

Controlling your performance blocking behaviour

What causes people to engage in various types of performance blocking behaviours?

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The main causes of Defensive-Aggressive behaviour are:

- feelings of frustration and anger when either (a) one is not succeeding at something or when (b) someone else has failed to deliver something important (which in turn affects your success or well-being)
- threats to self-esteem
- fear of having one's inadequacies or weaknesses discovered
- fear of loss of control

The main causes of Conflict Avoidance behaviour are:

- perceiving, approaching and managing situations on a win-lose basis
- fear of losing arguments, decisions, or battles of one kind or another
- unwillingness to expend the time and/or the energy, or to experience the energy drain, from argument or conflict
- unwillingness to pay the emotional price of conflict

The main causes of Responsibility Avoidance behaviour are:

- fear of failure
- fear of having one's actions and decisions challenged
- fear of the risk of responsibility
- feeling trapped in a job one doesn't like or want to do

What can you do to avoid this behaviour?

First, when you discover yourself engaging in performance blocking behaviour, try to identify your current emotions. Are you feeling frustrated, anxious, nervous, threatened, powerless, helpless, slighted, unappreciated, angry, etc?

Then ask yourself what's causing you to feel this way. Performance blocking behaviours are reactions to external situations, actions or pressures. They are normal and natural. But they need to be controlled, and identifying the cause is a critical step in managing them. If you understand what's causing you to react this way, and you can deal with the cause, the behaviour will disappear.

If you feel threatened, ask by what? If you're feeling frustrated, why is this? What is it that you want to do but cannot do? Is there a way around the blockage? Are the things causing your negative behaviour within your power to change? If they are, then concentrate on dealing with them. If they aren't then you have to change the way you react to them. It is useful to think of a prayer of St. Francis of Assisi: "Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to distinguish one from the other."

When you're taking an action ask yourself the question, "Whose needs am I serving by doing this?" Performance blocking behaviours tend to serve one's own needs, and seldom serve the needs of others. The objective of management is to add value and to accelerate and sustain momentum and performance in the organization. That implies doing things which serve not just your needs but the needs of your team and your organization.

Seek out and get feedback on your behaviour. One can only change if one knows what one is doing. Objective feedback is essential. Get a close colleague or a friend to tell you whenever he or she sees you engaging in performance blocking behaviour. And when they point it out to you, take it like a mature adult. Listen and don't get defensive. And make an effort not to repeat the behaviour.

We change our behaviour when its consequences are painful to us. Set up a penalty payment that you make whenever you find yourself showing bad behaviour. The penalty could be an amount you put aside and give to charity.

We maintain our behaviour when it is rewarding to us. When you stop yourself from engaging in performance blocking behaviour, and instead do something constructive, reward yourself - even if only by congratulating yourself. Don't wait for congratulations or reward from others. Organisational life being what it is, it could take a long time to come.

Feedback is the key to dealing with performance blocking behaviour. If you have people working for you who do these things, talk to them about it. Learn how to give feedback. If it is your boss who is exhibiting the behaviour, it can be more difficult, but if you feel you are able to give him or her feedback, do so supportively and loyally. The same thing can be said in many ways - the proper way is the way that the other person can accept.

Performance blocking behaviour is not a necessary part of any job. It is a natural emotional reaction to external factors. But when things are frustrating, when you feel threatened, when you feel demeaned, or when you feel anxious and irritated, it is definitely possible to avoid letting these emotions get on top of you and expressing themselves in negative behaviour. If you can contain your reaction, can step back and identify its cause and then can deal with the cause, you will transform the energy wasted on your blocking behaviour into behaviour that improves your performance.

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strategy people performance

Penumbra is a strategic business consultancy. We bring clarity by using research to drive understanding and direction. We deliver success by balancing experience and innovative thinking.

Whatever your aspiration, we'll provide the tools, information and analysis to turn your strategy into operational reality, in a way that motivates your people to outperform the market.

Overview

As a strategic business consultancy, our expertise is in helping our clients executing strategies and delivering results.

We achieve this by combining a robust management planning system with a focus on people which drives alignment and commitment

We work in partnership with talented and committed leadership teams to help organisations build corporate value with a wide range of customised, cross-functional advisory programmes and services delivered from four complementary service groups:

Strategy

(Development, formulation, implementation and alignment)

Our innovative **Penumbra Balance** approach creates dynamism, drives and sustains momentum and makes strategy real for stakeholders

Organisational Development

(Behavioural issues)

We call our holistic approach **Balanced Motivation** which encompasses activities that improve performance both for the organisation and the individual

Research and Insight

Our stimulating **Clarity** approach draws on our business consulting skills to deliver a mix of business analysis and market research which

provides compelling insights for winning decisions.

Operations

The Operations practice brings all of our hands-on practical experience to bear on execution and delivery of results.

Our technology enabling approach called **Totality** facilitates business focussed services and solutions, aligned to business needs, for people, processes and tools.

Why Us?

Organisations turn to us when they:

- Want to find a new strategic direction
- Have created a strategy and now need to execute it
- Need to drive more value from existing initiatives
- Have a big issue to resolve, usually dependent on lasting employee buy-in
- Need to explore new ways to drive value
- Need a breakthrough result
- Are seeking measurable results

Our Experience

We have real world experience spanning 20 years with our clients. This includes working with:

BP, Citibank, Morgan Chase, WestLB, RBS, UBS, Bankers Trust, Kleinwort Benson, Coutts, Natwest, Intel, Nokia, Adobe, Kall-Kwik, Glaxo Smith Kline,

Dupont, Pfizer, Savills, British Council, Clifford Chance, British Airways, Gillette, Unilever, Shell, Volvo, Vauxhall, British Gas, TradeStation, MWB Business Exchange, Investors in People, University of Cambridge

On projects such as:

Strategic Planning, Strategy development and implementation, Culture change, Post-Merger Integration, Vision, Purpose and Values, Current State Analysis, Organisation Re-design, Transformational Change, Client Focus Strategies, Perception Studies, Client and Staff Engagement surveys, Global Rebranding, Know your Customer, Market Forecasting, Consumer Insight, Market Segmentation, Process optimisation, Lean/Six Sigma, Project Management, ERP Systems Roll-out, Market Research, Financial Modelling, Franchise Start-up Evaluation models, Cost Benefit Analysis, Implementation Alignment, Strategic Alignment, Complex Database development, Custom Application development, Supply Chain Optimisation

Covering diverse sectors such as:

Financial Services, Pharmaceuticals, Manufacturing, Energy, Mobile Telecoms, Travel and Tourism, Aviation, Property, Hi-tech and Business Services