  - Slaying the dragon
  - Winning the prize
- However, choosing the right one depends on
  - Top management style
  - Existing energy state
  - Organisational heritage

Reference: Bruch, H. & Ghoshal, S. (2003). *Unleashing organisational energy.* MIT Sloan Management Review

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Let’s look at the four zones

COMFORT ZONE

- Low animation and relatively high levels of satisfaction
- Weak but positive emotions such as calm and contentedness
- Lack the vitality and alertness needed for bold action

RESIGNATION ZONE

- Low animation – almost the acceptance of a “bad lot” – lack of excitement and hope
- Weak negative emotions such as frustration or disappointment
- People feel lethargic and/or emotionally distanced from organisational purpose

AGGRESSION ZONE

- Internal tension characterised by strong negative emotions such as fear or anger
- Tension drives an intensely competitive spirit
- High levels of alertness – often delivered with discipline

PASSION ZONE

- Strong positive emotions such as enthusiasm and pride in work
- Attention on shared organisational priorities
- Often associated with collaborative and creative endeavour

Reference: Bruch, H. & Ghoshal, S. (2003). *Unleashing organisational energy.* MIT Sloan Management Review

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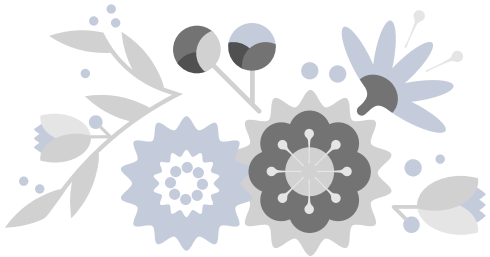
How to get to the "good place"

Slaying the dragon – gets you to the aggression zone (e.g. Philips Electronics)

- Clear articulation of imminent threat
- Release of strong negative emotions which are channelled to overcoming the threat
- The dragon must be visible and personally felt by staff
- There must be a great deal of discipline and accountability
- Leaders must personally guide and control the process
- Visible leadership commitment and involvement are essential

Winning the prize – gets you to the passion zone (e.g. Sony)

- Engages people with a dream/vision of a positive/materially better future
- May incorporate a journey that is exciting in itself
- Mobilises excitement and enthusiasm
- Leadership needs to make people clearly see what can be a fuzzy image of the future then get passion going in the teams
- Personal credibility of leadership is critical – symbolic actions are helpful
- Really this is about inspiring voluntary engagement in a better future



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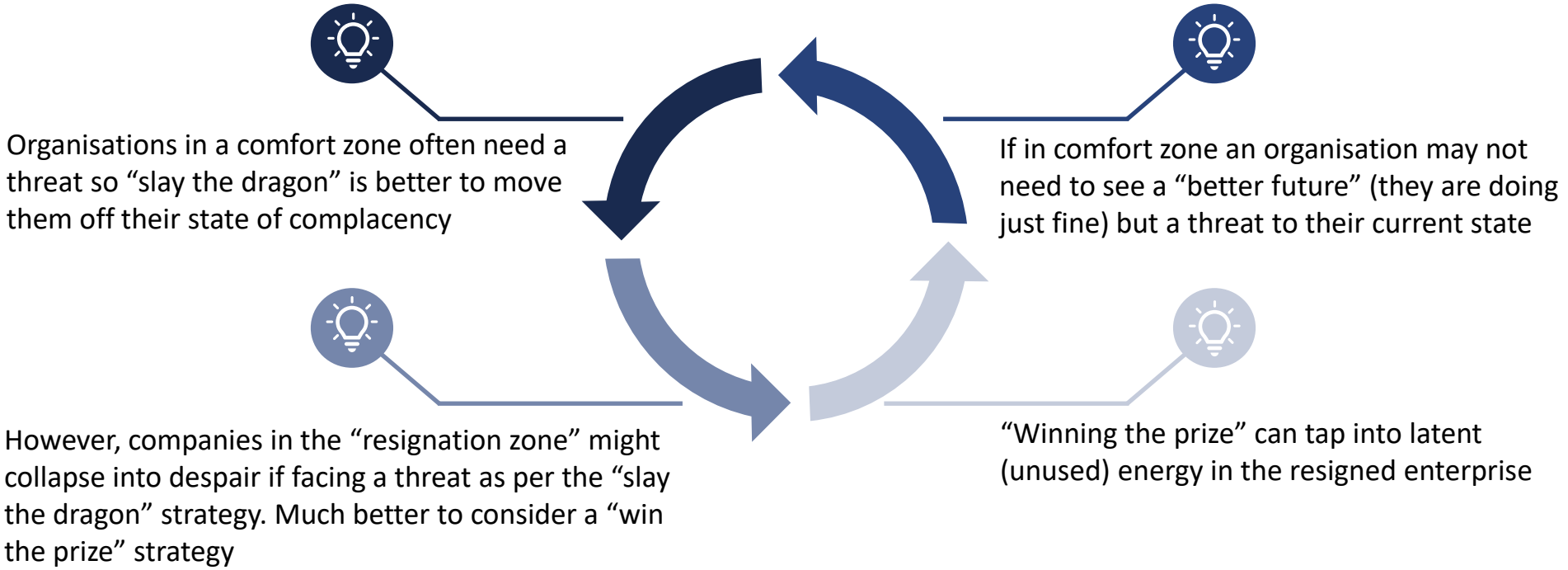
How to choose your strategy

