

Psychology Benefits Both Business and Sports Performance



Watching the College World Series was an exercise in psychology.

Certainly, as I watched the athletes get ready, it was obvious that they have very clear warm up routines for their bodies. But I found myself wondering what mental preparation they did to help them maintain focus and remain consistent under pressure.

Seemingly forever we have supported the physical development of the game. This is also true in business – getting people, systems, processes and production to perform at their best. Historically training in the business world has been focused on observable skills and technical capabilities needed for the job. **But how have businesses approached mental preparation?**

“Soft skills” in both the business and the sports worlds have taken awhile to be accepted into the mainstream. Today, however, the tide is turning. It is more commonplace to have a sports psychologist on staff than it was in the 1980s when I was competing. At that time, it was often viewed through a deficit lens—what’s wrong with that athlete? Now, sports psychologists are an accepted, even expected, part of individual and team training.

The same can be said in business where companies routinely leverage executive coaches from a psychological standpoint.

Technology is in lockstep with this approach as we see coaching apps that provide constant feedback to employees. There is a better understanding of the impact culture has on environment, retention and business outcomes. For example, look at the journey Salesforce and Microsoft have been on in the past few years as both have put culture at the forefront of their businesses and leveraged technology to enhance, enable and accelerate culture building.

If we balance our focus on both mind and body, everyone comes out a winner in the end.

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