A-ha!
PERFORMANCE

Building and Managing a Self-Motivated Workforce

DOUGLAS WALKER
with STEPHEN SORKIN

John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
Additional Praise for  
_A-HA! Performance_

“What a fabulous book! Congratulations! It offers such excellent advice for business and for life, and it is a pleasure to read. _A-HA! Performance_ is a book of gems—sound and immediately actionable advice that goes to the core of what it takes to be a successful manager. Just by recognizing a person’s intrinsic motivations, Doug Walker shows how simple it is to move from objectives to exceptional achievement. I so look forward to discussing this book with you further and exploring ways we can work together. Congratulations, again!”

Peyton Daniel  
Senior Managing Director, Coaching Practice Leader  
North America, DBM

“A-HA! Performance should be within reach on every manager’s (or aspiring manager’s) desk because it’s too full of a-ha insights to collect dust on a bookshelf. Amazingly, A-HA! is equally useful for employees who want to effectively manage their managers, because the central premise of A-HA! is that managerial effectiveness—like mutually-beneficial relationships of all types, and communication in general—is inherently a two-way, not a one way street. Perhaps _A-HA! How Employees Manage Managers or A-HA! How to Manage Relationships_ will be the sequel to this imminently readable book.”

Wilton Thomas Anderson  
Retired Professor of Marketing and Entrepreneurship  
University of Texas, California State University

“If every employee was ‘given’ a copy of _A-HA! Performance_ without any conditions attached, watch and see what viral marketing can do. They will love it! The return on investment from them applying only a fraction of the principles would pay for the book a thousand times over!”

Joe Andrew  
CEO, Quantum2
“If you have ever thought you needed a degree in Counseling to motivate your staff you now have all that you need in *A-HA! Performance: Building and Managing a Self-Motivated Workforce*. I was so sold on the A-HA Performance Model and its usability that we have incorporated it into our ‘Coaching for Development’ training for all supervisors and managers. The Model is *Clear, Attainable* and will result in major *Payoffs* in improved relationships and motivated staff.”

Susan Curtin  
Training and Development Manager, Department of Health and Human Services, County of San Diego

“A-HA! Performance is a rare gift to managers at every level. After more than 40 years in top management positions in both the government and private sectors, I truthfully say I have never read a better hands-on, practical, step-by-step guide for managers to maximize productivity, performance, and employee moral. *A-HA! Performance* is a must read for managers or wanna’be managers who want to do it right. This is the only book you need in your management library.”

Retired Rear Admiral W. E. Terry  
U.S. Navy

“As a business owner and consultant for 20 years, I have worked with amazing teams that were driven; people that worked with purpose. To my chagrin, replicating that kind of synergy was haphazard and seemed a bit magical. After reading *A-HA!* I now understand the process that motivates behavior. Now, I perceive interactions differently. My questions lead to *A-HA! Performance* moments that turn into solutions of their creation; strategies that they are self-motivated to implement. Thank you for creating the work I was searching for! I will recommend this book to every leader I know.”

Carla Adwell Webb  
Performance Specialist, Administaff, Inc.

“I thought the book was great!! Very Insightful and the dialogues were so real world. Great content. The best managing, coaching, and sales require employee engagement. Doug Walker clarifies the real factors that block success for managers, coaches, and salespeople and offers simple and effective methods for making managing, coaching, and sales a valuable win for everyone.”

Jim Trunick  
Senior Director, Corporate Sales Training, Allergan

“Doug Walker has been teaching his A-HA Performance Intrinsic Motivation Points model and coaching processes to managers, business owners, human resources, training, organization development and sales
professionals in the San Diego State University, Professional Certificate Program in Coaching for Organizational Excellence for over four years. He easily conveys how the brain receives input and produces behavior in a way that allows business professionals to quickly grasp and effectively use it as internal and external coaches, managers, and consultants. Our students take his information and make big changes in their organizations and careers. Doug is a master coach and teacher.”

Jordan Goldrich, LCSW, CEAP
Executive and Management Coach, Faculty Advisor, San Diego State University, Certificate Program in Coaching for Organizational Excellence

“This book characterizes through a powerful framework, real life stories and thoughtful metaphors, how managers can rely on the vested interests of others to build and manage great performance with consistent and lasting results. This is a must read for those managers who want to be extraordinary at cultivating intrinsically driven motivation in their employees to perform and with their customers to buy.”

