



# Peaking For Success<sup>TM</sup>

A Model For Personal and  
Organizational Achievement

# Peaking For Success™

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The Peaking For Success™ model describes all of the elements that we have determined necessary to achieve personal and organizational excellence. We apply the model in our work with leaders in all types of organizations to take their organizations to higher levels of success, and as well as to have a greater degree of satisfaction and achievement in their personal lives.

We have developed an action plan that is part of our client engagements which facilitates leaders through this process. The purpose of this document is to explain the model and set the stage for actually applying it.

Success ultimately comes down to two things—clarity and focus. Clarity is achieved when we have a clear understanding of what it is that we want to accomplish and how we are going to accomplish it. Clarity is achieved through self assessment and through having a clear understanding of organizational vision and goals, as well as personal mission and goals.

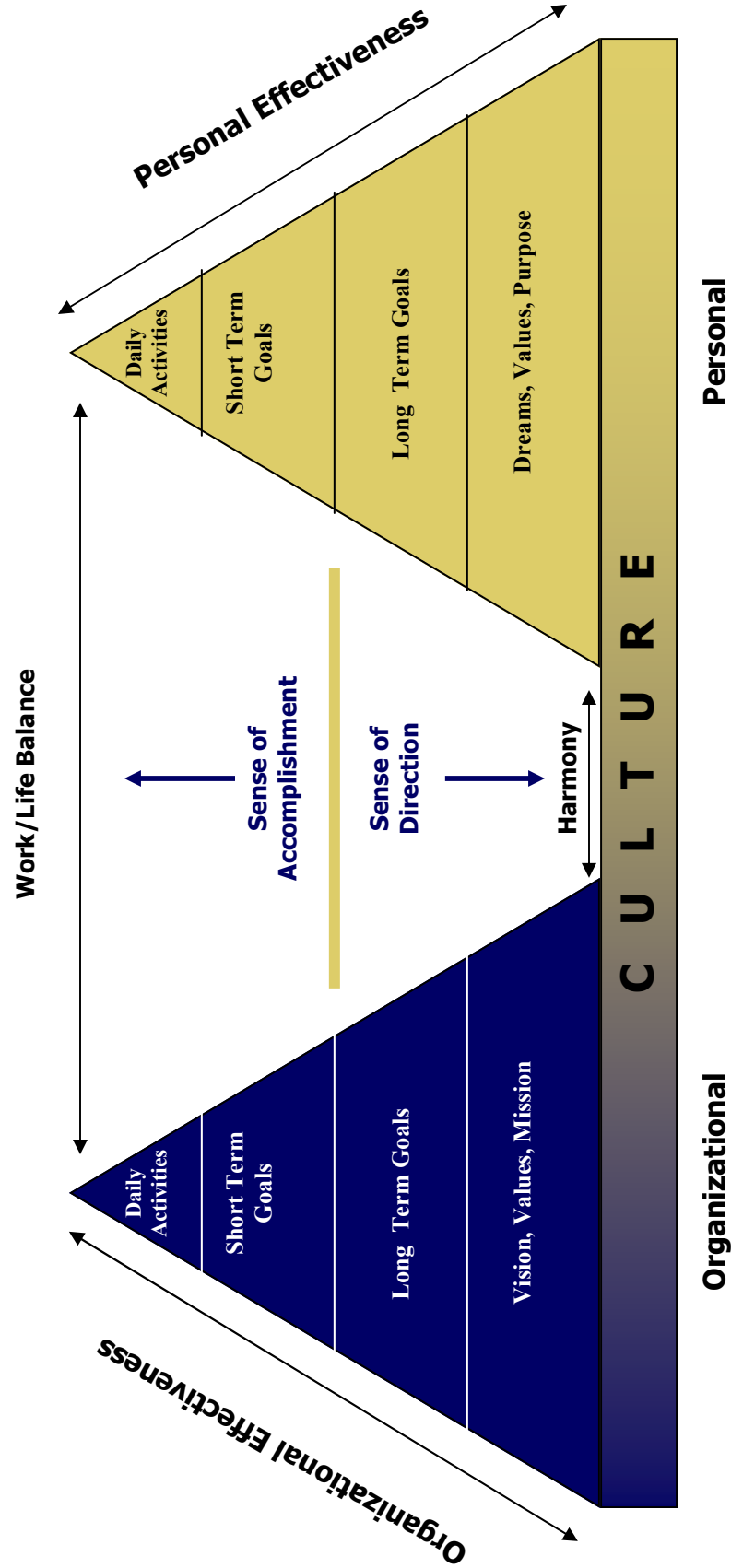
Focus is achieved when we are able to keep on task and devote our energies and resources towards achievement of vision, mission, and goals. Distractions are those things which keep us from staying focused. Highly effective people are able to block out distractions, and to accomplish those things which are most important.

This model creates clarity and focus.

