

Building a High-Performing QA Organization

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Roadmap

- What the opportunity/challenge was
- Why change was needed
- What we did
- Where we ended up / where we're headed

Opportunity/challenge

- I inherited onsite, onshore and offshore QA teams
 - Varied levels of experience and performance
 - Not many team members were perceived to be “high performing”
 - Long onboarding and learning curve
- Teams’ effectiveness and efficiency varied
 - Reactionary; thrashing
- The company was expecting more from everyone

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Why change was needed

- Our company has a FY19 goal of becoming a high-performing organization/team
 - Head of IT also talked about building a learning organization

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Why change was needed (cont.)

- No one was doing anything concrete to help everyone become (more) high-performing
 - Internal Learning Dept. had nothing that fit the bill
 - I had recently done some work with high performance that I believed we could leverage
- We had a lot of work to do in a short timeframe
 - Everyone had to be on their A game

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Unanswered questions

- What does “high performing” mean?
- Did the company expect employees to accept the challenge to be high performing? Would everyone willingly come along for the ride?
- What about those who refused and/or are content with just being “performing”?
- How will teams be evaluated for high performance?

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Our strategy

- Take a proactive approach to helping co-workers increase their performance
 - Define high performance
 - Show how it fits in with our performance management system
 - Find a modern, enjoyable way to augment everyone's skill set
 - Do our part to contribute to a higher-performing team
 - Make learning and personal development part of our culture

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Why personal development?

- When do you work on improving *yourself*?
- You know you could be better...are you doing anything about it?
- no action = no change = same results
- Continuous improvement; ongoing performance improvement
- If it weren't for an opportunity to get better at work, would you do something on your own?

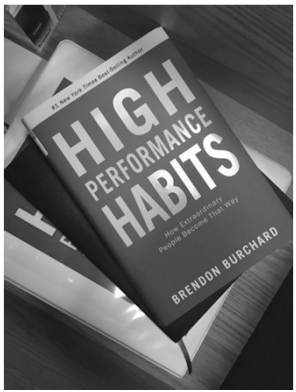
High performer characteristics

Characteristic	Good performance	High performance
PPL Product core values	Exhibits most of them	Exhibits all of them
FY19 personal goals	SMART goals	Stretch goals
Work ethic	Works hard	Works smart
Mindset/attitude	Fixed	Growth
Expectations	Meets	Exceeds
Productivity	Moderate	High
Value	Adds	Creates
Comfort zone	Stays in	Gets out
Risk tolerance	Risk-neutral	Risk-seeking
Competency	Moderate	High
Commitment	Moderate	High
Effectiveness	Meets PSG + personal goals	Meets PPL + PSG + personal goals
Efficiency		
Quality	Moderate	High
Quantity	Minimum	Maximum
Speed	Moderate	Fast
Consistency	Moderate	High
Results	Variable	Repeatable
Reputation	Good worker	High performer
Situational Leadership II (SLII) development level / leadership style	Capable but cautious performer D3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate – high competence Variable commitment S3: supporting	Self-reliant achiever D4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High competence High commitment S4: delegating

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<https://www.success.com/article/brendon-burchards-high-performance-habits>

225,000 HPI assessments	10M Facebook followers	100M video views/comments
300,000 organizational employees		Global surveys and data analytics
1.6M online students		Structured 1-on-1 interviews
2M newsletter subscribers		Academic literature review
195 countries		500k YouTube subscribers
Before-and-after assessments from live-workshop attendees		Empirical results from training
20 years of the author's experience	Coaching insights from 10k high performance coaching sessions	

Why this book?

- I read the book earlier in the year and was very familiar with its content
 - PowerPoint slides
 - Performance Prompts (106)
 - Journal-based action items (151)
 - Recurring-based action items (84)

Defining high performance

- Succeeding beyond standard norms, consistently over the long term
 - High performers consistently exceed the standard expectations and results
 - A high performer does better for longer periods
 - Isn't about never-ending improvement

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High performance habits

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek clarity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Envision the future four • Determine the feeling you're after • Define what's meaningful • Generate energy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release tension, set intention • Bring the joy • Optimize health • Raise necessity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know you need your A game • Affirm the Why • Level up your squad | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase productivity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the outputs that matter • Chart your Five Moves • Get insanely good at key skills • Develop influence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach people how to think • Challenge people to grow • Role model the way • Demonstrate courage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honor the struggle • Share your truths and ambitions • Find someone to fight for |
|---|---|

High Performance Habits in the Workplace (HPHW)

- Definition

- *A grassroots initiative based to help PSG resources increase their individual and team performances on the job*
- *A community of practice based on the High Performance Habits book by Brendon Burchard*

This is not a book club or a study group. It is a community of practice whose members support one another towards self-improvement and lifelong learning.

