

Active Performance Excellence

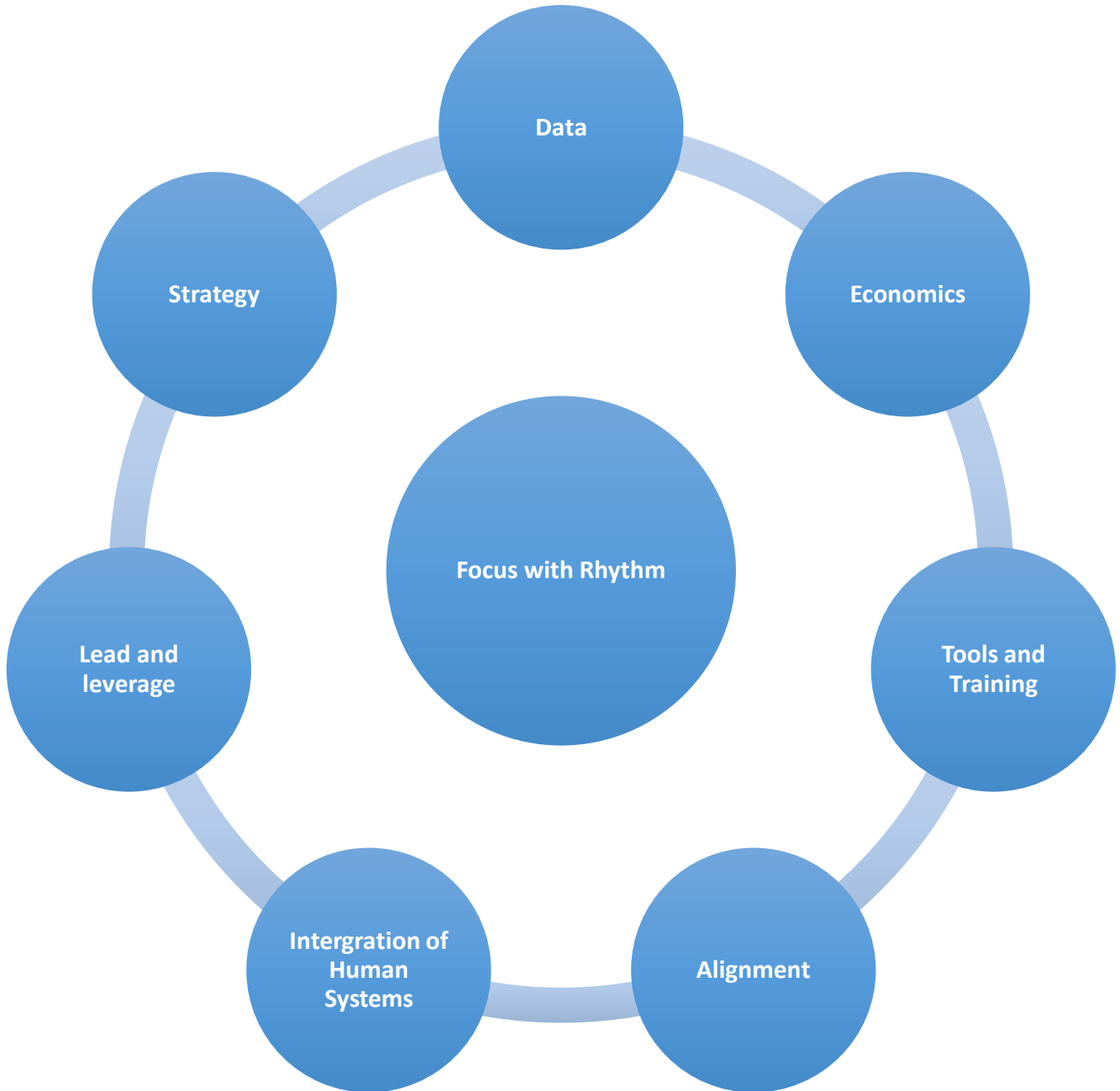
# APEX Playbook



**ASPEN SUMMIT GROUP**  
Advisory | Consulting | Coaching

## Included

- The DETAILS Outline
- Sample – One Page Strategic Plan
- Business Rhythm Check List
- APEX Assessment
- Jump Start Organization Assessment
- Delegate, Education, Perform (DEP) Plan
- Personal Energy (PE) Plan