Lisa Vander, M.Ed.
CEO, Pacific Blue Investments
Author of The Real Guide to Making Millions Through Real Estate: Start Your Portfolio with as Little as $3,000

“A-HA! Performance is a map to an extraordinary sustainable corporate life; in fact it is a map to an extraordinary life. The A-HA! Applications (tools) used in conjunction with the basic understanding of human nature and needs, explained herein, are the ‘recipe’ for excellence in human performance! The competition will want to get their hands on this.”

Marilyn M. Weakly
Strategic Sourcing Consultant, M Squared Enterprises, LLC

“Results require execution and action and closing the gap between knowing what needs to be done and getting it done is critical to individual, team and organizational success. Using Intrinsic Motivation Points the A-HA! Performance Edge provides a proven model that empowers managers and their employees to communicate, execute, and deliver results.”

Jon Gordon
Author of Energy Bus: 10 Rules to Fuel Your Life, Work, and Team with Positive Energy

“The single most important factor in building a booked solid business is the keen ability to understand the correlation between a manager’s input and an
employee’s output so that we (and our employees) achieve our desired, ideal results. That secret formula is detailed in the pages of this book.”

Michael Port
Author of Book Yourself Solid

“The book uses realistic examples, graphic illustrations, and focused how-to steps that leave the reader better equipped and more empowered to effectively manage a self-motivating workforce. Every manager and coach should read this! I can’t imagine a better deal at any price, but for the cost of this book . . . it’s a no brainer. Best investment you can make in maximizing your human capital.”

Wendy Evers
Senior Director for Program Development, SDSU

“Understanding and managing that self-motivated workforce was as complex a puzzle as a Rubix Cube . . . until this book.”

Vince Poscente
CEO, Be Invincible Group
Author of The Age of Speed

“Walker’s model is the heart secret of business. This formula transforms resistance into motivation. It easily engages partners and accelerates results.”

Jeanete Biasotti, PhD
CEO, Quantum Leap

“So much stress arises out of frustration to meet one’s deepest needs. By helping identify and bridge the ‘got-want gap,’ A-HA! Performance may well be more than a book on motivation, but also a prescription for good health!”

Daniel Friedland, MD
American Board of Internal Medicine, American Board of Holistic Medicine
President of SuperSmartHealth.com
Author of Evidence-Based Medicine: A Framework for Clinical Practice

“Improved performance, relationships, and conversations are at the root of this highly impactful book. A-HA! Performance’s innovative models will give leaders a laserlike focus on how to close the gap between current and desired behavior. An inspiring read, I recommend it to anyone who wants to move themselves and others to greater focus and action.”

Vicki Halsey, PhD
Author of The Hamster Revolution
Vice President of Applied Learning, Ken Blanchard Companies
“When we at DCM consider investing to build the next great start-up, we look first and foremost at teams and ask, ‘Is there a team of experienced and driven people coming together to achieve the nearly impossible?’ Doug peels back to the kernel the motivating force behind all great entrepreneurs and does so in a way that lets entrepreneurs share this passion throughout their company. By focusing on a few simple techniques like ‘creating vested interests’ and artfully ‘managing the gaps,’ Doug lights the path for one entrepreneur’s passion to spread throughout a team, a team that can break new ground and accomplish the nearly impossible. This will be required reading for the great entrepreneurs we back in the years to come.”

Peter W. Moran
General Partner, DCM

“Being a leader and manager in an arena with no margin for error requires the ability to understand and exploit the maximum in creative thinking, capability, and energy from every employee. A-HA! Performance provides a comprehensive tool to achieve that in the workplace and to create opportunities for better understanding at home. It was a great read and will be a tremendous resource.”

Don Flynn
Vice President of Security Strategies
Former Senior Executive in charge of Presidential Protection with the U.S. Secret Service

“In A-HA! Performance, Douglas Walker captures our essential humanity and shows us how to work and engage with each other in ways that respect and benefit from that essence by honoring the infinitely varied manners in which each of us chooses to express it. Grounded in a sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the psychology of motivation, A-HA! Performance is a step-by-step manual for achieving collective goals while fostering self-determination. I will be recommending this book to any manager whom I coach or advise and who wants to be more effective, and I will be reading and rereading it to learn more about how to improve my own relationships while getting more of what I want at work and at home.”

