



**A-Ha Performance
Building and Managing a Self-Motivated Work Force**

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Author's Bio: Douglas Walker and Stephen Sorkin are the co-founders of A-AHA Performance Solutions.

Author's big thought: Many people are great at what they do, but when they become managers they aren't given basic human motivation and management tools. Successfully building and managing a self-motivated work force requires awareness and a skill set far different from the expertise managers had in their specialty. Attracting and retaining top talent and continually improving performance requires a strong focus on the vested interests of employees. Managers who understand the eight Intrinsic Motivation Points (IMPs) that drive human performance outlined in this book have an edge over managers who don't.

Introduction:

- There is a process that goes on in the brain between input and output (Input>Process>Output). Understanding this human performance process will give us more of the results we want because our employees want to give them to us. We will also get the results we want from ourselves on a more consistent basis, with less effort. Using the insights and applications of A-HA! Performance, we will be building and managing a self-motivated workforce.
- The fundamental tool is the A-HA! Performance Model that is graphically illustrated in the A-HA! Performance Map. The map reveals the eight IMPs that make up this sequence of events. The map is a template we can use to focus our conversations in ways that get vested interest performance rather than balking or pushing back.
- When we understand this model, we can focus quickly on the best place to start a conversation that will get buy-in to productive changes with the least amount of resistance.
- This book teaches us how to understand and manage a self-motivated workforce in ways that money cannot buy and threats cannot force.



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Chapter 1: Receptionist Goes Nuts...and Goes

- The book opens with an example of a new manager, who mishandles a less than performing receptionist.
- Poorly managed people have options. They can somehow rise above the way they've been managed and perform well anyway, they can withdraw and diminish their performance, or they can fight back.
- Relationships that work are always about perceived care and credibility.
- If "location, location, location" are the three basic rules of real estate, "relationship, relationship, relationship" are the three basic rules of successful managing.
- Outperforming the competitor boils down to turbo-charging existing human capital that's accomplished through *synergy*, the highest form of power there is. Whenever two or more people come together to achieve something, there are only three possible outcomes: synergy, *samergy*, or *lessergy*.
- Synergy is not the absence of tension; it's the harmonizing of tension.
- When two or more come together and each does her own thing, one plus one only equals two, or samergy.
- The third possible outcome of coming together is lessergy - one plus one equals minus two, or lessergy; neither as good as either would have done alone.
- A-Ha performance-trained managers learn to focus their conversations on the Intrinsic Motivation Points that are the Drivers of desired behavior, as well as on the Options that are viable for the particular employee they are addressing.
- Problems have two ends to them, a *want* and a *got*. A problem is always a gap between the way we want something to be and the way we've currently got it. If there's no gap, then we're getting what we want and there isn't a problem.
- All problems are gaps between a want and a got. Our motivation to act is always about these gaps. We are driven to behave in order to close gaps between what we've got and what we want – and so are our employees.
- Behaviors happen in an effort to close gaps. No gap, no behavior. Gaps close in two ways. We can get what we want, or accept what we've got.
- If the people we manage experience us as trying to solve problems in ways that not only serve the company and the managers, but the employees as well, they begin to believe we care about and are looking out for their interests too. It's reasonably simple; just think win, win, win. Three wins: the company, the employee, and the manager.





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Chapter 2: Needs - The Hidden Fundamentals of Motivation and Behavior

- We are each responsible for what we do. Second, what we do is not about being controlled by others (such as managers, parents, or teachers); rather, it's all about satisfying or protecting powerful forces within; needs that must be tended to and satisfied because they have to do with life and death itself. So while we don't have a choice about whether or not we do something to protect or satisfy a need, we do have a choice about what to do in that pursuit.
- Doing happens on three levels: the observable chosen behavior, the intended result of that behavior, and the hidden reason for it. When we understand those powerful hidden reasons for our behavior, we'll understand how to focus our conversations around need satisfaction or protection in order to get the observable behavior and performance levels we seek.
- A-HA! Performance explains and illustrates how before behavior, before output, we want something, a certain outcome. And before the want, there are powerful needs. Those wants are tied to that one way or another must be satisfied.
- While we have choices about what to want and what to do, we don't have choices as to whether or not to satisfy or protect a need.
- Human beings are internally motivated by, not just one, but five powerful forces, or hungers, that must be fed, or else we suffer to the point where life itself is at risk. We're in effect, slaves to these hidden fundamental motivators and are constantly driven to behave in ways that keep them protected and satisfied.
- Readers who are familiar with Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs will find them to be essentially the same ones:
 - i. Survival
 - ii. Belonging (love)
 - iii. Power (achievement)
 - iv. Fun
 - v. Freedom
- These five needs collectively form the first of the A-HA! Performance Intrinsic Motivation Points (IMPs) are the foundational drivers of all behavior. These needs are the source of both motivation and action.
- Buy-in to a performance change will not happen unless the request satisfies (or protects) needs more than it frustrates them. The easy to remember formula $\text{Payoff} \geq \text{Cost}$.
- The challenge many managers face today isn't lack of motivation or abundance of malice. It's a paradigm, assumption, or understanding deficiency.





