

Improve Performance - Use a Scorecard

by Frank Hurtte

Last week I finished my fourth running of the Bix-7 road race. For the 6.5 Billion or so readers out there unfamiliar with the Bix-7, the “Bix” is a 7 mile foot race through the streets of Davenport, Iowa. It attracts 20,000 participants, and in our corner of the world, it is more than just a race - it is a measure of human endurance. This year I alternated jogging, trotting, walking, and running to round the course in the (un-Olympic) time of 1 hour and 44 minutes. What is the point of all this? I am getting better and I can prove it. I have a score card that I can use to measure myself over the past 4 years – and I know I am improving.

Before this years race, a friend (who is a long time runner) promised to help me trim at least another 15 minutes from the time. When I asked him how he was going to do this, he told me he was going to set up my own personal “score card” over the winter. This will measure my progress on a weekly basis – all toward the goal of a race to be held in July of next year. This made me think – about score cards, about management, and about human nature.

Why a scorecard?

In my coaching practice, I have found that even the most successful of individuals find themselves distracted. On an intellectual level, they know what needs to be done. But, on a human level they stray, they allow themselves to be sidetracked and drawn into low value activities. Sometimes they find themselves pulled into solving other people’s problems – because “that’s the kind of guy/gal they are”. One very successful CEO told me, “for the past 28 years, I have created a daily task list... and I hate it.” The message of this is... task list implies tedium and drudgery. I have discovered using a scorecard implies fun... it brings out the best in human beings.

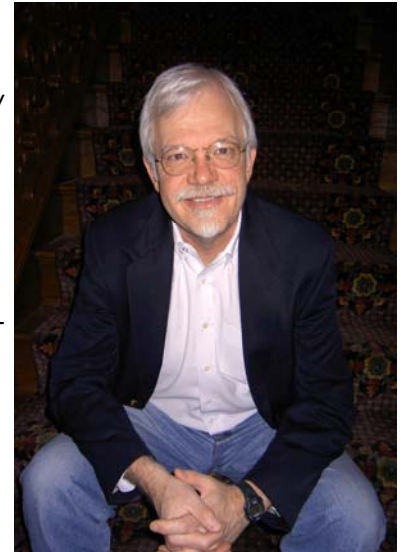
Games date back to the beginning of time – board games were popular in biblical Ur (3000 BC). Keeping score dates back even further. In his book “What Counts; how every brain is hard wired for math”, Brian Butterworth points out that non-linguistic forms of keeping score evolved (before and) into the mathematics of modern man. Scores and scorecards are a part of the human essence.

Developing a scorecard

It has been said that sports are 95% practice and 5% game – and, keeping score provides the direction in practice. If the home team fails to hit the ball during the game, batting practice is lengthened. And, if the Tiger Woods “duffs” a put on the 8th hole, it would be my guess, his next week is spent on the practice green. The same is true in business. Daily activities drive long term performance.

To take advantage of the scorecard process, I recommend that scorecards be developed in three different sections.

- Daily Practices
- Big Rock Activities
- Results



Frank Hurtte of River Heights Consulting combines “in the trenches” experience with long range strategic thinking.

About the author...

Frank Hurtte (frankehurtte@riverheightsconsulting.com) is a consultant to distribution and the sales channel at River Heights Consulting. He has 28 years of real world experience and is available as a speaker and executive coach. He has written a number of articles and white papers on distribution and the selling process. Frank looks at the distributor manufacturer relationship from a number of different angles. You can contact Frank at 563-514-1104 or through www.riverheightsconsulting.com.

