



NO. 151 APRIL 2023

STUFF

SWC
CONSULTING

SKILL, WILL & CONSCIENCE

www.stephenwren.com.au



PERHAPS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CONCEPTS THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE BUSINESS WE DO, THE STYLE OF LEADERSHIP WE ADOPT AND THE QUALITY OF THE LIVES WE CHOOSE TO LEAD GENERALLY, CAN BE SUMMED UP IN ONE SIMPLE WORD; 'FOCUS'. IN ITS ABSENCE, WE ENCOUNTER CONCEPTS LIKE DISTRACTION, APATHY AND COMPLACENCY, CHAOS AND EVEN REVOLUTION. WE EXPERIENCE LOSS AND THE REGRET THAT ACCOMPANIES IT. THEN WE NEED TO ALLOCATE PRECIOUS RESOURCES THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN ALLOCATED TO GROWTH, TO THE RECOVERY OF WHAT WAS LOST. THAT MIGHT BE MOMENTUM, RELATIONSHIPS, REVENUES, HEALTH OR OPPORTUNITY. ONE OF THE MOST COST EFFECTIVE BUSINESS SOLUTIONS YOU CAN INVEST IN, IS THE MAINTENANCE OF FOCUS. IT'S THE BEST VALUE INSURANCE POLICY ON THE MARKET AND THE PREMIUM IS FREE. IT NEEDS TO OWN THE STATUS OF 'PRIORITY' IN YOUR HEART AND YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS TO WORK PROPERLY. IF YOU ALLOCATE THAT STATUS TO FOCUS, YOU'LL SELDOM IF EVER, NEED TO DECLARE THAT YOU OR YOUR TEAM NEED TO 'GET BACK TO BASICS'. THE REAL QUESTION HERE IS; 'WHY WERE THE BASICS EVER ABANDONED TO BEGIN WITH?' WHATEVER THE REASON, YOU CAN BE ASSURED THAT A LACK OF FOCUS PROBABLY INITIATED IT. THAT DECLARATION TOO CAN BE INTERPRETED TO MEAN THAT YOU HAVE NO NEW IDEAS.

YOU CAN'T EXPECT WHAT YOU DON'T INSPECT. This isn't about micro-managing. It's about being situationally aware and understanding that data can lie. Here's a simple rule of thumb. Data is mostly hindsight because most data is results. If it doesn't reveal WHY results are the way they are but simply THAT they are the way



they are, it's just information or info and a waste of your focus. If the data tells you why you succeeded or failed, now it's intelligence or intel and is worthy of your focus because you will be able to replicate the behaviours that made you succeed

and interrupt the behaviours that contributed to failure. SITUATIONAL AWARENESS is another way of expressing the meaning of FOCUS and a lack of it is what gets first responders killed. Firemen who forget to feel a door before they open it or soldiers who forget that ambushes mostly come from above or police officers who become complacent over a routine job or call.



CEMETERIES ARE FULL OF PEOPLE WHO ONLY EVER HAD ONE ACCIDENT. Often the reason for the accident was a lack of focus and most happen within a five km radius of home. Also, pilot error is what brings most planes down. Routine is therefore a dirty word and the enemy of focus. Familiarity does indeed breed contempt. Technologies like cruise control and auto pilot are fantastic but the terms are also metaphors for being complacent. So, the question now is; when are we most likely to become complacent?

The answer is; when you're doing great. You've achieved that status. You've 'arrived.' The foot comes off the throttle and the eye comes off the ball and the kettle is off the boil. Maybe your ego is blinding you to the situation you're in. Watch out for blaming your outcomes on circumstances. To be outstanding is a title earned over time and it's about *defying* circumstances or prevailing despite them. Beware of comparison groups because you can't be certain of the talent, scruples or effort that contributed to the results they're achieving. Now for the most important question of all; what should your focus be on? If you're a leader, it's morale. What is the feeling like in your team? In the absence of focus it can diminish into cliques or sub-cultures. If you're a member of a team, it's your mood. Don't worry about your knowledge because an enthusiastic rookie will always outsell a jaded veteran. Once mood and morale are sorted, your only focus should be, what sort of things am I capable of achieving. That's a question you can ask forever and it keeps you humble so your ego will never blind you to your behaviour. Being focused keeps you in an inquisitive state & that means you learn.