Bernardo M. Ferdman, PhD
Professor, Marshall Goldsmith School of Management
Alliant International University
A-ha!

PERFORMANCE
For
My Family
and Friends in
Recognition of, and
Appreciation for,
All of the Ways
My Needs Are
Met Through
You

Douglas Walker

For Linda, Skylar, and Nathan
Who Give My Life It’s Deepest Purpose

Stephen Sorkin
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Foreword

When we are personally motivated, we perform better. That truth is not a surprise to any of us. Great sports stories, courageous acts of love, even traumatic self-sacrificing heroism are all borne out of intense personal motivation. Great results require great motivation. Yet, puzzlingly, in a typical business environment, we command employees from an almost mechanical task manager mindset instead of leveraging key insights around managing motivation. The difference in results between the two approaches, managing tasks or managing motivation, is striking.

The *A-HA! Performance* book you have in your hands is a clear and unique look at that internal motivation process, allowing us at last to understand it. *A-HA! Performance* also provides a practical, proven strategy and series of ready-to-implement-today techniques for making the shift from task management to motivation management. Not only does it work for leaders, managers, and organizations as a more effective and healthy managerial approach for orchestrating work effort, it is also a great way to reinvigorate—even reengage—ourselves with our own personal drive for accomplishment, happiness, and well-being.

*A-HA! Performance* does this very simply by highlighting what we already know: when we become aware of the difference between what we are currently experiencing and what we truly want in our lives, the resulting gap creates a zap of energy...what Doug calls the GapZap. That GapZap is the motivational force that energizes us into action toward achieving our desires, dreams, and goals, including team and company goals.

Vague desires and unfocused wants alone will not be sufficient to energize us to make changes in the way we think or behave.
Wisdom through the ages has taught that to be motivated enough to truly achieve greatness while maintaining a healthy equanimity we need to fully clarify what we want in life, actively visualize that it is attainable, and ascertain that the payoff is worth the effort. *A-HA! Performance* is an immensely down-to-earth, practical tool for doing exactly this process.

As a manager of a very large number of software engineers, designers, testers, project managers, and others, once I understood the A-HA! Performance Model and started putting it into practice, both work productivity and employee motivation greatly improved. As I shifted from being a task manager with a factory pipe-line or assembly-line mentality of tasks to be accomplished in a particular order into a manager who, while still needing to get the same tasks done, became an employee motivation manager, my daily experience became more effective and enjoyable for me and I’m sure for my employees as well.

In the A-HA! Performance Model, Intrinsic Motivation Points are revealed that are the keys for making this shift.

This understanding or assumption shift has to happen first in those of us who lead, manage, or supervise others. So often, for a variety of reasons, we simply tell or command—even in a nice way—someone to do a particular task for us. We do that without considering what that person’s motivation might be for doing the task. It is easy to think he should do the task merely because we told or asked him to do it. “I’m the boss, that’s why!” But most of us who have tried that approach or who have held that mindset know that it only gets a marginally satisfactory result and therefore may require us to review and change the work that employee has done, thus causing resource wasting rework, in order to get the final result we need.

If, instead, we understand a few of the other person’s Intrinsic Motivation Points, we can reframe our request in such a way that the work effort is performed as a motivational and motivating exercise. When people feel good about, are engaged in, and energized by their work, they do it better.

The best ideas, the most innovative concepts come from cultures where managers have created vested interest motivation from which innovative ideas and superior performance emerge. Too often
motivation efforts include threats or sticks, the kinds of motivation that result in fear or anger at being coerced into performing some task perceived as meaningless or at least as unnecessary. From this level of motivation, the idea generation is generally one of pain removal and does not necessarily add value to the final result. It merely gets the task done at the lowest acceptable level.

Alternatively, when we create the kind of motivation where innovation and creativity emerge, new concepts and ways of doing work become energy-gaining activities for the individuals and improved innovative processes and products for the organization. That leads to greater delight from and increased business with, customers.

So how do we make this change from task management to motivational management? By using the A-HA! Performance Map, as explained in this book. It will help us quickly become aware (even in our own self-talk) of the eight key Intrinsic Motivation Points that focus us on how to conduct our conversations in ways that achieve emotional commitment to producing high-performance results.

