

# Are you living up to your potential?

A Guest Article by Leah Conway  
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In a recent survey 100% of respondents revealed they had not yet reached their potential, or even come close; with ages ranging from 18 to 79. What are we all waiting for?

The plain fact is that none of us are reaching or living up to our potential because our potential is unlimited. We can develop in so many areas: achieve more academically, build a career, create prosperity, push for optimum fitness, become more spiritually elevated, maximise our inter-personal skills, make our finest sale, write 'the' book, compose a symphony- the list is endless.

It is widely recognised that our limited beliefs hold us back; however it is also clear we all know we can achieve more – so why aren't we doing something about it?

The survey highlights that it often comes down to the environment we are in and how much encouragement we get. This is particularly the case when it comes to our working life. Very often the culture we are exposed to at work dictates whether we settle for less, or strive to grow.

With the dynamic nature of our global business economy, as organisations respond to market forces, more and more is expected from us as individuals. Gone are most of the support functions that of those of us old enough to remember only came to truly appreciate after their demise: the tea trolley, typing pool, filing clerks, and teams of administrators. Many find themselves constantly juggling, as with the aid of technology most job descriptions encompass what would have been expected from a team of five or more only 15 years ago. Day to day survival often means putting in longer hours which inevitably takes its toll physically, mentally and emotionally, leaving little time to monitor or care if we are evolving and developing in the way we would like.

As an employer how do you tap into, harness and develop that unlimited potential that is available in your workforce?

In order to increase individuals' capacity to get things done we recommend a change from trying to get more and more out of people, to investing more in people.

A recent development programme designed for the Customer Service Department of a major mobile network's customer service function provides evidence to support this. With limited resources a bespoke modular programme spread over a four month period produced an increase in service levels to an all time high, a substantial decrease in sickness and attrition, and low morale has been replaced with highly motivated enthusiastic team effort.

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Do you consider your organisation a hot house for talent and potential?

In order to gain a greater understanding of how we are performing in this regard, we need a robust measurement tool. Here is a 3-step health check; most of this information can easily be gleaned via an anonymously completed staff engagement survey. The results can then be fed into a staff investment plan.

1. **Examine the culture;** is it one that encourages, acknowledges and rewards success? How open to change, innovation and continuous improvement are the board and management teams? Are the most up to date company goals, vision and mission clearly communicated? Does everyone understand and accept their individual and team responsibility to making it happen? What is the level of integrity around the organisation? Is this a process-driven or people-focused business? Is it a fun and stimulating place to work?
2. **How able are the managers?** What kind of micro climate are they creating within their department? Is performance managed? Are reviews and appraisals carried out properly or have they become a tick-box exercise? What actions are triggered as a consequence of performance management? Do they have the tools, attitude, skills and support they need?
3. **How motivated is your workforce?** How engaged are your staff in the company goals, vision, and mission. What development opportunities are they aware of? How much feedback do they get on how they are performing? Do they receive acknowledgement/praise for a job well done? Where do they see themselves in two years time? Do they feel any nearer to performing to their potential than they did one year ago?

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If you would like more information on any of the points covered in this Guest Article, please contact **TCii** on **020 7099 2621**.