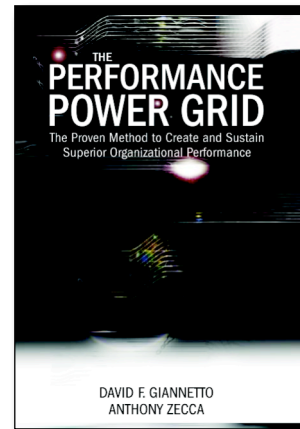


**For Immediate Release**

For an interview with David Giannetto or a review copy of the book, please contact Dottie DeHart, Rocks-DeHart Public Relations, at (828) 459-9637 or DSDeHart@aol.com

**Freeing Them to Focus: Nine Ways the Performance Power Grid Helps All Employees Boost the Bottom Line**

*Are your managers and employees so busy fighting fires that they can't focus on your strategic goals? David Giannetto and Anthony Zecca's new performance model can organize your company so that everyone's actions truly count . . . every hour of every day.*

**Hoboken, NJ** (September 2006)—Your company's financials are in, and they are dismal *again* this quarter. You're not sure why. It's tempting to think your employees just don't care about the bottom line, but since they all have mortgages to pay, kids to feed, and retirement plans to fund, you know that can't be true. Surely, every member of the team wants your company to succeed. So what's the problem? Why the Grand Canyon-size gap between strategy and results? According to David Giannetto and Anthony Zecca, your employees' lackluster performance isn't about lack of initiative—it's about lack of *focus*.

"Your employees want to contribute to the bottom line, but no one in the higher levels of management is telling them what, *specifically*, they need to do to achieve that," says Giannetto, co-author (along with Zecca) of the new book *The Performance Power Grid: The Proven Method to Create and Sustain Superior Organizational Performance* (Wiley, 2006, ISBN: 0-4700514-4-2, \$27.95). "They can't meet organizational goals because they are too busy fighting fires that arise during the workday. Their focus changes daily. Employees need a clear, practical way to understand *exactly* what they should be doing . . . every hour of every day."

What companies really need—and what this new book describes—is a methodology that creates long-term, sustainable, superior organizational performance by closing the gap between

strategy and execution, properly focusing employee action, and giving them the information they need to make better, timelier decisions. The Performance Power Grid transforms individual, tactical employee actions into a unified effort in which everything everyone does is focused on driving the performance of the entire organization.

Struggling companies usually have two key problems in common, say Giannetto and Zecca. Their leaders aren't developing their *power drivers*, those critical actions that drive success, which are key elements in the Power Grid. Nor do they have a clear method to connect an individual's work with company objectives. These omissions force every manager to constantly assess and re-assess their purpose and priorities. Their days are filled with clutter and noise, constantly distracting them from focusing on improvements that would actually lead them out of this hazy confusion.

The Performance Power Grid changes this inefficient and frustrating dynamic. It gives each executive, manager, and knowledge worker throughout the organization the information they need to make better, timelier decisions. As a byproduct of this model, traditional barriers to organizational change are overcome and overall performance improves. An enabling technology makes these changes stick, so that organizations don't revert to their old habits over time.

Here are nine ways the Performance Power Grid can improve your company:

**It helps you determine strategic objectives.** Strategic objectives differ from company to company and it doesn't matter how you determine them—it's just vital that you *do*. The Performance Power Grid helps companies focus on the most important overall objective, which is to improve performance, grow revenue, increase profit, and enhance customer value. "Don't worry about developing the perfect strategy," says Zecca. "The best strategy is simply starting toward achieving superior performance. Companies need strategic objectives, but dwelling on what the right objectives are should not paralyze them. What matters is action. Over time the Power Grid will show the organization if the objectives themselves are right or wrong."