Once this process is fully understood, even those quick, on-the-run conversations can still be short efficient requests for getting work done, but now they will be seen as trusted motivational requests instead of curt demands, ensuring a better result.

Do the people you work with leave work at the end of the day with at least as much energy as they brought into the workplace at the beginning of the day?

So many workplaces literally drain the energy and vitality from their employees. These drained individuals cannot go home and respond energetically to the daily demands of their household. If they repeat this energy-draining process over time, then there is very limited opportunity for them to provide the necessary creativity and innovation that sustains high or even acceptable performance levels at work.

Continue those energy-draining practices longer, and burn-out occurs, turnover happens, or worse, people become disengaged but remain present in your workforce, unable to improve, unable to change, unable to respond to new demands.

This book is not only a call to action, but also, a call for reflection. Knowing your own Intrinsic Motivation Points will help you recognize quickly what is being called for in the day-to-day conversations
you are having with others. This new awareness will guide you to higher performance for yourself while also improving your ability to manage the performance of those around you.

The final result is you will look forward to change and to new challenges in your life, both as a manager and a human being. You will create new and innovative approaches that energize and excite both you and others. The whole A-HA! Performance process ignites new fires of passion, creativity, and commitment. I have found this to be a great book, and hopefully, it will be a great guide for you, too.

Skip Andrews
Chief Information Officer, SharePoint360, LLC
Former Senior Manager, Nokia Mobile Phones Inc.
Acknowledgments

No one synergizes alone, unless maybe... Robin Williams. I am not he. A-HA! Performance, and the quality of its contents, exists because of significant contributions from a number of people, including:

Daniel Walker: my father. You first taught me these ideas by example and the way you and mom raised us... how does a son say thank you for that? And if there is any style to my writing, it’s because I grew up on, and always was moved by... yours. Take a truth: Make it plain so the head understands it, moving so the heart does, and practical so that people want to do the work it takes to understand its application for their lives. Principles that guided your writing... guide mine, too.

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William T. Powers: For pioneering this explanation of human behavior and sharing the genesis of it with a small group of us at Dr. Glasser’s home years ago... thank you. What began as a personal a-ha has become an a-ha to share—A-HA! Performance. Understanding and being able to explain human behavior in these terms has made all the difference in my effectiveness as manager, coach, teacher, and parent.

Steve Sorkin: For years, people who heard the A-HA! Performance Model told me, “You’re sitting on a million-dollar product. The model is great, but your marketing sucks!” Well your
marketing doesn’t. For more than nine years I had been “gonna write that book!” Less than nine months after partnering with you, the book is a reality. For the way you A-HA! manage your intrinsically motivated partner, for your skills in pulling from me a more practical and accessible product, for your unfailing positive attitude and “it’s all good” approach. I am more grateful than I can say. Not only that, but you’re a fellow graduate of Samohi (Santa Monica High School) . . . no wonder the partnership works.

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A-HA! Performance Map of Intrinsic Motivation Points included in this book...thank you.

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Darcy, Chelsea, Courtney, and Todd—my four great kids: The best proving ground for any set of ideas such as these is always the home. Had any of you turned out badly, others would have reason to question this model. The superb ways you live your lives, the tremendous persons you each are, and the contributions you each make to the lives of those around you are perhaps the highest testimonials of all to the efficacy of this approach with people in any environment. No doubt you each are who you are because of a combination of things; your genetics, your own daily choices—and to at least some extent, being raised by parents who tried to practice these principles. Thank you for being so super. I could neither be prouder nor love you more.
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D. W.

I am grateful for being part of something with such deeply beneficial meaning. This book is now available to benefit others because of you special people:

Doug Walker: Working with you and bringing the A-HA Performance Model to market is an intrinsically rewarding experience through helping others live more fully. You are a true master of vested interest motivation and a gift to anyone wanting to better their relationships with self and others—including me! Your inspirational, wise, and humorous style not only provides for a dynamically meaningful partnership but also a timeless book with your personality shining through. It is an honor to work and co-author with you.

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Linda, Skylar, and Nathan, thank you for being who you are—and for empowering me to focus on this important work. I love you.

S. S.
Introduction

It’s not just about results. Everything we do produces results. It’s about achieving better results or maintaining desired results in an ever-changing environment.