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- What drives top performers are internal forces. They want to be the best in order to satisfy their power or self-esteem needs. Top performers want to do their jobs well so that they win or so that they don't let their manager or team members down, thereby satisfying not just their power needs, but their belonging needs, too. They want to produce great results because it's more fun. They excel because excellent performance produces excellent results and that satisfies needs. That's why A-HA! Performance managers are always thinking- What are the need-satisfying wins for my employee, my customer, my company, and myself?
- The author calls the five basic needs the hidden fundamentals of all behavior because everything we do is ultimately an attempt to satisfy or protect one or more of them.
- **Survival needs** – are the physiological needs for air, food, water, shelter, and safety. We do have a powerful need to survive, but sometimes when one or more other potent needs are at stake, we'll give up survival in an attempt to satisfy those.
- **Love and belonging needs** – this is a need that must be satisfied throughout our day; whether at work or outside of it. We know people care when they spend time with us, touch us, or are at least in touch with us – giving us praise once in a while. This need is so powerful that, statistically if we join a new organization and don't connect with anyone in the first three months, we won't stay. The need for belonging must be met at work if people are going to perform well. Successful management requires that managers build and maintain good relationships. A relationship in the work context is one where the other person believes the manager cares and is credible. Our employees should believe that we tell the truth, that we make and keep promises, and that we know what we're talking about. The need for love is a powerful driver of our behavior and we will go to great lengths to satisfy or protect that need.
- **Power needs** – power is about achieving and winning. It's the reason we compete and compare. Power is the reason we criticize too. With power needs at work, we compare to see who's best, who's wearing what, who's invited, who's in and who's out. We compete to be the best. To be number one. When power needs are harnessed, they can serve an organization well; when they run amuck, they can be an organization's internal undoing. To meet power needs, synergy is the ultimate goal.
- **Fun needs** – There's plenty to suggest that we are driven to have a good time, to do things just for the joy we get in doing them. The billions of dollars spent in pursuit of fun every year is strong evidence that there is a powerful need to have some fun once in a while. Joy in the workplace is the sign of a successful operation and once it's gone, an organization is in trouble. Fun may be an inherent reward for learning. Learning, or continuous development, is critical if we're going to keep up with the changing demands of life and business. The need for learning is life long and the immediate payoff for learning is power. Joy in the workplace is one of the hallmarks of organizations that produce quality products or services. When morale is high, fun flows easily. But if the need goes unmet for too long, morale and retention go down, and quality suffers.





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- **Freedom needs** – Freedom is perhaps as obvious as survival itself. Without a certain degree of liberty, or physical freedom, we could not move around enough to find the food, relationships, accomplishment, opportunities, and fun activities to meet our other needs. Freedom is also about intellect, creativity, and spirituality. The need for freedom is strong and people will kill and die in their attempt to meet it. This need is strongest in our most creative colleagues: designers, engineers, artists and writers. It is also strong in salespeople, entrepreneurs, and others who prefer jobs where they don't have to answer to others or sit behind a desk or at a workstation all day.
- So which need is the strongest? The one that is not being met at any given time.
- While all of us have all these needs to some degree, we each have a different need profile. Some of us care more about freedom or fun than relationships and will sacrifice friendships for the open road.
- What the A-HA! Performance manager learns to count on, regardless of an individual's specific need profile, is that each person he manages does what he does to satisfy or protect one or more of those needs. To manage someone successfully through change requires that we focus on finding need satisfying wins for that person.
- When needs are being satisfied, morale and motivation are high. We are energized and are willing to do more. On the other hand, when needs are chronically frustrated, we expend energy without satisfaction. We get worn out. When we are unable to feed our needs, strength and enthusiasm dissipate, effectiveness diminishes, and accomplishments decrease. Morale in our organizations is directly traceable to need satisfaction or frustration.
- When looking to get an employee to do something, utilizing the A-HA! Performance vested interest approach – tying desired behavior directly to need satisfaction – is the most effective way to get buy-in and compliance.
- Understanding our employees' needs, and in particular, their unique need profile allows us to not only make sure their needs have been met- and thus morale is high – but it also gives us the ability to focus quickly on what is most likely to be an intrinsic or vested interest payoff for them in doing what we want them to do.
- Needs are the hidden fundamentals of all behavior. Through employees' needs, we can work directly with the source of motivation – why people do things they do and don't do.
- Whether we're looking to get an employee to shape up or simply improve an already good performance, understanding their needs is crucial to building and managing a self-motivated work force.





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Chapter 3: Wants - Not-at-All Hidden Fundamentals of Motivation and Behavior

- Needs are the hidden fundamentals of motivation and behavior, but we don't satisfy them directly. Instead, we satisfy them through wants; specific preferences that are tied to our needs. Based on five general needs, people develop an infinite number and wide variety of specific wants. And it's our wants that make up Intrinsic Point 2.
- Getting what we want is the tangible way we satisfy our needs.
- These are the key points about *wants*:
 1. Based on five general needs, we develop a wide variety of specific wants.
 2. These wants are the particular motivators of our actions, our behavior. The wants are the conscious reasons we do anything. Before output, but based on needs, we have a want.
 3. Quality, by definition, is that which most thoroughly matches our strongest wants. Wants are our preferences for meeting our needs and when we find someone or something that matches our wants, we perceive that person, situation, or thing as quality.
 4. We develop wants or preferences by experiencing someone or something that meets A-H! - Performance Motivation Point 3, the CAP criteria: clarity, attainability, and payoff. Once we experience a person, situation, or thing that satisfies our needs in a powerful way (produces a great wow feeling) we'll lock in that person or thing as a strong preference or want. We do that because having experienced it:
 - It's clear
 - We know it's attainable at least once, so it should be again
 - The wow or great feeling was a wonderful payoff. At least one of the needs was satisfied.
 5. Wants are our specific preferences for meeting our needs. They are the not-all-hidden fundamentals of all behavior; what we do, we do to achieve a want. Wants, unlike the needs, are changeable, replaceable. We're willing to reset our wants when something new is Clear, believed to be Attainable, and Pays Off better than a current want is paying off. This knowledge gives us a real edge in building and managing a self-motivated workforce. After all, when employees want to take action for their own reasons, they are intrinsically motivated to perform.

Chapter 4: CAP - Aligning, Setting and Managing Self-Motivation

- Locking together the three pieces of the CAP puzzle is what buy-in is about. It's how we get employees to want to perform the tasks we believe need to be done. Once we really grasp the CAP buy-in puzzle, we can leverage it to both spark motivation and thwart it, when necessary. The magic is in getting our employees to want what we want them to want because it's clear to them, they believe it's attainable, and their own needs will be satisfied in the process.





