

# JEFFREY MAGEE

## Ultra-Achievers & Peak-Performing Organizations

### Fixate on 3 Performance Factors or Levels — What about You?

For more than three decades, I have been engaged on the frontline of performance execution and achievement – from global super stars to the person I see in the mirror daily. What I have found from the frontline business level to the executive room and from interviews and articles in my *Professional Performance Magazine.com*, it is clearly revealed that there are only three performance factors or levels in life that matter – we are not discussing life balance matters in this article, only pure performance. These three levels of performance once understood for their simplicity, you can then calibrate everything needed for true achievement and success in your business and life, and serve others to guide them to greatness as well!

After 9-11, the businesses that thrived revealed a clear formula to success, and most missed it. Again, in the Recession of 2008-10, the businesses that thrived revealed a clear formula to success, and most missed it. And, again as COVID ravaged the planet, the businesses that thrived revealed a clear formula to success, and most missed it. There are only truly three Performance Factors or Levels, one level can no longer be accepted nor tolerated. A second level should always be challenged (in a healthy manner), and the third level is the new playing field of Ultra-Achievers and ultimately sustainable success!



The wake-up call to individuals and organizations that do achieve or aspire to achieve is simple:

1. Do we really want to be clear in what we measure or do we want to have levels of excuses, tolerance and condone less than the best in performance behaviors?
2. Do we really have the ability to objectively assess ourself and others in relation to what level of performance one is at and how it can be addressed, elevated, sustained and calibrated for continuous improvement or ensure peak performance every time?
3. And, more importantly do we really want to be able to have clarity, unequivocal quantifiable data to ensure clarity of the accountability factors associated with not tolerating, condoning or accepting one of the three performance factors or levels, will be the catalyst to your end-game reality.

What the human resource field and talent development professionals have done for decades is to over-complicate, dilute, bastardize and confuse the reality of these three core variables. Far too many performance assessments are calibrated with far too many mathematical factors to drive attention away from the three core obvious factors that really matter. Labor professionals engage in topical deflection discussions and create allowances to get everyone confused, and at the end of every Scorecard there are only three factors that matter – just ask anyone that has ever signed the front of a payroll check – and they will indicate three factors, every time!

Just as I have articulated in my graduate management text book *The Managerial Leadership Bible* and through our **Dr. Jeffrey Magee | Leadership Academy of Excellence** talent development series, all of the KPIs in life and for example within an organization must be calibrated with three core Performance Factors in mind, they are:

#### Level One — Underperforming

The score one has earned when one is not meeting the minimum expectations or even taking responsibility of achieving their respected position, role, job

description and/or the corresponding KPIs on their Performance Coaching/Assessment/Review documents; This is where you find underachievers when scored against the KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) of the expected or needed TDRs (Tasks, Duties, Responsibilities) of a position, role, job, or task assigned to them – you are not doing your JOB!

What one tolerates is what one condones, and what you condone becomes what everyone tolerates. Globally we have created cultures, organizations and mindset calibrated to mediocrity! We resource it, champion it, compensate for it and tolerate it – we dumb down and dilute everything away from Level Two Performance, because no one wants to be a leader of others nor a leader of themselves and we have become excuse making proficient machines – the pathetic is now seen as acceptable (Gallup Organization has some powerful research backing this bold statement up, food-for-thought), look around?

#### Level Two — Performing

The score one has earned when one is meeting the minimum and executing the maximum expectations and taking responsibility of achieving their respected position, role, job description and/or the corresponding KPIs on their Performance Coaching/Assessment/Review documents; This is where you find achievers when scored against the KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) of the expected or needed TDRs (Tasks, Duties, Responsibilities) of a position, role, job, or task assigned to them – you are doing your JOB!

If you (believe you are, know you are, can validate you are) job scope right, interview right, hire right, on-board RIGHT, integrate right, resource right, train and develop right, empower right, champion-coach-mentor right, celebrate right ... Then, the worse performance, minimum performance you should ever experience is an individual and/or team that is fully vested, assumes 100 percent accountability and ownership of the role/job they accepted, and, accelerated champion success is your norm – right?

