In our everyday life, we all have objectives. Usually, the objectives are associated with obligations from work or from our personal life. Regardless of where the objectives come from, our tendency is to fulfill them as fast, as much, and as best we can. Operational excellence is the state of achievement for the works we do to fulfill our objectives. The operational excellence framework and its associated methodology were developed to provide the necessary implementation guidelines and practices to enable the achievement of the desired objectives at work. There are 6 steps in the operational excellence methodology:

Step1 - Create a “burning” desire for success

Step2 - Turn “desires” into objectives for success

Step3 - Mastering the capabilities for achieving the desired objectives

Step4 - Achieve greatness in execution

Step5 - Ensure the Operational Transparency

Step6 - Continuous Improvement

In the following paragraphs, the step 2 of the methodology – the “Turn desires into objectives for success” will be discussed in details; with guidelines and practices to enable the translation of Executives’ burning desires for company success through the implementation of operational excellence; into the obtainable, realizable, and actionable set of business objectives for the company. These necessary business objectives will provide the direction and the final destination for the company to follow. A company will not achieve its success without having the necessary objectives to channeled its energy for the achievement of them.

Step 2: Turn “Desires” into Objectives for Success

“The reason most people never reach their goals (objectives) is that they don’t define them, learn about them, or even seriously consider them as believable or achievable.”
Generally speaking, objective setting is the foundation for individual and team success. Compelling objective creates motivation and engagement. Objectives are the means by which your ultimate desires are met. For example, if your ultimate desire is to increase sale revenue in the upcoming month, your objectives are the series of achievements that must be happened in order for the desire to be realized.

To find acceptable and realistic objectives, take notes and write down all objectives you may need to accomplish to reach your overall desire. Weed out unrealistic objectives. This information will help you break down your objectives and insert them into a project plan later.

A useful objective should have the following elements:

- Action words
- Key results
- Target dates
- Achievement conditions

It is important to establish objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART objective).

**SMART Objective:** All objectives should be able to meet the following criteria:

- **S – Specific:** Identify the precise and significant outcome of an activity or task in a clearly defined manner. This avoids conflict and confusion later on in the performance review cycle.

- **M – Measurable:** There has to be a form of measurement in the objective which is meaningful and motivational to give team members and managers a clear indication to know if the objectives were met or not. To increase the clarity objectives are best written in quantifiable terms using specific numbers or percentages.

- **A – Achievable:** Is the objective actually achievable and possible? Remember that these should be reasonable given the market conditions, resources available, level and position, etc.

- **R – Relevant:** Does the objective meet the long-term result of the larger objectives of the business? They should be written as a tangible result or deliverable that the team member will produce. E.g. increase production
• **T - Time Bound**: Clearly state when the objective will be achieved. Using targeted project milestones and due dates help team members and managers monitor progress. This allows for corrections during the performance year and enables team members and managers understand the accountability to the overall department goal.

**Get Motivated Objectives**

Objective motivation is the idea that all our actions are based on logical reason. If you can understand why you act as you do, then you have a better chance of taking relevant actions that help you to achieve your objectives. There are two basic points to objective motivation:

• The link between objectives and motives,

• The importance of pain and pleasure/satisfactory motives.

Objective motivation means that we only achieve objectives to satisfy our motives. We achieve the objective as a means to an end - and that end is taking care of our desire. For every objective we set we need at least three 'why's'. If we don't have a strong enough list of why's we simply won't have strong enough motivation to achieve the objective. Essentially, there are two categories of why: pain and pleasure.

"Everything you and I do, we do either out of our need to avoid pain or our desire to gain pleasure"

*Anthony Robbins - “Awaken the Giant Within”*

You need to identify the pain and pleasure/satisfaction associated with any objective you set. When you write your objectives down, you also write down your pain and pleasure/satisfaction motives. Naturally the motives you identify must be important to you. You can't get motivated for someone else's reasons. Some people seem to get more drive from moving towards pleasure and others from moving away from pain. In general, pain is the primary concern.

Effective objective motivation and objective setting techniques should deliver two benefits: help you set objectives that motivate you and help you to stay motivated as making progress towards the fulfillment of them.

