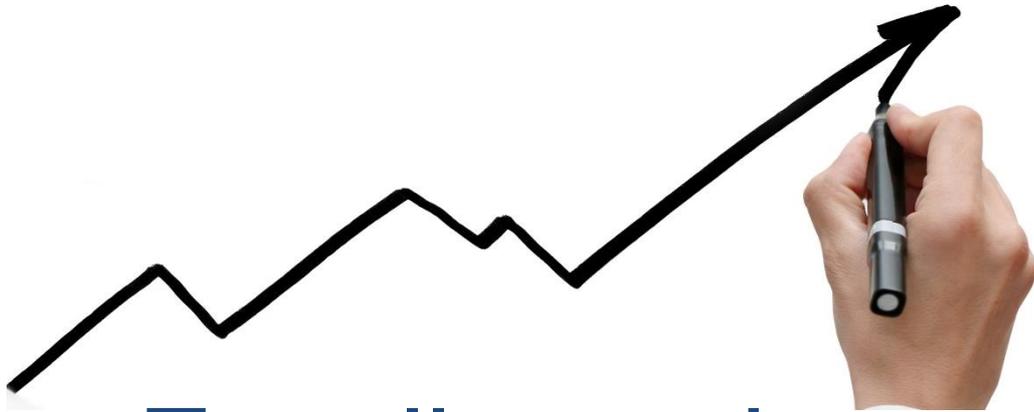


*Malcolm G. Tyson*

# Excellence is a Habit

*The top **4** qualities of  
business leaders that  
maximize the  
possibilities of  
excellence.*





# Excellence is a Habit

*By Malcolm G. Tyson*

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## *Dedication*

*-Glory be to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.*

*This ebook is dedicated to my family and their unconditional love, which has inspired me to have unwavering confidence; Tisha, Jalen, Justin.*

*Ma & Tre*

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Excellence is a Habit

# Introduction

In today's fast-paced business, because the environment and players change so frequently and erratically, it's important for firms to be prepared to address these changes in order to maintain their viability and long term health. Once an organization addresses a change, it gears up for the next challenge that potentially threatens its value, position, or mission.

This agility in meeting challenges give rise to not only threats but also to opportunities to further establish its core competencies. Internally, organizations seek to broadcast their values to all staff members, from support staff to the highest levels of management. Simultaneously the organization is striving to externally solidify and improve its position in the market with new offer or new delivery methods of services or products.

Organizations mistakenly characterize this phenomena as continuous improvement or perhaps corporate agility measured through key performance indicators, comparative analysis and other metrics. Yet, this course of action is correctly distinguished as the corporate trait of habitual excellence. It is the cumulative effect of excellence seeking efforts established and enforced by the leaders of an organization.



This is further executed and refined through the culture of the firm. It is this habitual excellence that propels organizations through the doldrums of economic downfalls, the shifting whims of customers, and the purposeful attacks by competitors. It is this habitual excellence that leads to companies being voted the best places to work for or becoming market leaders. However, it's understood that the results of habitual excellence are well... excellence, but what is less understood is the foundational elements that must be in place for habitual excellence to be established, cultivated, and leveraged.



This eBook seeks to explore those key characteristics and offer models that support excellence as a habit, not a destination

First, the owner/manager of an organization is the catalyst for habitual excellence and perpetuates its evolution within the firm. Second, the organization has to have an environment that allows and encourages habitual excellence to not only be established but also to grow, thrive and be a key driver in the attitude and actions throughout the organization. This must permeate to the core of the individual leaders regardless of their responsibilities. This eBook looks at those key elements that create a culture of habitual excellence.

Last, the benefits of habitual excellence have been well documented in the many “Top 5” or “Top 10” lists, “Best of’s” and rankings within media (social or traditional). However, this eBook examines the more quantifiable benefits of habitual excellence that solidify this approach in any industry. Assuming a non-traditional, cross-section of metrics, including cumulative income growth, valuation and community involvement (social responsibility), places habitual excellence at the top of the relevancy meter and provides evidence of far reaching appeal in the ancillary areas of business.



**Malcolm Tyson has always had a passion for helping others.** As he worked his way through his educational and professional careers, that passion grew into a deep desire to help businesses grow into strong job-creating, revenue-injecting contributors to the economy. He approaches small and medium-sized enterprises from the perspective of improving the people, processes, and tools by focusing on sound management practices and strategic decision-making. “As a consultant and coach, I am passionate about growing small businesses and formulating the actions and attitudes that help small business owners become successful, both personally and professionally.” Mr. Tyson has over 20 years of accounting and financial management experience and is currently a PhD candidate specializing in strategy and innovation.

