

Success Methods of Elite Pilots

Hi, as business people we want to use whatever we can get to help us perform at a higher level. And I like to look at elite sports performers because they've often got techniques for performing better that we can use in the business world. And today I want to talk about one of the world's greatest air pilots and that is a guy by the name of Matt Hall and he is the one of only a handful of people who have been admitted into the Red Bull International Air Racing Team.

So these are the guys that travel all around the world going to air racing shows, that involve going through - at very low altitude - obstacles as part of the race and being timed. Now it's so dangerous that in 2010 Matt Hall, the only Australian in the Red Bull International Air Racing Team, flew so low that the tip of his wing hit the water and he still kept on going in the race.

So when you look at these elite performers, clearly they have a lot of stuff that keeps them focused, a lot of stuff that keeps them relaxed when they are under stress, and a lot of stuff that helps them perform better. Now all of that can be used in business. So what I want to do is tell you some of the discoveries I've got looking into Matt Hall and how he maintains an elite level of performance as an air racer.

There are three areas that most impressed me about how Matt trains. The first is, he is very big on having routines. So as it comes to the week before the race, he's got very well-organised routines that keep him in the right place mentally, which keep his training going forward and prepare him for the big event.

Well the question I've got for you is: would you perform better in business if you set more routines into your business week? If you had particular highly-organised routines that you do and your stuff do before a sales presentation, let's say, or before you get on the phone with someone or before you see a client. Having routines and establishing them and then sticking to them is a really crucial area of business performance, and Matt does it in the sky and we can do it in the office.

The next thing that impressed me about his training was he is extremely big on positive reinforcement. And he explains it this way: whenever he is thinking about flying in a race he focuses on what's going to go right, rather than what's going to go wrong. Let me say that again: he focuses on what's going to go right with his performance and not what's going to go wrong.

Now so often we in business can be accused of focusing on what could go wrong, or 'We'll never make it... this won't work... this client won't say yes' ...etc. So it really does pay to discipline your thinking and catch yourself when you start going down these negative spirals and just refocusing on 'This is how we are going to do it right... this is why it's going to do well and this is how we're going to make sure it goes well'... very powerful, whether you're flying at an elite level, or whether you're working at an elite-level.

Then the final thing that really impressed me about Matt Hall's training is he said he does a "huge amount" of visualisation. So he's constantly closing his eyes getting relaxed and seeing himself perform really well in the race... Seeing himself do the right things so that he can get a victory. And we can do the exactly same thing in business. Just see yourself performing well in the sales presentation. See yourself giving a good talk on the phone to a client. See yourself performing well and not getting stressed, being time efficient. These things are very important.

Now almost no business people do this, but what's working in the sports world can work in the business world. So have a think about those three techniques. See which one, and very possibly all of them, could be relevant for you and your business. And then institute them; create a new system, whether it's having routines, positive reinforcement or a huge amount of visualisation. And I think if you do that you can have a business that's going to perform a whole lot better.