Reprogramming Mind for Business Success

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Abstract

In the context of business, an opportunity for guaranteed success is to reprogram our mind, diffuse disputes, zap away limiting habits and beliefs and step into more positive feelings.

Firstly, the paper attempts to demonstrate that it is absolutely necessary for our actions to have a purpose in order to bring about self-development and a relationship of rapport.

Secondly, the article helps us to effectively consider the powerful role of finding alternatives and responses to people and situations in today's workplace. The use of neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) tools and techniques allows us to enrich our personal map in the pursuit of business excellence.

The results of the research show that generating new and empowering thinking styles are able to support us in achieving positive outcomes.

Key words: debugging, driving forces, flexibility, NLP, reprogramming
J.E.L. classification: Z00

1. Introduction

Learning in what ways society is capable of change is a big challenge in today's workplaces. Businesses are constantly exploring a world of opportunities to show us what works and what doesn't as well as how to perform at peak levels of energy, focus and effectiveness. They either stand or fall, not because of the quality of their systems and processes, but because of the wisdom, inspiration or talent of their people. Companies are aware of the need for leadership in order to achieve future success. This way, NLP can help us shape a culture of learning, improvement and success. It is a comprehensive set of models and tools for learning and change in response to complex issues confronting the business environment. Searching for ways of getting the best out of people, leaders and managers often resort to various proven NLP techniques that can make a difference between running a team of unmotivated subordinates and turning negative minds into *driving forces for change*.

For the aspiring executive and not only, NLP can bring personal development, since it describes the workings of the mind, how verbal and non-verbal language is used to express our thoughts. This study helps us realize our potential as a useful "asset" in the world of business, on the one hand, and become an excellent influencer ready to take charge of our career, on the other.

2. Theoretical background

Reprogramming the mind for success means removing past failure-related experiences and making some changes to get different results. That is why, finding alternatives and responses to people and situations can make all the difference between continually seeking new choices and being trapped in what NLP holds as a core premise, namely:

If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got.

Thus, trying new things and discovering the *drivers of our thinking and behaviour* by observing how our unconscious mind is working becomes, in my opinion, the cornerstone of NLP. Moreover, what matters most is our ability to start the changing process with ourselves and then with the

people around us. Training our mind for success can be achieved as long as we avoid being stuck in previous limitations. Further on, dreams become goals we can reach.

The beliefs we hold about ourselves or others can either limit who we can be or what we can accomplish. Similarly, the beliefs we have can provide a window of opportunity for us where others see no possibility. Based on these beliefs and our perception of the world, all our actions have a purpose. We do not choose them at random; on the contrary, we have a positive intent in everything we do, even if this intent may or may not be always clear or meaningful according to another person's perspective. We always try to achieve something, although we may not be consciously aware of what it is or how it can benefit us. That is why, the more choices and strategies we have to achieve an outcome, the greater our sense of achievement.

Consequently, by understanding that people filter information differently, have different beliefs, make different value judgements or decisions, we realize that not only do they have different maps of the world, but they also react in various manners to specific events.

The role of NLP is to help us work on ourselves and bring about self-development and change in order to eventually understand the other person and establish a relationship of rapport. All this insightful analysis conducted by NLP experts today (O'Connor, 2001; Ellerton, 2006; Cooper, 2008) stresses that self-direction, self-development, or self-awareness, which can be thought of as features of high achievers, are not possible without metacognitive and affective skills. Metacognitive strategies enable business people to control their cognition through setting and attaining goals, forecasting and planning, self-monitoring, or self-evaluating. Affective skills assist business people with controlling emotions and regulating motivations through making positive statements, understanding one's body (language), sharing feelings, or self - talk. O'Connor (2001, pp. 6-7) explains what NLP can do to bring about self-development and change proposing a five-stage model, which shows our route from working on ourselves, through practice, to becoming the person we really aspire to be so that we can effectively influence others. As he states, NLP is not about "fixing other people and neglecting yourself. Put your own mask on *first*! When you approach change and self-development, you need to be congruent, determined to succeed and believe in what you are doing. [...] do not sabotage yourself. *Secondly*, you need to establish rapport, in other words work within a relationship of trust and mutual influence. *Thirdly*, you need to establish what you want to achieve in that change. *Then* you can apply one of the many patterns, techniques or combinations of patterns that NLP has developed for change and learning. *Lastly*, you 'future pace', that is you mentally rehearse the new change and learning" (2001, pp.6-7). He also stresses that, among the basic pillars of NLP, *flexibility* is a key to accomplish an outcome and lead to good results: "NLP encourages choice governed by purpose in a relationship of rapport and awareness" (2001, p.4). Ellerton (2006, pp.5,7) further explains that, as a communication model and frame of mind based on exploration and curiosity, "NLP is a process of discovering the patterns of excellence of experts, and it makes these effective ways of thinking and communicating available for others to use for their own benefit or to assist others". In line with O'Connor (2001), Ellerton also mentions that one of the biggest benefits of NLP is "becoming aware of the patterns, habits, strategies and programs that you have been running unconsciously and then using NLP techniques to change them in order to achieve the outcomes you desire" (Ellerton, 2006, p.7). Cooper (2008, pp.14-18) further clarifies that the idea of increasing our flexibility to get good results, as well as acquiring self-awareness and techniques to achieve aspirations and goals provides us with the opportunity of becoming excellent influencers and thus, overcoming barriers to success in the workplace. From the point of view of accomplishing more by using NLP in business, Cooper openly advocates for embracing NLP tools and techniques in the essential aspects of business life: communicating, leading, and achieving the best results (Cooper, 2008, p.15).

