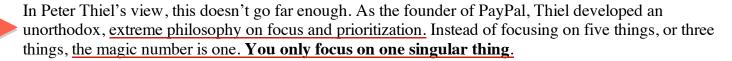
Peter Thiel's Unorthodox Management Philosophy of Extreme Focus: iDoneThis blog

Peter Thiel's Unorthodox Management Philosophy of Extreme Focus

"What are your top five <u>priorities</u> for this week?" "What are the top three <u>objectives and key results</u> you're using to measure how you're doing for the quarter?"

These are questions that get thrown around by managers at work to help their teams <u>prioritize and focus</u> on achieving the most important accomplishments.



As PayPal executive <u>Keith Rabois recalls</u>, <u>Thiel</u> "would **refuse to discuss virtually anything else with you except what was currently assigned as your #1 initiative**." Every employee, for instance, had to identify their "<u>single most valuable</u> contribution to the company" on PayPal's 2001 annual review forms.

Extreme focus worked, because Thiel gave it teeth. With <u>distractions cleared away</u>, <u>Thiel empowered every person in the company to pursue their only priority "with extreme dispatch and vigor."</u> Giving each individual in the organization a singular focus drives people to work on only those goals that will help achieve true excellence.

As Rabois explains:

The most important benefit of this approach is that it impels the organization to solve the challenges with the highest impact. Without this discipline, there is a consistent tendency of employees to address the easier to conquer, albeit less valuable, imperatives. As a specific example, if you have 3 priorities and the most difficult one lacks a clear solution, most people will gravitate towards the 2d order task with a clearer path to an answer.

As a result, the organization collectively performs at a B+ or A- level, but misses many of the opportunities for a step-function in value creation.

(via Is Peter Thiel's "one thing" management philosophy a good model for startups? - Quora)

<u>To Thiel, if you allow yourself to have more than one focus, you've already blinked.</u> You've determined that mediocrity is an acceptable outcome. With Thiel's singular focus philosophy, the <u>solutions</u> may not be clearer but the paths to excellence and value are.

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