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978-0-521-44963-2 - Performance at the Limit: Business Lessons from Formula 1 Motor Racing, Second Edition

Mark Jenkins, Ken Pasternak and Richard West

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Performance at the Limit

Can you imagine your organisation as a Ferrari or a McLaren, a Toyota or a Force India? Your management team as a pit crew? Your sales force as the race team and your marketing and research department as the design studio creating a Formula 1 car?

Formula 1 has an estimated turnover of \$4 billion, employs 50,000 people in more than 30 countries and has a foothold in every major and developing economy. With performance as the central focus of every organisation, *Performance at the Limit* uses the case of Formula 1 motorsport as an example of how business can achieve optimal performance in highly competitive environments where dealing with change effectively is paramount. This second edition builds on the success of the first and contains a wealth of new material, including many more interviews with Formula 1 drivers and other key executives active in the sport.

MARK JENKINS is Professor of Business Strategy at Cranfield School of Management. He has twenty-one years' experience as a teacher and consultant in the areas of competitive strategy, knowledge management and innovation. He has undertaken research on the performance of Formula 1 teams since 1997.

KEN PASTERNAK delivers seminars for executives and advises banks and businesses in the areas of leadership and management, organisation development and teamwork. Based in Helsinki, his activities are focused in the US and Europe, plus the CIS and other emerging economies. Previously, he worked for Citibank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

RICHARD WEST has held senior commercial roles with the McLaren, Williams and Arrows Formula 1 teams and the Jaguar Sportscar team. Having raised in excess of \$165 million of commercial sponsorship, today he works as an international keynote speaker and facilitator and runs a management training company that uses Formula 1 as a central theme.

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Business Lessons from Formula 1
Motor Racing

2nd edition

MARK JENKINS

KEN PASTERNAK

RICHARD WEST



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Acknowledgements

As with the first edition of *Performance at the Limit*, one of the hardest parts of writing the second edition has been to know where to start saying thank you to the many people who have contributed to its content.

Formula 1, both as a sport and a business, takes huge commitment and unrelenting effort in all areas. Despite these pressures, everyone we have spoken to gave freely of their time, experience and knowledge to assist us in the creation of this book. We would like to express our gratitude to all those who have supported this project and trust the reader will bear with us in recognising the people by name, as without their time and contributions *Performance at the Limit*, both first and second editions, would never have been written.

Firstly, and without whom our research could not have been undertaken so thoroughly, our sincere thanks go to Formula 1 supremo Bernie Ecclestone for allowing us unrestricted access to round 4 of the FIA Formula 1 World Championship, the Formula 1 Gran Premio De España Telefónica at Barcelona in April 2008. His positive response to our request meant we were able to meet and talk to some of the great names in the sport and business of Grand Prix racing, with many of the interviews with key people taking place over that weekend.

Equally, *Performance at the Limit* could not have been published without the continued commitment of our publishers, Cambridge University Press. Paula Parish has worked with us on the second edition and our thanks go to her. We are also indebted to Margaret Hamer for transcribing a considerable number of the interviews and for working on some of the figures, and Nardine Collier for preparing the index. Additionally, our thanks go to Charly Salonijs-Pasternak for proofreading and commenting on the manuscript, and also to Angela Thompson for her additional work on a number of key transcripts.

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original version of *Performance at the Limit* as the inspiration for an eight-part global television series ‘Formula for Success’, and also for the professional manner in which Ian Sollars and the entire crew of TV production company Sunset + Vine conducted themselves in producing the series using the authors’ many contacts.

In terms of our specific thanks to the Formula 1 and motorsport community, Max Mosley as the President of the sport’s governing body, the FIA, responded in detail to the authors in writing and gave us some concise and insightful views of the challenges facing Formula 1. Our thanks go to Tony Purnell of the FIA who also shared his thoughts with us.

Flavio Briatore, the Managing Director of the Renault F1 team, gave us an amazingly frank and entertaining overview of what it takes to successfully operate a Formula 1 team and a diverse range of additional businesses, including his involvement with football club QPR. Special thanks must also go to Patrizia Spinelli, Renault F1’s Communications Manager; John Mardle, Operations Director; and James Gilbride, Account Manager, for their continuous supply of facts, figures, materials and arrangements.

Ferrari made us incredibly welcome both trackside and at our second visit to the factory at Maranello in Italy. Stefano Domenicali, as Jean Todt’s successor in the key Ferrari role, was forthright with his views and comments on teamwork and the importance of every role in the team structure, but none of this would have been possible without the assistance we received from Luca Colajanni. His tireless efforts assisted us by providing a unique insight into the business and sporting affairs of the ‘prancing horse’.