And, if this was your reality, which there is no reason in today's global economy for it not be actualized, then your team would



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be the benchmark of others and Level Three Performance would be achieved more often and by greater numbers of individuals.

Everything you do or an organization identifies (as core KPIs) should be calibrated at this level as the foundation, basement, minimum and upward from here is the focus!

### Level Three — Overperforming

The score one has earned when and only when one is exceeding all expectations of their respected position, role, job description and/or the corresponding KPIs on their Performance Coaching/Assessment/Review documents; This is where you find overachievers when scored against the KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) of the expected or needed TDRs (Tasks, Duties, Responsibilities) of a position, role, job, or task assigned to them; This is the individual that has realized performing is the minimal entry to life and ones' occupation, and as a professional athlete must over perform every time they take the playing field, so to should every professional in any vocation – you are exceeding your JOB!

Feed the beast – stay out of their way and identify what has meaning to this demographic, align that (as appropriate and don't violate your own values) with your organization and market needs. The Level Three Performer will out last the competition and help you to rewrite all of the rules and norms that Level One thought your playing by and Level Two has become comfortable in operating within.

So, when self-assessing or objectively assessing an individual among a team that one is responsible for or to, the qualifier of each of the three levels or factors of **Performance is Context**.

The **context** is critical in evaluating whether an individual at any one of the three levels, is in asking:

1. Can a person at any one of the three levels, is to ask if that level of performance is - good or bad, healthy or unhealthy, sustainable or not?
2. How do you resource, support, incentivize, compensate, train/develop or celebrate the person at each level?
3. Is this appropriate performance acceptable and how does it impact or influence others standards-of-performance?
4. What are the necessary KSAs (Knowledge, Skills and Abilities) one must have to perform at a minimum Performing level or to achieve and sustain overperforming levels?
5. What is the capacity of the organization to sustain individuals at any of the three performance levels and what is the capacity of the individual to perform at any of the three core levels? And, what does this mean to the performers on a team that are at performing or overperforming if “under-performing peers or leaders” are tolerated, accepted or even promoted?
6. In determining what this means to organizations' human-capital needs, succession plans, ongoing performance coaching, performance development plans, performance improvement plans, capacity alignment and growth realities?
7. What are the implications, ramifications and consequences to any of the three performance levels on the organization of today and tomorrow?
8. How does the performance bar influence your culture and how does your culture influence the performance bar?
9. How do you truly know what over-performing looks like and really means, what Scorecard do you utilize and has it been calibrated upward or downward to arrive at your analytics?

And more...

Globally we keep score in many ways, using athletics as a benchmark, the winner of the Super Bowl, the Stanley Cup, the World Cup, the World Series, the Indy 500, etc. are comprised more often than not, with a team comprised of individuals that understand, are committed and relentless work to execute at the overperform level every time they come to their office –

**You get what you tolerate, and what you tolerate is what you condone!**

So, where are you? Where is your organization? Most organizations operate at **Level Two Performance!** While many others operate and tolerate **Level One Performance!** And, a few rise and can sustain **Level Three Performance** with **Ultra-Achievers!**

Your ability to objectively assess yourself and others in relation to what level of performance one is at and how it can be addressed, elevated, sustained and calibrated will directly impact every ROI and the ultimate end-game reality of your organization, as well as YOU, and what it becomes known for – **Your BRAND!**

Jeffrey Magee, PhD, PDM, CSP, CMC, CBE, is the “Thought Leader’s Leader.” Jeffrey is the publisher and editor-in-chief of **Performance 360 Magazine**, editor of *Trajectory Code* and *Performance Driven Selling* blogs, a former nationally syndicated Radio Talk Show Host as well as a published author of several books including **Performance Execution**, **The Managerial Leadership Bible**, **The Sales Training Handbook**, and **Your Trajectory Code**. He is also a columnist and highly sought motivational leadership speaker. The recipient of the United States Junior Chamber’s Ten Outstanding Young American’s (TOYA) Award, and the United States National GUARD’s Total Victory Team Medal for civilian contribution to the Armed Services.

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