



F is for Focus: Ten Focus Strategies

Helping Leaders Find Their Voice, Take Action, and Get Results

Training and Coaching Services for Leaders and Managers in the Middle

Elements F is for FOCUS

Don't blink! A circular 3.5 inch hard round object is coming at your face at 80 mph, along with five really big guys, and there is a loud drunk trying to get your attention. Can you stay focused on the black object and stop it from going into the net behind you? Or should you duck and pay attention instead to the fire alarm that is going off and the smoke you smell?

Mastering the art and science of being able to hold your focus in the moment is a skill that is both an art and a science. It can be the difference between success and failure.

It took Kevin almost two years to learn how to not blink when the puck would come at him. Kevin was a hockey goalie in high school and he was motivated. The motivation to be an NHL goalie is gone now, but his laser-like focus remains. Whether it's training to be an NHL hockey goalie or delivering projects, getting a promotion, or achieving any goal, it requires the skill of focus, lots of practice, and motivation. And sometimes learning a new skill can be uncomfortable, painful, and messy.

Also on the learning side, I hope you take advantage of the [free one-hour webinars](#) I offer. The webinars are a chance for me to hone in and focus on the best targeted material for you that is part of my [full-day workshops](#).

Yours in building focus muscles in 2016 and beyond!

Star

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Workshops and Coaching for Top Performers and High Potential, Middle Managers

Note our new emails and website, old ones will continue to work! (we dropped the LLC)



Top Ten Tips for Creating a Focus Framework

Highly motivated people take focused action. And typically that action is not just one thing. Rather, it is a living, multifaceted, synchronized and choreographed set of actions and thoughts aimed at the intended outcome - in short, it is a "focus framework." For an athlete the focus framework includes the daily practices of individual health and wellness behaviors, and constant readjustments based on personal and expert feedback. A manager's focus framework may include daily reflection and prioritizing; weekly team meetings, trainings, and reviews; and alignment of goals. An individual may use resources such as Toastmasters, Weight Watchers, other training programs, or coaching as their focus framework. Making your focus framework visible, being accountable, practicing, constantly adapting, and staying motivated to reach the intended outcome are parts of a focus framework that gets results.

Here are my top ten tips for mastering the art and science of creating a focus framework:

#1 Frame it - Have a framework, a living system, a set of repeatable tasks and actions designed for your goal. Be accountable to it, measure it. Adapt and change your daily, weekly, monthly, yearly actions and thoughts as needed to ensure you are on path to your intended outcome. Write the components of your framework down, map it out, visualize it, talk about it - just make sure you have one! **What's your focus framework?**

#2 Get Crystal Clear about Your Intended Outcome - Can you visualize the results of your framework at will? Can you summarize it to a stranger? Can you describe it in glorious detail? Can you feel it? Do you know who's already done it? Can you read about it? Learn about it? Write about it? Are you clear why it motivates you? **Where is your focus framework taking you?**

#3 Limit it - First thing in the morning, select 1-3 most important priorities that will keep you focused on your larger goals. Examples are: doing a report, exercising, making a difficult phone call, or thinking along new lines. **What are your 1-3 most important things today?** (Bonus points for mapping out an entire day of focus!)

#4 Abstract it - Associate a thing that is with you all day with your intended outcome. Forge a mental bridge between the two to remind you of your focus throughout the day. Having a constant reminder keeps you focused. Find something that you can see, feel or hear. Here are examples clients have used: a piece of jewelry, a pen, a photograph, an article of clothing, or a Post-it® note. Think Pavlov's dogs. **What will remind you of your focus?**

#5 Prioritize it - Find a system of prioritizing that works for you. In Stephen Covey's book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, he divides up personal time/energy into four Quadrants. To focus on achieving your highest priorities, only do things that fall into the two most important quadrants. Those are labeled "The Quadrant of Necessity" and "The Quadrant of Productivity and Balance." "The Quadrant of Necessity" contains important tasks. The "Quadrant of Productivity and Balance" contains items that are important but not urgent right now, such as building stronger relationships, health, and long term goals and visions. **What's your prioritizing system?**

#6 Remove Shiny Objects - They call to you and lure you in; distractions derail your focus. List what your top distractions are and create a strategy to avoid them. Conversely, know what will enhance your focus. Drop *Seven*, *Candy Crush*, and *Best Fiends* are distracting games I've deleted from my phone. *Candy Crush* made over 1 billion dollars in a year; they excel at, and have research on, what makes a game addictive. Knowing that, you can swim against the tide and focus on outcomes you want! **What are your shiny distracting objects and how do you dull them down or make them disappear?**

#7 Know your Five to Seven - Every goal can be broken down into a minimum of five key results areas and a maximum of seven. If it's more than seven break it down again. Know what these key results areas are, and make sure you are providing a regular measurement and focus on each. These are the results that you must have in your focus framework in order to have a successful outcome. Key results are like vital functions of the body -- blood pressure, heart rate, brain waves, breathing, and nutrition. A manager's key results areas might be: planning for new work, supervising people, reporting, presenting, organizing, and completing current tasks. Even intangibles like building trust and improving delegation skills can be measured. Here's a link to an article on [measuring intangibles](#). **What's your five to seven?**

#8 Learn to Say No and Yes - Say "no" to what doesn't fit into your focus framework and say "yes" to new challenging ones that fit. Have ten ways of saying no ready to go and in your back pocket. Vary your response in firmness and friendliness based on the requester and situation. Here are some examples you can adapt:

- "I'd like to help and don't have the time to do it properly right now."
- "I can't right now, but (name some other likely person) might be able to."
- "I have quite a few commitments right now; I feel like it would be unfair to the other commitments for me to take that on."
- "Yes, when it is on the top of my priority list, and right now it is not."
- "I'm honored you asked me, and sorry to say that I can't."
- "Can you check back with me next week on that?"
- "Here's the impact to me if I help you right now..."
- "Yes and it will cost this much money."
- "I would love to help you if I had the time."
- "Sorry, no, I'm busy saving the world right now."