**It identifies what drives your company.** Breaking out of the pack, achieving strategic objectives, refocusing employees, and overcoming the inherent resistance to change within your organization all require an understanding of what truly drives the success of your organization—your *power drivers*. Once you have determined the strategic objectives, the next step is to determine the power drivers for each by answering a simple question: *What must the organization do right in order to achieve this objective?* The answers to these questions are your power drivers. They convert a strategic objective, something that lacks substance and is purely theoretical, into something that can be achieved. "A company cannot grow revenue at twice the industry average or increase profitability by 5 percent per year," says Zecca. "Executives,

managers, and employees may wish for these things, but they cannot *do* them. They can only take those actions that they believe will result in the achievement of these objectives. It is a cause and effect, action/result relationship. Therefore, it is on these actions, their power drivers, that they must focus their effort.”

**It ensures success by overcoming employee resistance to change.** When your employees learn that a new way of doing things could disrupt their world at work, says Giannetto, naturally there will be some resistance. That is why the Performance Power Grid takes a softer approach and sets aside traditional change management theories while providing a structure to prevent the organization from getting lost during the process. The Grid increases productivity without causing conflict or fighting human nature. Instead, it addresses and spurs change with a less aggressive approach. “The Power Grid allows change to happen naturally, behind the scenes, without personal confrontation,” write Giannetto and Zecca. “When management clearly states what is important to the organization—what units and employees are clearly responsible for—it is much more difficult to fight the system. The clarity of purpose and responsibility reduces confrontation, confusion, and conflict.”

**It focuses your company on customer value.** Customer value is a complicated issue. But as one of the three key elements to a company’s success (the other two being revenue and profit), it is vital that everyone in the organization knows the importance of valuing the customer. You, your managers, and your employees may often ask yourselves the following questions: *Why does a customer buy from one company over another? What makes one product more appealing than another? What advantages does better service give one company over another?* The answers to these questions are where customers find value in a company. They must translate into revenue and eventually profit. The Grid helps companies weed out objectives that do not drive customer value. *The Performance Power Grid* includes many of the success stories that have made it market-proven, including:

*We implemented the Performance Power Grid at one of the largest pension fund organizations in the world. The company had already established objectives and metrics and was comfortable with them. We accepted these objectives and set in motion a process to develop and implement the Power Grid around those objectives. Our first act was to determine the power drivers for each objective and then the metrics to measure them. Next, we implemented the technology that brought the Grid to life. When the fund managers began operating within the Power Grid, they discovered that a key customer value objective was simply wrong. So wrong, in fact, that it had nothing to do with helping them support their customers. They further discovered that this erroneous objective had been consuming a disproportionate amount of management time. The reason we accepted the pension fund’s stated objectives was because, at its core, the Power Grid is an evolutionary process. If the fund’s objectives were wrong, the Grid would reveal it. In the end, that is exactly what happened—with little fanfare and no externally imposed change, they realized their own problem. With us as counselors, they were able to find, quickly and easily, a solution to their problem and re-focus their efforts so that they could improve on customer value.*

**It creates job clarity.** You may assume your employees know exactly what their job requires them to focus upon, but in their day-to-day work lives that focus may get a little fuzzy. One important element of the Power Grid, the *performance portal*, helps employees focus properly. The portal is what brings the Power Grid to life and allows it to succeed where other approaches

fall short. Within the portal are those things that management has deemed important to each employee, translated into specific actions or processes. “All the confusion of boardroom talk, mission and vision statements, and company newsletters has been set aside, and in its place are ten to fifteen metrics for each employee,” says Giannetto. “To the managers’ and employees’ delight, these metrics tell them not only what they are responsible for, but what their performance is—and *why* it is what it is—in a way that actually makes their jobs easier.”

**It allows CEOs and managers to limit their focus to critical company issues.** Many managers feel like they spend every day rushing from one task to the next. No wonder they lose sight of what drives the success of the company. When that focus is lost, a supervisor’s day degenerates into fire fighting. The Power Grid helps CEOs and executives begin to actually devote their time and talent to the company’s strategic objectives, customer relations, and management development. “The freedom to focus energy in those critical areas has as much to do with creating an outstanding organization as anything else,” says Zecca. “Managers become more effective because they are riveted to the things that matter.”