3. Reprogramming mind in order to achieve business success

The terms which are most frequently used in eliciting a strategy are "programming" and "reprogramming"/ "debugging" by means of NLP methods and techniques (Dilts and DeLozier, 2000; Molden and Hutchinson, 2006; Cooper, 2008).

The former refers to the NLP perspective that there is a close relationship between mental processes and computer software programs since, historically, the notion of *programming* in NLP derives from artificial intelligence and information theory. According to Dilts and DeLozier (2000), "Much of the NLP approach to the mind is based on viewing the brain as functioning similar to a computer in some ways. The NLP notion of a cognitive 'strategy' is derived from thinking about mental processes as if they were like software programs in a computer" (Dilts and DeLozier, 2000, p.1013).

The latter consists in giving up ineffective strategies, i.e. strategies that do not work to our advantage and prevent us from achieving positive results. It makes us aware of the possibility to offer ourselves choices which bring us closer to the things we want to accomplish. To put it differently, *reprogramming* ('debugging') works best when we step down limiting/unproductive beliefs and, instead, upgrade and redesign strategies and cognitive processes that function appropriately and ecologically. In Dilts and DeLozier's opinion, "NLP methods allow us to *reprogram* or *debug* those strategies which have become obsolete or ineffective in our lives [...]. Many people have tried to 're-program' themselves by visualizing themselves being successful. For all the people who naturally use this as a strategy, it will work fine" (Dilts and DeLozier, 2000, pp.1014, 1059).

The purpose of NLP is to find out "the programming language" of the brain, by helping us "listen" to our internal language when we visualize our most successful previous experiences. Thus, in the journey of achievement (Nădrag, Gălbează Buzarna-Tihenea, 2018, pp.164-186), it is more positive, insightful and less constraining if our internal language is in the past tense, for example, how we *composed* ourselves before a key moment in our life or career, what we *did* compared to what we *have to do*.

The best-known discussion of programming and reprogramming in NLP stems from the works of Dilts (1994), Dilts and DeLozier (2000) and Molden and Hutchinson (2006) who draw an analogy between human programs / strategies and computer programs. As Dilts and DeLozier (2000) remark, although our powerful personal "computer", i.e. the *brain*, does not come with a user's manual, our role, as "software wizards", is to encode other people's software by applying their structure (inner programming) to our own experiences: "The cognitive strategies identified by NLP are the *mental software* used by the *bio-computer* of the brain. The problem with it is that sometimes the software *isn't very user-friendly*. The goal of NLP is to discover the *programming language* of the brain so that we can help get ours and others' brains to do what we want them to do more elegantly and effectively " (my emphases) (Dilts and DeLozier, 2000, p.1014). Similarly, Cooper (2008) argues that reprogramming our mind is really user-friendly, or "in your hands" and proposes to "think of your brain as a bespoke computer, programmed to run you" (Cooper, 2008, p. 10). He adds that by detecting unconsciously held patterns and habits, our mental software can *delete* old programs and *install* and *upgrade* new thinking ones: "After you start paying attention and observing how your mind is working, you have the choice to delete, upgrade or install whichever bit of 'thinking software' you desire" (2008, p.10).

In accordance with the two approaches considered above, a similar argument is put forward by Molden and Hutchinson (2006) who provide a diagram on how programs are formed. As they explain, "through generalizing, deleting and distorting information you create a state, which drives your behaviour" (2006, p.83).

4. Research methods and material

In my analysis, I considered that a worth mentioning approach related to the business environment is Cooper's remark on targeting our language and adapting our discourse when communicating with our partners so that we closely match their map of the world and build rapport. Hence, I have pointed out that it is really surprising how far we can reach with subtle shifts in our language and attitude. I have also concentrated on analyzing debugging programs that hold us back in the business environment when communicating with ourselves, and with others.

The data illustrate that, at work, we often use programs or strategies which function more powerfully for accomplishing certain types of activities than others. We apply certain programs and set well-formed outcomes for just about everything we do: selling products, negotiating contracts,

running projects, delegating tasks, agreeing budgets, setting targets, or making organizational changes.

5. Findings

The findings of the present paper are related to the idea that external events and experiences are most likely to generate *feelings* which, in turn, are automatically *anchored to thoughts* by our unconscious mind. As a result, the aspect of inner programming is based upon the fact that our own understanding of reality (*personal map*) is made through a combination of *external stimuli* and *inner thoughts*, and it is this captured version that we use to make decisions and form judgements. In NLP this is called a 'strategy' for achieving an outcome, "The key is in the knowing the beginning and end of each strategy, so that you can change it" (Molden and Hutchinson, 2006, p.85).

6. Conclusions

In summary, reprogramming our mind involves the process of uprooting ourselves from limiting beliefs until they fade out and generating new, empowering thinking styles able to support us in achieving positive outcomes. As mentioned previously, creating strong values and solid beliefs helps us get what we want when they are stated in the positive and become self-fulfilling. Throughout our life and professional career we are constantly refining them until they empower us to put our knowledge and drive into a goal.

Resourceful attitudes/states of mind are the means to achieve the outcome. By staying committed to the outcome, every problem can be changed into an objective, the scope of NLP going beyond business-specific skills.

Therefore, the advantage of using appropriate "mind control" techniques seems suitable for overcoming barriers and resistance in communication or handling a conflicting situation at work in the best way. Stepping into a colourful and bright mental imagery helps us break an obsolete habit or programme, create an alternative choice and use this to good effect.

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