- The approach should be consistent with your management style
  - Disciplinarians are usually better at “slaying the dragon”
  - Visionaries and “engagers” are usually better at “winning the prize”

- The existing state limits options



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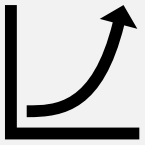
However, watch for these traps

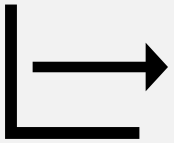
The "acceleration trap"

- Driving an organisation beyond it's capabilities
- Failure to apply the disciplines of "stress and rest" (Taleb, 2012)



The "inertia trap"

- Leaving the organisation so long in a stable state that it has trouble moving again



The "corrosion trap"

- Poor quality relationships, toxic politics and self-interest
- Anger and blame

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Removing organisational clutter to improve focus and energy

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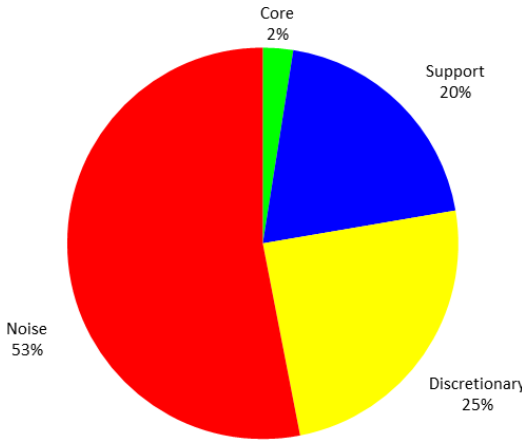
Noise is a form of clutter that sucks time and energy from your organisation

Category	Definition	Example
Noise	Non-value add activities which cost the organisation money, reduce service levels and waste staff time. Usually symptomatic of process failure.	• Manual calculations / formatting / work done in excel • Avoidable questions from other teams • Information not provided by internal teams • Rework due to change / late adjustment
Discretionary	Activities that manage risk to the organisation and/or introduce management approval/checking steps. Usually their frequency or level is adjustable and is at management's discretion.	• Approvals / sign offs • Compliance checks • Meetings • Reporting activity • Verify contact details
Support the mission	These activities enable efficient delivery of a current service – they represent the normal, actual work being done right.	• Work allocation • Processing • Resource / management • Attending/delivering formal training
Improve the **Core**	These few activities directly increase service, reduce cost or enhance capability. They positively change the status quo to *drive* performance improvement in the organisation.	• Building automated reporting functionality • Developing task and process automation • Identify and work on improvement opportunities

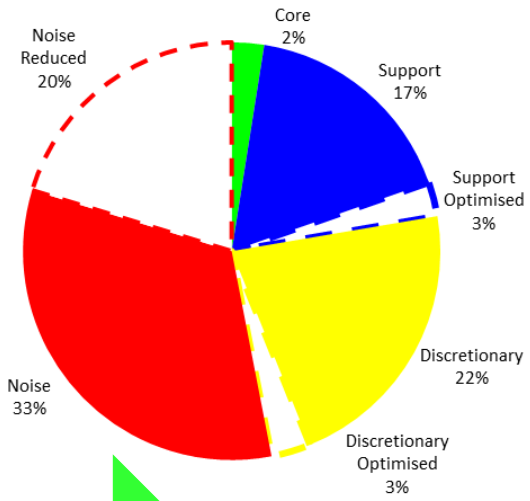
Noise is especially interesting because

- It frustrates customers
- It can frustrate staff
- AND it costs

Example Current State



Example Opportunity



Time Liberated,
Room for Growth,
New Activity Investment

Change Imperative
• Workflow and status management improvement
• Knowledge of process and solutions/products improvement
• Process reengineering improvement
• Roles and responsibilities clarified or realigned to model
• Data input quality improvement
• STP, self service or use of COEs increased
• Billing improvement
• Technology use improvement
• Reporting improvement

