

TheEvoWay

The Story is Yours

Introduction

The Evo Way is a dynamic and innovative approach to optimize learning and skills development in sport and educational contexts. It is ideally suited to performance environments but can readily be applied in support of academic learning, leadership projects, adult skills development, and continuous improvement in organizations.

With inputs from world leading practitioners in coaching, sports science, neuroscience, and other disciplines, TheEvoWay provides cutting edge principles and practices to help young athletes and learners to enhance their performance, well-being, social skills, and long-term development as athletes and people. The combination of hard and soft skills makes for a best practice learning and development environment in which participants are inspired and guided to plan, structure, and implement proven methodologies in pursuit of clearly defined performance objectives and success criteria.

TheEvoWay Circle of Excellence

Fundamentally, The Evo Way is focused on facilitating the holistic development of participants and the commissioning of instructors to pursue all-round excellence focused around specific personal and team objectives, supported by a culture of values and leadership. This transformative environment is underpinned by *The Evo Way Circle of Excellence*, comprising five core elements:

- * An interactive learning environment which encourages participants to take ownership of their developmental journeys.
- A methodological approach, drawing on pioneering principles now being applied in elite sports teams around the world.
- A supportive culture based on core social values and constructive behaviors.
- An emphasis on a performance lifestyle to sustain peak performance outcomes and objectives.
- * A unique framework for leadership development to empower young participants to become positive influencers and custodians of the future, including a focus on sustainable living to support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Better People, Better Players

Growing demands and expectations associated with increasingly competitive youth environments has resulted in a skewed emphasis on hard or technical skills at the expense of soft or social skills. As recent research demonstrates, this is associated with growing problems relating to negative social behavior and mental health challenges for young participants, reputational fall-out for institutions, and a failure of development programs to fulfil their potential.

In this context, TheEvoWay presents a meaningful paradigm shift in performance-based projects. Firstly, by focusing on holistic developmental pathways, it promotes a healthier balance between hard and soft skills, ensuring that participants are equipped to cope with pressure to perform and take ownership of their own journeys of discovery and development. Secondly, more than a decade of experience in TheEvoWay applications has shown that not only does the framework promote holistic well-being of participants, but it also significantly improves personal and team performance. As summarized in our Proof of Concept below, the pivotal realization is that providing a basis for young participants to grow as people is associated with consistent improvement in hard skills and all-round performance. In other words, the focus on soft skills is not simply a convenient bolt-on to make performance programs look better, but a direct route to sustainable excellence: better people, better players.

As noted further on, this translates into a persuasive value proposition for participants, instructors, institutions, and broader society.

The Story is Yours

There is always a beginning that changes everything. Our mission is to ensure that TheEvoWay provides that beginning for all participants and stakeholders. Ultimately, TheEvoWay is a journey of self-discovery and self-mastery in which personal achievement and excellence is an underlying objective. As sports stars and other leaders have so often demonstrated, no matter what history has already been lived, the future is yet to be written and is not necessarily held hostage by the past. Aspirations that may appear to be beyond reach can be attained; determination, courage, and perseverance can triumph over despair and deprivation; and with every challenge comes an opportunity to discover resilience and character.

The Story is Yours!

Proof of Concept

While TheEvoWay is an international program spanning 18 countries in five continents, an intensive and highly successful two-year pilot project in South Africa has allowed the program to be adapted and expanded to meet specific developmental needs and challenges in Africa.

In this period, over 500 young participants from 7 - 19 years of age benefitted from TheEvoWay methodology in sport and educational settings. The inputs included sport-specific skills, social skills and values, and leadership development. Participants reflected the diversity of South Africa's youth in terms of socio-economic backgrounds, gender, ethnicity, and language. Outcomes included participants being recruited for elite sports programs, receiving educational scholarships, and being invited to trial at elite sports academies in Europe. In one case, a video of a 15-year-old participant addressing a group of football parents regarding the values and objectives of his team went viral around the world after being promoted by Mark Bennett, MBE, the developer of the internationally acclaimed Performance Development Systems (PDS) coaching methodology which is now in place in several world-famous sports teams and leading organizations.

In response to the video, a head coach at an elite sports program in the U.S. commented: "what an admirable young leader, all players should learn these skills".