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- Clarity, attainability, payoff \leq Cost (CAP) – put all of those pieces together and people will want to do what we want them to do.
- Wants precede performance. CAP is the formula for setting wants.
- When the three pieces of this CAP puzzle come together around new levels of performance, people will want to achieve those levels enough to do something about it.
- When people are not doing what we want them to do, one or more of those pieces are missing.
- The better we get at utilizing this CAP Intrinsic Motivation Point, the better we'll be at getting buy-in and action from others.
- Whether we are managing down, up, or sideways, our ability to get buy- in and desired performance from others is directly related to our ability to cover these bases.
- *Clarity* – Communicating the job accurately and completely is a key aspect to putting the CAP puzzle together.
- *Attainability* is about believing that something is possible. So as managers we'll be well advised to work on convincing our employees that the desired results are possible so that they will engage in the required tasks. Busting assumptions that things aren't possible and challenging beliefs that they can't achieve something is sometimes what this exercise is about. It's our belief about attainability that plays a key role in determining whether or not we'll act.
- If we're addressing the attainability piece with employees, some questions we can ask include exploring whether enough of the A-HA! Performance 10E's are in place to be able to accomplish what we're asking people to do. The 10Es are: Expertise, Experience, Equipment, Education, Empowerment, Ethics, Expenses, Energy, Enthusiasm and Environment.
- *Payoff* – the Payoff must be greater than or equal to the cost of getting something, or we won't put forth the effort to try to get it. Payoff is about need satisfaction.
- There are four possible answers to WIIFM (what's-in-it-for-me?) – two are based on avoiding pain, two on approaching pleasure.
 1. *Avoiding the pain of force* - force frustrates all our needs. Because force is so threatening to all of our needs, the frequent counter is to struggle against it. If people are fighting back or running away instead of doing what we want them to do, then the force isn't working. Force is an answer to parents, to the military, and to our police forces, but it's not really available to managers – it doesn't pass the CAP test.





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2. *Avoiding the pain of threat* – threats like force are aimed at frustrating the needs unless the targeted person complies. There is a payoff to protecting the needs. If you do what I tell you to do, your needs won't be frustrated. There are lots of ways managers can threaten or hurt people. They use sanctions that frustrate employee needs in a variety of way (firing, demoting etc.) If threats are our primary way to address and impact people's needs, and if payoff is only about protecting a threatened need, then retention will become a huge issue. Employees will seek work environments where their needs are not constantly threatened or frustrated; they'll seek work environments where their needs can be satisfied.
3. *Approach the pleasure promised in a bribe*. Bribes work in the short term, and are effective at getting strangers to do what we want them to do, such as giveaways at trade shows or free products for consumer purchases. But bribing people we live or work with stops working over the long term.
4. *Approach the biggest pleasure of all: his own vested interest*. Most managers don't seem to know about this practical option. Not only do they not know that the vested interest approach exists and is viable, they don't realize that is a more powerful one than carrots or sticks. Carrots and sticks are extrinsic satisfiers and frustrations of the needs; vested interest is intrinsic satisfaction or frustration of the needs. A vested interest focus attempts to tie the desired task directly to need satisfaction. Vested interest payoff is the reason people volunteer their time to worthy causes. When we do things that satisfy needs directly, we're doing them for our own vested interest. Those are things we do voluntarily – no force, no threat, and no bribe. In the end, to get a person to do what we want him to do, we first have to get him to want to do it. To get him to want to do it, we have to CAP our request.
 - Clarity is about the details of the desired end state.
 - Attainability is about the belief that the end state is possible.
 - Payoff is about need satisfaction, or need protection, as reasons to pursue that end state.
5. Locking together the three pieces of the CAP puzzle is what buy-in is about. It's how we get employees to want to perform the tasks we believe need to be done. Once we really grasp the CAP buy-in puzzle, we can leverage it to both spark motivation and thwart it, when necessary. The magic is in getting our employees to want what we want them to want because it's clear to them, they believe it's attainable, and their own needs will be satisfied in the process.

Chapter 5: Got - Our Baseline for Knowing Where We Are Relative to Any Given Want

- In building a self-motivated workforce, knowing A-AH! Performance Intrinsic Motivation Point 4- which is what we've got- is critical if we want to make the midcourse corrections necessary to build and maintain success.
- Accuracy in perception is the goal. Not complexity in acquiring it.





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- People act, not on the facts, but on their belief about what the facts are. That's what the "got" is, it's about our belief about what the facts are.
- A-HA! Performance managers know about the needs and they know that employees come to us self-motivated to meet or protect those needs.
- To deliver quality the first time, we've got to treat our self-motivated workforce in a way that they can meet their own needs by meeting the customer's needs...which loops in back to how we meet our company's needs for revenue.
- It's extremely important to know what we've got or we won't take any corrective measures to make them what we want.
- We know and understand that we have to meet needs – the company's, the customer's, the employees', and our own as managers.
 - Take care of the employee (or the quality stops).
 - Take care of the quality (or the customer leaves).
 - Take care of the customer (or the money stops).
- We also recognize that we all have particular goals, wants, or preferences for meeting those needs. But unless we know clearly what we've got, we won't know whether we're meeting those goals, getting what we want, experiencing our preferences, and satisfying our needs...or not.

Chapter 6: The Gap and the GapZap - Underwhelmed, Overwhelmed, Whelmed Just Right

- All problems and opportunities are gaps between something we want and something we've got. Whenever there is a significant enough gap between want and got, there will be a signal within our brain, a zap – felt as a pressure or an urgency to act, to do something quickly or methodically to maximize that opportunity or to solve that problem; to close the gap. Gaps between a want and a have provide the energy, the GapZap, that drives all our behavior. No gap, no behavior.
- Behavior is always purposeful. And its purpose is always to close a gap between something we want and whatever it is that we've currently got.
- Understanding how to utilize Intrinsic Motivation Point 5, how to fine tune gaps in others, as well as in ourselves, will give us a tremendous edge in managing people and a strong advantage over managers who do not grasp gaps and GapZaps as a place to focus their performance management conversations.