## APEX Check List

1 of 4

## Strategy Principles:

- Utilize a One-Page Strategy document
  - Don't overthink your strategy—take action!
  - Keep it real on your climb—don't try to reach your WAG in one year
  - Include the people in your decisions and strategy sessions
- Cascade strategic initiatives throughout the organization
  - Everyone should know their role in the company's objectives
  - Everyone should know their team's role in the company
  - Everyone should know who to contact for questions or specifics
- Make the plan stick by establishing...
  - Everyone can articulate the company's big rocks
  - Everyone understands the brand's promises
  - Everyone understands the 90-second pitch

## Focus Principles:

- Focus the sun's power for maximum results and leverage
  - Create a sense of urgency
  - Involve the whole team
  - Focus your lens on the most important item to accomplish
- Use a Daily Top-3 to help prioritize schedules and focus
  - Don't prioritize your schedule, only schedule priorities
  - Say "NO" to non-priorities (or at least, "not now")
  - Encourage other leaders in your company to do the same
- Get into the details of accountability to maximize results
  - Understand how to track daily points of accountability
  - Focus on specific actionable and measurable tasks
  - Gather failures as well as successes to understand results

## Data Principles:

- Use scorecards/dashboards/KPIs for all teams
  - Publicly post results
  - Update data charts/results daily
  - Avoid confusion and distraction of the team with "solution of the month"
- KPIs need to include predictive data point, not just reactive data points
  - Use charts and graphs to analyze data whenever possible
  - Analyze monthly, quarterly, and annual trends
  - Predictive metrics should include behavior-based activities
- Use the "Rule of 3" to drill into your data
  - When exploring the data, ask "why" at least 3 times
  - When you have an answer, ask "why" again
  - When you have this answer, ask "why" again

## APEX Check List

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## Economics Principles:

- Have a cash reserve of at least six (6) months. Twelve (12) is best.

- Know and Understand your cash flow levers. Such as the following:
  - Price
  - Volume
  - Expenses
  - Indirect/direct and overhead expenses
  - Collection pace or accounts receivable
  - Cost of inventory
- Know and understand what other items impact cash flow? Such as the following:
  - Upfront collections
  - Invoicing at the beginning of the month vs. the end of the month
  - Having subscription-based sales and evergreen contracts
  - Looking at the frequency of your transactions, increasing your transaction size.
  - Also looking for add-on sales or your expansion opportunities.
- Create a Profit & Loss accountability matrix
  - Creates multiple views of responsibility
  - Creates multiple points of accountability
  - Creates multiple points of focus
- Create a Culture of predictable, steady improvement
  - Don't overcommit
  - Focus on steady growth
  - Easier to reach the summit when stopping to camp at basecamps along the way

**Tools & Training Principles:**

- Train all colleagues on how the business works
  - All colleagues understand how the company's finances work (how it makes money, what affects profit, what money is spent on, etc.)
  - All colleagues understand how to make better decision balancing the 3 Cs (company, customers, colleagues)
  - All colleagues understand how all departments fit together and affect each other.
- Create a culture of learning
  - Develop a learning center of excellence
  - Inspire colleagues to teach others
  - Create a reward system
- Focus on efficient tools
  - There should be one source of truth
  - Get the efficient process right before choosing a tool
  - There's no need to spend dollars on the latest "hot" products

**APEX Check List**

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**Alignment Principles:**

- A healthy and aligned executive team is necessary. Failure to do so is death.
  - Team acts and is invented as one team and is rowing in the same direction
  - Focus on health (no silos, no politics, no personal agendas)
  - Build strong teams per 5 dysfunctions
- Align the 3 Cs: Customer, Colleagues, and Company
  - Balanced them over time
  - Apply a flexible approach
  - Never waiver and explains decision publicly

- Full organization driving to the big Rocks
  - Communicated via multiple channels and on a predictable business rhythm
  - Share information with transparency
  - Use a clear, direct communication style

**Integration of the Human Systems Principles:**

- Ensure incentive programs are aligned
  - Align programs for the individual, team, management, and department
  - Accept nothing less than exceeding the customers' expectations
  - Hiring, promotions, and terminations are based on behavior and skill-based criteria
- Provide an outstanding customer experience
  - Service matters. It is your trump card for success
  - Make a good 1st impression. You may never get a second chance
  - Exceed the customers' expectations ALWAYS
- Personal energy plans (PEPs)
  - Every person has a daily number (KPI)
  - Reviews should be simple, specific, and skill/behavior-based
  - Reviews happen in real time or every three (3) months

