



## ***Creating an Operator Excellence Vision***

### **Background**

In his video The Power of Vision, Joel Baker makes the following comment:

***Vision without Action ..... is merely a Dream***

***Action without Vision ..... just passes the Time***

***Vision with Action ..... can change the World***

The most successful sites progressing their Continuous Improvement journey have developed and clearly articulated a number of Visions to complement their Company / Site Vision:

1. **Improvement Vision** – what do we want to achieve from our improvement journey and when do we want to achieve this?
2. **Operator Excellence Vision** – what do we want our operators to be able to do or what standard of operator do we need and by when to achieve our Improvement Vision?
3. **Operations Vision** – how do we want to operate our plant and when do we want to achieve this?
4. **Maintenance Excellence Vision** – what do we want our maintenance department to become and by when?

### **Creating an Operator Excellence Vision**

***What do we want our operators to be able to do, or what standard of operator do we need and by when to achieve our Improvement Vision?***

When researching this concept we came across some Managers and Supervisors who described the way their operators operated their plants was by ***Magic, Art or Science***.

Using this analogy, we have attempted to understand what is meant by these terms. Our findings were:

#### **Magic**

We employ operators, train them on how all the buttons and knobs work using Standard Operating Procedures and Checklists, and provide examples (standards) of expected performance. Often the performance is average and quite variable.

## Art

After many years of experience (provided we don't move them all over the place) our operators develop the understanding of relationships between problem and required action (when this happens, if I do this, I should solve the problem). Performance improves with less variability.

## Science

Through regular weekly improvement activities our operators learn how to care for their equipment and most importantly how it functions (as opposed to just operate) so they can diagnose problems at the earliest possible time to root cause. In parallel through Root Cause Analysis or Frontline Problem Solving they develop a greater understanding of the process they are responsible for, so again they can identify problems at the earliest possible time when they are easy to fix. Performance continuously improves with little variation.

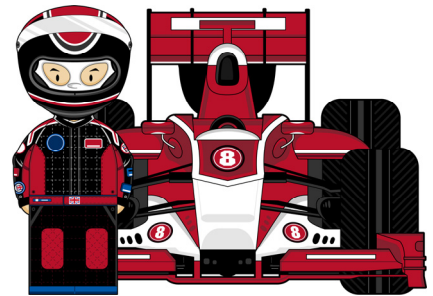
## Key Learning from this Analogy

When introducing the concept of Scientist to Operators we were often rebutted by the comment "I would have gone to school longer if I wanted to be a scientist". In other words, don't try to make up Scientists.

Hence we realised we needed a better analogy that defines what Operator Excellence is.

The best analogy we have found so far is a Formula 1 driver. They understand the functioning of their equipment (as well as being excellent operators) and diagnose problems on the run relying on a highly skilled and motivated support crew to create a winning team.

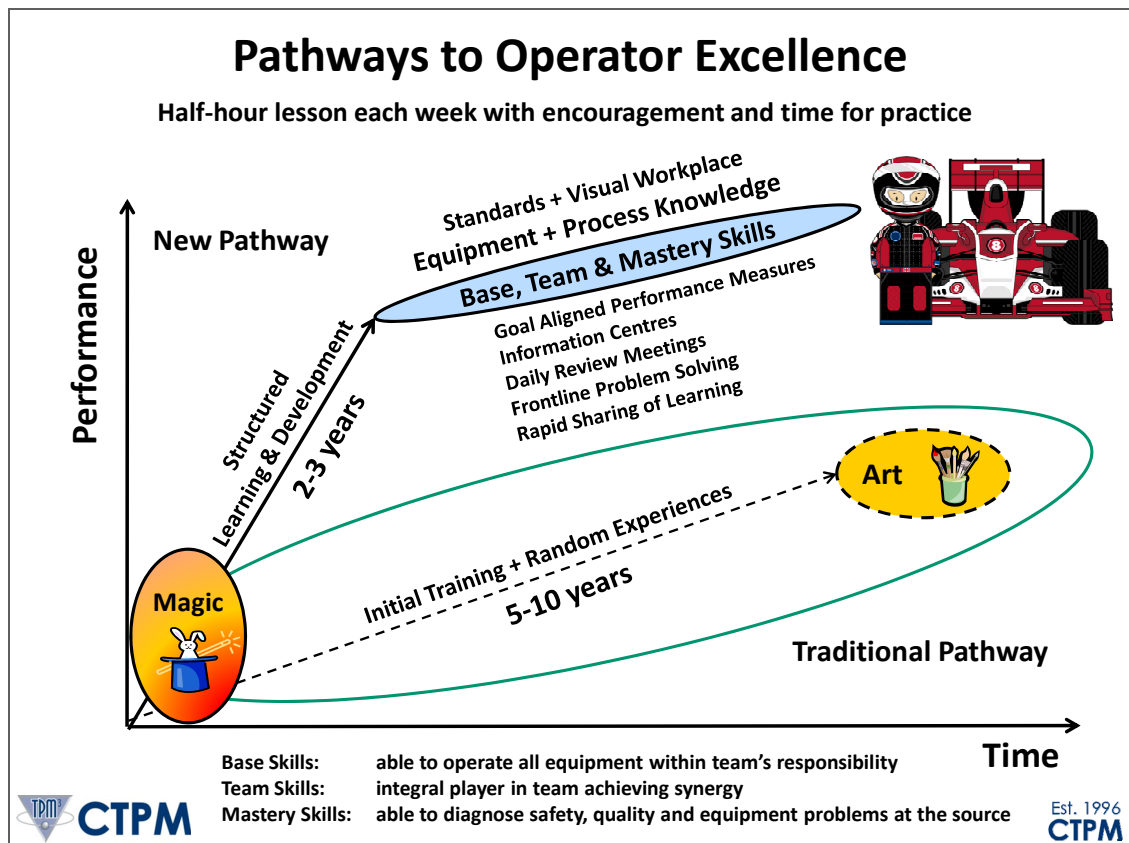
There is a great short video created by BBC Sport on the driver's role in a Formula 1 Pit Stop, if you would like a copy of the video please contact CTPM Head Office.



