

THE EXCELLENT EXPERIENCE

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

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Chapter 1: Excellentology

1. Excellence requires hard work, persistent discipline, a plan and the commitment to see it through.
2. There is a blueprint for creating and sustaining excellence that anyone can learn and apply.
3. Applying the blueprint will create a life of purpose, meaning, and worth for you and all those around you.

Chapter 2: Design a BluePrint

4. Our metaphor for creating and maintaining a culture of excellence is a house. The building of any house begins with a blueprint, or model, from which to build.
5. The 3 most important raw materials for a house of excellence are:
 - a. Leadership excellence,
 - b. Having and keeping the right people on the bus, and
 - c. Using a proven and tested strategic framework.
6. The roof represents our ultimate end objective - to create excellence at the organization, team, and individual levels.
7. The essence of excellence lies in the quality of each individual's performance. The key, then, is to create a culture in which each individual is inspired to voluntarily and passionately perform at their best every day.
8. Undergirding the foundation of a house of excellence is meaningful communication: a language of excellence that inspires a culture of trust and accountability with passion.
9. The foundation is comprised of a meaningful mission, inspiring vision, uncompromising principles, and standards that demonstrate them. These enable all team members to become team and organization MVP'S.
10. The supporting structure represents the strategic framework that serves to provide a balanced approach to excellence. The framework is comprised of 5 pillars of performance – quality, service, people, growth, and finance.
11. This framework enables goal setting at each of the levels of measurement – organization, team, and individual.
12. Our blueprint for excellence can be applied to any environment where two or more people come together to make some special happen. Whether it's a business, a team, a church, a club, a family or an individual, this blueprint will help you build a life of excellence in anything you strive to do.

Chapter 3: Build on Rock

13. A rock solid foundation for excellence begins with a language of excellence that inspires a culture of trust.
14. Everything communicates and everything must be intentional.
15. There are many words and phrases you can use to communicate your culture of excellence. Choose the ones that connect with you and the others you lead.

16. A language of excellence must intentionally be created and reinforced in the culture. Begin now developing your unique language to describe the future you are pursuing in your team or organization.
17. The concept of managing up is critical to creating and maintaining a culture of excellence. Always speak positively about other team members and position everyone on the team in a positive way to guests at all times.
 - a. The more you encourage the good in others, the less you'll have to deal with the bad.

Chapter 4: The Mission

18. The first cornerstone of the foundation is the mission. Why does the team exist? What is its main purpose? Each individual's personal mission must align with the team and organization's mission for excellence to have a chance. Team members must believe they are accomplishing their personal mission and goals by being a part of the team.
19. Discerning your mission will require the participation of your mastermind group, a group of 12 or less you select and with whom you hold in high regard.
20. Trust is the foundation of great teams. Take every opportunity to build trust in your team.

Chapter 5: The Vision

21. The second element of the foundation is the vision. Where are we going? What do we want to look like at some point in the future? The vision exercise can help you guide your team to the discovery of a powerful, inspiring vision.
22. Like with the mission, each individual team member's personal vision must align with the team's vision, and teams must align their visions with the larger organization's vision. Team members must believe that by being a part of this team, they are getting where they want to go in life. The vision must be compelling enough to inspire them to want to go there.
23. Sometimes, it may be a good idea to capture all the specifics that came out in the vision brainstorm in a descriptive paragraph to create clarity and to inspire others to help make it happen.
24. A strong vision will inspire members of the team to keep striving for excellence in the pursuit of their mission, regardless of the obstacles, challenges and setbacks that will inevitably come!

Chapter 6: The Principles

25. The third cornerstone of the foundation is the Principles. Principles serve to guide daily behavior to ensure team members strive to accomplish the mission and realize the vision without compromising on what's most important to the team. Every member of the team must commit to add these team principles to their list of personal principles and strive to uphold them every day.
26. Team leaders at every level must demonstrate commitment to uphold the principles of the team by living them out every day. Remember, what we do speaks so loudly that people can't hear what we say. Culture is determined by action first, then communication that aligns with action.

27. Everything we discuss about building our house of excellence is a guideline, including the discussion about your principles. The key is to use the guidelines to customize and develop what works for you and your team and remain flexible to do that.

Chapter 7: The Standards

28. The fourth and final cornerstone of the foundation is Standards of behavior. Standards provide specific behavior guidelines to demonstrate the team's principles.
29. Everyone on the team must make a commitment to behave according to the standards every day.
30. When (not if) you mess up, you must initiate action right away to make it right. This is called your personal Service Recovery Plan.
31. Leaders must model the way. Hypocrisy is counter-productive to a culture of excellence and will serve to derail the effort.
32. Standards of behavior should be integrated into the language and the performance measurement process used by the team.