Daily practice consists of the habits that breed success (think business and personal growth) if practiced regularly. Here - in no particular order - are some that I have used:

- De-Clutter Office – this is a weakness of mine
- Eat a “low-carb” friendly lunch – call me Mr. South beach
- Schedule early morning appointment – for a salesman who got hung up in the office
- Work out with dumb bells – for a person recovering from shoulder surgery
- Arrive at work at least 20 minutes prior to start time – for the time impaired
- Visit non-work websites less than 3 times per day – hung up on news sites
- Develop a 5 item task list – for the workaholic who wanted to do everything
- Review calendar for next week – to increase planning
- 30 minutes of new product study
- Check phone messages at 10 and 3 daily
- Return emails in batches rather than continuously

Each is an activity scored on a daily basis. Select activities that do not come naturally. For example, I am one of those people who consistently arrives at work 30 minutes or more prior to start time. Therefore, start time would never be on my personal score card.

Big Rock activities are items which direct the individual in a sector of their job which is of high importance but may change over time. These are fine tuned as major projects or events approach. In practice, the longer the time frames – the better. Here are some examples of project related activities:

- Improve professional appearance by dressing conservatively – for a young sales person
- Update website
- Learn one new product line

- Learn one new sales technique
- Make 10 prospecting calls per week in the instrumentation sector
- Refresh data in customer contacts
- Write one chapter for the book per week
- Review and update the Scorecard weekly
- Update ongoing marketing program
- Update and review FOCUS analysis

These activities are designed to drive the right behavior on longer term projects. (If you have not heard the time honored story of the big rocks, drop me a line. I will send you my version of the modern day parable.) These Big Rocks require thought and often help break projects into smaller more manageable pieces.

It should be noted that reviewing and updating the scorecard on a weekly basis is an important part of this process. Others indicate they begin reviewing weekly but evolve into a daily practice of looking over their scorecard.

Results oriented activities are the long range important points in our lives. In my life finding new clients is an important task. Coaching opportunities are the most satisfying part of my job, so I have weighted the addition of a new clients for coaching more heavily than a new client for product consulting. Here are some samples from other people:

- New client from A group – where A met the profile defined in a financial consulting business
- New client for coaching – my own personal direction
- New OEM based customer – this came from an automation based distributor
- New Manufacturing based customer
- Achieve Vendor Partner status – from a sale manager growing a new territory
- Sign JIT supply contract
- Identify major driver at end user plant



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The crux of the difference in results oriented activities is a more intensely weighted scale. While points from above tend to be more or less the same, points awarded in results can vary greatly.

To give you an idea as to what the scorecard might look like... **Check out the box below**

How to use this data

Scores are recorded each week. Reviews range from weekly for new employees to quarterly for long term employees. In my practice I discuss scores in passing on a bi-weekly basis but in depth quarterly. I apply coaching and additional discussion in areas where the score slips

or has reached a premature plateau. If you find you are “maxing out” the scorecard in daily practices – you may need to adjust the parameters of measurement. This will become evident in a short time. If it does happen - the door is open for discussion and more evaluation. Coaching and developing people, whether it be yourself or others is an ongoing process. I am often asked “when can I expect results?” The answer is nearly immediately. Will this turn a “rookie” salesperson into a seasoned pro in weeks? No – but it will eliminate miscommunication and wasted effort in growing new professionals. As a side benefit, I have found that often the process of developing a scorecard provides a more focused view of that which is important to an organization.

The Scorecard	Time Frame	Weekly
Big Rocks	Value	Score
10 prospecting calls per week	3	
Write one chapter	2	
Appearance	2	
De-clutter office	3	
Learn one more sales technique	2	
Update website	3	
Spend 3 hours with family		
Total Projects Score		
XX	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX
Daily Practices		
De-clutter office daily	1	
Exercise for 20 minutes each day	1	
Answer all e-mails daily	1	
Return all phone calls	1	
Less than 3 visits to non-work website	1	
Total Daily Practice Score (x 5 working days in week)		
XX	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX
Results		
New customer contact in non-target market = 1 pt. each		
New customer contact in target market = 5 pt. each		
New order with value greater than \$5000 = 10 pt. each		
Total Results Score		
XX	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX
Total Score		