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- If a gap between what we want and what we've got is small, we are underwhelmed, and are not likely to think much about the situation or to do anything about it at all. It's the size of the gap within an individual that supplies or generates the energy, the zap, to drive a behavior. When we are sufficiently overwhelmed, we give up trying because we don't believe we can achieve success anyway. Resetting what we want is often the way we have to deal with overwhelming gaps.
- Sometimes we do what we do because it's intrinsically satisfying to do it. It just feels good. Sometimes we do what we do because it's extrinsically satisfying, or need protecting. The reward for being intrinsically motivated to behave is that we close a gap directly. The reward for being extrinsically motivated to behave is that we close a related gap.
- Sometimes, however, there is no way to reduce a gap to the point where we can achieve the want. In this case, the only way to close a gap is to accept what we've got.
- The gaps that produce the most effective action are the optimum gaps – the ones where we arewhelmed just right.
- The manager's task in getting someone whelmed just right may be to comfort the afflicted – to reduce the gap to where the individual is whelmed just right for action. Or, if a person is underwhelmed, the manager's task is to afflict the comfortable in an effort to increase his or her gap.
- Managing the gap is critical to getting action. Remember, when it comes to gaps, size is important. The size of the gap can tell us:
 - The level of motivation
 - The degree of frustration
 - The scope of the problem
- The intensity of the urgency to do something
- The obstacles that need to be overcome before action will occur.
- If you are underwhelmed, belief that there is a payoff needs to be increased. If you are overwhelmed, belief in attainability needs to be increased.
- If they are small or petty and we are under-whelmed, we can let it go and not worry about it. If gaps are humungous, immense, or monstrous and we are overwhelmed, we can be consumed by painful emotions and hopeless thinking; we can give up on it and let it go, accepting what we've got; or we can chunk it down into doable goals and optimum gaps that can be closed with creative and productive effort.
- If gaps are important, exciting, and we are whelmed just right, we can start working on closing them by doing something productive to take us from got to want.
- We can therefore manage gaps in two ways:





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1. We can manage their size for optimal motivation, best possible GapZaps.
 2. We can work at getting what we want. But if that's impossible, we can learn to accept what we've got.
- Rather than going straight to telling employees what to do, or advising them on what their output should be, the manager with the A-HA! Performance Edge skillfully addresses the drivers of behavior; the Intrinsic Motivation Points that culminate in the gap: needs, wants, CAP, and gots.
 - In summary, gaps are what produce the energy and urgency to do something. Think of it as a ZapGap. It's the gap that zaps our brain to come up with a behavior. The intensity of the ZapGap will not only be the difference in whether people act at all, but the difference in whether they act in a productive or a panicky way. Gaps can leave us under-whelmed, over-whelmed or whelmed just right. To establish an optimal gap – one that leads to a self-motivated workforce doing what we'd like them to do – we develop skills at creating gaps in employees' minds where they are whelmed just right for productive action. Weak ZapGap... no behavior. Overpowering ZapGap...shorts out productive action and jolts us off our feet. Optimum ZapGap provides just the right amount of urgency to rationally and productively perform.

Chapter 7: Options - The ABCs of Choices – Choosing Our Own Behavior Means a Whole Lot More Than We May Think

- All of the pre-behavior buy-in functions covered so far – the needs, CAPped want, got and gap/GapZap- are what the author calls the Drivers of behavior. And until Drivers are in place, people won't go to the next step, which is accessing an area of the brain where our behavior options are stored.
- The behaviors we choose on a daily basis have four possible sources within the options area of the brain:
 1. automatic behaviors, which are our habits or comfortable ways of doing things
 2. a backup repertoire of things we know but may not be comfortable with or accomplished in
 3. a creative zone, our ability to come up with something new from behaviors we have already used;
 4. a new learning capability, which is the ability to learn a new behavior from outside of ourselves.
- **Automatic Zone** – this is where we go first to come up with a behavior, especially if we are under time duress. Our automatic behaviors are behaviors that we have done over and over again to the point where they are cemented into our automatic area and come out so fast that we experience them as reactions, rather than what they really are, which are pro-actions. They are well-rehearsed actions for dealing with common situations. At the top of the automatic zone are our fight or flight impulses. Since we have been using emotions for such a long time, they are well entrenched into our automatic zone. Whether we cry, beg, or sulk, we are using emotional behaviors that we probably haven't really thought through, yet they pop out of us because they are really accessible from our automatic behavior zone and we are way too comfortable using them. Because the behaviors that come out of our comfort zone happen so fast, they don't feel like choices at all. They feel more like someone made us do them. An important thing to remember is that we're not stuck with unproductive behaviors.





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- **Back-Up Zone** – If we take the time to think of a different behavior – possible because the automatic one isn't working, we can access our back-up repertoire. The important thing about unproductive behaviors is that we are not stuck with them. We not only have a back-up repertoire that we can tap into, but we also have the ability to think of something completely new; something we've never done before, yet it might be the most effective way to approach a particular situation.
- **Creative Zone** – Using our creative zone means creating never-before-used combinations or configurations of behaviors to handle a challenging situation. Whether we create from things we already know or from a combination of what we know and what we learn from others around us, creativity is rearranging or repackaging.
- **New Learning** – We also have the ability to learn something entirely new from books, seminars etc – new behaviors that might prove fruitful in professional and personal lives.
- Knowing that we have our automatic, back-up, creative and new learning options for behavior empowers people; it opens their eyes in a whole new realm of choices. People become open to other possibilities – something that proves useful in managing them.
- In recognizing that we aren't only our automatic behaviors and that we are capable of putting something else out there that may be more productive, managers and employees alike realize that even our attitudes, our emotional outbursts, are behavioral choices and there may be better ones available to us simply by accessing back-up, creative, or new learning capabilities in our existing operating system. Emotions are choices we make.
- We choose our own behaviors. Yet, most people aren't aware that we have behavior choices. Many people think that other people made them mad, or made them sad or made them love another person. Any time we blame someone else for what we do, we're demonstrating a belief in external control; that forces outside of us controlled us.
- What A-HA! Performance introduces is a huge paradigm shift from external to internal control, with the pictorial map illustrating the internal process. Here's how it works in a nutshell:
- When we are aware that people's motivation and choice of behavior are internal events, not only will we see that our employees are accountable for their own actions, but as managers, we also realize that we can't control another person's behaviors. The real control is inside each individual.
- Everything is about protecting or satisfying our needs, and we satisfy our needs by getting what we want, and the way we get what we want is by choosing appropriate behaviors. The Drivers (motivation) and Options (viable choices for that person) are inside. As managers, we don't make the rivers, and for the most part, we don't load the Options; they are already there.
- With external control, managers believe it's their words, gestures, and emotions that control other people's behavior, but in reality, the words they use are just input and the degree to which their input covers the Drivers will determine whether an employee will perform.





