

# What You See is What You Get!

By Stan Pohmer

I'm intrigued by the game of golf. But being intrigued and being good at it are two completely different things, especially in my case (as others who have seen me play can attest to, though I do an exceptional job of driving the cart that has water, soda and adult beverages on it, so my buddies let me continue to stay on the course with them!).



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Consider all of the externalities that the golfer has to factor

when setting up a shot over which he/she has no direct control, among them:

- Wind direction and velocity
- Type and length of the grass
- Humidity (helps determine whether the ball runs fast or slow)
- Current and recent weather conditions, and course maintenance that have an impact on how hard or soft the ground is
- Elevations and terrains
- Obstacles and barriers, such as trees, sand traps and water hazards

These are just a few of the many variables a golfer has to mentally compute on each and every shot, and because these factors are constantly changing, no two shots are ever the same.

Add to this the need for the golfer to honestly and candidly acknowledge his/her physical abilities and limitations and the complexity of the mental calculations the golfer has to almost instantaneously make become even more mind-boggling!

My favorite worldly philosopher, Yogi Berra, had it right when he said, "Baseball (and golf in this case) is 90 percent mental and the other half is physical."

There are a lot of golfers out there with great physical skills and the ability to "read" the course, factoring in the multitude of external forces that need to be dealt with on each shot.

The main thing, however, that separates "good" from "great" is that great golfers visualize or focus on positive outcomes; they visualize in their mind's eye the result they want to achieve.

## Visualize Success

Let me give you a real life example. When I'm setting up a fairway shot with sand traps on each side and the hole beyond, as I address the ball I'm thinking "I have to avoid the traps;" the last conscious thought in my brain before I start swinging is "avoid the traps," so there's a high likelihood that the traps are where my ball will end up.

A "great" golfer on the same fairway with the same traps will focus on the desired outcome of hitting the green and getting close to the hole as he/she addresses the ball; though even great golfers still end up in traps, the odds are much greater in their favor that they'll hit the green and get closer to the hole.

Visualization is a tool often used in sports psychology to improve performance and achieve positive outcomes.

Based on real science, it leverages the power of ideas or thoughts — good or bad — in the brain that direct muscles to work in a desired way.

It helps to improve focus and concentration through the process of creating a visual image of the outcome, and then thinking through and mentally rehearsing all of the actions required to achieve the goal.

Harnessing the power of the correlation between mental and physical performance requires practice, but when we train the brain, powerful results can be achieved.

Just think of the pro golfer who develops the visual image in his/her mind's eye of where they want the ball to go, and then the brain factors in and computes all of the externalities and variables, along with the golfer's physical abilities, and then mentally rehearses the swing and directs the muscles of the body to execute; this whole process takes place in the span of mere seconds.

Even more amazing is the pro tennis player who, in a millisecond, visualizes where they want to return the ball to and how they're going to achieve that when the ball is hit to them at 130 miles per hour.

Or the baseball hitter who visualizes the bat meeting the ball and knowing where they want to hit it to, in a mental process that begins when the ball leaves the hand of the pitcher at over 100 miles per hour.

The process of visualizing the desired outcome, creating the image of the process to achieving it by coupling the brain/body power to drive execution is incredible!

In each of my sports analogies, the key to success was first focusing on the desired outcomes, identifying what you wanted to achieve.

As Lewis Carroll, author of "Alice in Wonderland," once said, "If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there."

And this is just as true in business, as it is in sports.

## Activities Versus Outcomes Based

There are still too many companies that are doing lots of "stuff," investing scarce resources in activities that keep people busy without first knowing what the desired outcomes should be.

And often, too many of these activities are independent, standalones or one-offs that fail to leverage the power of coordinated effort.

Activities-based organizations tend to start their business thinking at ground level and work up.

Successful companies, on the other hand, are focused on outcome-based activities; the desired results are first visualized and only then are the plans developed and the resources

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## POHMER ON...

invested to achieve them. And when you have defined desired outcomes, you then have a basis for benchmarking progress and a process to make adjustments to ensure success.

Outcomes-based organizations generally start with the "big think," clearly identifying goals and where they want to position themselves in their marketplace, rather than being positioned by others.

There's a distinct difference between "working in your business" and "thinking about your business." The first is more operations and activities based; the latter is more outcomes based.

In my opinion, as an industry, we're not as profitable or growing as much as we could be because we're reactive rather than proactive, activities focused rather than outcomes focused. Every company needs to visualize what success is; only then can you create the process to accomplish your success.

If my thoughts might remotely remind you of the need for a corporate vision, mission, strategies and tactics thought process to establish desired outcomes and a roadmap towards execution and success, that's intentional!

This process forces you to think about your business, mentally preparing it before execution and is essentially the same visualization technique that sports pros perform in seconds.

As noted author Stephen Richards stated, "Our way of thinking creates good or bad outcomes."

You sometimes hear coaches imploring their players to "Get your head in the game!" encouraging them to get mentally involved in the outcome, not just physically; visualization is a tool that can be used by every employee, but especially management who sets the direction and tone for a business.

I leave you with another Yogi-ism: "If you don't know where you're going, you might end up someplace else."

It's time we all got our individual and collective heads in the game and started visualizing where we want to go!... **LGR**

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