Christian Horner of Red Bull Racing added a fresh approach to our questions. As one of the new breed of younger team principals in Formula 1, his views were open, honest and clear. In addition, we were warmly welcomed into the ‘Red Bull Energy Station’ during the Barcelona weekend. It was fascinating to see how such a facility has formed a central meeting point for members of all of the teams, the media, television crews and the like, all catered for, all welcomed and all being made aware of the Red Bull lifestyle commitment to Formula 1.

Regarded by many as the sport’s top technical man and leading tactician, Honda’s Team Principal Ross Brawn gave us an incredible insight into life at Honda and his comparisons with his time at Ferrari

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and the challenges he faces today. His views on the integration of various working groups spread out across the globe and why revitalising Honda's racing efforts are part of a three-year plan make fascinating reading.

A driver's schedule today both on and away from the track is grueling in terms of time allocation. It is therefore particularly satisfying to be able to thank McLaren's Heikki Kovalainen, Red Bull's Mark Webber, WilliamsF1's Nico Rosberg and Ferrari's Felipe Massa for their contributions. Our thanks also go to the manager of Kimi Raikkonen and Jenson Button, David Robertson, for his frank views of driver management today, and to Jukka Mildh who was our conduit to Nico Rosberg. Our thanks also go to former Grand Prix driver and now driver manager and TV commentator Martin Brundle who added some valuable insights into the world of a current-day driver.

Driver fitness now plays a vital role in achieving performance at the limit. It was therefore very helpful to be able to spend considerable time with Aki Hintsa, McLaren's Team Physician, and to discuss his role in keeping the team's drivers and key staff in top condition.

Sir Jackie Stewart's views are as valid today as they were at the start of his career in the 1960s. A former World Champion, Team Principal, pundit, TV commentator and today a highly successful international businessman and corporate ambassador for The Royal Bank of Scotland Group, the words of 'JYS' are always worth reading and the authors' thanks go to him for his time and commitment to the many questions put to him.

From a business perspective, John Hogan, senior consultant to Just Marketing and Vodafone, gave us his views of the changing face of Formula 1 as a business and Peter Digby, Managing Director of Xtrac transmission technology, inputted greatly as to the ever-changing requirements of a first-class engineering supplier.

From the sponsors' perspective, Isabelle M. Conner, Chief Marketing Officer for ING's Corporate Communications and Affairs, gave us a truly unique insight and a range of personal guidelines that anyone wishing to enact a sponsorship programme should heed. Her view of how to 'attack' a new opportunity was simple yet clear and concise and our thanks are also extended to her for supplying us with a range of data and materials that aided our research greatly.

The authors noticed tremendous improvements since 2005 in the increase in the numbers of journalists, photographers and TV crews

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present and also the ways in which the teams look after and assist them in their quest for information. Very special thanks go to journalist David Tremayne who gave freely of his views and time. Chief Operating Officer (COO) Alex Burns and Head of Marketing Scott Garrett of WilliamsF1 provided us with major inputs, as did John Howett of Toyota F1 with assistance from Alastair Moffitt. Ian Phillips of Force India and Jim Wright of Toro Rosso also add greatly to this book through their comments as two of the longest-serving commercial men in the business.

For the first version of *Performance at the Limit*, the authors also interviewed Sir John Allison, John Barnard, Paul Edwards, Bernard Ferguson, Patrick Head, Eddie Jordan, Paul Jordan, Paolo Martinelli, Raoul Pinnell, David Richards, Dickie Stanford, Paul Stoddart, Pat Symonds, Jean Todt, John Walton, Sir Frank Williams and Hiroshi Yasukawa. Their words are in some cases still quoted and for those where they are not, we recognise and appreciate their original contributions and the value of their comments in our research process.

The authors hope and trust that we have correctly identified everyone's inputs and contributions; however, last but definitely not least, to our enduringly supportive wives, Sandra, Harriet and Denise, thank you for your commitment and understanding during the long hours our research, writing and production has demanded of us ... and of course the odd visit to a race, or test session, and the various factory visits that have made writing this second edition such a pleasure!

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Amphill, Helsinki and Dartford

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A numbered list of all sources used is given in the References section at the end of the book. Where these sources are quoted from or referred to in the main text a superscript numeral cross-refers to the relevant numbered source.

