The Marginal Gains Approach to Professional and Career Development

An Additional Tool-Technique
for Professional and Career Development
Facilitators - Advisors - Coaches – Counsellors
To Supplement Traditional Approaches
such as advising on
Formal-Academic Qualifications
Mandatory Job-Skills Training
CV-Resume Updates
Annual Post-Appraisal Development Plans

Clive Findlay

What is the “Marginal Gains” approach?
A Development of the Kaizen - Continuous Improvement - Approach
An In-depth Analysis of Key Aspects of an Individual’s Life
Home Life - Social Activities – Work Life
Identifying Factors Which Impact on Performance-Progress
Finding Ways to Change-Improve-Enhance those Aspects
Resulting in Multiple, Small, Marginal, Improvements
Which Collectively Result in Substantial Improvement-Progress

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The "Marginal Gains" Model

At first, 1% positive change makes little difference to the situation-performance .... but over time, as the new changes build on earlier changes ... a sequence of 1% gains results in a significant improvement
If the changes are negative – inevitable if no action is taken – the collective result is a decline in performance

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Examples of the Approach - in Sport
Out-of-Competition: Diet – Sleep-Rest Patterns – Media Activities
Training Facilities - Replicate Competition
Accommodation: Location - Noise Levels – Beds – Bathrooms – Food
In Competition: Privacy from Media – Privacy from Fans
Clothing and Footwear to Match Conditions
Small Improvements Combine to Improve Competition Performance

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Examples of the Approach – In Hospitals
Instruments for Hand-Sizes + L R Hands
75% Reduction in Accidents During Surgery
Words on Colour-Coded Wristbands
90% Reduction in Wrong Treatment
Checklist Approach Before Operation Starts
100% Reduction in Missing Equipment During Operation
Flexible Catheters at Skin Entry Point
50% Reduction in Infections
5 Minute Earlier Alert of Patient Arrival
20% Improvement in Survival Rates

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Working with Your Clients – influence of Individual Profile
Opportunities will depend on:
Age
Personal-Life Situation
Home Location
Workplace Location
Current Role and Responsibilities
Development-Career Objectives
Culture – Practices - of Current Organisation and Sector

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Examples of Marginal Gains Actions

Personal Life

Delicate … But … Can Have Great Impact

* Intimate detail not required – but – ask client to consider these *

Relationships … advise that - if a problem - action is taken
Health – Fitness … advise that – if a problem – action is taken
Social Activities … Increase or Decrease - Appropriately
Partner-Family Support … advise discussions on importance of CPD

Examples of Marginal Gains Actions

Work Life – Indirect Impact

Workplace Location … If a major problem – change or move nearer
Working Hours … If excessive-inconvenient – explore change of format
Commuting … If by car - change to train, tube, bus – use to study
Taking Work Home … reduce - or eliminate if possible
Professional Memberships … Join relevant one(s) – be an active Member
Inappropriate Social Media Activity … focus on LinkedIn - only

Examples of Marginal Gains Actions

Work Life – Direct Impact

Change Personal Appearance to "Professional"
Change Personal Habits - Behaviour
Adopt Positive Attitude to Change
Seek out and Volunteer for Projects
Relationships … actively attempt to re-build - improve
Schedule Bite-Size Skills Updates - Study Formal Qualifications in Stages

Approach of Facilitator-Coach-Counsellor

Prepare Template: Areas – Opportunities – Agreed Actions - Progress
Discussions: Together - then Individually - then Together
Agree Initial Small-Quantity of Marginal Gains Action Plan
Monitor Progress
Agree Next Set of Actions
Repeat !!

Combine With – Supplement With – Other Tools-Techniques
Separate From … or … Integrated With
Professional Development Action Plan

Benefits of the Marginal Gains Approach

Helps Individual to Accept “Whole-Life” Approach to Change
Explores - Considers - Impact of Wider Range of Factors
Widens Range of Options for Improvement Actions
Regular-Visible Progress Made on Changes-Adjustments
Weekly-Monthly Achievements – v – Months-Years for Qualifications
Regular Successes are Motivational-Encouraging

Complimentary Tools-Techniques

One to One Discussions
Gap Analysis … Experience-Qualifications-Image-Actions
Personal SWOT Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats Analysis
SDI Strengths Deployment Inventory
Belbin Team Type Test
Current Organisation P E S T L E Analysis
Personality Tests … which you approve of
Sources of Related Information

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