

**Paul Rulkens**

# **THE POWER OF PREEMINENCE**

**High performance principles  
to accelerate your business  
and career**

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2<sup>nd</sup> revised edition

Vakmedianet

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1

# The razor's edge

**Would anyone care if your business disappeared overnight? Would anyone care if you left your company today? Would anyone care if you said goodbye to your profession right now?**



## Chapter 1

In this case, I'm not talking about the wailing and gnashing of teeth by your employees, family and close friends. I am referring to your clients (will they panic?), your competition (will they dance in the streets?) or your raving fans (will they despair?) If the answer is "no, they will probably not notice I am gone," you might not be Preeminent yet. Preeminence means that you and your business stand out like a tall giraffe surrounded by tiny field mice.

### **Achieving Preeminence**

In order to attain the highest pinnacle of success, you must reach the status of Preeminence. Examples of companies who have achieved Preeminence are Ferrari, Apple, McKinsey, etc. Needless to say, Preeminence is a great position to be in.

You know when you have achieved Preeminence when:

- People specifically ask for you and your business: "Get me..."
- Prospects come to you with minimal marketing. For example, you won't see many Rolls Royce advertisements, because of the brand's Preeminence. It virtually sells itself.
- The conversation is about how to use you, your product or service, not whether to use you, your product or service.
- Price is never an issue. Your availability and the availability of your product or services is the only concern.
- You are seen as a benchmark by your competition.
- You command premium pricing.
- Your ideas are copied and imitated.
- You are a thought leader in your field.

For many of us, this sounds like a lot of work -- time consuming and frankly out of reach. What if there is a proven way to achieve

Preeminence fast? The key is the fascinating concept of the “razor’s edge.”

### **The secret of the razor’s edge**

Even in a depressed economy, the top 10 percent of businesses and professionals in virtually all industries is becoming more successful than ever. The remaining 90 percent is either floating, treading water, or even drowning. More millionaires are being made in difficult economic times than in good economic times. And many of the most successful companies were started in a bad economy.

### **Why are some people or businesses wildly successful?**

Some decades ago, while studying race horse performance, a group of scientists stumbled upon a fascinating discovery: in the long run, the number 1 race horse earned up to ten times more in prize money than the number 2 race horse. However, the number one race horse was less than 3 percent faster than number two. They called this strange phenomenon the razor’s edge, a small, yet consistent advantage, which can result in a massive, exponential positive effect on performance and success.

What we know now is that the razor’s edge is not limited to horse racing, but is equally valid for modern businesses and professionals.

Here is a little truth: wildly successful people do not know much more than you do. They also do not necessarily work longer hours than you do. They only do a few things slightly different, with a few small advantages in certain key areas, which are systematically, consistently and relentlessly leveraged. They have a razor’s edge that carves a significant chasm between a business that prospers beyond imagination and a business that struggles to survive.

**They called this strange phenomenon the razor's edge, a small, yet consistent advantage, which can result in a massive, exponential positive effect on performance and success.**

Take for instance David Beckham, the soccer player. At the time of this writing, David Beckham earns an estimated 100 times more than the average professional soccer player. And yet, he does not score 100 times more goals. Come to think of it: a few years ago he retired from soccer all together and still earns 100 times more. This is an example of the razor's edge in action.

Yet, the razor's edge is not limited to the famous and well connected. It is everywhere. In my home town there is the bakery. Actually there are many bakeries, all vying for clients. Some survive, but many eventually go out of business. Bread, cakes, pastries: they are all commodities. But there is only one bakery. Tourists, as well as people from all over town patiently wait in a long line to get in this little shop, located behind a standard store front at an unre-

markable corner in an anonymous part of town. The only distinction is the long line which invariably starts in the middle of the street. This bakery has the razor's edge. Its revenue is undoubtedly multiple times higher than that of its nearest competitor.

This book is all about how you can get the razor's edge in the easiest, fastest and most elegant way possible. Achieving your own razor's edge is the key to succeed beyond your wildest imagination. But first you must learn the premier secret to launch the razor's edge: future pacing.

### **Future pacing**

A couple of years ago I saw an interesting commercial on television. This commercial was about instant soup. Frankly, there was nothing remarkable about the soup. However, in this commercial, a young manager, type A personality, had the annoying habit of loudly trying to energize and cheerlead his entire team non-stop the entire day. Exhausted after a full day of running around, he would sit down and drink his instant soup. Remarkably, after 10 minutes, his energy level was completely restored and, to the agony of his people, he'd start all over again. The interesting thing about this commercial was the young manager's catch phrase: "success is a choice."

This is a fascinating revelation. However, if success is a choice, there must be something like a master key to access it. This key can be found by taking a closer look at the human brain.