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Goal, objectives and expectations

- Goal: leverage the high performance habits to improve results on the job
- Objectives
 - Discuss the book's content and key messages
 - Socialize accountability with performing the exercises (action items)
 - Share experiences and results from applying the material to the workplace

Expectations

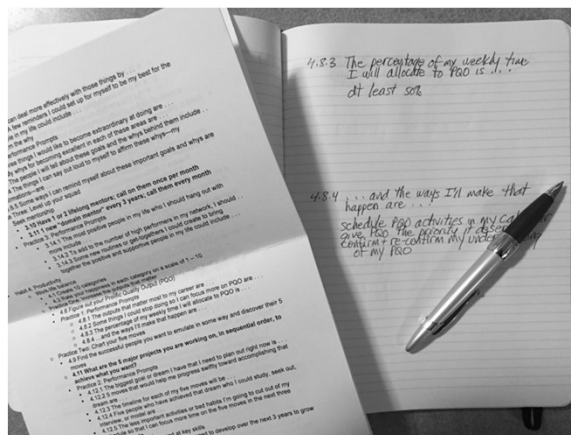
1. Read the book
2. Do the exercises (action items)
3. Apply the material
4. Share your results
5. Teach the material*

Materials

- Book
 - Hardcopy (\$15)
 - Softcopy (\$9)
 - Audiobook (\$0)
- PowerPoint slides (252)
- Exercises (235)
- Schedule

Exercises (action items)

- Journal-based (151)
 - Answering questions in a notebook
- Recurring-based (84)
 - Daily, weekly and monthly actions



Schedule

- September 21: Kick-Off Meeting
- October 5: Introduction; Beyond Natural
- October 19: Habit 1
- November 2: Habit 2
- November 16: Habit 3
- November 30: Habit 4
- December 14: Habit 5
- December 28: Habit 6
- January 11: Beware Three Traps; The #1 Thing

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Session Format

- Results from applying last week's material to the workplace
- Presentation of this week's content by designated participants
- Discussion of applying this week's material to the workplace

Applying the material

- Hiring, onboarding & training
- Team meetings, 1-on-1s
- Career development
- Performance reviews
- Leadership & management

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Applying the material (cont.)

- Out-of-the-book examples
 - High Performance Indicator (HPI) assessment
 - Primary Field of Interest (PFI)
 - Clarity Chart
 - Desk trigger
 - Mentorship
 - Take a break
 - Key skills
 - Work-life balance
 - Prolific Quality Output (PQO)
 - Your 5 moves

HPI assessment

- Based on the world's largest study of high performers
- 65 questions
 - 36 multiple-choice questions that correlate with high performance
 - 29 fast questions that determine how you respond versus your peers
- 6 scores that tell you how likely you are to succeed over the long-term

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Primary Field of Interest (PFI)

- 1.6.1 Think about your PFI and write down three skills that make people successful in that field
 - PFI = software quality assurance
 - 3 skills: Java, Selenium, Python
- 1.6.2 Under each skill write down what you will do to develop it. Set up a plan to develop those skills, put it in your calendar and stay consistent
 - Java, Selenium, Python: take an online class
- 1.6.3 Now think about your PFI and write down three skills that you will need in order to succeed in that field 5 – 10 years from now. Keep those skills on your radar and start developing them sooner rather than later.
 - Cloud (Amazon Web Services, Microsoft Azure)
 - DevOps
 - AI

The Clarity Chart

THE CLARITY CHART

<p style="text-align: center;">Self</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The 3 words I'll live and exemplify this week!</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Skills</p> <p style="text-align: center;">List your five and work them this week!</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Social</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3 words that define how I'll treat people this week!</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Service</p> <p style="text-align: center;">How I'll add value to those around me this week!</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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Focus on the Feeling

The main feelings I want to cultivate in my life, relationships, and work this week include . . .

The way I will generate these feelings is to . . .

Define What's Meaningful

Something I can do or create that would bring me more meaning in life is . . .

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Desk trigger

- 2.7.2 Some new triggers I could set for myself include (see my examples of notification, doorway, and waiting-in-line triggers)...