**Lead & Leverage Principles:**

- Leaders lead by example
  - Manage by walking around
  - Engage on a personal level
  - Only ask people to do what you have done or will do
- Leaders remove roadblocks, eliminate problems, and reduce friction.
  - Use the start/stop exercises (feedback as to what can be added or eliminated)
  - Help colleagues provide outstanding service to others
  - Help employees contribute faster
- Leaders use the D.E.P. Chart
  - Delegate what is not in your wheelhouse
  - Educate others on what you are an expert at
  - Perform those things you love and are great at

**APEX Check List**

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**Rhythm of Business Principles:**

- Tie everything together with rhythm
  - Rhythm creates habits of best practices.
  - Rhythm creates muscle memory that enforces efficiency
  - Practice like a business athlete to take advantage of the spacing effect.
- Utilize the following meeting rhythm
  - Daily Huddles
  - Weekly tactical
  - Monthly strategic thinking
  - Quarterly business reviews
  - Annual strategic planning sessions
- Use these meeting best practices
  - Start with good news
  - Confirm actions and accountability before the meeting's end

- Confirm cascading messages before the meeting's end

**Sample 1-Page Plan**

Core Values	Purpose – Why	Key KPIs	5-10 year WAG
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•

<b>Sandbox – services / Products</b>	
<b>Target Customers</b>	
<b>How we go to Market</b>	
<b>What are we the best in the world at</b>	
<b>Geographic area – if applies</b>	

Current year plan:		3-year plan	
<b>End Date:</b>		<b>End Date:</b>	
<b>Revenue:</b>		<b>Revenue:</b>	
<b>Profit:</b>		<b>Profit:</b>	
<b>Gross Margin:</b>		<b>Gross Margin:</b>	
<b>Cash:</b>		<b>Cash:</b>	
<b>AR Days:</b>		<b>A/R Days:</b>	
<b>Employees:</b>		<b>Employees:</b>	
<b>Other:</b>		<b>Other:</b>	
Key goals / Thrust / Initiatives		Key goals / Thrust / Initiatives	
1.		1.	
2.		2.	
3.		3.	
4.		4.	
5.		5.	

Q1 Rocks	Q2 Rocks	Q3 Rocks	Q4 Rock
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.		3.

Employee	Customers	Innovate
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.

Strengths	Weakness
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•



## Meeting Rhythm Check List

### Daily Huddle

**15 minutes**

- Good news sharing
- Top 3 actions for today
- KPI status
- Stucks preventing action

### Weekly Updates

**1 hour**

- Good news sharing
- Review of KPI
- Status of report (Red, Yellow, Green) corporate rocks
- Review of client issues / needs
- Review of Employee issues / needs
- Round table discussion of issues critical for achieving corporate rocks
- Cascading messages with commitment from everyone
- Wrap up – close out statements

### Monthly Strategic

**1-2 hours**

- Good news sharing
- Financial review (first meeting post month end close)
- Deep active discussion around key company issues and/or decision that need to be made
- Deep active discussion around strategic items that drive the company
- Cascading messages with commitment from everyone
- Wrap up – close out statements

### Quarterly Business Reviews

**2-4 hours**

- Good news sharing
- Review of prior quarter rocks
- Detailed financial review
- Active discussion and brainstorming around key strategic business items
- Set rocks for upcoming quarter (3-5 and commit to #1)
- Cascading messages with commitment from everyone
- Wrap up – close out statements

### Annual Strategic

**2 days**

- Annually the company leadership needs to take time to reflect on the prior year and discuss long term objectives.
- Set and confirm yearly targets and metrics.
- Review customer and colleague issues and engagement initiatives.
- Confirm budgetary items and actions.
- The meeting should be held off-site from the company offices to allow the team time to focus on the meeting discussion and planning.
- A social business dinner is also recommended the night prior to the first day and between days.

**APEX Assessment**

1 of 3

Answer each question and add up your total.

5 points	Big Yes, always AND everyone
4 points	Yes, sometimes OR some people.
2 points	Don't know or unsure
1 point	No, sometimes OR some people
0 points	Big No, always any other answer

**Strategy Assessment**

- Can your company’s annual strategic plan fit onto one page (front and back)?
- Does your company’s strategic plan include a clear statement of what your company does and what gives it a strategic advantage over your competition (i.e., a strong value proposition)?
- Has the strategic plan been clearly communicated to ALL colleagues, multiple times, and through multiple methods?
- All colleagues can accurately state the vision, strategy, and goals in the strategic plan?
- Does your company’s strategic plan include the top three prioritized “rocks,” or initiatives and goals for the company broken up by quarter?

