

# Are you confusing success and achievement?

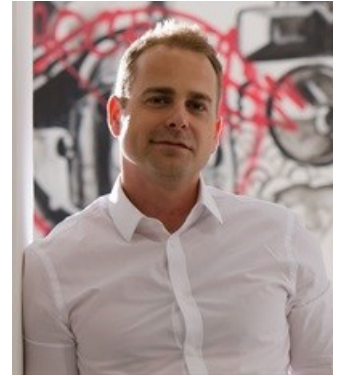
By [Jason Harrison](#), issued by [M&C Saatchi Abel](#)

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I have just returned from an inspiring and thought provoking trip to New York, where the M&C Saatchi global network of 29 offices met for three days.

A fantastic highlight was a keynote speech from the CEO of HBO, Richard Plepler. He talked about the journey HBO had been on since the absolute success of *Soprano's* all those years back, then a hugely troublesome patch in the early 2000's to how their resurgence was driven by a complete re-orientation around ensuring they put "creativity back at the heart of company".

He credited this creative re-orientation for their absolute resurgence as a broadcaster (heard of *Game of Thrones*?), a place that now works in service of the creative community of screenwriters, directors and actors as well as an innovation pipeline that allows content to flow wherever and whenever consumers want it. By all accounts a very successful company.



Jason Harrison

There were a lot of lessons, but he said one thing which landed like a ton of bricks for me personally.

"A huge learning for us was not confusing success and achievement, because they are two very different things".

He didn't unpack it further than that, but whether you are a business or an individual, I believe it's right in every single way.

Here's my view on it. At its core success is a 'result' of something. Achievement is the 'effect' of something. Success is fleeting and ever changing. We chase it relentlessly in a hyper competitive world, but it usually only resonates with a few. Achievement is more enduring, more fulfilling. It resonates with everyone because it has purpose hard wired into it.

So how do you keep yourself or your company focused on achievement?

## ***Keep your gratitude higher than your expectations***

When you first start out, whether it is in life or your company, you "don't know what you don't know". Everything is an adventure and you are thankful for the simplest of things. You connect around a common purpose; you value the journey and not the destination. Every small victory is acknowledged and celebrated. You appreciate people and the things they do deeply. Then somehow entitlement and expectation become endemic. The equation only works one way. Keep your gratitude higher than your expectations.

## ***Feed your dreams not the machine***

One day you wake up and you are turning the hamster wheels of industry. The beast needs to be fed. You did 20% this year, well then 30% next year is the only option. You finished Top 3, well then #1 is the only measure of success now. You forget your 'why' and only concentrate on 'how'. Stop. Go back to the very beginning. Examine your true purpose. Your reason for being. Use its power to liberate your dreams and your people. Martin Luther King said, "I have a dream", not "I have a plan". Feed your dreams, not the machine.

## ***Look inwards, not outwards***

Success is celebrated on the outside; achievement is celebrated on the inside. When you start to drink your own proverbial

Kool-Aid because of external acknowledgement, awards or recognition you lose focus. You play for the crowd, not for each other. Rather focus on what really matters most to you or your company. Shape that relentlessly. Hold yourself (and each other) accountable to your own high standards and measures because when you achieve them, you unlock true fulfilment for everybody. Look inwards, not outwards.

The good news is that achievement is an everyday thing. It is all around us. It just needs to surfaced with a simple question at the end of every day, “what did we achieve today and what are we going to achieve tomorrow?”

All else follows.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jason Harrison is the Founding Partner : Group MD of M&C Saatchi Abel (Cape Town & Africa). Jason joined his most trusted friends and partners to start M&C Saatchi Abel as Managing Director: Cape Town in October 2011 at the age of 33. Since then the partners have grown M&C Saatchi Abel into one of the fastest growing and most successful marketing communications startups in South Africa. Jason was previously based in London for 6 years working for Ogilvy Action (Shopper, Promotional, Experiential & Trade Marketing Agency) on Ogilvy's 3rd largest client worldwide, British American Tobacco, where he was a member of the Global BAT leadership team fulfilling various global, regional and local roles. His last role before leaving the UK was as Global Business Director, Global Travel Retail (duty free) where he was part of a team considering how BAT could redefine their global strategy, innovation pipeline and retailing experience to suit this unique channel. He oversaw hubs in Rio, Dubai, Switzerland and Shanghai. Before that he held the role of BAT's Regional Communications Director responsible for both East and West Europe, looking after creative hubs in London, Moscow and Dusseldorf. Jason is a passionate believer in the power of advertising agencies to change the world for the better.

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