**It provides continuous, need-to-know feedback that helps employees make the right decisions.** Constant and timely feedback is a necessary part of success, yet it is absent in most companies. Missing are the key tools that tell whether or not a unit, department, division, or even the entire organization is moving toward its objectives. Most managers lack even the most basic measures that are needed to tell them if their organizations are accomplishing their missions. Once an organization has its objectives and has identified its power drivers and each unit’s ability to affect them, it needs a metric to measure that relationship. The Performance Power Grid provides that.

In the end, metrics and the associated actionable information that explains their “why,” are the only pieces of the performance puzzle that will have substance. They will appear on the dashboard of the performance portal for each manager or unit that needs to know what they are and who can then influence them. There is no need for anyone within the organization to see a metric over which he has no control. It would serve only as a distraction, a potential fire that draws a person’s attention from those key actions that the organization needs him to focus upon in order to succeed. These are actions that he *can* influence. “The Power Grid is designed so that employees know where to focus their attention,” says Giannetto. “It always seeks to minimize distraction, and, therefore, gain the most concentrated focus by all employees. It is a basic approach that should influence every aspect of the Grid.”

**It draws employees out of silos.** A major roadblock to any company’s success is its employees’ tendency to get stuck in their own silos. Their unwillingness to leave those silos prevents them from being able to do everything in their power to drive the company forward. In other business models, employees can be drawn out of silos by “momentary unifying factors,” usually when some kind of deadline looms. Unfortunately, the employees usually go back to their silos when the problem has been resolved, and no permanent team-building is accomplished.

The Performance Power Grid recognizes that most people choose to work within their own silo. The Grid doesn’t fight this tendency. Instead, it works with it. Power drivers that involve multiple units create a common understanding of shared goals and teach interdependency. “Over

the course of time, the Grid naturally draws people out of their silos or cubicles as they realize that they *personally* can be more successful with the assistance of those around them,” explains Giannetto. “Each person begins to focus on the same problem from her own perspective, but all are each working toward a common goal that is in the best interest of the organization. Isn’t this the very definition of the teamwork every organization seeks? Employees leave their silos because it is in their best interest. This is how the Power Grid sidesteps the traditional obstacles to change that are present in every person and every organization.”

**It keeps employees on their toes, even when the company is doing well.** When companies are meeting and exceeding their goals, employees have a tendency to celebrate and relax. A more effective response is to understand why sales are so great and ask, *Is there something taking place we can take advantage of to drive sales even higher? Or, Is there something that we have to do to make sure we meet this increased demand and still provide superior service?* “That’s another great aspect of the Performance Power Grid,” says Zecca. “It’s designed so that even when you are doing well there is always an objective that your employees know they need to focus on. They are constantly prodded to drive the company to greater success.”

You’re probably thinking, *These improvements sound great, but how can I ensure that the Performance Power Grid will be successful at my company?* Giannetto and Zecca’s answer: First, determine your strategic objectives and power drivers. Then launch the Power Grid as a pilot program in a carefully chosen location, division, or department. Starting slow and using a pilot program to test the waters and figure out the kinks in your objectives is the most likely way to succeed, according to the authors.

Once the pilot model is launched, managers and employees will quickly understand and experience the value it adds to them, even if they don’t necessarily see the value to the organization as a whole. Accountability and fear retreat to the background. People begin to truly communicate. Everyone gets focused on the Grid, how it makes their lives easier, and what it is doing for them. At this point, evolution takes hold and a company-wide buzz begins.

“What was chaos and confusion suddenly becomes clear,” says Zecca. “The fog of business is lifted. Instead of repeating the same actions, managers now adjust their performance to fit what is actually happening. Instead of dwelling on the past, they see the future. They can now do something about bad trends. Personalities, office politics, and the ability to smooth talk or evade responsibility are all diminished. The truly effective managers emerge.”

“We have seen the transformation in other companies,” adds Giannetto. “We witness it every day in our own. We have created the Performance Power Grid and then tested it in diverse environments, refining it along the way. We have seen that the methodology applies everywhere, regardless of industry, the current status of the company, or the challenges a company is facing. Take the necessary steps and the Grid will jolt your company back to life, re-energizing your employees and improving your profits.”

