next level LEADER ™ PROGRAM

THE A.R.I.S.E PERFORMANCE WORKBOOK

Performance, or lack of performance in a team member comes down to five basic areas. This tool is designed to help you get clear on the source of the performance problem and how to best resolve it.

Is the person…

A = **Awake** to your expectations?

R = **Resourced** for the task?

I = **Inexperienced** in any way?

S = **Skilled** in the right areas?

E = **Engaged** in the work?

SECTION 1: YOUR MANAGEMENT PRACTICE

AWAKE

The first place to start when assessing performance blocks in others is with yourself. Here are the key questions to ask yourself before assessing performance or trying to solve it in others.

1. **Have I made the person aware of my expectations?**

   Leaders often assume their expectations are obvious or clear to others when they are not. Consider putting your expectations in writing. Be aware that your expectations may shift in subtle ways over time. Stay current with yourself on this and be sure to let others know how you're changing. This is essential to help them perform at their best.

2. **Have I made the target we are aiming at clear?**

   This is where you define clear goals that people can measure progress against. Do you have metrics or scorecards they will be assessed on? Does certain data matter more than other data? Are there minimum goals and stretch goals?

3. **Have I made clear HOW I expect them to get there?**

   In some cases, your organizational values, power dynamics, relational context, or processes will require that a person achieve the objectives in a specific way. Here you want to make sure they are clear on the HOW. This is also about making your quality standards clear.

4. **Have I helped them sequence the steps to get to the goal?**

   Given your vantage point or line of sight as a leader you may know that certain things need to happen in a particular sequence. If that is clear to you, don't assume it is to them. Be sure to let them know what needs to happen in what order.

5. **Have I prioritized the tasks?**

   Sequencing is determining the order of tasks, but prioritizing is about giving weight to the various tasks. Actions that are more important don't always happen first, but they do require extra care and attention. Help your team by letting them know where they should exert the most time, energy, or money, and where they can conserve these. Research shows, people's engagement increases when they have clear priorities.

6. **Have I verified that we have the same understanding on all these things?**

   Equally important to communicating expectations is confirming the other person or people have the same understanding. You can do this by literally saying, "I want to be sure we have a shared understanding, could you walk me through your key takeaways?" Or "Could spend a little time reflecting on this and send me your understanding and suggestions? That way we can be sure we're on the same page."

7. **Did I "Stage the Ascent?" (MODULE 1, VIDEO 14)**

   Whenever a leader introduces any directive, idea, project, they often assume that people will jump on board because the boss said so, and that's what there are paid to do. Nothing could be further from the truth. People are governed far more by emotional dynamics, than external controls. A leader's credibility, relational rapport, and a sense of involvement are big drivers of performance. The "Staging the Ascent" process is an essential tool to help build these elements into your directives. Sometimes the ascent only takes a 10-minute conversation. At other times it takes 10 months. But this process happens.

8. Should I use an 80/20 process to get more buy-in?

One of the biggest reasons people don't do what a leader says or perform in the way they want is because they aren't bought into the idea. This is often because the leader failed to generate credibility for that particular directive.

Credibility is the fuel for influence and motivation. Like a stock, it rises and falls on each decision the leader makes, but usually in ways that are imperceptible to the leader. When the leader is seen as credible, her directives are more trusted and taken more seriously. When a leader is seen as un-credible, team members will dig in, walk past, or nod and smile, but later unconsciously road block the idea.

One way for a leader to help establish credibility is through an **80/20 process**. This is to be used for larger more complex strategic initiatives or longer-term directives. It isn't just about establishing credibility, it's also about respecting the fact that your team knows things you don't (and can't) that are critical to what you are creating. This is about developing a better plan.

Here are the steps:

A. **GET FRONTLINE DATA:** Get the team together and let them know you are preparing a new initiative and you need their help to make sure it's done right. Tell them you know they are closer to the front lines and able to see things you can't. Ask them to generate data to inform this process. You could give questions for them to research or develop input around. (i.e. What trends are you seeing? If it were only up to you, what would you do here? What tensions and problems are you hoping we could solve?). Or you could ask them to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the organization, and the opportunities and threats in the marketplace (SWOT Analysis).