Chapter 8: Quality

33. The five pillar framework provides a method of planning and execution with balanced clarity of focus.
34. High quality is the first priority in a culture of excellence.
35. The definition of quality at the organization and team levels will depend upon whether you produce and sell a tangible product or deliver a personal service. Product quality is determined by safety, durability, strength, comfort, style, usefulness and appearance. Service quality is determined by safety, courtesy, speed, competence, accuracy, and convenience.
36. Quality at the church level can be defined and measured with the NCD eight quality characteristics of growing churches.
37. Quality at the family and individual levels is highly personal.
38. **You** are the essence of excellence in any endeavor. The success of your organization, team, church and family depends upon the quality of your life and of your performance.

Chapter 9: Service

39. Service is the second pillar of focus in a culture of excellence.
40. The goal of service is to create a positive memorable experience your guest will be motivated to repeat and voluntarily share with others. This leads to guest loyalty.
41. Everybody serves somebody with something. The CARE Model of Service provides twelve key behaviors that lead to service excellence in any environment.
42. Since service involves human beings interacting with one another, mistakes will happen. It's critical to have a service recovery plan in place to provide guidance in the event of a service failure. A service failure is an opportunity to create guest loyalty.
43. Good service is not good enough. The service encounter must WOW the guest so they will be motivated to speak positively to others about it. Everyone should strive to create the Ellen Avery Effect.
44. Touch Point Mapping can help you identify behaviors that will generate the Ellen Avery Effect in every guest interaction.

45. Team service is comprised of two elements, service to others outside of the team and service to one another within the team.
46. Church service is called ministry and seeks to meet the needs of the community.
47. Families serve both the community of which they are a part and the individual family members.
48. Excellence in individual service creates a desire from others to want you on their team.

Chapter 10: People

49. Excellence in the people pillar is the third priority in a culture of excellence.
50. The main objective in the people pillar is to create a great place to work, live or be for every member of the team.
51. The two main measurements in the people pillar are team member turnover and team member commitment (or engagement).
52. Only 29% of employees report they are fully engaged in their work.
53. While all the things the 100 Best Places to Work do to create a great place to work are important, even more important is the how the leader interacts with the team members.
54. The concepts of turnover and commitment apply in the team and church environments as well.
55. It's everyone's responsibility to make it a great place to work, live or be. You do your part when you become one of the team's MVP'S.

Chapter 11: Growth

56. Excellence in growth is the fourth priority in a culture of excellence.
57. Growth connotes change and change is inevitable. To build and sustain a culture of excellence, you must develop the skills of innovation and resilience in order to initiate and sustain forward progress and growth.
58. Growth is the natural outcome of successful focus on the activities in the first three pillars of quality, service and people. When you initiate positive changes in those areas of focus, you will grow.
59. At the organizational and team levels, growth is typically defined and measured in terms of market share, product or service lines, product or service volumes, guests served, number of team members, facilities in operation, technologies employed, the capabilities of the people involved, and revenue.
60. The most important environment for growth is the individual level. It is from there that all other forward progress emerges.

Chapter 12: Finance

61. Excellence in the finance pillar is the fifth and final priority in a culture of excellence.
62. Organizations, teams and individuals must guard against the human tendency to allow greed and selfishness to drive the desire for more simply for the sake of getting more. Instead, they should seek to exercise thrift and frugality and financial matters.
63. Like growth, excellence in the finance pillar is a natural outcome of proper focus on quality, service and people grounded in a strong foundation of mission, vision, principles and values. You must keep the financial perspective in balance.
64. The main goal in the finance pillar is stewardship, the effective management and administration of finances and other property for others. It invokes a moral responsibility

for the careful use of money, time, talents and other resources with respect to the principles or needs of a community or group.

65. Great organizations and teams need to discern what drives their economic engine and use it to measure efficiency and productivity.
66. Since tithing is the natural outcome of a mature believer and the major source of revenue for the church, churches should focus on developing their members to full maturity in the faith.
67. Families and individuals need to measure their financial performance against a sensible and realistic budget.
68. Everyone at all levels should live frugally, spend rationally, and save fervently!

Chapter 13: The Organization Scorecard

69. The five pillar framework provides a method of planning and execution with balanced clarity of focus.
70. The key concept in Section 4 is alignment. Goals, tactics, and time frames should be consistent at all three levels of measurement – organization, team and individual.
71. There should be no more than 6-8 goals on any one scorecard.
72. The 5 point rating scale enables you to create mathematical measurements at all levels to ensure alignment.
73. Using varying weights to drive focus within a particular scorecard can help communicate to everyone in the organization the priority of what's most important during the performance period.
74. There are general guidelines that help to enable high quality goal setting at all levels.
75. The 5 step annual planning process can be used to ensure alignment by cascading goals from the organizational level through the team level to the individual level.
76. Alignment of thought, intent and action begins at the organizational level.
77. The best organizational goal setting process will include the active involvement of key stakeholders at all levels. The Pillar Team Concept can help accomplish this.
78. Specific goals will vary with different industries and environments.

