

# Process, Progress & Optimal Performance: Achieving the Perfect Paradigm

By Tom Van Wie

**W**hat I'm about to ask may seem like a REALLY obvious question but I'm going to ask you to bear with me.

Have you ever thought about what it would mean for your brand, business, or organization to be running at optimal performance? Now, I'm not talking about remembering any recent hiccups and quickly jotting down a note to remind yourself that THIS PERSON needs to be spoken to, or that SO AND SO needs to research a new project management software system, so that THIS GROUP can put it in place. Let's face it...that's quick-fix leaky roof patching. Ultimately, what we want to achieve as professionals who strive for excellence is THE NEW ROOF!

For some, the words "optimal performance" amount to pure hyperbole. For others, the idea of optimal performance receives varying levels of attention throughout the days, weeks, or even years but is never fully imagined or realized.

So, take a step back for a moment and allow yourself to vision, imagine, and ask a few questions. What does it look like when my group, department, or entire organization is working together in almost symphonic harmony? What is the output that results from this mode of operation? What does the flow of communication look like? What time and space does this workflow allow so that the team is empowered to be solutions oriented, forward thinking, and (DRUM ROLL PLEASE)...INNOVATIVE? How would things be different than they are right now?

Please take your time in thinking about these questions and commit to formulating solid answers. Try to be specific and, by all means, avoid any tendency to use this exercise as an alarm system for what's going wrong or what needs to be fixed. Instead, utilize it as an exercise to establish a vision for what is possible!

Once that vision forms, let it solidify. Write it down. You may discover that what you have accomplished is the articulation of an approach that, as a Human Resources professional, can positively shape the culture of your organization and establish a very clear set of long-term performance goals; A set of expectations that you hold for yourself AND everyone within your sphere of influence.

Obviously this isn't a groundbreaking exercise. It's just something that far too often, in the daily operation of things, gets overlooked, then forgotten, and eventually erodes away until what remains is a short sighted overseeing of day to day tactics. One by one, creating little leaky holes in the roof (Yes...that's an intentional call back!). Over time, filling those holes becomes the performance expectation and standard. When this methodology is employed it almost always catapults entire teams into an overcrowded Process v. Progress purgatory; a circle of terror in which so much time is spent managing people and systems that actual delivery of product and service to customers become secondary. And typically, a link in the chain becomes compromised with Human Resources acting as first responders allocating valuable time to manage reconnaissance.

If you take the time to look at today's most iconic brands with even the slightest bit of scrutiny, you'll recognize that they all have one thing in common. Regardless of what it is they produce or what service they provide, they choose to uphold innovation as the cornerstone of their business model. It is the single most valued principle in their corporate culture. There is an established cultural imperative set forth by leadership and implemented through a finely honed balance of process, progress, and optimal performance. Human Resources plays a vital and instrumental role in creating the stage for innovation to play on!

The success or failure of any brand begins within its own four walls. On every level, people are happier and more satisfied, both individually and collectively, when they have the freedom to INNOVATE. Nothing is more rewarding than being enabled and empowered to produce the level of work that can only result from the physical, emotional, and psychological space to be forward thinking in a role. Achieving this holistic operational momentum is a commitment to the well-being of a brand and the future growth of the business. Human Resources professionals have the challenge, yet distinct honor, in building the internal policies that make it possible to fully align with this perfect paradigm. A paradigm that affords brands the privilege to continuously connect with customers and expand their audience in new and exciting ways.

*Tom Van Wie is a bona fide brand passionate with 20 years experience in entertainment marketing. He currently provides consultation and coaching services to clients in the media, entertainment, and corporate culture industries. [Click here for credentials and more information on services.](#)*