In terms of skills performance, the pilot program also demonstrated proof of concept through Evo FC, a grassroots football club which we established in 2022. The majority of players who joined the club were from disadvantaged backgrounds with development costs being primarily funded by TheEvoWay management. Many players who joined were referred by established clubs who assessed that those players required more intensive development. In the first year, Evo FC won five league titles and eight tournament championships. In 2023, the club was invited to participate in the prestigious Johannesburg Academy League (formerly the Soweto Association League) and won the overall league, with two of our four teams entered winning their leagues, one placing second, and one placing third. In the same period, six of our players were recruited by elite youth academies. A young girl who progressed through the program is now the youngest goalkeeper playing in the competitive adult women's league.

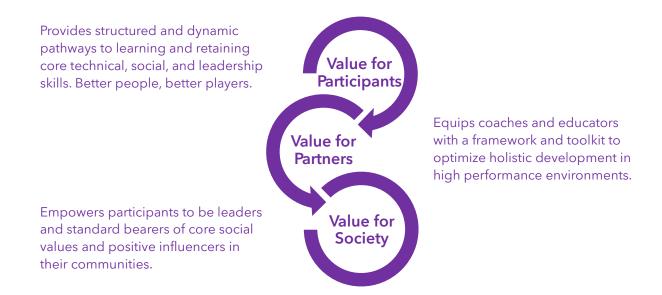
Partnering with Champions

Our mission is concretized in our *Partnering with Champions* program, which invites relevant institutions and organizations to be co-authors of the stories which are journeyed by participants. This includes partner institutions, program developers, sponsors, and investors. See further on for details.

Value Proposition

In a crowded market, TheEvoWay provides an innovative and disruptive approach to youth development in sport, education, and leadership.

Our value proposition focuses on participants, partners (coaches, educators, managers, etc.), and society (schools, communities, etc.), summarized as follows:



Considering TheEvoWay value proposition more specifically:

Benefits of TheEvoWay for Participants

Through TheEvoWay, participants learn key skills required to excel in high performance environments and, more broadly, in other areas of life:

- How to structure and manage their individual journeys to sustainable excellence.
- Techniques to assess, measure, and monitor progress towards short- and longterm objectives,
- Self-motivation and self-management skills.
- Effective communication in team and social environments.
- How to live core values and be effective leaders and influencers.

Benefits of TheEvoWay for Partners

The Evo Way offers substantial benefits to partners, including coaches, sports administrators, managers, schools, and other persons and institutions. These include:

- Gaining a deeper knowledge and understanding of how to engage with participants and assist them to structure their individual journeys to high performance.
- Acquiring hard and soft skills to enhance the management and effectiveness of high performance programs.
- Access to cutting-edge thinking and practices in sport and learning.
- Understanding how to optimize the leadership potential of players and improve teamwork and communication.
- Techniques to assess, measure, and monitor progress towards short- and longterm objectives for individuals and teams.

Benefits of TheEvoWay for Society

Through its emphasis on empowering young people to become effective leaders and introducing them to a values-based framewrok, TheEvoWay has the potential for significant social impact. Our pilot programs indicate that there is a definite transfer of skills from high performance settings to other learning and social environments including in the family, classrooms, and community settings. Equally importantly, TheEvoWay provides young participants with the skills to focus their thinking about their futures, increasing a sense of purpose, boosting resilience, and instilling hope even in adverse situations.

Benefits of The Evo Way for Sponsors

The EvoWay provides sponsors with meaningful opportunities to impact the lives of young participants, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds who generally lack access to holistic development pathways. The focus on 'better people, better players' (social skills, leadership, core values, etc.) means that sponsorship is ultimately connected to the development of people of integrity and custodians of the future.

F Employee Empowerment

The Evo Way is also structured to empower historically disadvantaged instructors to acquire and apply entrepreneurial and management skills while benefiting as shareholders in our commercial ventures. All of our employees are afforded this opportunity.

TheEvoWay Development Framework

Context

In an increasingly competitive world, success does not simply happen, and greatness even less so. Sport and education programs, especially those which aspire to provide high-performance environments, face numerous challenges including adequate funding, human resources, and a narrow talent pool. While these issues are well-recognized, three key challenges which act as critical barriers to success are frequently overlooked, to the detriment of the participants and the programs.

Challenge 1: Pedagogical Foundations

The first challenge has to do with the pedagogical foundations of high-performance programs, referring to the strategies which underpin how learning and skills acquisition are implemented in those environments. High-performance sports programs and traditional academic curricula traditionally place primary emphasis on technical mastery, be it a set of sport-specific skills (e.g. a footballer learning to shoot at goal consistently well, a swimmer learning the correct technique for specific strokes) or the accomplishment of subject-specific learning objectives (e.g. mathematics, languages). However, a persuasive body of evidence from diverse disciplines highlights that when it comes to sustainable performance excellence, how skills are learned is as important as what is learned. Optimal performance requires optimal learning conditions, and in the absence of those conditions participants may become discouraged, bored, or distracted, resulting in neither the participants nor the programs fulfilling their objectives or potential. As noted below, however, learning and skills acquisition can be optimized at little to no additional program cost through the introduction of structured learning objectives and feedback processes which activate neural pathways identified as critical to self-motivation and sustainable success.