## Section 2

### Passion & Drive

The leader of an organization, whether owner or manager, sets the tone for the organization and thus must exemplify habitual excellence in their very nature. Granted, excellence and its pursuit are learned and mastered in the functional areas of the organization but an owner/manager encourages this indirectly in the approval of policies and procedures as well as directly in their actions.

Further, Elliott and Boshoff highlight the factors influencing functional area success as: the owner-manager as a product/service champion, their knowledge, as well as their positive involvement. "Product/service champions are the people who recognize the potential of a particular project and take the necessary action to implement the innovation" Elliott and Boshoff postulated.<sup>1</sup> The drive for habitual excellence is insatiable, particularly with the owner/managers of enterprises. The same passion that drives the entrepreneur to start the business is the same innate quality that seasoned business owners use to exploit opportunities in the market and construct implementation strategies to effectively monetize opportunities and ensure positive returns. Fundamental to habitual excellence is the drive to never stop being an advocate for the company's product or services as well as the relentless campaigner for the standard of quality for the people, processes and tools of the organization are key to habitual excellence.



Excellence is a Habit



pas·sion  
/'paʃHən/ 

noun

1. strong and barely controllable emotion.  
"a man of impetuous passion"

drive  
/drīv/ 

2. propel or carry along by force in a specified direction.  
"the wind will drive you onshore"  
*synonyms:* power, propel, move, push  
"the engine drives the front wheels"

### {TAKEAWAY}

**Passion and the drive to never stop** are critical characteristics of the owner manager of an organization practicing habitual excellence. These emotional attributes are the intangible igniters of the owner/managers, who are the engine of an enterprise.

### Multi-dimensional Learning

In addition to passion and drive, the habitually excellent owner/manager has to practice and exhibit continuous learning.

Now it is understood that the habitually excellent owner/manager will surround him/her self with smart individuals to assist in resolution of complex issues and in the pursuit of excellence. However, this can lead to sense of complacency in many leaders.

*“...questioning and challenging the environment*

*in a way that allows for comprehensive strategies and innovative paths to emerge from within.”*

#### {TAKEAWAY}

**Multi-dimensional learning** is an integral quality of the habitually excellent owner manager. By understanding the source in the current, one can prepare for the future. Thus moving beyond the reactive **if**, then scenarios to proactive **why, for, else** situations.



It is important to distinguish the most effective type of learning that supports habitual excellence. The one-dimensional learning is that of the typical owner/manager, who are “students of the business” in the academic sense. This person takes a reactive position by learning from the effects of some stimuli, whether it be tracking the results of a marketing plan or responding to revenue recognition requirements. Traditional owner/managers are well-equipped and very proficient at this type of learning. The habitually excellent owner/manager participates in two-dimension learning, which seeks to understand the origin of a particular circumstance as well as explore strategic alternatives based on the gained understanding for a comprehensive approach to stimuli.

The terms “single loop” and “double loop” learning were devised by author Chris Argyris as he studied organizational learning. This noted author and social scientist describes double loop learning as a function of how professionals think and the intellectual boundaries and interpretations of how they feel.<sup>2</sup> At its essence, double loop learning is achieved by questioning and challenging the environment in a way that allows for comprehensive strategies and innovative paths to emerge from within. The habitually excellent owner/manager is multi-dimensional and seeks to learn from his/her environment just as an organism interacts with its environment. Business issues and challenges present these types of individuals with opportunities to learn from the stimuli and craft approaches that answer the root cause of the problem as well as place the organization in a forward looking posture.

### Experienced Failure



*“Success is not final, Failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.”*

- Winston Churchill

*“Every adversity, every failure, every heartache, carries with it the seed of an equal or greater benefit.”*

- Napoleon Hill

#### {TAKEAWAY}

**Perseverance and new knowledge** are embedded in failure and must be leveraged by habitually excellent leaders to realize their potential. Overcoming failure allows for the maximum use of passion and drive toward positive results. Failures also provide leaders with an opportunity to obtain new knowledge using multi-dimensional learning.