The brain is probably the most complicated thing in the universe. In the past two decades we have gained more knowledge of the workings of the brain than in the centuries before. Yet, despite this progress, we have barely scratched the surface of real brain understanding. Brain scientists have therefore developed models to describe what little we know of the brain. One model reveals

that we have a conscious and a subconscious brain. And here, the quest for the razor's edge becomes interesting.

### **Conscious versus subconscious brain**

Your conscious brain is the little voice that is constantly talking inside your head. Its main function is goal-seeking. For instance, if you ask it to find the color red in a crowded room, it has no problem locating multiple sources of red. In order to do so, it will filter out everything irrelevant to achieving its goals. Thus, if you are focused on the color red, you will not see the color blue, even when looking directly at it. Likewise, we often cannot find the misplaced car keys right in front of us, because we convinced ourselves we must have placed them somewhere else. In other words: we see what we believe instead of seeing what is actually there.

While your conscious brain is always at the forefront of your thoughts, your subconscious brain is a different animal, working 24 hours a day in the background. For instance, think about a time you saw a picture of a famous person in the newspaper and you could not remember her name. Then three days later, you are about to step into your car, and all of a sudden the name pops up in your conscious brain. This is your subconscious brain in action.

While your conscious brain thinks in language (the little voice inside your head), the subconscious brain thinks in pictures and feelings. A picture reveals more than a thousand words. And this is also true for the brain. The conscious brain is fast; in many ways it is still faster than a modern computer. The subconscious brain, however, is estimated to be more than 10,000 times faster.

You have a supercomputer inside your head. This is your subconscious brain. The problem, however, is that you do not always have access to this magnificent resource. Think about this: where do you usually have good ideas? Probably your answer is some-

thing like: in the shower, in bed, when I am working out, etc. If you think about it, the better question is: where do you usually not have good ideas? For many of us the answer is: “five minutes before I have a meeting with my most important client and I need to have a good idea.”

If you could access and fully use the subconscious part of your brain, you would be able to dramatically accelerate your success in business and in life. How can you do that?

### **Accessing the subconscious brain**

To answer this question, you need to travel back in time. Some 40 years ago, brain scientists asked themselves a question: how is it possible that parents of a newborn baby can sleep uninterrupted the entire night, even with the neighbors' dog barking loudly? Yet, at the moment the baby stirs and makes a soft noise, the parents wake up immediately.

The brain scientists concluded that the brain is equipped with a kind of radar, which constantly scans the world around you. The moment something important pops up on your radar, a signal goes to your conscious brain acting like a wake-up call to start to pay attention. This system works, even if you are deeply asleep.

The source of this radar is a little organ inside our brain. It is the size of an adult pinky and it is called the Reticular Activating System (RAS). The RAS acts like the gateway between the conscious and subconscious parts of the brain.

To simplify things, imagine this: the RAS is brimming with software and software code lines can be activated or de-activated. For instance, if you become a proud parent, the software line “baby cries are now important” is activated. Subsequently, you start to become aware of baby cries in your environment.

**If you want to achieve  
success in the easiest  
and fastest way possible,  
visualize yourself already  
having achieved wild  
success.**

**Imagine wild success**

Now consider this: if it were possible to write your own RAS software, you would suddenly gain access to the subconscious part of your brain, this magnificent supercomputer. The good news is that brain scientists have found a way to do exactly that. What they tell us is that if you want to achieve success in the easiest and fastest way possible, visualize yourself already having achieved wild success. Picture yourself already in possession of your goal and suddenly you will see yourself moving rapidly toward where you want to be. This process of imagining wild success is called “future pacing.”

Why does this work? Your subconscious brain can’t distinguish between a picture in your head and a picture of reality. That’s why you get scared when you watch a horror movie. Since the two pictures between actual state and future wild success state do not

match, it creates dissonance in your brain. Your brain starts to work to solve the dissonance between the two pictures. It starts to program the software of the RAS to become aware of people, ideas and circumstances that can help you achieve goals and alerts you to leverage these resources for your success.

Many recognize this phenomenon already. For example, at the moment you decide to purchase something you have always wanted (like a car, a handbag, a watch, etc.), you start to notice this item everywhere. Interestingly enough, the world did not change. What has changed is the way you interact with the world.

Here is the practical application to get the razor's edge and achieve Preeminence in business or your professional field: you will not know how to do it until you see yourself doing it. In other words, imagine wild success! Build a picture in your mind of you achieving your goal first. And then, by constant reinforcement, you will start to notice people, ideas and circumstances that will help you reach that goal.

