Introduction

In this module, we will focus on the dimensions of high performance leadership. Dimensions refer to the magnitude, scope and length of a leader's tasks; these give the tasks meaning and frame them.

A leader who takes pride in themselves must manage according to and in agreement with the regulations established by these dimensions. These dimensions guide and frame the leader's influence. It is easy, and at the same time, very risky to attempt to develop a series of actions that seemingly serve the team, but which lack clarity, impact and relevance to the team's needs and those of the specific situation.

On the one hand, these dimensions ask, or to a certain degree force, the leader to take a certain path to lead the team towards high performance. On the other hand, they are ordered according to their priority for organization, which determines the leader's priorities.

The three dimensions of high performance leadership are:

1. Productivity.
2. Group climate.
3. Individual development.

These three dimensions help the leader be organized, enabling them to define their actions and facilitating de for problems that should be permanently solved. Is conflict related to productivity, group climate or the individual development of some team members/athletes?

For those of us who are sports and organizational advisors with a specialty in psychology applied to sports, we are typically summoned to solve problems associated with these dimensions. Our task lies in supplying tools to leaders so that they can make sure that:

- The team improves its performance and can achieve better results.
- Interpersonal differences among team members or between team members and the leader are solved.
- A team member/athlete that has lost motivation and has low, fluctuating energy levels can recover their motivation.

The three dimensions of leadership, articulated above, mark the way we work as professionals.

Many leaders are defined according to their mastery in some specific dimension. Some leaders are considered very good at achieving great performance and getting good results; others are seen as very useful for forming large teams with a very positive climate; a third group of

leaders is highly valued for the way in which they maintain a high level of motivation in all team members. High performance demands that leaders do not stand out in one specific dimension, but for them to posses comprehensive knowledge across all three dimensions.

Timely, coordinated and appropriate handling of each of the dimensions will enable the group and each of its athletes to reach high performance. Below, we will delve deeper into each of the dimensions to understand their components as well as actions that strengthen them, and we will make some suggestions for their appropriate management.

2.1 Productivity

A team's productivity refers to the team's final level of performance according to the assets available to them. Generally, productivity is not only associated with final performance but also with the concrete results that a team achieves. In this occasion, from our perspective, productivity includes performance as well as the results achieved by the team.

Whilst productivity is the main dimension of leadership, it is not necessarily the most simple. Managing productivity is highly complex. Even having good individuals and worthy teammates does not mean that group productivity will be outstanding. What is the key to making sure that the whole team is highly productive?

Iván Steiner (1972, as cited in Weinberg and Gould, 1996 pp. 197-198) created a model to show the relationship between a team's individual abilities or talents and the way in which its members interact. This model is represented by the following equation:

> Actual productivity = Potential productivity - Losses due to flawed group processes
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> Steiner's model leads to an understanding that a team's actual productivity normally does not correspond to its potential productivity. Only when a team effectively uses its available assets to satisfy the task's demands does its actual productivity or performance approach its potential productivity. Specifically, a group's actual performance is almost always significantly below its potential productivity because of poor group processes. In a team situation, group process refers to the complex interactions that help a team turn its individual assets into a collective operation.
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> There are two kinds of losses due to flawed group processes: motivation losses and coordination losses. The first take place when the team does not make a 100% effort because they believe that other team members can carry all the weight. Coordination losses happen when there is no link between teammates or when ineffective strategies are used (Weinberg and Gould, 1996, p. 197).

"The phenomenon in which people in a group or team give less than 100% effort because of motivation losses is called 'Social Loafing'" (Weinberg and Gould, 1996, p. 201).

What Causes Social Loafing?

- The belief that one's teammates are less motivated and will consequently make less of an effort.
- The feeling that hard work does not get much appreciation, since the individual feels lost within the team and that their effort is not recognized.
- The feeling that it is not necessary to try hard since teammates will make up for any shortcomings.
- The belief that players can "hide" within the team and avoid the negative consequences of not trying their hardest (Weinberg and Gould, 1996, p. 202).

We see then that the initial dimension of leadership has a complexity that not only has to do with obtaining peak performance from each team member, but also achieving increased coordination among everyone; this task entails a high level of difficulty that demands a specific and professional focus so as not to end up creating teams that are seemingly productive but with high levels of social loafing.