Mentorship

- 3.10 Have 1 or 2 lifelong mentors; call on them once per month
- 3.11 1 new “domain mentor” every 3 years; call them every month

Take a break

- 4.4 Break every 45 – 60 minutes for 2 – 5 minutes
- 4.5 Get up every 50 minutes

Key skills

- 4.13 Determine the 5 major skills you need to develop over the next 3 years to grow into the person you hope to become

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Work-life balance

- 4.1 Create 10 categories
 - Health
 - Family
 - Friends
 - Intimate relationship
 - Mission/work
 - Finances
 - Adventure
 - Hobby
 - Spirituality
 - Emotion
- 4.2 Rate your happiness in each category on a scale of 1 – 10
- 4.3 Write your goals in each of these 10 areas every Sunday night

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Prolific Quality Output (PQO)

- 4.6 Figure out your Prolific Quality Output (PQO)
- 4.8.1 The outputs that matter most to my career are . . .
- 4.8.2 Some things I could stop doing so I can focus more on PQO are . . .
- 4.8.3 The percentage of my weekly time I will allocate to PQO is . . .
- 4.8.4 ...and the ways I'll make that happen are . . .

Your 5 moves

- 4.9 Find the successful people you want to emulate in some way and discover their 5 moves
- 4.11 What are the 5 major projects you are working on, in sequential order, to achieve what you want?
- 4.12.1 The biggest goal or dream I have that I need to plan out right now is . . .
- 4.12.2 5 moves that would help me progress swiftly toward accomplishing that dream are . . .
- 4.12.3 The timeline for each of my five moves will be . . .
- 4.12.4 Five people who have achieved that dream who I could study, seek out, interview, or model are . . .
- 4.12.5 The less important activities or bad habits I'm going to cut out of my schedule so that I can focus more time on the five moves in the next three months include . . .

Leveraging HPH action items to write FY19 goals

- Habit 1: Seek Clarity
 - Practice One: Envision the Future Four
 - Primary Field of Interest (PFI)
 - 1.6.1 Think about your PFI and write down three skills that make people successful in that field
 - 1.6.2 Under each skill write down what you will do to develop it. Set up a plan to develop those skills, put it in your calendar and stay consistent
 - 1.6.3 Now think about your PFI and write down three skills that you will need in order to succeed in that field 5 – 10 years from now. Keep those skills on your radar and start developing them sooner rather than later.

Leveraging HPH action items to write FY19 goals (cont.)

- Habit 4: Increase Productivity
 - Practice One: Increase the outputs that matter
 - 4.6 Figure out your Prolific Quality Output (PQO)
 - 4.7 Spend 60% or more of their workweek oriented to PQO
 - 4.8.1 The outputs that matter most to my career are . . .
 - 4.8.2 Some things I could stop doing so I can focus more on PQO are . . .
 - 4.8.3 The percentage of my weekly time I will allocate to PQO is . . .
 - 4.8.4 ...and the ways I'll make that happen are . . .

Leveraging HPH action items to write FY19 goals (cont.)

- Practice Two: Chart your five moves
 - 4.10.1 Decide what you want
 - 4.10.2 Determine the 5 major moves that will help you leap toward that goal
 - 4.10.3 Do deep work on each of the major 5 moves (at least 60% of your workweek going to these efforts) until they are complete
 - 4.10.4 Designate all else as distraction, tasks to delegate or things to do in block of time you've allocated in the remaining 40% of your time
- Practice Three: Get insanely good at key skills
 - 4.13 Determine the 5 major skills you need to develop over the next 3 years to grow into the person you hope to become

Example: SMART goal

Become recognized as a high-performing team member by demonstrating core values of empowerment and continuous learning

- Read the High Performance Habits (HPH) book by 1Q19
- Complete the journal-based and recurring-based exercises by 1Q19
- Participate in the HPH Workgroup and help mentor others in HPH by 2Q19
- Take the HPI Assessment every 2 months
- Develop skills related to my Primary Field of Interest (PFI) by 4Q19
- Fill out a Clarity Chart each week
- Set a desk trigger daily
- Participate in a mentorship by 2Q19
- Take short breaks throughout the day
- Define and develop my key skills by 4Q19
- Maintain some resemblance of a work-life balance by 1Q19
- Increase my Prolific Quality Output (PQO) each week
- Chart my 5 moves each quarter
- Leverage the HPH Checklist daily

Time investment

- Reading: 1 – 1.5 hr/wk
- Exercises (action items): 30 – 45 min/wk
- Applying the material: 30 – 45 min/wk
- Weekly session: 1 hr/wk
 - Sharing results
 - Teaching the material
- Total minimum investment: ~ 3 – 4 hr/wk

Issues we encountered

- Overall interest and momentum decreased as the weeks went on
 - Work (“day jobs”) took precedent
 - Quantity of work increased
- Quality of presentations during the sessions varied
- Management support wavered a bit
- People tapered off with doing the “work”
 - Exercises (action items)
 - Applying the material / practicing the habits