**Choose Objectives that support Your Desires**

Humans are natural objective fulfillment seekers. We have natural objective fulfillment seeking mechanisms in our mind that is non-judgmental. This
mechanism will help us achieve whatever objectives we decide to do. We can leverage this human nature by choosing the right objectives - objectives that you believe will change your life for the better, objectives that once fulfilled, will enable the achievement of your desires. There are two key strategies.

- It's easier to feel motivated to achieve an objective if you know the objective is important to you. One way to do this is to identify what values are important to you and also what you want to do. Each goal you set then needs to fit within your overall desire.

- Whenever you set an objective you need to identify exactly why you want to achieve it. How will you benefit. Because objective motivation can fall into two categories: pain or pleasure/satisfactory, the achieving an objective may take you away from the pain (as you perceive it) of your current situation and towards a greater degree of pleasure/satisfactory.

"Life's greatest rewards are reserved for those who demonstrate a never-ending commitment to act until they achieve"
- Anthony Robbins

Once you have chosen an objective, you need to keep motivated as you work towards the achievement of your desires. To do so, you can use the following techniques:

- Write your objective down every day. This helps ensure that you plan your daily activities around making specific progress towards you objectives. Next to each goal, you write your motives for achieving the objective.

- Focus your time and effort on moving towards your objectives.

Alignment of Objectives

Objectives need to support and align with each other up and down the organization entities hierarchy, so is the need for the alignment of short term and long term objectives. The alignment is necessary for the overall achievement of the desired operational excellence state. The following questions can be used to ensure the alignment of lower level to higher level objectives, short term to long term objectives:

- Are short and long term objectives available?

- Do short term objectives support long term objectives?

- For short term objectives:
• Do they represent growth to higher level organization entities?
• Do they enhance higher level objectives?
• Do they reflect the priorities of higher level organization entities?
• Do they support higher level objectives?
• Can the overall desired state achievable with the fulfillment of the defined objectives?

Get support for Your Objectives

You get support for your objectives by describing to others what you have in mind and finding those who are willing to support your effort. To do so, you need to talk about your objectives with other involved stakeholders; you describe what's in your mind; you send out consistent messages with clarity and passion; you establish a connection which resonates in others and find that they share or are willing to support your beliefs and objectives. It is a powerful force to have involved stakeholders of your objectives to believe that their objectives are aligned with yours, and their objectives will happen when they help you to achieve yours.

When your objectives are in sync with the objectives of other involved stakeholders, synergies are possible for all parties.

Effective Employee Communication about the Objectives

Communication plays a vital role and can make a substantial difference in increasing employees’ understanding and appreciation of the company operational excellence objectives, and enable their buy-in to the effort for fulfilling these objectives.

While the benefits of effective communication are many, especially for operational excellence, companies are not always successful in implementing and maintaining effective communication strategies. Good communication about company operational excellence objectives begins with an overall strategy. Implementation of a communication strategy requires the commitment of the company's leaders and the appropriate company resources. Here are a few suggestions that can add to the success of your operational excellence communications program.

• Communicate the company strategic objectives - The message to communicate to employees is that company strategic operational
excellence objectives are not just for Executives. They are there to address the pains, the threats and the needs for company success. It is essential for all in the company to align on these objectives and work on the fulfillment of them to ensure company success.

- **Choose the best methods to deliver the message** about company operational excellence objectives - While the company intranet has become a mainstay for much employee communication, print is still powerful, especially in communicating complex information. Employees often prefer to read about company level objectives at their leisure, highlight or underline important points and keep it for reference. Not all employees have computer access at work or at home. A combination of online information and print is the best solution for most in communicating operational excellence objectives effectively.

- **Keep it simple** - No matter how you choose to communicate with employees about operational excellence objectives, it’s important to present the messages in context, in a way that employees can understand and use the information. It’s best to use plain language but if you have to use a technical term, give a clear explanation nearby. Consider including a glossary of the technical terms you absolutely cannot avoid using.

The understanding and appreciation from employees about the company strategic operational excellence objectives can result in a more motivated work force whose productivity adds to the corporate bottom line.

