

Excellence at Execution

Leadership • Teamwork • Sales • Customer Service

A White Paper from The PAR Group

Executive Summary

Over the past 20 years The PAR Group has observed and documented the successes of over 500 companies in 25 countries, particularly in these areas:

- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Sales
- Customer Service

These are the four competencies that drive today's enterprises—whether or not new products, innovations or technologies are involved. The above four competencies produce an ability to implement change, whether it is a change in thinking, feeling, direction, procedure, or accomplishment. Most businesses grasp the intellectual principles of these competencies but struggle with doing them well. And knowing “what to do” is useless without the ability to execute in a consistent, results-producing manner.

These competencies make or break strategy.

This white paper presents an overview of 20 years of research and performance tracking of successful organizations and individuals. These top performers are recognized for their “excellence at execution.” They execute exceptionally well.

Their skills of execution are identified along with the methods they use to produce high levels of talent in others.

Background

Leaders are easy to recognize; they are the ones that have a following. They can obtain the willing buy-in, belief and confidence of others.

This is certainly not a matter of job title or function. It is an individual ability and given enough of it, it can become an organization's ability.

The PAR Group's research focused on **direct observation** of individuals who were clearly leaders in their organizations. They were observed

in action, executing the competencies that “won a following” and separated them from their peers. Our research resulted in five enlightening discoveries:

1. There is a universal skill set.
2. The skill set is unique.
3. The skills of execution are clearly definable.
4. The skill set can be coached to conscious competence.
5. There is a “best method” for developing these proficiencies throughout the ranks.

Discovery #1

A Universal Skill Set

Regardless of their job titles or functions, all individuals who have a “following” use the **same skill set** to “do business.” This skill set allows them to acquire “customers” in every interaction.

These skills are used by some people on occasion, seemingly by “accident.” They are used by highly successful people *more often*, because they use the skill set intuitively. They sense it and can repeat it regularly. However, they can't consciously describe what they do or how they do it.

As a result of The PAR Group's research, this skill set can be described and *developed* as a consciously competent ability. It is an *influence* skill set that aims at obtaining willing “buy-in” and action.

Discovery #2

The Skill Set Is Unique

The uniqueness of their “skill set” is their ability to deal with emotion first and apply logic second. Moreover, they have an ability to *tie logic to emotion* . . . for the purpose of obtaining willing buy-in.

No one taught them this skill set. They developed a sense for it by themselves. Call it “intuitive;” it is nevertheless real.

In America business people are typically taught to obtain results by simply applying logic. However, this does not describe the prime competency of the most successful performers, those who have a following. Certainly, they are logical, but their main interest and skill is in causing a “meeting of the hearts,” not just a “meeting of the minds.” This is illustrated in the example below:

Logic Only: “If you knew what I know, you would have to agree—and we would do business.”

Emotion first: “When you and I reach confidence together, then we’ll do business.”

Top performers throughout the world operate on that same insight. Namely, in order for buy-in to occur, **confidence** must be achieved—not merely logical understanding of ideas, solutions or technical benefits.

Nobel Prize-winning research in Economics, conducted by Simon in 1976, supports this conclusion. The way people actually do business and make decisions is in a *pursuit of comfort or confidence, whether or not logical cost-benefit-payoff is optimized!*

This is the difference between reality and theory. It is why people are often frustrated by the “logic” of our theoretical business schooling. The schooling is correct in technology but wrong when it comes to people. So we succeed at strategic planning but not at teamwork. Pure logic—without the ability to inspire confidence—doesn’t take us very far.

Discovery #3 Defining the Skill Set Leaders Actually Use

The skill that sets top performers apart is the ability to “**do business**” with people in a way that causes mutual “buy-in” to some tangible action by the end of the conversation.