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The Grand Prix experience

In April 2004, the authors attended the San Marino Grand Prix at Imola in San Marino, Italy to interview a number of the leading protagonists of the Formula 1 world for the first edition of *Performance at the Limit*.

Four book print runs and four years later, in April 2008, we once more entered the Formula 1 paddock with invitations to interview sixteen individuals over just two and a half days; there was no time to waste!

The ability to gain access to Formula 1 must never be underestimated and, as we described at the time of writing our first book, there are in reality two types of Grand Prix world – the outer and the inner – and nothing has changed in this respect!

The outer world of the circuit is comprised of the public grandstands, vending areas, programme sellers, campsites, huge parking areas and tens of thousands of people hoping to take a picture or obtain an autograph of their favourite driver or personality.

The inner world is the paddock which exists within an area controlled by the electronic security pass issued by FOM (Formula One Management). Access is gained via a microchip sealed within the plastic FOM access pass when swiped across a reader at the automated entrance gates.

This is the inner sanctum of Formula 1, a place for the teams, drivers and the movers and shakers of the sport. In simple terms it means no pass, then no entry, as access to the Formula 1 paddock is highly restricted. Almost strangely, this ‘exclusivity’ is what sponsors, guests and VIPs expect. It is a place where deals are cut, won and lost. It is the world of international sporting power brokers and businessmen and -women.

The paddock is where the Bridgestone tyre company’s stock of racing tyres and fitting facilities are based, the teams’ racing car transporters and the multipurpose race hospitality areas and team working areas

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all congregate. It is also where the increased number of FIA¹ vehicles and personnel that oversee the technical and safety rules of the sport operate from within their distinctive blue and gold facilities.

Passing through the electronically activated security gates, the first-time visitor is greeted by the sight of a range of immaculate articulated trucks, vans and vehicles in the various teams' colours and designs. These are the 'workhorses' that bring pit equipment, spares, bodywork, fuel and countless other items of equipment to each of the European Grand Prix.

These vehicles are specifically designed and manufactured not just as transportation for the racing cars and their spare parts, but also as mobile workshops, data management suites and meeting and briefing rooms. Once in position they are adorned with extremely tall telemetry and radio communication masts and throughout the weekend are endlessly polished and cleaned by the 'truckies' who drive them to and from events.

The scale of 'the show' is simply enormous and the logistics of this are astonishing. For non-European races each team moves about 8 tonnes of sea freight on top of the 30 tonnes of air freight for the cars and the garages.² Throughout the European season, this fleet of trucks, vans and mobile hospitality areas makes its way from race to race on a weekly basis. For the 'long haul' international races, the entire contents (although not the units themselves) and much more besides is flown, as described below.

When watching a 'long haul' Grand Prix such as Brazil or Australia, just consider for one moment that in terms of actual content, everything you see before you, in addition to all of the equipment as yet unseen in the garages and main paddock area, has to be packed, boxed and transported to a central airport, then flown across the world in a fleet of air freighters, then be unloaded, customs cleared and then transported to the circuit for use before being reloaded and then sent back to the teams' individual HQs!

One of the most striking visual things to have changed in just four years since our visit to Imola is the size of the teams' combined hospitality, guest and media units or hospitality centres. The McLaren centre (nicknamed 'Saturn 5' by one of the long-term Formula 1 hands!) and the 'Red Bull Energy Station', stand out as high-tech, mobile architectural wonders with their smoked glass and tubular steel exteriors, but upon gaining entry, the quality of the fittings, the food

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and drink service and the politeness and efficiency of the staff would put many top restaurants and hotels to shame.

They also feature meeting rooms, media offices and private areas for engineers and VIPs to discuss confidential matters; they are in effect extensions of the teams' home base facilities.

The positioning of these units, racing car transporters and mobile workshops is closely overseen by an FOM representative. In Formula 1, image and performance go hand in hand. Such is the attention to detail in paddock layout, that it is possible to run a measure along the front of the trucks and motorhomes and find them millimetre perfect.

Only one unit stands clear of this line by several metres and it is the ever-present, but discrete silver and dark grey coach with its darkly tinted windows belonging to Formula 1 ringmaster Bernie Ecclestone, where countless people wait patiently for an audience with motor-sport's most powerful man.

The window overlooking the paddock walkway is oval, almost a tinted eye when looked at carefully, and it is clear to the onlooker that at all times Bernie is aware of who is in his paddock.