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# PEAKING FOR SUCCESS

STRATEGIC ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



## Overview of the Model

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The model consists of two pyramids which sit on a base which is called culture. One of the pyramids is organizational effectiveness and the other is personal effectiveness. When you think about this as a structure, the foundation at the bottom of the model is what holds up the rest of the structure. Each element builds upon the one below it. The broader and stronger the base at the bottom, the more stable is the structure.

The two pyramids are not independent, but rather they are interdependent. There must be harmony between personal values and organizational values. Imagine working in a situation where the organization's values were dramatically opposed to personal values. This would create unhealthy internal conflict. Imagine that you could not see yourself achieving your personal dreams and purpose in your current work environment. You would never feel fulfilled.

Much is written and discussed about work-life balance. I believe that many of the efforts by companies to create work-life balance are misguided. While such things as on-site day care for mothers in the work force or telecommuting may be good things to do, they really don't do much for work-life balance. The real issue is focus and clarity in one's personal life. Here is some simple math to illustrate the point:

Number of hours in a week	168
Less: Hours at work	60
Less: Hours of sleep	49
Hours for personal time	59

Therefore, most people have as much time for personal activities as they do for work activities. The problem is lack of focus and direction. Their daily activities are not aligned with the achievement of personal goals. They get caught up in the whirlwind of family activities or just let stuff happen.

Work-life balance is achieved when our daily activities, both at work and outside of work align with the achievement of short term goals, long term goals, and ultimately vision and dreams.

## Culture and Environment

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Culture is the collective norms, beliefs, and accepted behaviors of a group. It is the environment in which we operate. Nations have cultures, families have cultures, schools have cultures, and business organizations have cultures. What we do is in large part dictated by the culture around us.

Culture is the base of the two pyramids in the model. Culture must support what individuals and organizations want to achieve. In a business context, if there is conflict between culture and strategy, culture will win out every time.

Most people are not in a position to change the culture around them. Organizations talk all the time about the need to change culture, but rarely are they truly successful. Cultures evolve over time through the collective actions of people in the culture, primarily leaders. Yet most business leaders think can snap their fingers and make culture change happen overnight. So most attempts at culture change fail because leadership is not patient enough and focused enough to stick with the change effort.

In the book, *Straight Talk From Corporate America's Ten Most Requested Speakers and Trainers*, I have a chapter which addresses the issue of aligning culture and strategy. A key point that I make is that strategy cannot be developed without considering culture. They must be aligned and compatible. For example, a strategy which calls for innovation and creativity is inconsistent with a culture that discourages risk taking and is highly autocratic.

Culture can impact the achievement of personal dreams and strategies. Think about cultural barriers that existed fifty or a hundred years ago that impacted the ability women and minorities to achieve their dreams and goals. While a few people successfully overcame cultural barriers, many were inhibited by them

As part of the Peaking For Success process, it is important for each person to critically assess the real and perceived cultural barriers that could impact the achievement of goals.

## Organizational Vision, Mission, and Values

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Vision, mission, and values form the base of the organizational effectiveness pyramid. First, let's define what these mean. I recognize that vision and mission have different definitions, but for the sake of this model I have chosen to use these definitions:

**Vision**—the ultimate aim or purpose of the organization. A vision provides direction and meaning for people working in an organization. It is a picture of where the organization is heading.

**Mission**—a specific, overriding long term goal of the organization. We like to express mission as the five year overall objective for the company.

**Values**—the set of principles that guide behavior in the organization. Values provide guidance for difficult decisions. We recommend that as part of the development of company values that the senior leadership also create a hierarchy of values.

The responsibility for defining and communicating vision, mission, and values for an organization rests with the senior leadership. Neither the development of these key statements, nor the communicating of them can be delegated to lower levels of the organization. And communication is more than writing the statements, getting them printed, and then posting them on bulletin boards. They must be communicated face-to-face and with passion in order for the organization to understand and accept them.

One additional comment about values. In my work I have found that often there are two sets of values. One is the written set of values and the other is the practiced set of values. It is the practiced set of values that are the true values, irregardless of what shows in printed material. The practiced values are determined by the behaviors exhibited by leaders in the company and by the behaviors that are accepted or not accepted from others. Nothing creates more mistrust of management and organizational conflict than differences between stated values and practiced values.

## Dreams, Purpose, and Values

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Just as organizations have vision, mission, and values, individuals need to have a strong base on the personal effectiveness pyramid. The base of the personal effectiveness pyramid is made up of dreams, purpose, and values.

All significant accomplishment begins with a dream. We must visualize something before we can achieve it. Creating a list of dreams is the starting point for personal accomplishment. Most people do not dream because they let negative thoughts and attitudes get in the way. Dreaming is an emotional activity. As soon as we let the rational part of our brain take over by analyzing why we can't achieve a dream, dreaming stops.