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- Not only do we earn respect and form practical working relationships from our caring and credibility, but we don't have to do nearly as much hand-holding when we utilize internal control insights as we would if we thought it was our job to control employees.
- It takes all of the pressure off of us to provide answers, and instead, allows us to help employees uncover what they see as their best options.
- In bypassing the Drivers and Behaviors Options zone in an effort to dole out our sage advice, we're also missing an opportunity to enable employees to figure out their best options by themselves.
- If employees know that the solution for closing the wants/got gap was their idea- it was their choice out of their viable options – they're much more likely to implement the solution than if a manager were to tell them what to do.
- The true factors for success include effective practices, but before we can implement effective practices, we need to access our personality specific skills and resources, ones that are viable for us. And before utilizing our particular viable skills and resources, we need to line up the Drivers of motivation, ones that create the Gap/Zap that energizes an excitement to achieve. Better perhaps than best practices are best motivators. If we can get people to want it enough, and manage the gap for optimum Gap/Zap energizing, then they will implement their own best practices. A-HA! Performance focuses us on managing motivation, not tasks or processes.
- There is a ton of research showing that when comparing solutions that management comes up with to what employees themselves come up with, employees' solutions are the best ones more than 80% of the time. And part of this is that employees will implement what they create.
- Not only are employees much more likely to implement a behavior when it comes out of their own options, but when we choose our own behavior, we are also responsible for it. This is part of the internal control a-ha.
- As long as we stay in the Drivers and Options, without jumping over to output, we'll have a strong chance of closing our gap, by getting her to come up with her own solution. And with an employee choosing her own behaviors to solve the problem, we can sit back and watch as she implements the performance we want because she wants it, too.
- In summary – Choices: Employees are capable of coming up with their own optimal performance options and can be managed in such a way that they feel responsible for what they come up with. Once the gap is established, once there is a perceived difference between a compelling want and the present situation, the employee will be motivated to act, to do something. If the employee knows what to do, or can figure out what to do, she should be encouraged to do it. If she wants to work toward a goal, but neither knows or can figure out what to do, she might be willing up to new learning.





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- The manager's job is to help a motivated employee navigate the ABCs of her behavior options; her automatic ones, her back-up zones, and her ability to create. If the employee can't come up with a good thing to do on her own, the manager should remember that the employee is capable of learning and should be prepared to teach- not tell, but teach, that employee what to do. Either way, through probing or teaching, it is the manager's challenge to help her come up with and commit to optimal behaviors for closing specific gaps. Choosing our own options makes for self-motivation at its finest. As a bonus, when enough employees are doing it, it breeds a culture of can-do responsibility and accountability and sustained morale.

Chapter 8: Output - Chosen Behavior – Doing, Thinking, Emoting, Physiology

- Behavior is what we've chosen to do to get from got to want. When we don't have what we want, we act.
- Sometimes the brain chooses so fast we're not aware it was a choice at all.
- One of the problems we all face is that the brain, left on automatic, will often choose what seems like a good idea at the time but ends up making things worse. Then of course, we'll blame our choice on something other than the fact that we chose it.
- Understanding how the brain works gives us the opportunity to take it off automatic in order to prevent disasters and optimize opportunities.
- It's possible to improve our ability at quick attitude changes, but for most of us, it's easier to change what we're doing and then let the emotions follow, than the other way around.
- All behavior, all output is chosen. Chosen behavior has four components: doing, thinking, emoting and physiology Most people are willing to admit that they do have control over the doing component, maybe some over the thinking component. Some people even acknowledge a modicum of control over their attitudes; their emotions. Emoting serves at least three major purposes: it gets the attention of others, it's a call for help, and it gets us off the hook to do something better.
- The truth is, we can change any of them, because, since they have to be in support of each other, if we change one, the others will follow.
- Managers who practice A-HA! Performance and utilize the Intrinsic Motivation Points understand that all behavior (ours and others) is chosen by the brain as the best thing it can come up with to deal with a particular gap at a particular time. Because the brain chooses it automatically, we can take our brain off automatic and choose better behaviors, intentionally.





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Chapter 9: Filters - Coloring What's Coming In and Limiting What's Going Out

- Our perception filters include a knowledge filter, a valuing filter, and the amygdala.
- The knowledge filter recognizes things we've seen before. We learn about something once and then recognize what it is thereafter. Whether we view something as good or bad depends on what our experiences have been with it and how we've calibrated our filters for the next time we see it.
- The valuing filter lets us know the value of what we perceive relative to our needs. So while the knowledge filter tells us what something or someone is, our value filter tells us how that person or thing is likely to impact our needs.
- The third filter, the amygdala, is the part of the brain that detects threat to the needs, and when it does, it shuts down the frontal lobe and activates our flight or fright behaviors.
- Input filters – knowledge, values, and amygdala- help us know what things are, whether they're need satisfying or threatening, and how imminent or serious a threat is. By determining that information almost instantaneously, we shortcut the decision making process as to what we do.
- In addition to input filters, we have output filters. The output filter sets the limits within which we will behave, as we believe that if we behave outside of those limits, our needs will not be met in both the short term and the long term.
- While our behavior options zone is responsible for coming up with a behavior it thinks will close a gap we're experiencing, our output filter is responsible for looking over those options carefully so that we don't select one that is actually going to make things worse.
- Values are always the specific limits or parameters that keep us behaving in ways that most satisfy or protect our needs both short term and long term. Values will allow some conduct, and disallow others.
- Input filters get calibrated through experience. A relationship between a manager and an employee will be maximized if the employee experiences care and credibility from the manager and thereby calibrates his or her input filters in such a way that "boss" is associated with need satisfaction. When employees value their bosses as good, they will be intrinsically motivated to do what their boss is asking them to do. Not only is cooperation and compliance enhanced when bosses are liked, retention is higher too.
- Output filters get calibrated through R2E2: reason, research, experience, and experts. Creating organizational values that employees are willing to buy into because they are clear, attainable, and pay off by maximizing need satisfaction in both short and long term will benefit employee and organization alike.
- When we share the same values, people can be counted on to perform within particular ethical parameters, not because someone is watching, but because their values wouldn't allow them to do otherwise. Shared values help minimize risk to the company and maximize the kinds of collaboration that only happen in high-integrity, high trust cultures.





