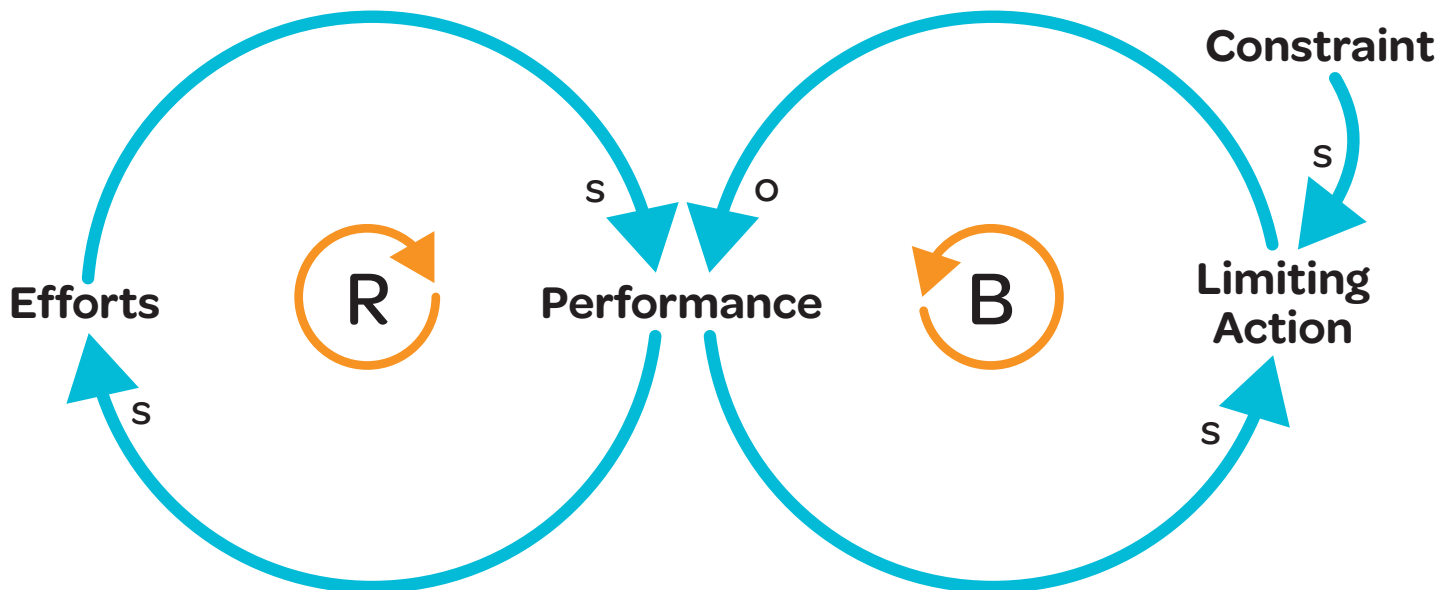


Limits to Growth/Success

When initial success eventually leads to a decrease in performance due to a limit that kicks in



Description

In a limits to growth/success situation, a reinforcing process of growth increases performance. The more effort put forth, the higher the performance level becomes.

At the same time, the increasing performance increases a limiting action, which decreases performance. Initially the reinforcing loop of success is stronger. Over time, because of a constraint, the balancing loop becomes dominant, causing the performance level to plateau or even to go down.

Examples

- Performance in physical activities, e.g., running
- Success of a company with limited production capacity

Ways out

Identify how the structure of the system is leading to limiting actions. Then adjust that structure in a way that reduces destructive behaviors and increases beneficial ones.

As a tool for prevention

The limits to growth/success archetype is a useful tool to consider when people have a "growth only" mindset. Anticipating where constraints exist, considering how to expand capacity, and minimizing limiting actions is key to creating longer term success.

Questions to ask

- How are efforts to increase progress toward a goal individually or as an organization actually leading to action that will, in the end, pull the progress back down?
- How much pressure is present that is pushing us to achieve higher and higher levels of performance? How might this pressure backfire and lead to the opposite result?