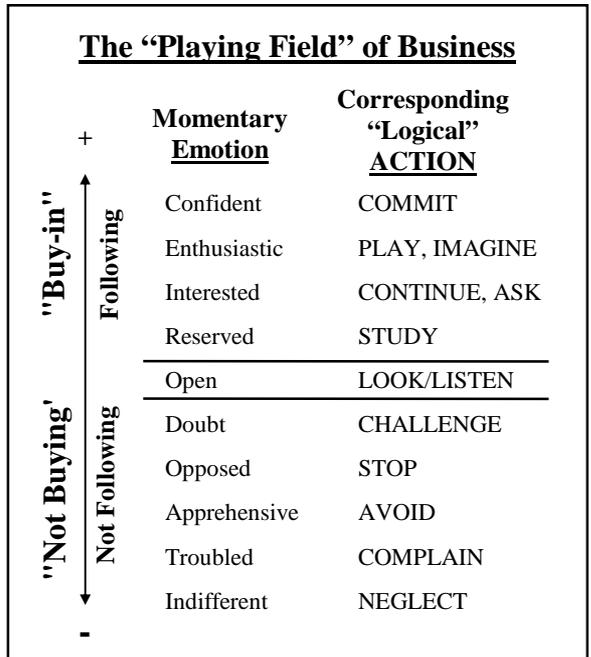
This ability involves three major components that blend together as if they were a single skill.

The skill set is an explicit ability to:

- LISTEN
- CONNECT
- INSPIRE buy-in

This is not a soft, vague or incomprehensible ability. It is specific and measurable.

1. **LISTEN**: Exemplary performers accurately read emotions first, logical content second. Why? Because the only way you can tell whether or not buy-in is occurring is to see degrees of positive, neutral, or negative inclination at the moment of decision making conversations. **Figure 1** illustrates the “playing field” across which people decide whether or not to “follow” or buy-in.



© 1980-2009, The PAR Group. Reproduction Prohibited. Figure 1

Across the entire “playing field,” willingness levels are different and **logic is different** for each point of view. For example, we do not reason in the same manner when we are fearful as when we are open-minded or interested. Logic is not fixed—as many schools teach it. Instead, logic is relative to our willingness level or emotional state at any moment in time. People who listen accurately for emotional inclination read “logic” better also!

2. **CONNECT**: In business the ability to empathize is fairly useless without the logic to make a business connection. The hallmark of top performers is their ability to **connect** logic to the viewpoint of others. People recognizable for their ability to obtain buy-in and a following link logic to emotion all the time. It is now a well-defined

and measurable skill. It causes alignment, teamwork and concerted action.

3. **INSPIRE BUY-IN:** The ability to **inspire** others to see, hear and to feel higher, more positive points of view is the third skill element . . . and the payoff skill of leadership, teamwork, customer service, sales, or effective change agents.

This is the ability to lead conversations “up” the “playing field” of business decision making. This ability links logic to higher, more positive points of view. People who can do it get far more cooperation and tangible action from others. People who don’t do it may have profound technical knowledge, but are unable to get others to accept their recommendations.

No one succeeds in business as a change agent, leader, customer service or sales performer without this ability. It now can be developed to a higher level of conscious competence.

Indeed, those who cannot reach proficiency in this skill should not be promoted to leadership, sales or other positions in which they must gain the support and buy-in of others. It is that critical. After all, would you want to put people in positions of leadership or influence if they caused only neutral or negative degrees of willingness in others?

Recap: The above three-part skill set is the benchmark skill set of **all** successful people who demonstrate an ability to get a “following” or “customers” in business. The skill set succeeds regardless of job title or job function (from boardroom to shop floor to customer premises) and regardless of type of product, service or industry. This is the elusive “missing link” skill some people refer to as the “art” of doing business.

This skill set has never before been well-defined or effectively taught in business schools. This is particularly surprising because Nobel Prize-winning research dating back to 1976 has clearly established that business decision making combines the use of emotion as well as logic. That is the stuff of leadership ability that goes beyond the scope of academic learning.