B. **ANALYSE THE DATA:** After the data is collected, bring them all together again to present their findings and recommendations to you. Here you're looking to generate as much content as possible. The more data the better because a data driven decision is always better than an ego driven one. Encourage debate and disagreement.

C. **PRESENT AT 80%:** Once you have all their data you will let them know that you will take all of this and everything you know and can see that they

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can't and develop a proposal or a plan. But you will only bake it about 80% of the way. At that point you will present your plan to them and ask them to help you bring it the remaining 20% to completion.

D. **BAKE IT TO COMPLETION:** Build your plan, then present it, and let the team refine, hone, and tune the idea the remaining 20%. Allow them to push back, argue, and advocate for their perspective here.

E. **ASK FOR "ALIGNMENT:"** At the end, when you feel you've heard enough and it's time to make decisions and finalize the plan, you finish with this step. At this point some people still won't like where you're headed or agree with it. That's ok, here's the clincher, you will present the plan then do two things:

1. Thank them for all their work and input (often overlooked)
2. *Ask them for their **alignment**, not their **agreement** on the final plan. **Alignment** means they are saying "yes" to support the idea publically and in their actions. They do not have to **agree** with the decision.*

   When you give people this distinction, it helps them move forward without feeling like they are losing their integrity.

This process does more than generate buy-in, it creates ownership. And when a team owns an initiative that's when the magic can happen.

A.R.I.S.E PERFORMANCE WORKBOOK
SECTION 2: ENTER THEIR WORLD

Just by doing the processes outlined in Section 1 you will start seeing the performance of your people improve. If you have thoroughly vetted your own management practice, given people some time to show up, and you are still not seeing results, it's time to turn your attention to the team member. In Section 2 you "Enter Their World."

There are really only four reasons a person doesn't perform at their best. These are outlined below along with suggested interventions to help. It could be any combination of these reasons. Get curious about what it might be, you can even lay it out to them and see what they think.

RESOURCES
Is the person properly resourced to do their job? Here's a check list of areas to look for:

POSSIBLE ISSUE	SUGGESTED INTERVENTION
☐ **Structure or Politics**: Search for power dynamics or turf issues above, below, or across that might be impacting them. Sometimes it's personalities and egos, other times it's just a simple organizational tweak that is needed.	✓ Help them strategize about the different ways to work through a political system by identifying competing interests and aligning them. ✓ If you have the authority, make adjustments to the structure to alleviate the problems. ✓ Use the RACI process found in Module 4 to identify clear lanes and rethink structure. ✓ Engage and external coach or HR if you have access or those resources when the problem is intractable.

☐ **Staffing & Workload**:
Do they have the proper team underneath them? Do they have enough bandwidth and margin to get the work done?

✓ Consider revising role and responsibilities
✓ Prioritize & Sequence work for them
✓ Add staff

☐ **Money**:
Are they adequately funded?

✓ Remember the rule: *Fast, Cheap, or Good?* Pick two, you can't have all three. You could:
  - Add budget (not cheap)
  - Elongate timeline (not fast)
  - Relax standards (not good)
  One of them will have to give…

☐ **Relationships**:
Is there any relational gridlock or bad blood that need to be resolved between you and them or between them and others?

✓ Don't shy away from relational gridlock or problems. Engage them head on, because avoiding them makes them worse.
✓ Use the hard conversations protocols from Module 2 to address these.
✓ Hire an external coach or bring in HR if it's sticky and beyond your skill.

INEXPERIENCE
Does the person have enough or the right kind of experience for this job?

☐ Have they lived through enough cycles to anticipate unintended consequences?
☐ Do they know how to ask the right questions?
☐ Do they have some sense of limits, knowing what they don't know?
☐ Do they have enough exposure to a variety of methods and tools in their job?
☐ Have they worked with enough people to be able to benchmark good talent?
☐ Are they too experienced and have lost curiosity, unwilling to learn?

SUGGESTED INTERVENTIONS
✓ Scale the role and responsibility to better match experience

- ✓ Create more gates or decisions points along the way that you can participate in
- ✓ Follow up more frequently
- ✓ Find a mentor for them, or serve as a mentor
- ✓ Be sure they can shadow you in critical tasks to get exposure.
- ✓ In the case of too much experience, this is a slow process of helping the person see that things have changed, and new skills are required. This is a disorienting and destabilizing experience. It is like being moved to a foreign country, but no one told you. So be aware this must be a respectful process of helping them come to terms with this. It means affirming their contribution, recognizing their mastery, and at the same time reinvigorating their curiosity and learning. By tapping into their Second Job – to learn, often that produces interest.