Chapter 10: Addressing and Improving Inadequate Performance Behavior

- Most managers at some point in their careers face the challenge of trying to improve the performance of one or more of their employees, either because it's unacceptable, or because they want to develop a promising talent into a leadership position. An A-HA! Performance based intervention called *Address and Improve* was designed for this challenge.
- The objective of Address and Improve, is to address the situation as it stands in the present and to engage the employee in improving it for the future in a way that doesn't ruin the relationship with that employee.
- Between the manager's input and the employee's output there is a process. The process includes buy-in (or not), motivation (to do or not to do), behavior selection (good or bad choices), and behavior implementation (or not). Once managers understand the process the brain takes on the way to performance, managers can focus their conversations in ways that maximize buy-in and desired behavior choices.
- The phases of Address and Improve are:
 1. Assess the strength of relationship between manager and employee:
 - Care: Focus on need satisfying wins for all parties.
 - Credibility: Integrity and competency.

An employee needs to know that when we sit down to talk with her, it's not to berate or criticize her; rather, it's to figure out a solution to an issue. So we train ourselves to think about employees' needs as much as we do the company's and our own. It's a minor addition to the thought process, but it pays off in major ways.

2. Identify the gap: Both ends, want, and got, as well as size/scope:
 - Identify your want/goal
 - Identify, as clearly as possible, what the current reality, or got is.
 - Identify the size of the gap, the intensity of the Gap/Zap, the scope of the problem.

One way to open an Address and Improve conversation might be: "I have a concern that needs to be addressed and I'm going to need your help in solving it. I want to be able to improve this situation in a way that works for you, for the company, and for me. From my experience, I believe the best solution is one we'll work out together."

3. CAP the want:

The opportunity here is in optimizing the gap by establishing a compelling want that brings together three pieces of the CAP puzzle

- Clear: What? Who? When? Where?
- Attainable: What are the obstacles that need to be overcome in closing that gap and achieving the goal? Are we missing any of the E's of attainability?
- Payoff: Be clear about both payoff and cost involved in attaining the goal. Unless the payoff is greater than or equal to the cost, it won't be done.



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- Two of the skills utilized by A-HA! Performance managers are 1) afflict the comfortable – open the gap wider to get people energized – GapZapped = enough to move toward a want that is different from the current got; and 2) comfort the afflicted – reduce the gap and GapZap so that overwhelmed people can see that achieving the goal is possible. When we can go from under-whelmed or overwhelmed to whelmed just right, we'll have achieved the optimum level of energizing motivation to come up with something to do to move from got to want.
 - Once we come to an agreement as to what we've got and our employee buys in and wants to improve the situation, now the problem isn't just our problem, it's a shared problem.
4. Examine current chosen behavior:
- What's the current behavior or behavior pattern; the current process?
 - Identify the current mix of actions, thoughts, and attitudes or emotions. So what are you doing, thinking, emoting? What we've currently got comes from what we're currently doing.
5. Evaluate how well it's working –Is the doing working in closing the gap and moving us closer to the want/goal?
6. Plan to do something that will work better:

Remember this quote when you are at this stage (it's about the futility of advice)
"Never try to teach a pig to sing; it wastes your time and it annoys the pig."

- a) Criteria for a good plan:
- Clear
 - Attainable
 - Payoff \geq Cost (makes things better, not worse)
 - Measurable
 - Do plan, not don't do plan.
 - Immediately implement-able - if we put something off until the next day, the chances of the performance happening will decrease by 50 percent.
 - Repeatable – A fix to important performance issues is about a sustainable fix, not a one time change, and then a return to old ways.
7. Get/make commitment:
- Review consequences of success/failure.
 - No excuses.
 - Never give up – hang in at least a moment longer than our normal give-up threshold.
 - Give up (confer/refer) if we get to the point where we are out of ideas, options, time, and patience, perhaps we should try to go outside of our automatic and back-up options to learn something new. We can confer with someone else, like a mentor or a coach. We can read books or take training courses.





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Chapter 11: Address and Improve - Excelling a Top Performer and Retaining Talent

- A major benefit to having self-motivated employees is a work force that is proactive. And with the Address and Improve application we can address employees who are already performing well and encourage them to perform even better.
- Through the A-HA! Performance paradigm we know that the critical importance of need satisfaction and why employees would seek different work environments if their needs are not being met in our workplace.
- Understanding the importance of needs we can work with them to address and improve performance in ways that increase retention as well as increase our bottom line.
- Whether we are using bits and pieces of the model, or the A-HA! Performance application in its entirety, understanding the motivation root of behavior not only gives us the tools to effect positively, but also gives us the A-HA! Performance Edge. It allows us to manage motivation rather than skills, tasks or processes. When we do that well enough, skills, tasks and processes follow naturally.

Chapter 12: Rapid Conflict Resolution and Rapid Team Tune-Up - Dealing with Conflicted Employees or Building Teams

- Keeping employees motivated towards organizational goals sometimes requires a *Rapid Conflict Resolution* to clear up unnecessary conflict and focus them back on collaborating; synergy making conversations. It is a curative piece but it also can be used as *Rapid Team Tune Up*, a Preventative and energizing experience.
- Conflicts in the workplace are common. Conflict can be defined in a variety of ways but basically conflict is:
- Two or more people going in opposite directions
 - Energy/resources expended
 - Little or no progress made.
- Some of the problems Rapid Conflict Resolution can be used to address include:
 - Acrimony – issues between team members that adversely impact quality/efficiency
 - Dysfunction – other employees resist using a particular group or team
 - Communication issues – Lack of clarity/completeness, tone or frequency
- Problematic conflicts include:
 - Ownership of responsibility and authority
 - Disagreement with direction or strategy
 - Communication – frequency, clarity or tone
 - Personality conflict
 - Quality or work performance
 - Work procedure issues