**Focus Assessment**

- Do you write down the three most important tasks for the day, and are you focusing on them until they’re finished?
- Do you have a clear #1 priority daily?
- Are colleagues providing clear, actionable, and measurable accountability updates?
- Are you leveraging the power of the sun in that all colleagues have a sense of urgency and involvement as to what is important every day?
- Are you tracking and publicly reporting daily focused scorecards?

**Data Assessment**

- Does every person in the company have a KPI?
- Are scorecards visible and used daily?
- Is data being used in everyday decisions and for process improvement?
- Are you tracking predictive metrics?
- Are you drilling into the data and asking “Why” three (3) times on a routine basis?

**APEX Assessment**

2 of 3

**Economics Assessment**

- Do you have 6-12 months of cash on hand?
- Do you know your company’s cash flow levers?

- Do you know your return on capital spent?
- Is your team aligned around steady improvement, or are they focusing on hockey stick forecasts?
- Do you have P&L accountability with all line items in the P&L assigned to an accountable business owner?

**Tools & Training Assessment**

- Are your colleagues knowledgeable on how/why the business operates?
- Do you optimize your best-practice methods before purchasing new tools?
- Are colleagues educated on behavioral and technical skills?
- Is there a culture of ongoing learning that exists within the company?
- Have you created a single source of truth for key metrics?

**Alignment Assessment**

- Does your executive team have trust and transparency?
- Is everyone comfortable engaging in productive conflict on critical issues?
- Do all colleagues know the aligning message for the quarter/year?
- Are all colleagues aligned and driving to the #1 priority for the quarter?
- Are the 3 Cs balanced when making decisions?

**Integration Assessment**

- Does every colleague have a PEP (personal energy) plan?
- Is healthy behavior integrated into the review process?
- Is colleagues' feedback (reviews) provided throughout the year in real-time and NOT provided once a year?
- Are the incentive programs aligned across teams and at all levels?
- Is healthy behavior part of the hiring, promotion, and termination process?

**Lead & Leverage Assessment**

- Is leadership's time appropriate for the D.E.P. (Delegate, Educate, Perform) chart?
- Are leaders eliminating roadblocks, not creating hurdles?
- Are you using the start/stop exercises to gather feedback from your team members?
- Are you spending a good portion of your leadership time outside of your office and invested in meaningful dialogue with colleagues?
- Is leadership leading by example in all areas of culture and performance?

**Rhythm Assessment**

- Are daily huddle meetings used by all teams within the company?
- Are meetings concluded with a confirmed agreement on actions, assignments, and cascading messages?
- Are you allocating time for the leadership team to have strategic discussions and planning?
- Are you conducting a leadership QBR to reinforce accountability and focus?
- Are you conducting an annual two-day off-site strategic planning session?

**Add your point for each section.**

Section	Your total score for section	
Strategy		<p><b>Over 20 points in a section:</b> Congratulations! You are ready to move on to the advanced concepts of the APEX method.</p> <p><b>Under 20 points in a section:</b> You will see a significant improvement in productivity and achievement when you implement APEX methods.</p>
Focus		
Data		
Economics		
Tools & Training		
Alignment		
Integration		
Lead & Leverage		
Rhythm		

Jump Start Organization Assessment

Answer each question and add up your total.

5 points	Yes, always AND everyone"
4 points	Yes, sometimes OR some people.
0 points	any other answer

1. Team members have trust and are fully transparent.
2. Team members engage in productive and open conflict on issues.
3. Meeting end with confirmed specific and active agreement on decisions.
4. Team hold each other accountable.
5. Members are focused on team #1.
6. Members agree and are passionate about vision & strategy.
7. Team has clear & embraced behavior values.
8. Team has clear goal to rally around.
9. Members are comfortable asking questions about each other's work.
10. Vision and strategy are regular reviewed by team.
11. The team has clearly communicated the vision and strategy to ALL employees.
12. Team members routinely flow down behavior to departments.
13. Team has agreement and cascades messages quickly.
14. Employees can accurately state vision, strategy and goals.
15. Organization values, vision, strategy, behavior is reinforced with human systems.
16. Organization is simple and consistent with goal setting and progress reviews.
17. Separate meetings are held for tactical and strategic discussions.
18. Meetings are focused and result in active open dialogue.
19. Meetings allow enough time for debate, resolution & certification.
20. Team meets quarterly on strategic review and realignment.