Getting other people to do the right thing, in the right time frame, with the right attitude is what makes success so challenging in businesses, as well as in schools and homes around the world. In fact, getting ourselves to do the right thing, in the right time frame, with the right attitude is not as simple as Just DO it.

What every manager, parent, teacher, spouse, advertiser, disgruntled customer, coach, politician, businessperson...actually what all of us want is direct access to, and control over, the behaviors of others. But direct access to other people’s behaviors continues to prove illusive because, without the use of overpowering physical force, it’s impossible. It’s not the way things work. Between our input, “Would you...?” and their output...something that can range from enthusiastic compliance through benign or hostile indifference to violent defiance...is a process, a series of steps, that the brain goes through before deciding and doing; before choosing and implementing a behavior.

Imagine how convenient it would be, not to mention how much less stressful it would be, if we could bypass the process part, if we could turn on desired behaviors and attitudes in others as simply as we turn on a light switch. If we want the light on, we flip the switch and the light comes on. It doesn’t fight us and it doesn’t try to avoid us. It just does what we want it to do. The input (what we do to control the light) is flipping the switch, while the output (the result of our input) is light.
But people are not light switches. People have cares, preferences, and beliefs about the way they think things should be. So when we try to flip their switches—approaching them in some way that constitutes input—they process that input in the context of their cares. These internal cares or preferences—what I refer to as Intrinsic Motivation Points (IMPs)—ultimately determine what the individual decides to do; what their output is going to be. Unlike light switches, employees have options and unique preferences as to how they’re going to perform. And their decisions are more about satisfying their IMPs than about complying with a manager’s request.

Because the approach (input) of the manager is so important in eliciting superior performance (output) from employees, not to mention maximizing strong retention, learning what the Intrinsic Motivation Points are that determine employee behaviors and attitudes is critical. Managers who know what these Intrinsic Motivation Points are, and how to utilize them as they manage their employees, have an edge, the *A-HA! Performance Manager’s Edge*.

In addition to revealing these IMPs, *A-HA! Performance* will also show how the IMPs are optimized or leveraged for managing others in ways that produce desired results in sustainable ways.

Simply put, there is a process that goes on in the brain between input and output (Input > Process > Output). Understanding this human performance process will give us more of the results we want because our employees want to give them to us. We will also get the results we want from ourselves on a more consistent basis, with less effort. Using the insights and applications of *A-HA! Performance*, we will be building and managing a self-motivated workforce. (Quick confession here: This book’s subtitle is a little bit of a trick title because, as the book explains, human beings are already self-motivated. We can’t build a self-motivated workforce, we already have one. This book is really about understanding and managing that self-motivated workforce.)

The foundational tool is the A-HA! Performance Model (a foundational framework for understanding why people behave) that is graphically illustrated in the A-HA! Performance Map (showing the sequence of events inside the mind that explain the intrinsic
motivation process). The map reveals the eight IMPs that make up this sequence of events. We can think of the map as a template we can use to focus our conversations in ways that get vested interest performance rather than balking or pushing back.

When we understand this model, we can focus quickly on the best place to start a conversation that will get buy-in to productive changes with the least amount of resistance. When our employees are producing less than stellar results or we want our top performers to develop to new levels—we can use this model to determine where the missing link is in the performance sequence, and quickly leverage that into a productive performance turnaround, or enhancement. This book teaches us how to understand and manage a self-motivated workforce in ways that money cannot buy and threats cannot force.

I learned the basics of A-HA! Performance and the Intrinsic Motivation Points it reveals while serving as a senior faculty member at the William Glasser Institute. While I had seen their power at work in the lives of psychology professionals who I taught around the world, my challenge was to take these great and practical ideas designed for counselors, therapists, corrections officers, and teachers, and present them in ways that business professionals would want to learn and utilize. A-HA! Performance: Building and Managing a Self-Motivated Workforce and The A-HA! Performance Map of Intrinsic Motivation Points are the result of that work.

What goes on between a manager’s input and an employee’s output? What are those Intrinsic Motivation Points and how do we consistently get employees (and others) to want to do what we want them to do? That knowledge is what this book is about and what gives managers the A-HA! Performance Edge.
A-HA! Performance™
Map of Intrinsic Motivation Points

Between Input and Output
1

Receptionist Goes Nuts . . . and Goes