

# Reaching HIGHER

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## Creating The *Performance Culture*™: Part 1

**W**e at SAMI, and others in our field, routinely write and speak about the methods and success stories that have resulted in substantial improvements. These are inspiring stories, and give us insights on what tactics to use, how to deploy them, and the kinds of gains we can achieve.

The truth that most of us prefer to hide is that most of these successes *were not sustained over time*. So many of the improvements we make create *anecdotal stories*. One-time events. Sometimes we get bottom line changes mentioned in our stories (additional production or reduced costs), but mostly we talk about a unit or a line and the changes in availability or another KPI.

Affecting the bottom line of the company, permanently, is a far more daunting task than improving the availability of a machine, or improving a KPI. In benchmarking studies, the relative position of the measured plants seldom changes in the long term, looking at a 10 year time horizon. For instance, most refineries are benchmarked by Soloman Associates. Their relative position and strengths/weaknesses very seldom change.

Why is that? Why is real, measureable, bottom line change so difficult to get?

It comes down to culture. Cultures resist change like crazy. That's one reason why Toyota and Honda remain so good at what they do. They are so conscious about creating the right culture, they spend years at it before a product ever comes off the line. Each new person who joins the company learns expectations, methods, and teamwork. You can change out the entire workforce over a period of time, but the values and expectations remain embedded.

This is also true for the low-performers. They transmit values and expectations as well as the best companies.

### Culture Determines Results

My point in presenting this article is, that *Culture Determines Results*. You can have all the best practices in the world. You can measure 100 KPI's. You can have 15 #1 priority initiatives in a company (and most do). These things are all meant to drive changes in the behaviors of people on the plant floor, and the supervision who manage them.

Let's say that again: *All the improvement work we do is trying to change the behaviors of the people in the plant.*

This may be the most important sentence in this

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## “Where do I Start?”

I've been following recent SMRP (Society of Maintenance and Reliability Professionals) Linked-In discussion. The topic was submitted by a newly minted maintenance manager wondering about the reactive maintenance organization he had just inherited. Well, while he didn't spell it out, his description fit a reactive organization to a tee. His question was, and I paraphrase here, “Where do I start if I want to turn this organization around?” This got me to thinking, just where do you start?

We have the opportunity to work with many organizations dealing with the same issues. It always amazes me, that in this day and age of computer technology and sophisticated systems and tools, reactivity is still the overarching trait that I see. Truly proactive organizations are few and far between. I guess I would have to chalk it up to basic human behavior. Who has time to plan, order parts ahead of time or think about tomorrow. Where's the fun in that?

So where would I start? My first response would be to attempt to restore discipline into the organization. Why discipline you may ask? For me the answer is pretty simple. Most reactive organizations are pretty undisciplined. Although it is draining on

individuals, working in reactive mode is the easiest way to maintain equipment. It breaks, I fix it. No planning, no attempts at scheduling, no worrying about metrics... I just simply have to react. Now this doesn't mean that I don't attempt to plan and schedule, it's just the fact that more than likely I don't get much work done that way.

To further the case, more than likely, I've been promoted and rewarded for my reactive behavior. I'm the “go to” person. I'm the one that gets us out of trouble. I'm the knight in shining armor that saves the day. It's the trait I look for in the personnel who work for me. We're a bunch of disciplined cowboys looking for things to fix. And, we're self-perpetuating.



So, I'd start by instilling some form of discipline. Perhaps the easiest way is to focus on meetings and meeting behaviors. Everyone holds some sort of meeting on a recurring basis plus a lot of others that take place ad hoc. So pick one that takes place at least weekly. Start with drawing up a standing agenda, required attendees, time line, action log and assign a permanent scribe. Sounds easy, but this is far from the truth. Start slowly and keep working on it over time. Soon you'll find that meetings start on time,

finish on time, accomplish the intent of the meeting, publish minutes and track actions.

Okay, I hear the question now, “What does this have to do with maintaining equipment?” My answer is simple, if you can't hold a structured meeting, how can you ever expect to stick to a schedule?

I've had the opportunity to work with many organizations struggling with reactive work management practices and believe it or not, getting meetings under control is the first sign of success. This doesn't mean to say that we don't work on other things. Work identification, prioritization, planning, scheduling and work closure are still taking place. But interesting enough, meeting control is the first win! Once we start building confidence the other cards fall into place.

One other thing; this doesn't just apply to the Maintenance Department. Reactive Work Management is supported by many organizations in the plant. Materials Management, Operations, and Engineering, (just to name a few), play a significant role.

So my advice is that if you want to start on the road to proactivity, consider starting with meetings. As always feel free to comment and provide feedback. I can be reached at [darmy@samicorp.com](mailto:darmy@samicorp.com).