With the goal of correctly orientating a leader who wants their team to achieve high performance, we begin here by presenting three central concepts for productivity management:

1. Roles.
2. Objectives.
3. Reinforcement.

A leader must know how to best manage these three pivotal concepts for their team to be able to reach peak levels of productivity. Productivity is the main reason why an organization hires a leader, demands productivity, and asks said leader to guide every team member/athlete towards high performance and the best possible results.

Often, organizations put valuable resources at a leader's disposal, but inefficient management creates productivity levels that fluctuate significantly, far from the expected levels and with a lot of undetected social loafing within the team.

2.1.1 The Philosophy of High Performance

High performance has its own unique characteristics and philosophy, and people can tend to confuse high performance with positive results. High performance transcends results and it is important that a leader keeps in mind the foundations on which high performance is strengthened, constructed, and raised.

Our main opponent in high performance is ourselves: individuals compete with themselves all the time and seek to break their own records because defeating the current opponent is not enough. The outcome is important; however, it is not the only important indicator. To move towards high performance, it is very important to have objectives for performance and results that are clearly defined for each athlete.

Continuous improvement, associated with high performance, means that the leader must also adopt this philosophy, and seek to increase their performance and the way they respond.

Another prominent characteristic of high performance is 100% effort towards fulfilling objectives. Nothing happens by chance or through half-effort. High performance requires learning to use 100% of available energy in pursuit of success and growth. Moreover, the most complex issue is the almost immediate demand for energetic recovery: high performance is not putting it all out there, but rather knowing how to quickly generate and recover energy. Enduring at this level means keeping in mind physical and emotional recovery routines.

There is a purely mental factor that differentiates those who implement high performance: a high tolerance for frustration. The high performance individual does not fall, and if they do fall, they get up quickly. High performance is completely determined by perseverance and persistence. The stories of important people are undoubtedly full of unsuccessful actions and numerous obstacles that were overcome. The path to high performance is not simple, it has many difficulties; without a high tolerance for frustration and without perseverance, reaching this level is impossible. That is why it is essential to nourish the ego with successes, but also with challenges. Psychological development is often more important than the finish line.

Another essential characteristic of high performance is habituation to stressful situations. This way, an athlete can make use of all their assets in situations that are complex, critical, and with an audience watching, without their performance suffering in the slightest. High performance demands a lot of attentional consistency so that internal and external distractions do not cause focus to stray or performance to worsen.

Finally, there is an aspect that is not always emphasized, but this doesn't mean it is not important. High performance athletes have an internal attributional style. What does that mean?

> It means that they attribute their successes and performance to their own effort, their training regime, development of new abilities and to their overall skills. Therefore, if an athlete who gets positive results attributes the success to internal factors, not only will their motivation increase but also their success in future performances (Dosil, 2004, p. 136).

The athlete does not attribute success to external causes, meaning to the opponent's poor performance, weather conditions or sports judges. Likewise, they know that external factors are influential, but what is crucial is development and internal growth.

In short, high performance is built on a foundation of overcoming obstacles, permanent improvement, competition with oneself, 100% effort towards meeting objectives, high tolerance for frustration, habituation to stress, attentional consistency and internal attribution of performance.

2.1.2 Defining, Assigning and Taking on Roles

After presenting and defining productivity, showing the difficulties and complexities of managing productivity and understanding the philosophy of high performance, we will now turn to creating team productivity. We will provide guidelines for reaching the highest levels of individual and collective efficiency, starting with managing roles.

> A role is, by definition, the function that an individual is appointed within the team. In order for an athlete to adopt a role within a team, the leader must clearly explain to them what is expected and how to achieve what is expected, in other words, the expectations the leader has regarding the concrete role that the individual will adopt (De Diego and Sagredo, 1992, p. 226).

“A role or function consists of the set of behaviors required or expected of the people who hold a given position on a team" (Weinberg and Gould, 1996, p. 190).

The work of the leader is essential in this stage. The definition of the role must be clear, precise, behavioral and cannot be ambiguous. The leader must pay special attention when defining the scope of the role that they expect from a team member. The explanation must be both precise and particular; it must not be able to be confused with another group role, since that would mean that it was poorly defined. (Remember high performance communicational demand mentioned in the previous module).

It is the leader's role and responsibility to determine the roles and functions that will be fulfilled within the team. The leader must privilege the analysis and definition of the role over the preferences of the person who will perform it. The team member must train to develop skills and meet all of the role's requirements.