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- Temptations for dealing with conflict that we'd do well to resist are:
 - Telling combatants to shape up or knock it off
 - Getting into the rescuer, persecutor or victim loop
 - Wishing and hoping
 - Giving advice
- Managers should get involved:
 - When it comes to our desk; when someone makes us aware of it
 - If a conflict adversely impacts any of the links in the service profit chain – revenue, customer satisfaction, quality of product or service, employee “gruntledness”
 - When wishing and hoping won't work
- We should bring in outside facilitators:
 - When the internal person is uncomfortable
 - When the internal person “knows” the solution
 - When the internal person has a favorite in the conflict
 - When the people involved have senior positions to the internal person and the internal person is intimidated
 - When the cost of doing nothing is more than the cost of the intervention
- When the conflict is two employees who refuse to speak to one another or many people who are at odds, conflicts waste people's time and cost companies a lot of money. Worse yet, if tensions are ignored, they grow, fester, and perpetuate problems that can permeate an entire organization.
- Rapid Conflict Resolution and Rapid Team Tune-Up consist of two-session, eight question, facilitated interventions, by a manager or a third party. The goal of this intervention is a harmonizing of tension.
- The added beauty of this intervention is that there doesn't have to be a problem in order to utilize and benefit from it.
- Regardless of which intervention we are referring to, the premise is the same: Don't blame anybody or judge anybody, just focus with working with all parties toward finding a solution.
- Rapid Conflict Resolution is a focused set of questions leading relentlessly to personal responsibility.
- The setup, when we sit down with the two people is something close to this: “Let me tell you how this works because it may be different than you're expecting. We're going to spend two sessions together – that's it. This isn't court; it's not an ongoing coaching or therapy session. We'll meet today and one week from now. I'm going to ask you a total of eight questions – five this first day and three when we meet again a week from now. If each of you gets the answer right then we move on to the next question and we'll have a strong chance of solving this issue. If you don't get the answers right, then I can't help you.”





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- The purpose of this set-up is to put:
 - Put pressure on the participants to solve the conflict
 - Acknowledge that we can't solve it for them
- Managers who understand the A-HA! Performance Model know that we can't control other people into a solution they don't buy in to and that we probably couldn't come up with the best solution for them anyway.

Day One – Rapid Conflict Resolution

1. *Do you want things to be better in this situation? Or would you be against things being better around here?*
 - What is better to you (clear)?
 - Do you believe it is fixable (attainable)?
 - What's the payoff to you to make this better? (Payoff)?
 - *Rapid Team Tune-Up Version:* As good as things are, would you like it to be even better around here? Or, would you be against things being even better around here?
2. *Whose behavior do you control?* The only acceptable answer to this question from each person is “I control my own behavior”.

We ask this question so people stop trying to control other people's behavior and focus where the control is; on their own.

What this question begins to teach us is:

Our power in getting others to change is our own willingness to change ourselves.

3. *What's working in this situation now?* This question is designed to change the momentum from a focus on a problem to realization that not everything is wrong.
- *Rapid Team Tune-Up Version:* What's working well in this situation now?
 - If we can get people focused on the fact that in spite of the conflict, there are still some things that are good for them, they're still getting some of what they want, it will close the gap a little.
 - When gaps close, even a little, then thoughts, emotions and physiology settle down...their brain and blood chemistry changes for the better. When one of the components of chosen behavior changes, they all change. If the emotions change for the better, thoughts and actions for dealing with the other person will improve, too.





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4. *What needs to be fixed (improved)?*

- *Rapid Team Tune-Up Version:* What could be improved further?
- This shouldn't create an opportunity to blame or point out who is at fault. This question focuses the discussion on acting in the present to make something better in the future. Focusing on a fix is more energizing for most of us than focusing on a problem.
- Cautions:
 - Just list and move on, don't comment or ask for much detail
 - Avoid getting drawn, into issues
 - Don't judge
- Before moving on from this question ask, "Do we have the main thing on the list'?"
- Getting the key issue identified is critical here or everyone is wasting time; spend as long as is necessary to get the key issues on the list.

5. *What's one thing you would be willing to do differently for one week that you think would improve one of the things on your list?*

- At this point, remind all the participants of the answers to the four questions so far. Then move on to question number five.
- Both partners in this conflict have to agree that if the other does it, it will make things better, and the facilitator has to agree that if each does it, it would make things better, too.
- The criteria for a good plan in RCR are the same as that of Address and Improve, in that the plan to do something better should meet most of the following eight criteria:
 1. Clear
 2. Attainable
 3. Payoff \geq Cost (makes things better not worse)
 4. Measurable
 5. A do plan, not a don't plan
 6. Dependant on the doer only
 7. Immediately implement-able
 8. Repeatable
- At the end of the session, we tell the employees that they are done for the day and we'll reconvene in a week.





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Day Two – Rapid Conflict Resolution/Rapid Team Tune-Up

- Here are the three questions that you ask during the second session:
 1. *Did you do what you said you'd do? If not, what did you do instead?*
 2. *How did it work?*
 3. *What now?* Sometimes people feel really good about the gains they've made but reasonably insecure about their ability to keep it up. The lesson we're trying to share with people is that if they change what they're doing, they'll change what they're getting.
- With a large group, meet with people individually before bringing them together. You may want to share the questions you'll be asking so they won't worry about being embarrassed, put on the spot, ambushed, or in any other way surprised. Brief them on your approach. No one is going to be blamed or singled out. The focus will be on the here and now and on the immediate future. Prefacing the meeting in this way will hopefully relax the participants before everyone sits down together.
- The power of Rapid Conflict Resolution and Rapid Team Tune-Up is in the eight questions. Not only are the questions designed to get people doing and thinking positively, but they work in getting people thinking about personal responsibility solutions rather than blaming, shaming and justifying.
- The advantage of a neutral third party is that this individual has no history with the conflicted employees; she doesn't have an agenda that isn't biased.