As the combination of passion and drive fuels the momentum of the pursuit of excellence, it is multi-dimensional learning that paves the way for game-changing, dynamic results. The inquisitive and analytic qualities of a owner/manager practicing habitual excellence differentiates the individual as an exceptional leader of organizations.

Moreover, beyond these intellectual merits, the habitually excellent owner/manager demonstrates a unique perspective that is only acquired from failure... preferably epic failure and more than one if at all possible.

The lessons learned from failure are theoretically taught in academic settings, although, the practical implications, in addition to the emotional impacts of failure extend, beyond textbooks and labs. Well, what is it about failure that provides its enduring lessons that can't be learned any other way? Why is failure so important to some of the top leaders and iconic business minds the world has ever known?

There are two elements in failure that cause reactions in the owner/manager practicing habitual excellence. It must be noted that these lessons can be learned only from a positive mindset. It is virtually impossible to learn anything from a position of negativity.

The first element in failure that helps shape the habitually excellent owner/manager, is the capacity of failure to ignite perseverance. One's ability to continue despite impediments and an environment that is not conducive to progress is perseverance. Failure poses a threat to the passion and drive of the habitually excellent owner/manager. Failure can certainly eliminate these characteristics but most likely, failure diverts passion and drive that could be used to energize a more impactful endeavor.

The second element of failure that acts as a catalyst in the habitually excellent owner/manager, is the opportunity to develop new knowledge laced with wisdom. The habitually excellent leader capitalizes on failure through multi-dimensional learning and acquires the new knowledge that is embedded within the failure.

## Coaching

The elements described thus far have highlighted the intellectual and experiential qualities of the habitually excellent practitioner. The essence of habitual excellence incorporates a forward-looking mindset with an awareness of empirical circumstances. This attitude is coupled with an insatiable desire to succeed, not at all costs but the right way.

However, even with these qualities the habitually excellent practitioner is relatively one-dimensional and self-contained in his/her development. The component that adds depth and breadth to the individual's attitude and efforts is the impact of a coach or mentor. The coach seeks to amplify the attitudes and efforts of the habitually excellent practitioner through a process of ensuring the individual or group of individuals are more focused, effective, and productive.



**“Coaching takes a holistic view of the individual: work, corporate values, personal needs and career development are made to work in synergy, not against one another.”**

**- British Journal of Administrative Management**

With the augmentation of the coach, the habitually excellent owner or manager is poised for greatness. The characteristics that shape the business leader are filtered through a systematic approach for improvement.

From the outside looking in, partnering with a coach allows business leaders to be habitually excellent with more consistency, ease, and speed than those who do not because of the high attention paid to maximizing effectiveness. Coaching supplements and amplifies the positive attributes of the habitually excellent leader, and utilizes laser-like focus to reveal the critical path to goal fulfillment.

**Coaching has become increasingly more important** as corporate budgets shrink yet expectations grow. Businesses are expected to do more with less, so performing consistently and efficiently at a high level are essential. According to the International Coaching Community, coaching is more cost-effective alternative to recruitment and re-training. In addition, business coaches offer tools, ideas and connections that help individuals and organizations achieve their goals in an accelerated fashion. This is accomplished through strategic planning, objectivity and accountability. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) whether just starting out, dealing with a plateau, or at end of their lifecycle, can benefit from the guidance of a coach who can provide an outside perspective, as well as an environment in which to reflect and contemplate more strategically.

The habitually excellent practitioner can especially benefit from a coach or mentor because they are trained in asking the questions that guide and help leaders become more self-aware. Being a creature of passion and drive the habitually excellent practitioner will naturally push themselves without regard for physical consequences or consideration for the people that they care about. A good coach or mentor will provide the constructive and consistent feedback targeted at helping the leader grow the right way, with a focus on improvement. The coach is genuinely seeking to improve both the leader's business and life.

### {TAKEAWAY}

**Characteristics of the habitually excellent owner/manager :**

- Passion and drive,
- Multi-dimensional learning
- Experienced failure
- Coaching



As the Managing Partner of Stratascension, Inc., a strategic business consulting and coaching firm, I lead the company on its mission to offer academic theory and real-world evidence based management principles and practices in an effort to improve the ability of organizations, both public and private to leverage strategic decision making in increasingly complex, demanding, and results orientated environments. Clients include the owners of small- and medium-sized businesses, management teams, sales teams and self-employed professionals among others.



*Want more out of your business? Want to bridge the innovation gap?*

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