After defining the roles, the next step consists of communicating the roles to each member of the team. This stage is important because it demands that the leader has strong communication skills and, above all, honesty and openness, in order to align the expectations of each team member.

After the leader presents the functions that each team member will perform, they need to make sure that each team member has correctly interpreted and accepted the boundaries of the role.

When an athlete clearly understands their role within the team, and there are no doubts, the leader will provide the necessary support so that the athletes fully assume and continue their roles. Where productivity loss shows up the most is in the partial or intermittent ownership of roles. Ownership is intermittent when at times the role is assumed, and at other times it is not. In turn, ownership is partial when the most enjoyable parts of a role are carried out, but the less appealing tasks are not. The leader must establish compliance for each role within the team.

An important factor which affects ownership is the status the leader assigns to each role. All roles are important in a high performance team, both those that enjoy public endorsement as well as those that are carried out anonymously. If the leader presents certain roles as being trivial when establishing roles, it will be difficult for team members to accept doing less important or unimportant things.

The last step in managing roles lies in ensuring that the role is performed adequately. The member may clearly understand the role, assume it fully, but perhaps they do not know how to do it, they may only know how to do part of it, or it becomes difficult for them in stressful situations. In this type of case where capabilities are not yet fully formed, the leader must work to optimize performance with performance objectives for this team member.

So, the leader uses team roles to manage productivity by way of the following tasks: comprehensively defining roles, communicating them clearly, making sure that each group member understands them, ascribing importance to each of the team's roles, supporting full and continuous assumption of the role, and accompanying this with performance objectives that ensure the intended skill level.

To conclude, the leader manages the team’s productivity through individual roles, to which there are three central aspects: knowing clearly what to do, wanting to do it, and knowing how to do it. Knowledge, attitude, and ability, respectively.

2.1.3 Principles for Establishing Objectives

Establishing goals primarily guides the team member's effort and attention. In the previous module, we explored principles for establishing objectives and the frequent errors that leaders need to be aware of, because that is where productivity losses really show up (due to poorly-established goals). Below, we will delve deeper into those central features that lead to productive shortcomings in terms of objectives.

The most frequent error is lack of performance objectives for each team member. Frequently, the objectives that are established are collective and are linked to team results, but they leave out the development and implementation of individual performance objectives.
Thus, a high performance leader must consider four types of objectives in their motivational design:

1. Group results objectives.
2. Group performance objectives.
3. Individual results objectives.
4. Individual performance objectives.

We can distinguish objectives by asking what and how: Results objectives answer the question: What are the goals for the group and for the individual? Conversely, performance objectives answer the question: How do we achieve it? The skills we want to develop and the way things need to be done to achieve the expected results.

A common error lies in only setting objectives for results without including performance goals. Only focusing on achieving results increases the athletes anxiety and encourages a blocked or explosive attitude. Even if the outcome is the most desired goal for both team members as well as the whole team, it does not only depend on them: many barely-controllable external factors influence the achievement of an outcome. If all of the team's attention is focused on a goal that they do not control and does not depend on their level of performance, the emotional effect is uncertainty, worry and a lot of uneasiness.

Performance objectives direct participants' attention and efforts to developing a skill or ability that depends exclusively on them. Let's not forget one important fact: we always talk about high performance athletes, not about high result athletes. The leader's focus should be on both individual and group performance to accomplish great results.

In summary, the main mistake that leaders make in managing productivity through objectives lies in a total or partial lack of both individual and group performance goals.

Performance goals must be specific, concrete, behavioral, measurable and mobile. Successful people across all fields constantly develop and improve their performance through new challenges for their skill and ability levels.

Other common mistakes are failure to evaluate objectives and to adjust goals. Let's start with failure to adjust.

The leader establishes performance goals, but each team member's ability to internalize these goals, along with various factors outside the team member's control, can influence objectives, making them either impossible or too simple. A leader must make the necessary adjustments so that the goal will be both achievable and challenging. An objective that requires little effort is the opposite of training; furthermore, such a goal is boring and will not foster 100% investment of effort. An impossible goal, on the other hand, frustrates and creates a strong sense of impotence.

Failure to evaluate objectives is fundamentally linked to the belief that the only way to assess an objective is through the successfully achieving a result. This is relevant to result objectives, but not performance objectives. These objectives demand partial, behavioral, and detailed goals that allow each team member to visualize their progress.