Learn to gulp and say "yes" to thoughts and actions that fit into your focus framework. **What "No" statements are in your back pocket and what do you need to say "Yes" to?**

#9 Do 15 - Every day find time for big and important goals. You can do anything for 15 minutes, 10 minutes if you are skeptical and busy. Start with baby steps. Consistency is the key to creating change and forging a lifelong habit. The first 15 minutes you spend on one of the big or

important goals might be to get clarity, to learn more, to create a plan. **What will you do during your 15 minutes today?**

#10 Reflect and adapt

- Stop, drop, and learn. A focus framework is a continuously adapting, learning, and living path. Take your regular reviews and reflections and hold them up against the path laid out in your focus framework. Is it taking you where you want to be? Are the goals still motivating you? What's missing? What skills and behaviors still need to be developed? What needs to be made clear? What activities need to be stopped or started? What's most important today and in the future? **What lessons learned need to be applied now?**



Focus Quotes

The successful warrior is the average man, with laser-like focus ~ Bruce Lee

A person who aims at nothing is sure to hit it. ~ Unknown

Concentrate all your thoughts upon the work at hand. The sun's rays do not burn until brought to a focus. ~ Alexander Graham Bell

No life ever grows great until it is focused, dedicated and disciplined. ~ Unknown

If you focus on results, you will never change. If you focus on change, you will get results. ~ Jack Dixon

Often he who does too much, does too little. ~ Italian Proverb

If you chase two rabbits, both will escape. ~ Unknown



Public Events

**Speak the Language of Business and Results
will Speak for Themselves**

Wisconsin Internal Coach Federation Chapter,
Webinar, March 1st, To register, [click here](#)

Focusing By the Numbers -

Free 1-Hour Webinar, Free 1 Hour Webinar, March 3, Thursday 12-1 EST, To register [click here](#). Being focused gets stuff done! Here are 10 tips to help you master the art and science of creating a focus framework that works for you. These are ideas that you can put to use right away!



Alignment and Development of Ideas and Vision into a Successful Project -- Free 1-Hour Webinar, March 16, Wed, 12-1 EST. To register [click here](#)

The reason projects fail is rarely due to manager-team inability to execute. Rather, research shows senior management support and lack of project communication and clarity are always the top reasons projects fail. This workshop will provide tools and methods for concise and clear ways to talk about a project. The early stages when a project goes from idea to reality is the best time to ask the difficult questions, set the boundaries, clarify assumptions, state the limits, and explore the possible challenges. Interacting with senior executives and being able to show and discuss concisely how a project aligns to strategic goals creates buy-in. This highly interactive workshop encourages participants to bring their project ideas to life using the tools and techniques introduced.

Speak the Language of Business and Results will Speak for Themselves

[ICF Midwest Coaches Conference.](#) Indianapolis, Indiana, June 23-26, 2016

Coaches who speak the language of business will be hired faster and have more follow-on business than those who don't. Business managers who squirm at the "touchy/feely" will relate comfortably to coaching when presented in terms (ROI) and frameworks (life cycle) they understand. This session will describe how to use integrated project management, business and coaching tools to create a marketable, powerful and effective comprehensive coaching program.



About Us:

Star Leadership offers coaching, training and consulting services for High Performing, High Potential Leaders and Managers in business. What makes Star Leadership unique is the focus on measurable goals and delivery of proven results in the areas of communication, leadership and teams. Our approach is direct, results-oriented and geared to the bottom line. We are able to quickly map, translate and align your broader vision to the concrete details of skills and behaviors. We have an impact on the results you want in an open, informal, non-judgmental and supportive way. We take pride in providing a wide array of experienced associates, resources, and expertise to be brought into play as

needed to help clients. Star Dargin is the founder and been creating vision and direction for the company since 1996.

Star Leadership offers a wide variety of talented coaches for your business and trainings. The coaches have success and experience in many industries and with many levels within client organizations.

Coaching Match-Making and Customized Process

We create a process tailored to your needs as well as offering a variety of coaches and coaching styles to find the right match for you!

Workshops & Training

We offer workshops in one-hour, half-day, and one- or two-day formats.

Alignment and Development of Ideas and Vision into a Successful Project - **NEW**

Team Coaching - **NEW**

Influencing: One Size Does Not Fit All

Leadership ABC's Workshop

Succeeding in a Matrix Work Environment - UPDATING

Emotional Intelligence

Project Management Essentials for Professionals

Project Management Hands-On Workshop

Project Management Simulation Workshop

Women and Leadership

Coaching for Managers and Leaders

Team CARE Profile and Building a Tower Workshop

Star Leadership LLC

Leadership Training & Coaching for Business

Helping Leaders Find Their Voice, Take Action, and Get Results - One Letter at a Time

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