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# Creating The Performance Culture™

## Part 1

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article. If you don't understand or agree, I'll give an example or two.

The topic of safety has been prominent in industry for about 25 years. We have seen waves of attempts to improve safety results. At first we measured incidents. Things got a little better. Then we tried training and awareness, and little jingles the people should remember when they are working. Didn't see much change. We finally saw a breakthrough when "Behavior-based Safety" became the standard. Understanding that what people habitually do gets them predictable results. We began measuring not only lost time incidents (things after the fact), but the behaviors that create the incidents (near-misses). By focusing on safe and unsafe behaviors our results in safety have improved dramatically.

Behaviors as the core of results is not a new realization:

"We are what we habitually do. Excellence then is a habit, not an act"

Aristotle 384 BC - 322 BC

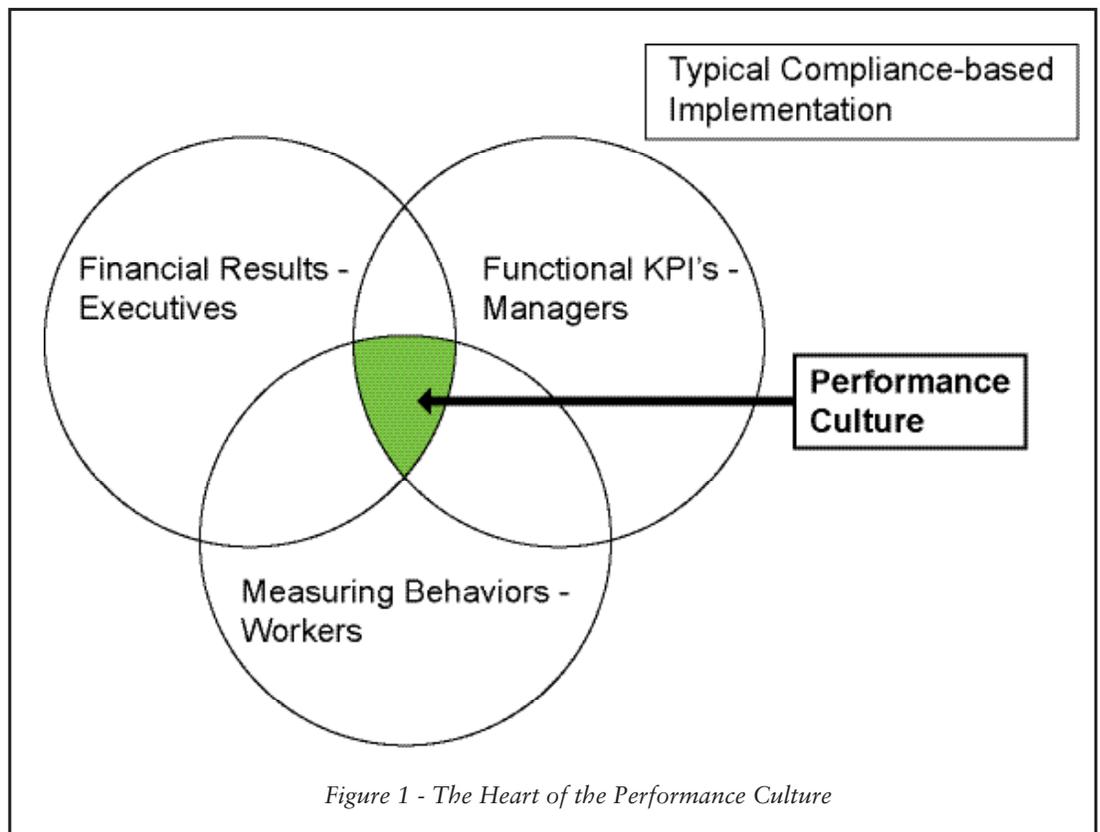
largest and most sophisticated companies (industrial companies who lead their industries) are observing this:

- All the KPI's are reported as GREEN (everything is working great)

company policy and standards.

Executives are measured on results. Results are the *consequence* of what we do.

What's missing is measuring *behaviors*.



It comes down to this.

1. A Culture is the sum of all the behaviors in a group
2. A Culture determines the outcomes in every business
3. To Change the culture you need to change the behaviors of all the people involved

We have observed recently that the

- Results are flat or declining
- If we make sure we have no identified gaps, we cannot change. GAPS are our friends for improvement. Why do we game the KPI's? Trying to make them look great? They are tied to our compensation! We are smart guys—we know how to make the KPI's look *really* good.

We are measuring KPI's because we want to improve our results, and to comply with

Change the behaviors sustainably, you get a different *culture* and different results. The *Performance Culture* measures all three.

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In part 2 of Creating The Performance Culture we will define and discuss the 4 P's of the Performance Culture.