Evaluation is what enables us to assess whether the asset development process is complying with its mission. A mistake associated with evaluating objectives is the frequency of evaluation.

High performance requires evaluation before, during, and after. This is the secret to proximity leadership, which is the style of leadership which is most associated with high performance. To this effect, we must reinterpret the role of evaluation.

Evaluation is not in and of itself definitive or crucial, it is a measure that indicates to us if we are following the expected path, which is why the consequences of the result of an evaluation are always positive. In the event that we are not on the right path, either the goal must be adjusted, the training process remedied, or a new skill must be chosen for development. Performance evaluations should not be associated with disastrous consequences, because this will create excessive fear. On the contrary, we want team members to be strong when responding to stressful situations.

2.1.4 Performance, Results and Reinforcements

In the previous sections, we were focusing on establishing guidelines to manage productivity through team roles and establishing objectives. Now we will turn to managing reinforcements.

Reinforcements are actions that the leader implements with the goal of bolstering or modifying certain behaviors exhibited by the team or some members. The principles of reinforcement include, in essence, two specific actions that should be applied very thoughtfully: rewards and punishments.

Rewards are all those actions that the leader implements to increase the probability of a desired behavior occurring. Punishments, for their part, are all those actions that the leader implements which increase the probability of an unwanted behavior disappearing.

The complex implementation of reinforcement defines different leaders' profiles. There are leaders who are more fond of awards; others are more attached to punishments; and there are those high performance leaders who apply reinforcement, both individual and collective, that the situation requires.

We must understand and accept that the leader has to specialize in and master reinforcements. Roles guide the team and define its functions; goals shape performance and promote the attainment of positive results; and finally, reinforcement improves performance and eliminates drops in productivity.

The first priority is to determine two fundamental points: what to reinforce and how to reinforce it. For different leaders, the complex task of mastering the principles of reinforcement revolves around this question. To completely know which behaviors to reward and which to punish, both individually and collectively, the leader must have internalized the idea of managing performance and not just results. If this happens, they will know how to define behaviors that should be achieved, how to guide the team towards these behaviors, assess the progress or setbacks in acquiring and solidifying behaviors, and in due course will know what to reinforce.

So, the first point of reinforcement management consists of thoroughly, behaviorally, and progressively defining which behaviors are expected and which are not. Then, they should be recorded, for which it is imperative to have concrete data that explains what these behaviors look like. Drawing from this, the leader must apply reinforcement to optimize or bolster individual and collective performance.

Once what to reinforce is known, we must provide the leader with tools to discuss the way in which the reinforcement should be carried out. On this point it is very important to be clear about the concept that makes reinforcement valid: reinforcement relies on the recipient. What does this concept mean? We must reward or punish with incentives that prove positive or negative for the recipient, not for the issuer. Many times, leaders make the mistake of rewarding with certain incentives that are positive to them, but not for the team. As a consequence, the objective of the consequence is not actually achieved, meaning that the probability of this behavior does not increase.

In short, to make the most of applying reinforcements, the high performance leader must really keep in mind what the reward and punishment is for each team member, so that the use of the reinforcement will be effective. Managing, respecting and understanding individual differences, as well as selecting leadership resources according to these differences, is a high performance leader's onerous and complicated secret to success.

So far, we have a clear understanding of the importance of what to reinforce: performance and results; in what way: individually and collectively; and how to do it: according to the preferences of the team member and/or the team. Now we must consider the frequency of reinforcement. Let's keep in mind that all the principles of reinforcement are framed within what is known as external motivation. If these reinforcements are applied in an unplanned way, they can undercut each team member's internal motivation, which is the most important asset that the leader needs to nurture and support.

It is recommended that the use of reinforcement be ongoing when a new skill is being integrated, but that compensation be interrupted once the behavior has been solidified. Initially, reinforcement should be given every time. That is, when the behavior happens, so does the reinforcement (reward or punishment). Later, it can be applied for variable reasons. Variable reason means that the reinforcement occurs randomly. Otherwise, if the reinforcement is fixed, when the behavior is established, there is a significant risk that the behavior could disappear. The subject gets used to receiving reinforcements, so external reinforcement becomes the main driving force of the behavior: when the reinforcement disappears, the behavior also disappears.

It is clear then that the use of reinforcement is not a course of action that should be governed by a leader's emotional state; it is another skill that must be trained and developed so that individual and collective productivity can be maintained. This is worth underlining: high performance demands that leaders are continually prepared.