

# [ RESULTS VS EXCUSES ]

THURSDAY JUNE 10, 2004

**Being number one is all about getting results. And, getting results is all about not making excuses and learning from mistakes.**

WORK WISE - A fortnightly column by Rahul Kapoor

Last week, I was in Colombo for an annual sales conference of a leading organization based out of Mumbai. The theme of the conference was 'Now or Never', the mission was to make the company the number one in the country.

Before I could get on with my session on team building, the chairman of the group addressed the gathering. He spoke on a very simple topic Results Vs Excuses? I must tell you that it was one of the best talks I have heard in the last couple of years.

His presentation started off with some simple lines 'I could not complete this work because I was busy with other things', 'Yes, I visited the client but he was not available', 'I wanted to do it but I was unwell' and so on. Almost every person sitting in the hall had used these sentences at some point of time in their lives. And thus could connect with the topic immediately.

He said, some people give excuses to gain more time, some people give excuses to defend themselves and some because they cannot accept failure. Whatever the reason, excuses not only affect the overall performance and effectiveness of an organization but it also affects the morale of individuals caught in such situations. He then illustrated his 5 Commandments to overcome the problem of giving excuses and moving towards attaining 100% results. Here goes:

## **1. Commit yourself**

When a father makes a commitment to his child to take him out for a movie, the child has expectations; he begins to plan every thing around that date, he zeroes in on what he will wear and so on. Now, if the father does not keep up this commitment, he breaks the child's heart and disappoints him totally. In a way, he destroys the small dream of the child and surely no amount of excuses or explanations can convince the child otherwise. So, it is imperative that the father finds a way to keep his commitment and keep the child happy.

In the same way each one of us should become sensitive to the fact that we should keep our commitments and ensure that we deliver results. Else we may land up upsetting other people's planning who rely on us, apart from doing harm to the overall planning of the organization.

## **2. Accept failures**

Having the courage to accept the failure is the easiest way to over come the problem of making excuses. In the recently concluded elections we saw the NDA lose to Congress

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and allied forces. Many were surprised with the way the NDA lost. So, the big question was to find out why they failed, it is then that Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee made a statement that we lost due to our complacency and over confidence. These words were very impressive, because instead of passing the blame on others like Chandra Babu Naidu and Jaya Lalitha's total defeats, he chose to accept the real problem. This illustrates that the big challenge is in the accepting defeat and learning from the mistakes and becoming more responsible and careful.

### **3. Stay positive in your mind**

Wilma Rudolf had polio and could not even walk properly. She could have blamed her destiny and lived life like a common woman. But instead she chose to fight it out and to make her dream of becoming a runner come true. Not only did she learn to run but she also went on to win three Olympic gold medals. Wilma is a classic example of people who achieve result irrespective of all the problems. So, if she could do it, why not you?

### **4. Identify the real problem and deal with it**

Dr. Charles Perellin, who was the head of NASA, faced the biggest challenge of his career when the Hubble space project taken up by his team failed to send the pictures from the space to the earth. Everybody thought that it was a multi billion-dollar scam and that it was not possible to actually get images from a satellite. It is then that he and his team figured out that the problem was with the position of the mirror in the telescope. They worked out a way of fixing it and achieved unmatched success.

So, when you fail to keep your cool, then you fail in getting results. Try to crack the real problem and zero in on the cause for failure.

### **5. Do not procrastinate**

Procrastination is the art of convincing yourself that you can put off until tomorrow what you should be doing today. It is quite rightly called the 'thief of time' and hinders our productivity. People usually leave things to the last minute; they convince themselves that they can thrive on the adrenaline which crunching the dead line inevitably includes. This attitude has little regards for the chaos it creates for other people or for the irritation of last minute hitch- if some thing goes wrong then not only you but also all the others associated with the project suffer. So commit yourself to a start time, break the large project down into small manageable portions, and prioritize your tasks. Remember if something is worth doing then it's worth doing it now.

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So, if you are one among those who is bitten by the bug of excuse-making, then take some advice from this piece and try to practice some of the suggestions illustrated above. Remember when excuses go out, results come in. And if can you get results then you will know what being number one is all about.