

Elevate Cognitive Performance

Improving cognitive performance is a strategic imperative for anticipatory leaders. With the availability of data, cognitive technology and performance analytics, stakeholders expect stronger performance, higher transparency, greater controls and clearer communications.

Performance analytics for cognitive work

The transactional operations of an organization have demonstrated how people, process, technology, information and analytics can transform their processes and improve performance before, during and after a customer transaction. A key area that is ripe for improvement is the cognitive operations of an organization where the same principles involving the mind, cognitive processes, cognitive performance technology and performance analytics can transform critical thinking and stakeholder communications.

Cognitive performance rings

Business professionals are similar to athletes. Both groups seek to achieve greatness from their actions and get to the top of their game. LeBron James in the NBA, Serena Williams in tennis and Usain Bolt in running at the Olympic Games are all recognized for their individual achievements and team play. They didn't just arrive. They work every day to close their own performance rings on their journey to greater precision in their craft. The same is possible for professionals. They need to not only outthink their competitors, they need to outperform themselves because they know their last performance is their last impression. Their performance is their memorable stamp on their organization and their industry.

Cognitive performance rings illustrate current and expected effectiveness in cognitive performance.

The activities performed in the minds of critical thinkers, decision makers and stakeholders are represented through cognitive performance rings in the eight performance indicators of cognitive effectiveness below.

From decades of experiences, we recognized the effectiveness of cognitive work across a wide variety of professionals in business, which are shown in the cognitive performance rings below. Each performance ring illustrates indicators for the common ranges of current effectiveness along with their expected effectiveness.

When reviewing each performance ring, think about where your teams stand with respect to their cognitive effectiveness. Then prioritize which performance rings are important to you and your organization at this time to help it learn, grow and compete more effectively.

Eight performance indicators of cognitive effectiveness

How well is your team doing?

Performance indicator 1 — critical thinking

How well does your team think critically about risks and benefits?

‘Most people believe their minds lead them down a logical path. Yet, we don’t have a way to challenge the way we think in the moment.’

Performance indicator 2 — stakeholder communications

How well does your team advance decisions with stakeholders?

‘Our stakeholders increasingly need evidence in a structured way that supports their perspectives and their questions. We don’t have a structured operating process to bring stakeholders into the decision making process easily.’

Performance indicator 3 — cognitive collaboration

How well does your team achieve breakthroughs during collaboration?

‘In our meetings, we can’t visualize what’s in each other’s heads. Our current processes don’t provide us a way to arrive at insights and foresights with the amount of time we have together. Frankly, it’s a challenge during this time of expected innovation.’

Performance indicator 4 — decision execution

How well does your team execute decisions with foresight?

‘We over rely on our gut instincts. We learn from hindsight. It’s concerning to us because change is no longer constant. It’s accelerating. We need a way to become more anticipatory.’

Performance indicator 5 — performance conditions

How well does your team establish upper and lower thresholds for thinking and communications?

‘We don’t share thresholds enough. When we do, we share thresholds verbally and in documents. The only way we shape the cognitive behaviors across our teams is through our review processes by management. This approach affects our culture and we don’t know how to address it.’

Performance indicator 6 — performance compliance

How well does your team incorporate performance conditions during thinking and communications?

‘The goals and objectives of our stakeholders aren’t transparent for our team. When we do receive them, we incorporate conditions we remember. We need a systematized way to incorporate conditions into our cognitive work.’

Performance indicator 7 — uncertainty monitoring

How well does your team anticipate disruption?

‘We don’t anticipate disruption enough. We are susceptible to external forces as we don’t monitor

indicators that can disrupt our business.'

Performance indicator 8 — performance advisory

How well does your team strengthen the performance of other teams?

'We try to lead from experience. Yet, we can't dedicate the amount of time necessary to accelerate the growth of each individual. We need to provide a way to help them self-learn and deepen their intelligence even more. That would help all of us.'

The performance yield of each ring begins with questions of uncertainty that span outcomes, impact, risk, opportunity, implications, consequences, causation or cause and effect. Performance yields arise from insights and strategic foresights in the minds of professionals. With dashboards presented the way their minds work, professionals lean in and think more deeply about situations. As they access correlated data at the speed of thought, they create performance analytics that challenge the way they think about their current situations. When they visualize indicators and patterns within dashboards about the current and target states of their subject profiles, they work in a software environment to engage their thinking, create their ah-ha moments and generate counterintuitive wisdom.

Tom Brady was selected 199th in the NFL draft by the New England Patriots and became the most decorated quarterback in history. All professionals have an opportunity for greatness. Beyond the physical game, it starts with their cognitive tools.

Learn how to elevate your planning, accelerate innovation and transform results with The Anticipatory Learning System and how to maximize the cognitive performance of your team with Cognitive Performance Software.



About the Author:

DANIEL BURRUS is considered one of the world's leading technology forecasters and innovation experts, and is the founder and CEO of [Burrus Research](#), a research and consulting firm that monitors global advancements in technology driven trends to help clients understand how technological, social and business forces are converging to create enormous untapped opportunities. He is the author of six books including The New York Times best seller [Flash Foresight](#). This article is reprinted with permission. Reproduction without permission is strictly prohibited. For reprint permission, contact Burrus Research, Inc. at office@burrus.com.



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