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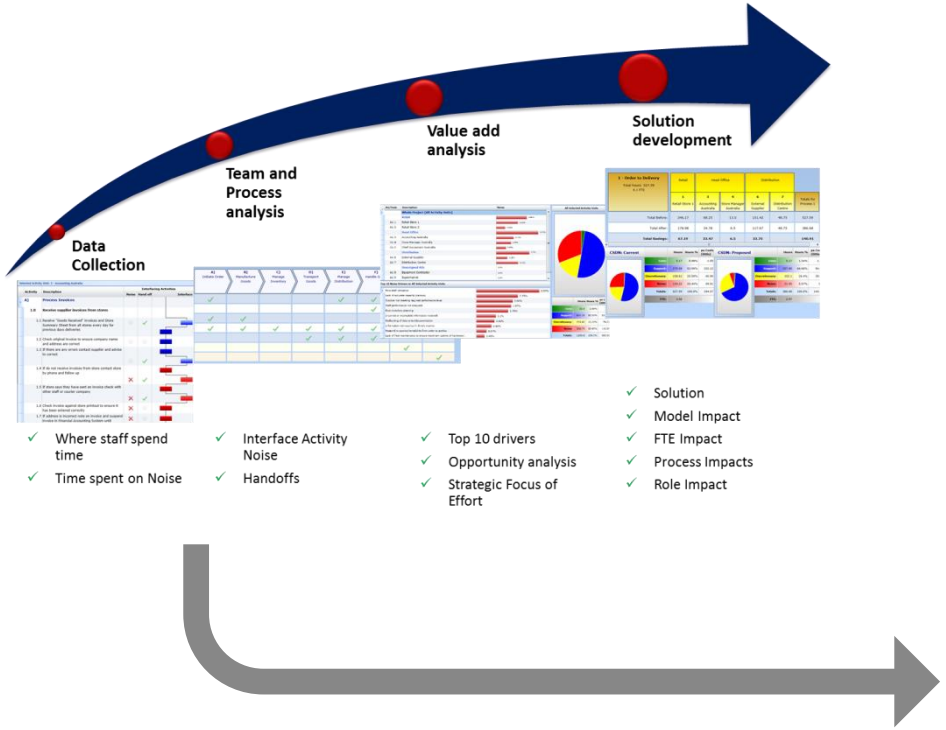
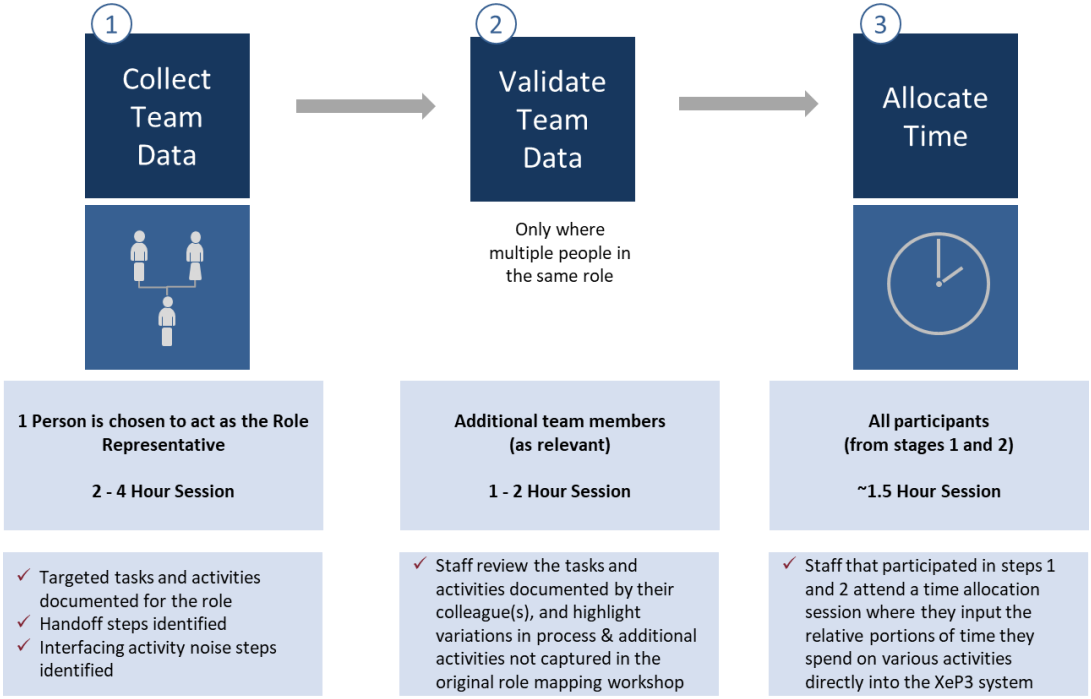
You will need to understand the detail driving this clutter – we do deep dive data collection at rapid pace, supported by cloud based software called XeP3