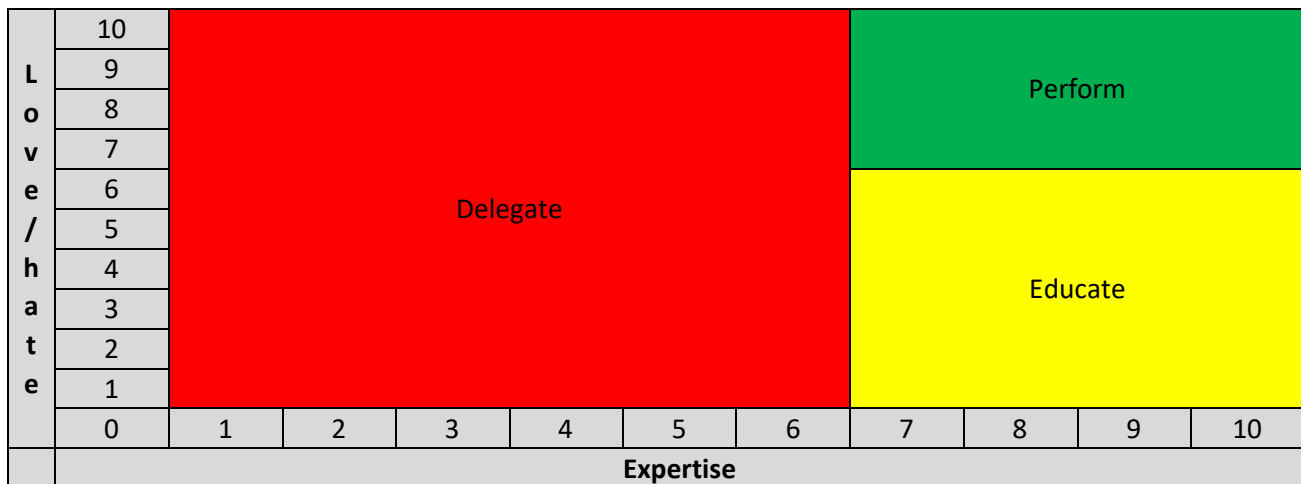
90 points	Aligned and optimized organization.
80 points	Close to fully optimized
79 or less	Sub optimized.

**Perform, Educate, Delegate – DEP Chart**

List your activities.

Rate reach 0-10 on your level of expertise and your level of Love/Hate of performing he activity.

	Activities	Expertise	Love or hate
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			



**Personal Energy Plan**

Name	Manager

Daily #'s	Weekly #'s	Monthly #'s
<b>Customer</b>		
<b>Colleagues</b>		
<b>Company</b>		

Growth Plan	
<b>Personal</b>	
<b>Education</b>	
<b>Technical</b>	<b>Behavioral</b>
<b>Other</b>	

## The **APEX** Process

Month 0	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10	Month 11	Month 12
Phase 0												
	Jump Start											
		Monthly Coaching & Advising	Monthly Coaching & Advising	Monthly Coaching & Advising	Monthly Coaching & Advising	Monthly Coaching & Advising	Monthly Coaching & Advising	Monthly Coaching & Advising	Monthly Coaching & Advising	Monthly Coaching & Advising	Monthly Coaching & Advising	Monthly Coaching & Advising
			Quarterly Align			Quarterly Align			Quarterly Align			
												Annual Planning 2 day Offsite
	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support

### Phase 0

- One on one with the CEO
- Review opportunities to capture
- Review dangers to avoid
- Review Strengths to maximize
- Describe the vivid description of the future.
- Executive team take the APEX assessment.
- Schedule Jump start.

### Quarterly Alignment

- Four (4) hours with the full executive team
- Review economics
- Review KPI's
- Review progress on rocks
- Active discussion on issues/challenges
- Set next quarter rocks and a clear #1

### Jump Start

- Four (4) hours with the full executive team
- Review the APEX process
- Review APEX assessment
- Define the Theme
- Define the rocks and the clear #1
- Schedule meeting rhythm

### Annual Planning

- Two (2) day offsite planning meeting
- Team dinner during offsite
- Review past years economics
- Review past year performance vs rocks, metrics, goals.
- Vision alignment
- Set next year's rocks and a clear #1

### Monthly Coaching & Advising

- Two (2) hours per month with the executive team
- Immersive participation in APEX process
- Implementation of the APEX system (Data, Economics, Tools and Training, Align, Integrate Systems, Lead and Leverage, strategy)

### Always-on Support

- Phone and text support
- Research
- Assess to leading industry material
- Extra: Specific topic workshops
- Extra: QBR facilitation
- Extra: Project based work