The way the media is handled by the teams has also changed dramatically for the better. It was very clear that many more of the teams' media personnel have now had formal training – some are ex-journalists themselves – and that they are sympathetic to the demands of the press and their team drivers and senior staff accordingly. With sponsors and manufacturers demanding greater returns, it is clear to see every effort is being made to meet their demands.

When first entering the paddock, the visitor is confronted by a truly astounding sight. Backed up to the pit garage complex are the racing teams' transporters. Above the garage complex at most venues are several floors of VIP boxes, administration offices and the media centre. And above them is the rooftop paddock club where several thousand VIPs are hosted by the teams, sponsors and manufacturers involved in Formula 1.

Step inside the teams' garages and you enter another world completely. Painted and in some cases tiled floors, complete wall-to-wall panelling featuring images, the teams' names and sponsors, digital clocks, plasma screens and weekend timetables all topped off with custom-made overhead gantries carrying heat, light, power, compressed air – it is simply a workshop created for a weekend to the

very highest standards, always mindful that the world’s media and TV watch on.

While all of this carries the ‘i’ word – image – the teams themselves are of course there to race. In among the deal-brokering, VIP and sponsor tours and endless meetings, the drivers, engineers and mechanics have to concentrate upon practice, qualifying and the actual race meeting, and their schedule is another work of art within a clearly defined timetable, as seen in Figure 1.

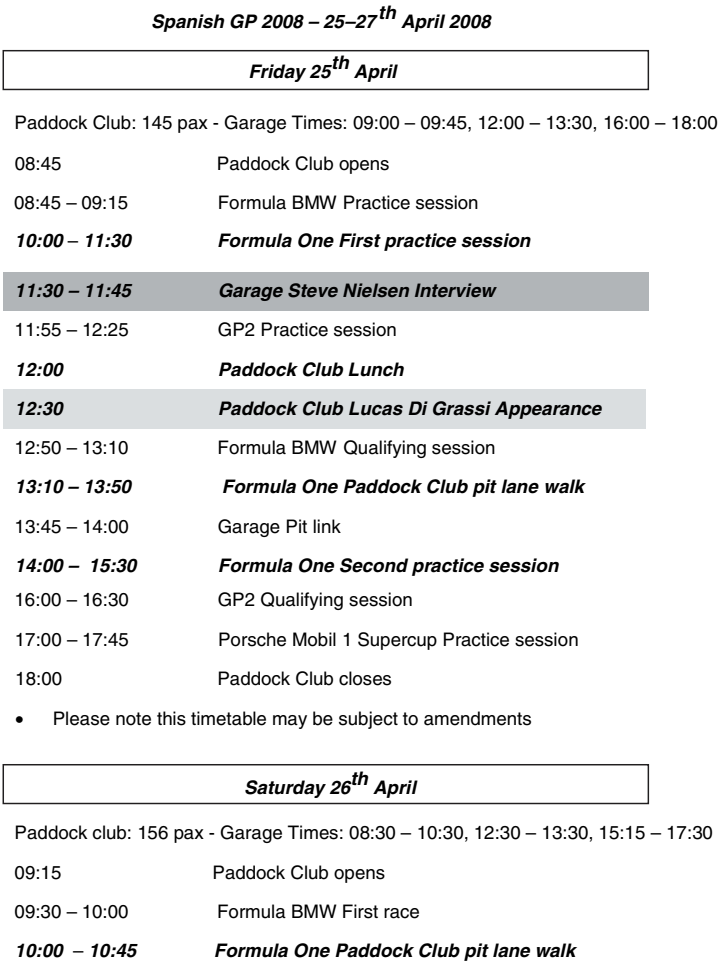


Figure 1 Timetable for Spanish Grand Prix, 25–27 April 2008.
Source: Team Renault F1.