1. Bevington Group can rapidly identify the causes of business issues and recommend improvements



2. The data collection journey is highly engaging for those involved – we will work with the business to minimise impact whilst not compromising the quality of the outcomes required



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Working at the team level

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Organisational focus might begin with a team discussion

Isaiah Hankel proposes that an absence of selective focus leads to mediocrity

Generally speaking, elite athletes focus their time effectively on training regimes that work best

By you being focused yourself, it is much easier to focus your team and your colleagues

To decide where to focus, you will need to…

1. Discuss with your team the areas for focused attention
2. Agree the importance of this with your colleagues, peers and bosses
3. Leave space in your day and week for the unexpected

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Maintaining energy levels – stress, rest and re-interpretation

You can think about your team and its work from a “focus” perspective

- Is the team focused or scatter-gunned?
- Is time proactive or reactive?
- Are roles well structured?
- Is energy being effectively deployed?

Remember that stress and rest makes the team stronger

- Has someone or some teams been going too hard for too long?
- Is the workload imbalanced across individuals or teams?
- Does all the work really need to be done?

Have you taken every opportunity to liberate time for capacity / innovation?

- Innovation often needs some “space” to breathe and grow
- To flourish it also needs staff to be allowed to take risks within bounds

Remember, your energy approach will require experimentation and that means not every approach will work

- A bad outcome does not always imply a bad decision
- A good outcome does not always imply a good decision

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Do you know what will get in the way? Work on the more common obstacles

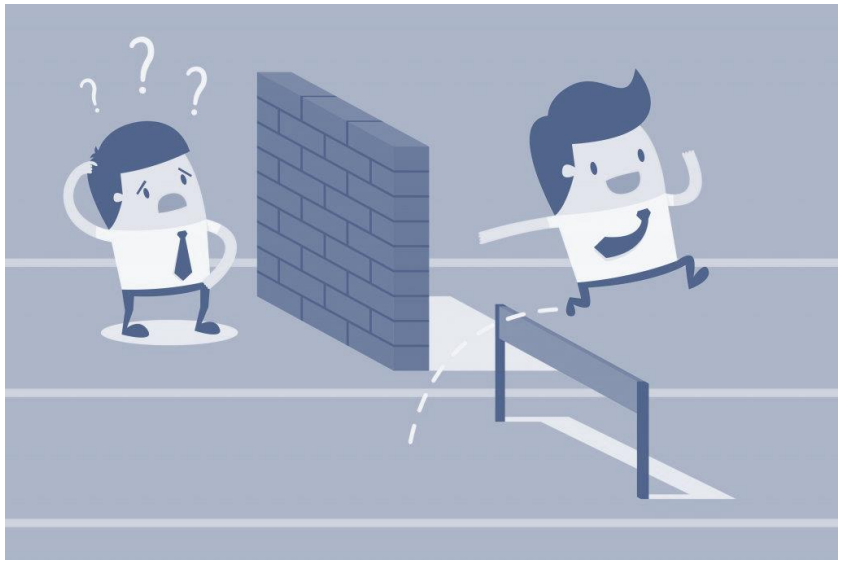
01 Complexity

02 Absence & guidelines

03 Unclear structures

04 Inconsistent beliefs and communications

05 Poor value stream management (execution)



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Help the team to stay focused

Help the team **understand** how their respective roles are linked to the **broader mission**

Personally demonstrate **passion** for the mission of the organisation

Coach the team on how to use **objectives** and **guidelines** to make decisions **(Mission Directed Leadership)**

Help the team **interpret stressful situations** more **positively**

- Ensure they have rest between highly stressful situations (Taleb – stress and rest)
- Reframe openly in response to negativity
- Talk about reframing to the teams

Reference: Taleb, N. N. (2012). *Antifragile: Things that Gain from Disorder.* United Kingdom: Penguin Books Limited.