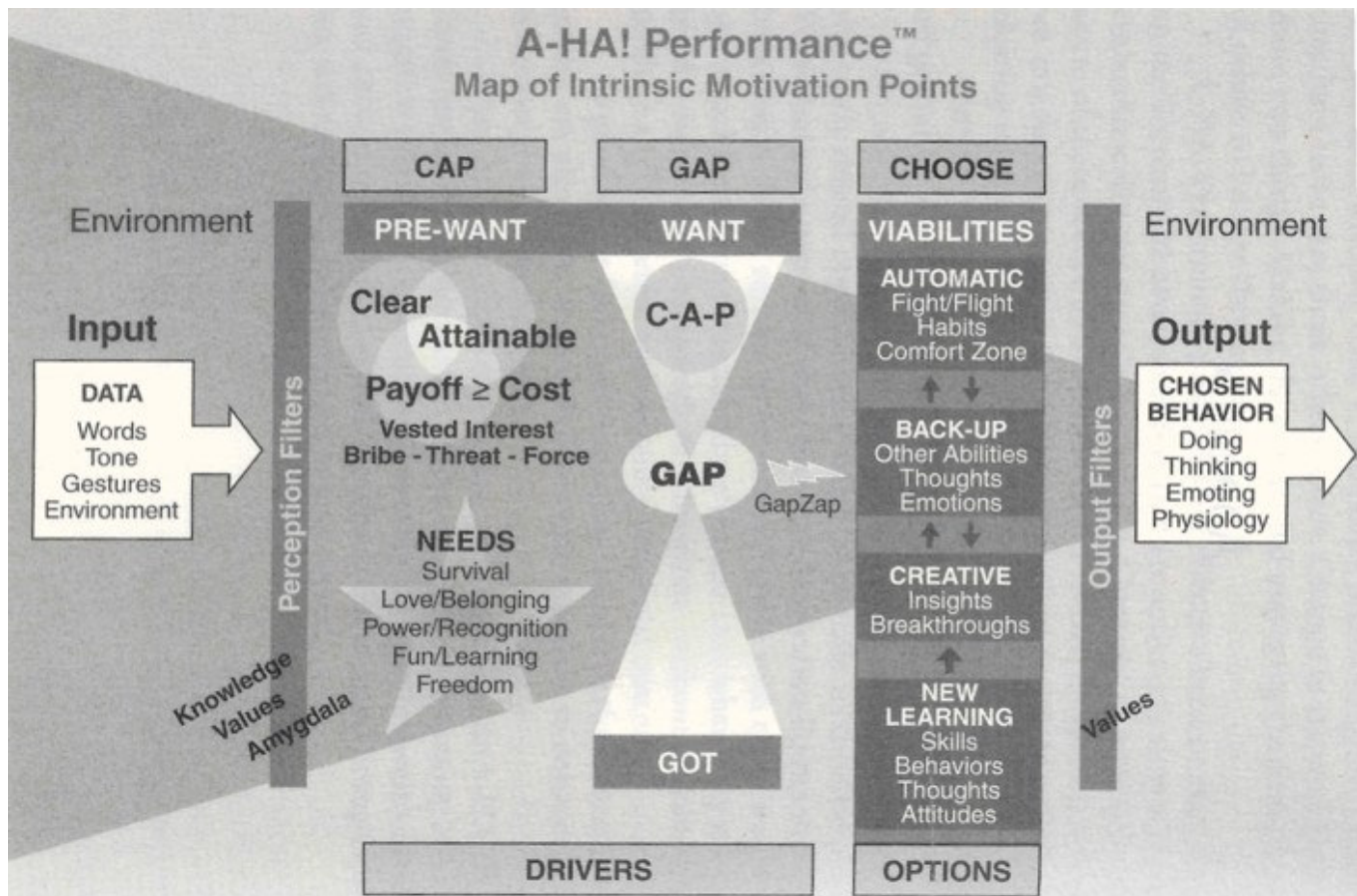
Chapter 13: Making the Shift

- The irony, or paradox, relative to the A-HA! Performance Model, is that the external controls many of us learned in our journey to managerial positions are exactly what we need to avoid doing now.
- A-HA! Performance, in many ways is a counterintuitive model. It says we should replace sticks and carrots with vested interest conversations and give up giving advice in favor of CAPing our requests and exploring viable options for that person.
- A by-product of learning the A-HA! Performance principles and cementing them into our automatic zones is that it applies to other relationships in all areas of our lives, not just in the workplace. It's just a more powerful and meaningful way to relate and manage because it helps us meet our needs in these relationships by focusing on meeting theirs.
- Internalizing the book's concepts, moving them into our automatic zone is the only way to make them ours, ready to use successfully in all situations. The objective is to practice A-HA! Performance principles in our daily managing so we get to the point where our utilization of these principles is automatic.





- Making this shift, and maintaining this shift, gives us a powerfully unique edge that could otherwise take a lifetime of experience to grasp.
- Acquiring the A-HA! Performance Edge requires a rewiring process of sorts. Letting go of the old ideas tied to external control is not as easy as simply letting go.
- So much of what the author is suggesting is geared toward a new understanding of the Intrinsic Motivation Points that are active between a manager's input and an employee's output. As we develop the mindset of internal controls – self-motivation – our ability to manage with a focus on the other person's vested interest strengthens.
- A-HA! Performance provides us with a graphic illustration of the model. It's designed so we can use it as a guide, a compass, an assessment tool, and a template for managing conversations and aligning efforts for greater organizational success.
- The map was designed to help us stay on the vested interest motivation track and is a reference guide for daily Intrinsic Motivation Point management.





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Recommendation: This book certainly met my needs and wants in helping my clients to meet their goals and fix areas of conflict. This is one of the best books I have read in a long time.

About the Reviewer: **Frumi Rachel Barr, MBA, Ph.D. - Executive Coach, Break Through Consulting**
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Frumi Rachel Barr MBA, Ph.D. is an Executive Coach at Break Through Consulting. Frumi has had a distinguished twenty-eight year career history as an entrepreneur and financial executive. Her experience and expertise as both a CEO and a CFO provides responsive and collaborative support to executives in a wide array of companies and industries. It is this unique blend of practical, theoretical, strategic and communications skills that makes the work Frumi does unique among business advisors and coaches.