11:00 – 12:00	Formula One Third practice session
12:00 – 12:15	Garage Steve Nielsen Interview
12:00	Paddock Club Lunch
12:25 – 13:10	Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup Qualifying session
12:45	Renault Suite Lucas Di Grassi Appearance
13:00	Paddock Club Nelson Piquet Appearance
13:15 – 13:50	Formula One Paddock Club pit lane walk
13:45 – 14:00	Garage Pit link
14:00 – 15:00	Formula One Qualifying session
15:05	Paddock Club Lucas Di Grassi Appearance
16:00 – 17:20	GP2 First race (39 laps)
17:30	Paddock Club closes
• Please note this timetable may be subject to amendments	
Sunday 27 th April	
Paddock Club: 166 pax - Garage Times: 08:30 – 12:30	
08:30	Paddock Club opens
08:00 – 09:15	Formula One Paddock Club pit lane walk
09:15 – 09:45	Formula BMW Second race
10:30 – 11:20	GP2 Second race (26 laps)
10:50	Renault Suite Nelson Piquet Appearance
11:05	Total Suite Nelson Piquet Appearance
11:20	Bridgestone Suite Nelson Piquet Appearance
11:15	Paddock Club Fernando Alonso Appearance
12:00	Paddock Club Lunch – First course
11:45 – 12:20	Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup First race (14 laps)
12:20	Paddock Club Lucas Di Grassi Appearance
12:30 – 13:15	Formula One Paddock Club pit lane walk
12:30	Formula One Drivers Track Parade
13:15	Paddock Club Lunch – Second course and desert
13:30	Garage Pat Symonds Interview
14:00	Formula One Spanish Grand Prix 2008 (66 laps)
17:00	Paddock Club closes
• Please note this timetable may be subject to amendments	

Figure 1 (cont.)

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As the weekend progresses, the pressures increase. Friday is a time for circulating the paddock, searching out specific people and journalists, catching up on the latest ‘word’ on the street.

Come Saturday, and the mechanics, tyre fitters, engineers and drivers can be seen moving from motorhome to garage, garage to media meetings, back to motorhome for lunch and, if required, a massage. There is practice and there is qualifying – the need for pole position (the front of the starting grid) occupies everyone’s minds and at today’s meeting at the Circuit de Catalunya it is a Ferrari and Renault front row – the Spanish fans can be heard above the engine noise as Alonso steps from his R30 Renault car at the end of qualifying!

The paddock is now alive with journalists. The top three qualifiers, Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari) on pole followed by Fernando Alonso (Renault F1) and Felipe Massa (Ferrari), walk out from the press suite and into a corral of photographers, TV cameras and journalists with their arms extended, holding voice recorders. Each of the drivers makes his way around the inside perimeter of the circle, accompanied by a PR person from their team, answering questions about their performance, the car and their expectations for the race on the following day.

For the drivers and team principals, assisted by their marketing and PR teams, Saturday evenings usually mean official sponsor dinners, guest appearances and drink parties. While sometimes onerous, all recognise the importance of these events and undertake them professionally.

Sunday of course is the longest and most important day. Arrive early enough and you will see the first people (motorhome staff) arriving and opening up their various ‘HQs’ for the day ahead. Shortly after, engineers, mechanics, team managers and drivers arrive (the team principals are never far behind!). Suddenly, the paddock is abuzz, the ‘truckies’ are giving the race transporters one final polish, the drivers, now focused, still stop and smile for photographs and autographs, the journalists continue to search for one more quote and Bernie Ecclestone can be seen frequently going from motorhome to motorhome ensuring the show runs faultlessly.

Amidst the noise, energy, sights, smells and sounds, one becomes increasingly aware of the crowd, the paying public who for hours have driven, camped, walked to see their favourite stars in action. On this day the grandstands are full of – what else? – Fernando Alonso supporters.

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There is a sea of colours representing his Renault team and all around there are banners and chants spurring their Spanish hero on.

As at all circuits, the fans wait with air horns, flags, fireworks and banners and thirty minutes before the start of the race, when the pit lane officially opens, they begin to cheer. Earlier in the day, the drivers must complete a lap of the circuit on the back of a flatbed articulated trailer or in open-top cars. They wave and the crowds cheer them, but this is nothing compared to the noise of the engines and the combined sound of the crowd as they wave them out with just minutes to go before the start of yet another Grand Prix ...

Exactly on the appointed minute, the cars are flagged off on their final warm-up lap to complete one lap under controlled conditions, the pole sitter leads them all round, each car zigzagging around the circuit to warm up its tyres, to form up for the grid where seconds later the five red lights come on in sequence, go out as one and the Spanish Grand Prix is under way.

The paddock is now quiet, almost empty; everyone is focused on the track and pit lane but one thing never changes, the deadline for the next race. Teams of motorhome workers have already begun to pack the items that are no longer required; some people, their work already done, are leaving the circuit to avoid the queues at the end of the day.

The authors, with their interviews complete, head for the airport and, by the time they arrive, the news is filtering through from the Formula 1 Gran Premio De España Telefónica 2008 – it is a Ferrari one/two finish with Alonso retiring due to engine failure. It's a disappointing day for Alonso (and his fans) as he packs up and heads for home, but in just two short weeks it's off to Turkey and another Grand Prix ... the show goes on!