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How to talk to teams when stuff changes?

Encourage the team to **take pride in its ability to adapt**

Celebrate success

Explain – tell the story of the **need for change**

Be aware of negative bias

Role model personal change as required

Re-frame

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Your culture can be an enabler or an impediment to appropriate focus

Symbols

Rituals

Reward structures

Power structures and decision making rights

Control systems

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Mission Directed Leadership principles can focus the energy

- Appropriately ***distributed authorities*** such as ***Mission Directed Leadership models***
  - Authorities are put close to the action
  - Leaders are given clarity on Mission, Rules and Guidelines
  - Leaders adapt by deciding on the best courses of action consistent with Mission and Guidelines without breaking the rules

Mission Directed Leadership

Mission Statement
- Should provide the reason for the organisation's existence
- Should act as an overarching *guiding star*
- Should encapsulate customer service and other strategic imperatives

Command and Control

Rules:
- Black and white
- Should be used sparingly

Objective Command →

- Simple process
- Legal
- Safety
- Risk

Mission Directed Leadership

Guidelines:
- Less rigid than rules
- Should be used liberally to empower staff

Subjective Empowerment →

- Complex process
- Provides flexibility
- Enables tailored customer service
- Creates a customer centric culture

with **accountability** and **capability**

Key elements of MDL model

- Ensure staff members understand and buy-in to the "mission"
- Provide a clear decision making framework (with clear distinction on rules and guidelines, and training)
- Ensure teams have the information they need
- Ensure people have the authority to act
- People have the skills to detect changes in critical systems and processes
- Trust needs to be maintained – transparency is key for this
- Enable staff to grow and develop

Auftragstaktik

Emphasis on mission

Subordinate leaders need to understand the intent of the orders (mission)

Subordinate leaders need to be given proper guidance (guidelines)

Subordinate leaders need to be trained and developed to act independently

Reference: Glenn, R.W. (2020). *Trust and Leadership: The Australian Army Approach to Mission Command*. United States: University Press OF NORTH GEORGIA.

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In Summary

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In summary

- Adaptation needs organisational energy AND that means also having the personal energy to lead

- Personal energy levels can be assisted by
  - Understanding where you need to focus (Hankel)
  - Managing your focus by being aware of where time is going (Covey)
  - Building your energy reserves through purpose (Seneca and Covey) and lifestyle balance
  - Stress and rest (Taleb)
  - Reframing (the Stoics and RET, Albert Ellis)

- Organisational energy can be liberated by
  - Applying the theories of "organisational energy" (Bruch and Ghoshal, 2003)
    - Where are you now as an organisation?
    - Where do you want to be?
    - Which strategy will you pursue?
  - Strong "energising" leadership behaviours (explain the purpose, display the passion)
  - Mission directed leadership (which is inherently empowering but takes effort)
  - Artefacts of culture – especially rituals and role-modelling
  - Elimination of "noise" AND focus on "building the core" (the organisational equivalent of Covey's Quadrant II)

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- Create an aspirational view of how the enterprise will deliver against future expectations

2. Restructuring and Role Design
- Create structures and roles that sustainably deliver value

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

3. Strategic Lean Process Improvement
- Concurrently transform end-to-end processes, structures, roles and systems
- Design radical changes aligned to customer outcomes and business strategy

4. Tactical Lean Process Improvement
- Deliver incremental lean process improvement
- Use and teach a proven, client-centric, process improvement methodology

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- Deploy process changes rapidly to address top priority issues
- Deploy technology solutions with Agile methods

6. Change Management
- Utilise and teach a structured approach to understanding the impacts of change and transitioning organisations to the future state

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- Connect clients to each other
- Understand and compare solutions from other industries
- Inspire through knowledge transfer and networking events

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