The video highlights the importance of communication between the driver (Operator) and the pit crew (Maintenance). It also highlights how the driver is able to diagnose problems with his car (machine) on the run and advise the pit crew (maintenance) to allow them to get ready for a speedy repair. There is also good examples of how (even with all their technology) they rely on the use of Visual Controls to assist the Pit Stop process.

One of our mining clients has embraced this pit stop concept with the refuelling of their dump trucks in the mine pit. During the refuelling, the time is also used to carry out a checklist of visual inspections and cleaning of the truck (especially underneath areas prone to rock damage) looking for equipment defects. The driver, instead of staying inside the cabin, also gets involved with their 'pit stop' crew. The impact of this activity has been very impressive with significant cost saving reported due to finding defects before they became big problems.

Below is a slide we have created which shows the traditional pathway for the development of Operators along with the new pathway we have developed which many of our clients are now following.



The New Pathway involves an Operator being a member of an Area Based Team that has developed very good Base Skills through the work of a Micro Education & Training Base Skills Team, as well as progressing through the structured learning and development process of Work Area Management and Operator Equipment Management Steps 1-7. Typically this takes some 3 years, with learning achieved by undertaking practical weekly activities. Incorporated into these Area Based Team activities would be Team Skills development through a series of 2 hour training modules covering:

1. Team Effectiveness
2. Effective Area Based Team Meetings
3. Presentation Skills
4. Decision Making & Problem Solving
5. Dealing with Difficult People
6. Conflict Resolution
7. Negotiation Techniques
8. Appreciation of Individual Strengths & Weaknesses
9. Giving & Receiving Feedback
10. Planning & Prioritising

This New Pathway is also complemented by the site developing an effective Daily Review Process implemented on a site, department and defined area level, with all areas supported by a strong Root Cause Analysis or Frontline Problem Solving capability.

## Example Site Operator Excellence Vision

***Within 5 years, by using a structured development process, all current Operators will be:***

- Competent within their Area Based Team's Area of Responsibility in their required:
  - Base Skills: able to operate all equipment to Level 3 competency utilising standardised work practices;
  - Mastery Skills: able to diagnose safety, quality and equipment problems at the source at the earliest possible time through excellent equipment and process knowledge; and
  - Team Skills: being an integral player in their team achieving synergy.
- Capable of maintaining agreed standards for their work area and equipment conditions based on a visual workplace.
- Effective at Reactive Improvement through Frontline Problem Solving.

***So as to be able to:***

1. Monitor daily performance and instigate corrective actions for any losses or wastes;
2. Realise and maintain optimal Work Area and Equipment (Workplace) conditions by setting, recording and monitoring the rules, standards & procedures and records;
3. Analyse above records to prioritise action to further improve workplace performance; and
4. Conduct regular (daily) self-assessments of team member behaviours to promote Zero Breakdowns, Zero Process or Output Quality Problems and Zero Accidents or Incidents.

***For more information about CTPM's learning regarding the need for an Operator Excellence Vision please do not hesitate to contact your CTPM Navigator or CTPM Head Office on +61 2 4226 6184 or email to [ctpm@ctpm.org.au](mailto:ctpm@ctpm.org.au).***