

Why do we keep score? Isn't it just enough to enjoy the experience of the activity and not worry about keeping a tally of the score? In a word – No. Whether watching college sports, playing a round of golf, or enjoying your favorite board game, we are conditioned to keep score. Picture sixty thousand fans packed into a sports stadium and no scoreboard. It is unthinkable. As Vince Lombardi famously quoted “if winning isn't everything then why do they keep score?”

As a former coach, I knew that when the drills and practices I designed for my students involved keeping score that their intensity level would significantly increase. In business, we have the obvious scorekeeping of profit and losses. Some businesses have also adopted key performance indicators (KPIs) or other metrics to measure the health of the organization. In the early 1990's, Drs. Robert Kaplan and David Norton popularized the concept of keeping score with their “Balanced Scorecard” approach to business.

Keltman Pharmaceuticals, a Mississippi based wholesaler/repackager of pharmaceuticals, has utilized the concept of keeping score with great success. Founded in 2003 by Wyatt Waltman and Kevin Kellum, this company has grown to be licensed in 21 states and distributes packaged pharmaceuticals to hundreds of physician and medical clinic customers. The company recently received the distinction of earning Verified Accredited Wholesale Distributor status by the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy which is the highest level of accreditation in its industry. Wyatt Waltman, CEO of Keltman, attributes a great deal of his company's success to the talented team they have assembled and their use of the scoreboard concept.

Keltman has a war room in its office where the management has a large scoreboard that reflects the company's progress towards its defined goals. Each team member has at least one KPI on the scoreboard that is updated daily. According to Waltman, “our scoreboard has helped focus our team around our goals and helped us to be mutually accountable to one another.” According to Waltman, the challenge is making sure that they are measuring the right things. “We spend a good bit of time making sure we have the right metrics both for our company and the individual contributors on the team.” Waltman noted.

For companies and individuals, one of the real values in keeping score is the feedback loop that it helps foster. In today's hyper-competitive marketplace and challenging company, businesses need the very best from their employees. We grow up playing sports under the tutelage of coaches and engaging in competition where we always keep score. We also spend years learning from teachers who grade us every step of the way. However, once we are out in the business world the feedback loop all but disappears. Besides the perfunctory annual review, most people get out of the habit of receiving any quality feedback on their work.

If we want the most out of our team, we need to engage in what Dr. Anders Ericsson, a leading scholar on performance, calls “deliberate practice”. Ericsson's idea of deliberate practice essentially is that we should practice purposefully and in a

constant feedback loop to make sure we are improving incrementally. Geoff Colvin in his book *Talent is Overrated*, helps explode the myth that people are just born talented, and he expands on Ericsson's concept of deliberate practice to practically show us that we can all improve our "game".

For companies seeking to raise their performance, a big step can be setting up their own scoreboard for their business. The process should be fun as team members collaborate to define what is truly important. It is often an eye opener when employees who would never associate a metric with their job start to see how important their individual role is to the success of the company. Utilizing high performance concepts such as a business scoreboard, Mississippi companies like Keltman will continue to make their mark on the world of business.