Another component in the base of the personal effectiveness pyramid is purpose. Discovering and moving towards one's true purpose is essentially to living a fulfilling and worthwhile life. I have found the purpose is tied to the answers to three questions:

1. What am I good at?
2. What do I like to do?
3. How do I want to be rewarded?

If what you are doing now utilizes your skills, talents, and abilities, is something you truly enjoy doing, and is something you feel adequately rewarded for, then you are one of those fortunate people who has a life aligned with your purpose.

Our personal values are also an important component of the base of the pyramid. Values guide behavior, particularly when we have to make tough choices and decisions. When our actions and behaviors are inconsistent with our values, it creates internal conflict. This is why it is important to have alignment between the mission, vision, and values of the organization that we are part of and our personal values, dreams, and purpose.

A key aspect of the personal growth process is recognizing and choosing to do something about misalignment at the base of the pyramids. If there is misalignment, it creates a very unstable foundation.

## Long Term Goals

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Long term goals turn vision, mission, dreams, and purpose into reality. Goal setting and goal planning are essential skills and processes that truly effective people have mastered.

Long term goals provide direction. Because they are long term, there is not an immediate payback for action on the goals. The key to achieving long term goals is to break the goals into segments, with specific milestones to measure progress.

There is not a specific period of time that differentiates a long term goal from a short term goal. I usually like to define long term as that amount of time that does not create immediate urgency to do something. For example, if you have five years to accomplish something, that certainly does not create urgency for most people. Conversely, if you have one week to accomplish something, that does create urgency for most people.

Long term goals need to be aligned with vision and mission on the organizational effectiveness pyramid, and with dreams and purpose of the personal effectiveness pyramid. Long term goals usually are sometimes called the critical success factors for an organization. Many organizations have strategic plans. A good, executable strategic plan consists of the culture, the vision, mission, and values, and long term goals components of the model. If these are done correctly, then the plan should be realistic and achievable.

Likewise, our personal strategy considers environment, dreams, purpose, and values, and long term goals aligned with these. Unlike organizations which usually have some form of strategic plan, most individuals do not have a personal strategy. In the absence of a personal strategy, people tend to react to what happens to them and leave a lot of their life to chance and circumstance. A personal strategy provides direction for our lives. We feel much more in control of our own destiny.

## Short Term Goals

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While long term goals provide our sense of direction, short term goals provide a sense of accomplishment. The achievement of short term goals provides positive reinforcement that we are accomplishing something in our professional and personal lives.

Short term goals are the steps we take to achieving longer term goals. While not every short term goal is linked directly to a long term goal, it is important that as many as possible are aligned with longer range needs. Imagine what would happen if this were not the case. It would be like going on a trip with a goal of covering so many miles per day, but at the end not being anywhere near where we wanted to be.

The best way to manage short term goals is to keep an ongoing "To Do List". With PDA's and calendar manager systems such as Outlook, there is no need to do this manually unless that is what works best for you. The advantage of an electronic system is that it allows you to update and sort the list much more easily.

As mentioned earlier, long term goals are usually achieved by breaking them down into short term goals. Each step in achieving a long term goal should be recorded on the ongoing to do list. Each item of the list should have a completion date associated with it.

Achievement of short term goals provides an opportunity for celebration and recognition. When achieving a short term personal goal, find ways to reward yourself. Positive feedback for achieving goals is the best way to reinforce positive behavior. Everyone needs positive strokes when they accomplish something.

When we set goals, and then achieve them, we are setting up a cycle of increasing personal effectiveness. When we achieve goals, we feel good which leads to greater confidence. The more confidence that we have, the more likely we are to set more challenging goals. When we achieve these, we feel even better and more confident. The cycle just keeps building.

## Daily Activities

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Ultimately, what we accomplish is done through our daily actions and activities. The key to both organizational effectiveness and personal effectiveness is to have as many of our daily activities as possible aligned with those things below it in the pyramids. If a substantial part of our daily activity is aligned with short term goals which are aligned with long term goals which are aligned with vision, mission, dreams, and purpose, we will have professional and personal lives filled with accomplishment.

Highly effective people begin each day with a good understanding of what they want to accomplish that day. They have specific activities that are directed towards the achievement of goals. They tend to be proactive in their use of time, rather than reactive. They are better able to make priority decisions because they have a clear sense of direction and need for accomplishment.

The primary source of items for our daily to do list are items from our ongoing to do list. I have found that sorting the ongoing list by due date is the best way to focus on what I need to do each day. This is why that it is important to have due dates next to each item on the ongoing to do list. Time creates urgency—without a time constraint there is no urgency.

One thing to realize about daily activity is that a large portion of it is done out a habit or subconsciously. Habits are nature's way of conserving mental and physical energy. This is fine as long as our habits are good and contribute to achieving our goals. However, some habits may be hindering us. Part of our daily activity may actually be working against the achievement of goals.

One of the best ways to develop power and influence is being a person of integrity. Integrity is simply doing what you said that you were going to do. The highest priority items on any daily activity list should be those things necessary to keep your promises.