Discovery #4

Making the Skills Consciously Competent

The skill set *could not be taught* until a method was developed to teach people how to make sense of the connection between logic and emotions.

Furthermore, the method has to cause people to get “the feel” of execution, not just have an intellectual understanding of it.

The PAR Group has developed specialized video illustrations, skill descriptions and coaching methods that have clarified this “art” and turned it into a consciously competent skill. In thousands of tests people with bona fide leadership ability have verified these skills and turned them into conscious competence . . . and immediate higher performance.

Discovery #5

“Best Methods” for Developing Proficiency

Simply telling people about a skill set—as typical training methods do—is ineffective in building proficiency in these skills. Indeed, all show/tell/role-play classroom endeavors are inept at causing skills to be acquired to a level of performance competence.

The PAR Group’s research has uncovered the fact that the best methods for causing skills to be acquired to high degrees of performance excellence are totally different from conventional corporate training methods. The best methods are the same as those used to develop **talent** in:

1. The martial arts
2. The performing arts
3. Athletics

All of these disciplines use **coaching** to develop excellence at execution.

Business courses educate people “about” skills. Coaching, on the other hand, makes people more talented or skillful at executing skills.

Skill-coaching causes people to acquire “the feel” of a skill. Once a person can do the skill “by feel,” then they have ownership, proficiency—**talent** that is transferable to everyday circumstances.

Successful companies and coaches use the same hands-on method used in sports, martial arts and performing arts. With the right kind of skill coaching, most people can take what they learn about teamwork, sales, customer service or leadership and **do it** in the real world.

Although hands-on coaching is the best way, doing it one person at a time in the field with supervisors is the **slowest** way! Supervisors seldom have enough time or skill-coaching ability to **do it well**, even for one person, let alone 5, 10 or 30 people.

The PAR Group has developed coaching methods that can be **done in groups—which is much faster and more effective**. Our group coaching methods have been tested to produce measurable increases in talent within three to six days! And a measurable *return-on-investment in business results within three to ninety days!*

A measurable return-on-investment within 90 days—this is unheard of in conventional corporate training. It is now a proven accomplishment, verified by over 500 companies in 25 countries involving more than 500,000 people—in all capacities of leadership, teamwork, customer service and sales.

A Call to Action

The PAR Group conducts in-house briefings as well as regularly scheduled briefings in Atlanta—for you, the business executive. These briefings provide you with a more in-depth analysis of the research and skill set mentioned in this report.

A series of video illustrations of these skills in action, along with details of the coaching methods will be presented. Following the presentation, Senior Partners from The PAR Group will be on hand to discuss your business issues and ideas for improving the skills-of-execution of your work force. The PAR Group's Senior Partners have years of hands-on experience at helping companies implement this research at line operations levels.

The PAR Group has put this research into formal, structured coaching programs for immediate application by any industry. The above results are

so consistent that we now **guarantee** a 100% return-on-investment or you don't pay. It is that effective.

We recommend taking a small amount of the expenditures you now make on leadership, teamwork, customer service, sales or “implementing change” training and use it to try this measurably better approach.

If you do not see measurable improvements, you don't pay. But if it works, you will have a repeatable way to continue receiving a return-on-investment and producing excellence at execution throughout the ranks.

The PAR Group

This research report summarizes over 20 years of international research and performance tracking in over 500 companies in 29 countries.

We have been applying these skills for many major companies worldwide for the past 18 years including Thomas Cook, Coca-Cola, Hewlett-Packard, Medaphis, Delta Air Lines, Merrill Lynch, Quaker Oats, Royal Insurance Company, Singapore Institute of Management, and Southwestern Bell Corporation, to name a few.

We **guarantee** that the skills in this research report are coachable and that clients will see tangible results. This guarantee is based on an incredible 99% success rate so far where “Excellence in Execution” was the objective and return-on-investment was the measure.



“People Achieving Results”

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