Chapter 14: The Team Scorecard

79. Aligning goals between the organizational and team levels is critical to achieving organizational excellence and is the single most important tactic for excellence that leadership can implement.
80. It is the responsibility of the team leader to ensure team goals are set and aligned with organizational goals.
81. Involving team members in the process from the beginning enables their interest, support, and performance toward accomplishment of the goals.
82. Your measurement system (team scorecard) should serve as the method you use to prioritize your work. This is not one of the tasks you want to leave off your plate. It's the master task that determines exactly what goes on your plate!
83. Determining team goals is as much art as it is science, with much leadership judgment involved. The organization must have a strong leadership development process in place to teach leaders this fundamental art/science.

Chapter 15: The Individual Scorecard

84. The individual is the fundamental element in a culture of excellence.
85. It is the responsibility of the team leader to create an environment in which each individual is inspired to voluntarily and passionately give their best every day. Performance management is the leader's core role.
86. Most leaders need a proven process to guide them in the fair and consistent execution of individual performance measurement.
87. The first stage of the P4 Performance Process is to gain perpetual shared understanding with the individual of what's expected and how it's measured so they can always know, through self-assessment, how they're doing and what they need to do to improve.
88. The eight behavior outcomes of individual performance can be used to measure and inspire performance excellence in any team or organization.
89. The more you communicate with the members of your team, the deeper your perpetual shared understanding will be.
90. It's the individual's responsibility to ensure that their own performance is measured accurately and fairly. After all, no one is with you more than you are.
91. The second stage in the P4 Performance Process is paying attention to performance daily. Recognize and encourage right behaviors while coaching to improve wrong ones. When you see it, say it!
92. The third stage in the P4 Performance Process is the periodic summary discussion. The shorter the time between your discussions, the easier it is to assess. People don't change that much. The key question to ask is "What, if anything, has changed in your performance since our last discussion?"
93. The fourth stage of the P4 Performance Process is validating performance excellence. To gain confidence in the validity of your performance measures and to ensure true performance excellence, check performance alignment between the three levels of performance at the end of the performance period.

Chapter 16: The BluePrint for Excellence

94. The House of Excellence model is a strategic planning framework that can be applied to any environment and any endeavor with its focus on the human aspect of excellence.
95. When combined with the 7 steps of a successful blueprint, you can create your own BluePrint to guide you on your quest for excellence.

Chapter 17: Leading Excellence

96. Leadership is the key raw material for excellence!
97. Despite what all the practitioners and academics say about the complexity and enormity of leadership effectiveness, anyone can become an effective leader if they can learn to TAP into the Pareto Principle of Leadership Effectiveness: build trust, create accountability, and lead with passion. By focusing on these three leadership actions, the remaining gazillion requirements of effective leadership will fall into place.
98. Trust is the one thing that changes everything. Communication determines the quality of trust in relationships. Trust builds hope and hope drives excellence. Therefore, trust drives excellence.
99. The Pareto Principle of Trust is captured in the acronym HRDNA, which stands for human relations, dependability (trustworthiness), never tell a lie (integrity), and apologize

when you're wrong (humility). Focus on these three areas and you will build high trust relationships.

100. In most organizations, 30% of the people are drivers and will voluntarily do what they're supposed to do regardless of who's looking. 60% of the people are doers and need someone to help them set priorities and do the right things at the right times. 10% are draggers and won't do what you need them to do no matter what. Create a culture of accountability to make sure things get done.
101. The three moments of truth where accountability is created are 1) at the beginning of the relationship, 2) during daily interactions, and 3) during the periodic summary discussion.
102. Consistency in execution of the accountability tools is required for accountability to be created and sustained. It must begin at the top and cascade all the way through the organization chart. If there's a gap anywhere in the chain whereby one leader is allowed to escape the process, excellence will eventually be thwarted. As the leader goes, so goes the team!
103. Passion must be based in virtue and knowledge....of who you are, why you're here, and where you're going. To lead excellence, discover your passion and pursue it honorably.

Chapter 18: America the Excellent

104. The House of Excellence model can be applied to countries as well.
105. America's mission is captured in the words of the Preamble of the Constitution of the United States... "in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity ..."
106. The founder's vision for America may have been for her to become "the greatest nation in the world."
107. America's core principles and values appear to be durability, duty, faith, justice, liberty, security, and unity.
108. Key outcomes of America's performance might include a composite score of 35 quality of life metrics, citizen perception of service by the federal government, federal employee engagement, voter turnout, GDP growth, growth competitiveness, the national debt, and GDP per capita.
109. America's current overall score on the criteria listed above is 2.40 on a five point scale, representing an overall performance in the fair to good range.
110. Restoring the hope of America the Excellent is possible if we all determine to join together in unity and common purpose. America can once again become "the greatest nation in the world!"