SKILL

Does the person have the right skills in the right areas for the job? Do they have the following?

- ☐ Technical competence
- ☐ Interpersonal skills or emotional intelligence
- ☐ Project management skills
- ☐ Time management abilities
- ☐ A relevant knowledge base
- ☐ Business planning capacity
- ☐ Communication skills

SUGGESTED INTERVENTIONS
- ✓ Identify a coach or mentor to help train them
- ✓ Find and require appropriate training
- ✓ Train them directly as an educator, not just a manager
- ✓ Have them shadow you in critical tasks and debrief afterwards to integrate learning
- ✓ Adjust outcomes and deadlines to make them more realistic
- ✓ Set learning goals and follow up to test skill development
- ✓ Hire a coach

ENGAGEMENT

How much is the person bringing their heart to the work? Are they excited to be showing up? If you sense they are flagging in engagement, consider the following:

POSSIBLE ISSUE	SUGGESTED INTERVENTION
☐ **Lack of Buy-in**: One of the biggest mistakes leaders make when they give directives to a team or person is they fail to understand the importance of getting buy-in. This takes time, and when you don't have it, it wastes even more time.	✓ "Stage the Ascent" for your idea (See Module 1, Video 14) ✓ Use the 80/20 process to involve stakeholders more (see Question #9 under section 1 above): ✓ Informally pre-socialize the idea, bring it up periodically with key stakeholders and get their input before it is ever officially introduced.
☐ **Lost Connection with Personal Purpose**: Often when people lack motivation they have lost connection with their own purpose	✓ Introduce them to the "Finding Your WHY" process in (Module 1, Video 4) ✓ Help connect the dots between the tasks they perform and the goals they have in life or career ✓ Begin to sketch out a career path so they can see the developmental possibility ahead.
☐ **Lost Connection with Organizational Purpose**: Motivation can falter when the daily tasks and workload no longer seem connected to a larger sense of team WHY.	✓ Be sure your organization or team has a clearly articulated WHY (Module 1, Video 8) ✓ Reframe more mundane tasks in the context of the large purpose, link these together explicitly and remind them of their role and contribution to the purpose. ✓ Consider adding more clearly defined values, along with rituals, tools, and processes, if you don't have them yet. (Module 1, Video 12 & 13)

☐ **No Longer Learning:**
Remember our 2nd job? To learn and grow. Sometimes we become bored in the work and no longer feel we are growing.

- ✓ Add learning goals on top of performance goals for them.
- ✓ Work with them to get clear on what they need to learn in order to prepare for what's next.
- ✓ Work with them to develop a career path and plan to show them a bigger future

☐ **Relational Conflict:**
When people feel resentment, hurt, or unresolved relational conflict, they will often shutdown, stir up gossip, sabotage work, or even unconsciously road block leadership efforts.

- ✓ It is not always easy to discover this as power dynamics in a hierarchy have a tendency cause people to hide what's really going on. An outside coach can do wonders in this case.
- ✓ Have regular conversations where you invite feedback and input.
- ✓ Use the "Hard Conversations" training of Module 2 to surface and address relational tensions and conflict.
- ✓ An apology, literally saying "I'm sorry" or "I regret that" can work miracles.

☐ **Personal Trauma:**
When people go through divorce, family illness, or death, some will lose themselves in their work as a method of dealing with their grief, while others may check out.

- ✓ Stay curious about what might be going on in their personal life. This does not mean you have to pry, but rather let them know there's room to share if they need to
- ✓ Ask the very simple question: "What support would you most welcome during this time?"

☐ **Lack of Recognition:** Some people thrive on a pat on the back. When they're efforts aren't recognized or appreciated they can lose motivation and become disengaged.	✓ Get into the habit of asking people "What is one accomplishment or win that you are proud of or celebrating this week?" ✓ Implement a regular recognition section to weekly meetings (Module 1, Video 13) ✓ Don't underestimate the power of the words "Thank you."