### **The Columbus principle**

Success author Brian Tracy once observed the following: when Columbus set sail to explore the New World he did not know where he was going. Once he arrived in the Americas, he did not know where he was and when he returned to Spain, he did not know where he had been.

The story of Columbus is a fitting metaphor for the way many people, teams and organizations drift through life. They have vague ideas of where they want to go. They are confused about where they are. And they are clueless about what happened to them in the past.

Thus, the essential ingredient for high performance is clarity. This is called the Columbus principle.



Clarity starts by asking: “what would I dare to do with my company, my team, or my life if I knew I could not fail?” The answer to this question is your major definite purpose: the overriding objective of all your activities. This is the place where great achievements start. For instance, if you had been working in NASA in the 60’s, your major definite purpose would have been to send a man to the moon and bring him back safely. You can have only one major definite purpose. Everything else is just support.

Once you have found your major definite purpose, the next question is: “what does wild success look like?” This question will trigger you to visualize a precise picture of your major definite purpose. The more precise the picture of what success looks, feels, smells, sounds and tastes like, the easier it becomes to decide which activities to focus on to achieve it.

The future pacing technique is extremely powerful to obtain clarity and engage your subconscious mind to help you get everything you can out of everything you have.

### **The 10-goal exercise**

Another powerful technique to avoid the Columbus dilemma, achieve clarity and become an unstoppable goal achiever is the 10-goal exercise. This exercise is an elegant way to program your brain to become aware of people, ideas and circumstances to achieve your goals in the quickest and easiest way possible.

#### **Act!**

*This is how the 10-goal exercise works:*

- Take a note-pad and write down your top 10 goals.
- Start with “I.”
- Use the present tense, as if you have already achieved the goals.
- Use positive wording (not “I quit procrastinating,” but “I am a lean action machine.”)

- End with a deadline (for example “per December 2017.”)
- Repeat this exercise every morning and evening, without referring to your previous goal list.

In the first few weeks your goals and wording will change every time you do this exercise. After approximately 30 days you will notice, however, that you are writing down the same goals with the same words over and over again. You now have identified the top goals that you feel most passionate about. This triggers the RAS, your pinky in the brain, to become aware of people, ideas and circumstances to help you to achieve your goals.

This powerful exercise will take less than 10 minutes per day. After about 30 days, you will notice miraculous progress on your most important goals. As a result, you will move rapidly toward becoming Preeminent in your business or professional field.

# About the author

How do the best get better? Paul Rulkens knows that 'doing more' is no longer the default answer to 'too much to do.' He is an expert in high performance: the art and science of accelerating bold executive outcomes with the least amount of effort. He is an award-winning professional speaker, author and a trusted boardroom advisor who has helped thousands of business owners, professionals and executives get everything they can out of everything they have. His ideas to improve results and accelerate careers are often described as thought-provoking and counter-intuitive, yet highly effective.



You do not have to be sick in order to get better. As an international keynote speaker, Paul annually addresses dozens of successful international audiences about essential mindsets and proven strategies to reap exponential improvements. His most popular topics cover the secrets of consistent execution, easy innovation, powerful leadership, growth focus and seamless teamwork.

Originally trained as a chemical engineer, Paul's work is based on deep knowledge and extensive experience in the practical business applications of behavioral psychology, neuroscience and, especially, common sense. His popular TED talks are used frequently in professional training sessions all over the world.

## About the author

His clients call his keynotes both substantive and hilarious. The reason may be that Paul once was trained as a standup comedian, receiving critical acclaim for his Arnold Schwarzenegger impersonation. However, the miserable failure of his ensuing 'pumping iron' muscle development project prevented him from pursuing his true calling in life: a career as a credible Arnold Schwarzenegger body double ...

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If you want to accelerate your business and career and stand out like a tall giraffe surrounded by tiny field mice, now is the time to get serious and get going. In this book, high performance expert Paul Rulkens offers the best ideas, insights and techniques to get everything you can out of everything you have – from business growth to maximizing your own performance.



**In The Power of Preeminence you will learn the critical skills and inside secrets to:**

- Focus on the few things necessary for business success
  - Dramatically grow your business and career
  - Achieve twice the results in half of the time
  - Strategically quit your way to achieve big goals
  - Communicate anything to anyone
  - Quickly and cheaply innovate and outsmart your competition
  - Rapidly build essential high-performance habits
  - Become part of the top 10 percent in your professional field
- 



**Paul Rulkens** has drawn from his extensive experience in developing high-performance organizations and individuals to create a guide packed with proven and practical ideas. You do not have to be ill in order to become better. Whether you are a business leader, company owner or ambitious professional, *The Power of Preeminence* has what you need to significantly raise the bar, set a new standard and rapidly take you and your organization to the next level of business and career success.