HPHW Metrics

	Program Start	Program End
# participants	20	14
read the book	19	14
did the exercises	15	9
applied the material	-	12
shared their results	-	10
taught the material	-	12

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HPI Assessments

	Sep '18	Dec '18	% increase	
Employee 1	75	85	13%	
Employee 2	67	78	16%	
Employee 3	60	72	20%	
Employee 4	62	73	18%	
Employee 5	73	82	12%	
Employee 6	70	79	13%	
Employee 7	72	85	18%	
Employee 8	65	78	20%	
Employee 9	72	88	22%	
Employee 10	74	86	16%	
Employee 11	78	88	13%	
Employee 12	65	77	18%	
Employee 13	74	83	12%	
Employee 14	62	74	19%	

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Subjective assessments

Improved

- Test case writing
- Finding important bugs
- Quantity of work hours
- Confidence
- Personal care

Didn't improve

- Routine tasks
- Metrics reporting
- Cross-functional relations
- Meeting etiquette
- Career planning

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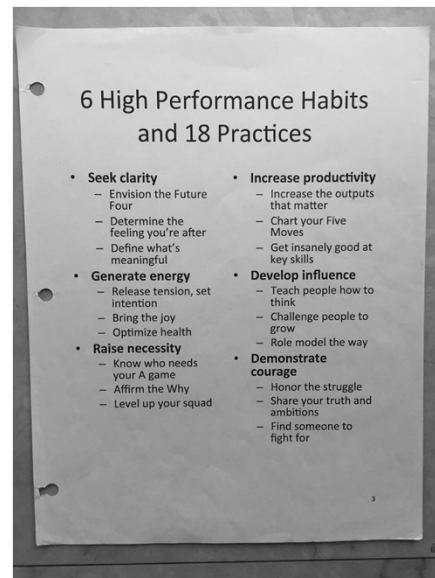
To Be Determined

- Performance management
 - How many participants will earn a “high performer” rating on their annual performance review?
- Discipline
 - How many participants are still practicing the habits?
- HPHW expansion
 - Who else within IT can we roll this out to?

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Sustaining the gains

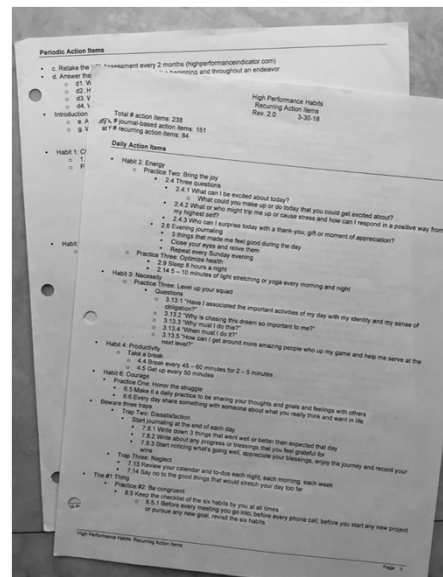
- High Performance Habits Checklist



Sustaining the gains (cont.)

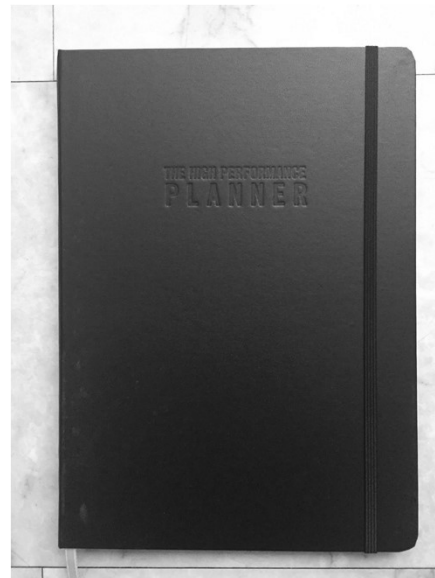
- High Performance Habits Recurring-based Action Items

- Daily
- Weekly
- Periodic



Sustaining the gains (cont.)

- High Performance Planner



Reflection

- Were you glad you participated? Was it worth it?
- Do you feel that your performance has increased?
Do you consider yourself to be a high performer?
- Will you keep practicing your high performance habits?

Summary

- Continuous improvement should be part of your company culture
- High performance can be learned and practiced
- Developing a reputation as a high performer takes ongoing effort and considerable time

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Action plan

1. Review this presentation
2. Decide if this could work at your company
3. Implement HPHW
4. Monitor and adjust your progress

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References

- High Performance Habits, Brendon Burchard
- High Performance Indicator (assessment)
<https://brendon.mykajabi.com/p/hp6-assessment>