###

### **About the Authors:**

**David F. Giannetto** is the director of Cohn Consulting Group’s Enterprise Performance Management Practice, and has been with J.H. Cohn LLP since 1999. He is responsible for helping client organizations improve operation efficiency, management effectiveness, customer satisfaction, and systems integration through the implementation of the latest performance management methodologies. Prior to this, he was an operations manager and quality auditor for Airborne Express Freight Corporation (currently DHL) at locations throughout northern New Jersey and New York City.

David, a former U.S. logistics officer who served with the 10th Mountain Division, is a Distinguished Military Graduate of Rutgers University and earned a business management degree from Monmouth University. He is following in the footsteps of his father, Vincent Giannetto III, one of the nation’s most collectable and respected decoy carvers, and has won awards as both a decoy carver and wildlife photographer. Originally taught piano by his aunt at age ten, he is a lifelong musician whose work has been published by two private record labels. Born and raised in Edgewater Park, New Jersey, he currently resides in Basking Ridge, New Jersey.

**Anthony Zecca** is the partner-in-charge of Cohn Consulting Group, a division of J.H. Cohn LLP, one of the country’s largest accounting and consulting firms.

Tony is an expert in driving corporate performance, developing business intelligence systems, and creating highly functional management teams. He has worked with top management to assess overall organizational effectiveness and strategic alignment, and to improve management effectiveness, profitability, and cash flow. Tony is an accomplished financial and management professional and a seasoned strategist focused on helping clients develop and implement growth and profit strategies that obtain breakthrough results within varying economic and market environments. He has served as the chief operating officer (COO) for several companies on the strategies and concepts consultants talk about, but rarely implement. In this capacity, he had overall management control

and responsibility for the financial and operational areas, and was responsible for successfully driving both top and bottom line performance.

Tony earned a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting from Fairleigh Dickinson University, Teaneck, New Jersey. He has been very active in community activities and on various boards and business associations, including the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), and the National Association of Corporate Directors (NACD). Tony is a certified public accountant in New Jersey and New York.

### **About the Book:**

*The Performance Power Grid: The Proven Method to Create and Sustain Superior Organizational Performance* (Wiley, 2006, ISBN: 0-4700514-4-2, \$27.95) is available at bookstores nationwide, major online booksellers, or direct from the publisher by calling 800-225-5945. In Canada, call 800-567-4797.

**Wiley Publishing, Inc.** (“Wiley”), a wholly-owned subsidiary of John Wiley & Sons, Inc., is a global knowledge company with a diverse portfolio of technology, business, consumer and how-to brands, computer-based learning tools, Web-based products and Internet e-services. The company’s best-selling brands include For Dummies, Betty Crocker, Bible, Cliff’s Notes, Frommer’s Unofficial Guide, Visual, Weight Watchers, and Webster’s New World. Wiley is also the publisher of AOL Press, Hewlett-Packard Press, Netscape Press, and Red Hat Press. Wiley has thousands of active titles in 39 languages and also owns the websites [www.cliffsnotes.com](http://www.cliffsnotes.com), [www.dummies.com](http://www.dummies.com), and [www.frommers.com](http://www.frommers.com). For Dummies is a registered trademark of Wiley Publishing, Inc. in the United States and other countries. All other trademarks are property of their respective owners.

Founded in 1807, John Wiley & Sons, Inc. provides must-have content and services to customers worldwide. Its core businesses include scientific, technical, and medical journals, encyclopedias, books, and other online products and services, professional and consumer books, and subscription services and educational materials for undergraduate and graduate students and lifelong learners. Wiley has publishing, marketing, and distribution centers in the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, and Australia. The company is listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbols JWa and JWb. John Wiley’s recently re-launched Internet site can be accessed at [www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com).

**For more information, please visit [www.performancepowergrid.com](http://www.performancepowergrid.com).**