

"The Right Tools For The Job – Part II of III"

By: Obi Abuchi

"Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity."
- Seneca, 1st Century Roman Philosopher

In the first series of this article I referred to a recent DIY experience I had that went completely wrong. I was trying to make do with an old drill and incomplete set of drill bits. I had an outcome, what I wanted to achieve, but I didn't choose the right resource and equipment to ensure success.

I also referred to the book "Beyond Entrepreneurship", where the Authors James (Jim) Collins and William (Bill) Lazier point out that there are five basic conditions under which people tend to execute well, one of them being - **"People execute well if they have the right skills (tools) for the job."**

The first of three tools we looked at was **"talent"** a.k.a. your natural ability.

Some of the most successful people alive will tell you that whatever vocation you choose in life or whatever role you are in, you will be most successful, indeed most fulfilled, if it is built around your greatest natural abilities i.e. your talents. This is because by focusing on your talents, you are more effective at your tasks and roles. This truth has been confirmed by almost every one of the Business Leaders, Senior Executives and Senior Managers that I've interviewed recently as part of a research project being carried out by Motivatem.

Hopefully, you spent a few minutes, if not longer, identifying your natural abilities so you can build on them.

Anyway, it's time to tell you about the second tool for the job. The second tool is **"skill."**

Now, before you say "Is that it?" let me ask you a question.

Have you ever looked at someone perform a task or activity and thought to yourself, "They make it look so easy. There's no way on earth I could do that."? I'm sure you have. But there's always more than meets the eye.

There's a habit that even the most talented of people have mastered in order to achieve success and discover their sphere of excellence – it's the habit of learning new skills, the right skills, and **honing those skills in line with their talents**. As I mentioned in the first article, just because you have a natural aptitude for something doesn't mean you have arrived. Your sweetspot still needs developing, and that takes skill.

In the simplest sense, a skill is the ability to perform the steps of an activity. The great thing about skills is that unlike talents, they can be learned! So once you've acquired the skills necessary for a given activity, you have the ability to perform its basic steps. For example, interpersonal skills, organisational skills, programming skills, management skills, presentation skills, writing skills, public speaking skills, etcetera, etcetera.

But that's only the beginning.

It's well known that Michael Jordan, probably the world's greatest basketball player, was the first on the practice court and the last to leave. He spent many hours honing his shooting skills. Despite his incredible sporting talent, his skills needed honing.

Let's look at another sporting legend, Tiger Woods. Despite being the world's greatest golfer by a wide margin, he still spends hours practicing his craft to stay at the top.

What about our very own David Beckham? There are many stories of David Beckham spending hours and hours practising his free kicks.

I could go on, but I think you get the picture. Of course, this doesn't just apply to sportsmen. Learning new skills and honing them applies to you in whatever field you're in.

What skills do you need to develop in order to "raise your game" and improve your current performance in your career or vocation?





American Businessman, Speaker, and Philanthropist Nido Qubein said, "Confidence comes from competence." Honing your skills enables you to develop competence, and that is what will give you the confidence to effectively and successfully carry out a given task, activity or project.

How do they make it look so easy? They practice and hone the right skills to deliver exceptional performance.

By the way, you might hear people say that this person or that person is lucky to be successful or to have achieved excellence in their field.

If you really want to create your own luck then cultivate the habit of learning new skills and honing the *right* skills. For most people, "Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity."

Practice. Prepare. Take courses. Take professional exams. Read and apply what you learn. Learn from the best in your field. Learn from your mentors. And when that opportunity comes, guess what? You'll reap incredible rewards!

Now, that's real luck. As golfer Gary Player once famously said, "The more I practice the luckier I get."

Next month we'll look at the third and final tool for the job. See you then!

Remember, there's a habit that even the most talented of people have mastered in order to achieve success and discover their sphere of excellence – it's the habit of learning new skills, the right skills, and honing those skills in line with their talents.

To Your True Potential!

Obi

*This article includes excerpts taken from the Motivatem Booklet "8 Steps to Discover Your Sphere of Excellence".

Obi Abuchi is the Founding Director of Motivatem and is passionate about helping young professionals and young people develop personally and professionally. Equipped with an exceptionally strong understanding of the aspirations of, and challenges faced by young professionals, Motivatem provides development strategies, and coaching and training interventions to organisations in order to raise the level of motivation, engagement, fulfilment and performance of young talent. You can find out more about Motivatem's services and resources at www.motivatem.co.uk.

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