**Executives support for the Operational Excellence Objectives**

Employees' perceptions of Executives support for operational excellence objectives are more positive when the Executives engaged in four types of effective behavior:

- Monitoring the work effectively (giving timely feedback and reacting to problems in the work with understanding and help);

- Providing socio-emotional support (showing support for a team member's actions or decisions; helping alleviate stressful situations for subordinates; socializing; keeping team members informed about stressful situations; addressing subordinates' negative feelings; and disclosing personal information);

- Recognizing good work privately and publicly; and
• Consulting subordinates about the work (asking for team members' ideas and opinions; acting on subordinates' ideas or wishes).

Employees' perceptions of Executives support are more negative when the leader engaged in three types of ineffective behavior:

• Monitoring the work ineffectively (checking on the status of assigned work too often; displaying an inadequate understanding of subordinates' capabilities or work; providing non-constructive negative feedback on work done; checking on the status of assigned work for too long; and displaying lack of interest in subordinates' work or ideas);

• Failing to effectively clarify roles and objectives (giving assignments that are not appropriate for the team member); not providing enough clarity about an assignment; changing assignments or objectives too frequently; giving assignments that conflict with other management instructions); and

• Dealing with problems ineffectively (avoiding solving problems; creating problems).

To ensure the achievement of the operational excellence objectives, Executives must “walk the talk”. Trust is always earned. As a successful Executive developing a reputation for “walking the talk”, it will make the difference between getting things done and getting things done well. Executives set the ‘walk the talk’ example by making and keeping commitments, building a strong foundation of integrity and trust in all dealings. Keeping track and living up to commitments will determine the success of any leader and their organization. After making the commitments for the operational excellence objectives, Executives should document and keep track of them – usually there is a deadline involved, which will need to follow up during and after the course of action, even noting any roadblocks along the way will help executives understand the course of action and new steps to take in the future under similar circumstance.

In his famous book, “Seven Habits of Highly Effective People - Habit 2 - Begin with the End in Mind”, Steven Covey suggested the formulation and understanding of a clear representation of what you want to achieve (or desire) when you just starting an effort. This understanding will focus the flow of your energy to the achievement of “the End” desires. The clearly articulated and compelling operational excellence objectives will serve as “the End” representations that provide a personal direction to guide our daily activities for the operational excellence effort.

"You've got to be very careful if you don't know where you're going, because you might not get there."

"If you don't know where you are going, you will wind up somewhere else."-
Yogi Berra

The burning desires will provide Executives with the necessary energy for leading the drive for the company to achieve the “excellent” for its operations. However, this energy must be channeled to the right direction that will eventually get the company to its final destination for success. The translation/generation of the Executives’ desires into achievable and actionable company objectives will provide the necessary information for that important direction and final destination. Once the objectives for operational excellence set and communicated, the company can start its journey on the right direction to the final destination where the company operational excellence will deliver its outstanding success.

Summary

We all do something to achieve our objectives. Operational excellence is the state of achievement for the works we do to fulfill our objectives. When we achieve the high level of operational excellence, we will have the respect and the recognition for the works we do; the optimization of the execution of the works to get the results; the satisfaction for the achievements; the ability to sustain our work performance and to continuously improve it by making our works better, faster, and cheaper.

Operational excellence framework and its associated methodology were developed to provide the necessary implementation guidelines and practices to enable the achievement of the desired objectives at work. Operational excellence framework describes the structure and characteristics from which one can use to determine the desired level of operational excellence state, the understanding of current state, the identification of the gaps and the necessary improvements needed for the achievement of the desired objectives. The associated operational excellence methodology includes the necessary implementation guidelines and practices that will enable the achievement of the excellence for one’s works in fulfilling the desired objectives.

The second step of the methodology provides the necessary guidelines and practices to facilitate the translation of Executives’ burning desires for company success through the implementation of operational excellence; into the obtainable, realizable, and actionable set of business objectives for the company. These necessary business objectives will provide the direction and the final destination for the company to follow to achieve its success.

In the later steps of the methodology, Executives will continue to lead and drive the implementation of the operational excellence strategy by ensuring that:

- Necessary resources and time are allocated,
• Assignments are made for the implementation tasks,

• Appropriate progress reviews are put in-place for tracking the achievement of the objectives (both of the business and operational excellence objectives),

• Results of the operational excellence strategy implementation are recorded and published for all in the company to see,

• Improvement actions for failures are taken and rewards are given for individuals, teams, and organization that achieved the business and operational excellence objectives.