Challenge 2: Transfer and Sustainability of Skills

A second challenge is that a narrow focus on technical learning and accomplishment may not prepare participants for success outside of the programs they are involved in. Considering that very few participants in elite sporting programs, and even fewer in grassroots programs, will go on to enjoy professional careers¹, it is particularly important that programs introduce young participants to skills which can serve as a foundation for achievement in other areas of life.

This means that (a) programs should offer skills that are sustainable over time and (b) that are readily transferable to other pursuits and objectives. Even for the select few who do go on to professional sports careers, it is important to be equipped with sustainable and transferable skills which can provide a basis for continued success when those careers come to an end through age, injury, non-selection, or other causes.

In this context, it is important that sport and academic programs offer an ideal platform for providing participants with the mindset and skills required for lifelong learning and sustainable

¹ For example, in the UK, roughly 0.012% of young players under the age of nine who enter elite football academies actually go on to have professional careers.

all-round excellence - provided that the necessary pedagogical components are built into those programs. As noted above, ensuring that so-called soft skills (social skills, values, communication, leadership) are foundational to performance programs not only promotes sustainability of hard (technical) skills, but also results in consistently higher levels of technical accomplishment.

Challenge 3: Social Values and Leadership

Related to the above, the third challenge facing sporting and academic programs is that their objectives are increasingly challenged by an erosion of core values and bedrock principles that shape positive and constructive social behavior. In fact, research shows that when those programs place a strong emphasis on competitiveness without providing a way for participants to learn constructive values and behavior, the outcome can be a sharp deterioration in social conduct and engagement. Apart from the social implications of this, negative values and conduct also act as roadblocks on the journey to achievement in sport and education, nullifying the ideals and objectives of those programs.

Towards a Culture of Excellence in Youth Development

To build and sustain a culture of excellence in performance-based programs requires more than a focus on technical skills. Multiple other individual and team competencies should be integrated into sports programs, including self-learning and self-motivational skills, a strong and sustainable values base, and leadership qualities. This will ensure an optimal return on investment for the participants and the programs, while also having a positive impact on broader communities, with participants becoming positive influencers and leaders in those settings.

The Evo Way development framework, described in the following section, draws on world leading pedagogical models and cutting-edge science to provide a platform for sustaining excellence in hard and soft skills in youth development programs.



The EvoWay is not just another program or club, it is a community of young leaders striving for excellence and committed to a purpose greater than themselves.

The Evo Way Circle of Excellence

The Evo Way Circle of Excellence is the cornerstone of our development framework. It is based on five core pillars of learning and development:



The Evo Way Circle of Excellence

A Values-Based Culture

Our values-based culture is a fundamental aspect of the Circle of Excellence, underpinning all learning and development. It promotes a professional ethos and supports the principle of "better people, better players", while providing a basis for promoting constructive social values and behaviors that transcend into school, home life, and broader society. Through interactive mentoring sessions, peer support and online learning modules, participants are continually encouraged to reflect on constructive pathways for self-expression, conflict resolution, and social engagement. Key components, principles, and values include the following:

- "The Lighthouse": A cognitive and emotional space comprising ideals relating to core values as well as personal and group vision, mission, and purpose. Participants are encouraged to hold dear this space, return to it regularly to reflect on progress, and draw on it as a source of inspiration and resilience in challenging times.
- Ownership: We are a product of our decisions not our circumstances. Our players are educated and empowered to drive their own journey.
- Respect: We expect participants to treat teammates, opponents, match officials, parents, and everyone with respect.
- Accountability: We won't win every battle, we will make mistakes, but our players won't hide. Whether in good times or bad our players are accountable to themselves and their teammates.

- Unity: We are stronger together. Our players support each other, they listen to one another, they decide together, they play together, they fight together, they win, they lose together, they celebrate together and ultimately grow together.
- Determination: Attitude requires zero talent. Our players develop the mindset to attack every session, every run, every dribble, every tackle, every game as if it was their last.
- Honesty: Our players are open, honest, and accountable with each other, as they know this accelerates the growth of both individuals and the team.
- Creativity: Every innovation begins with imagination. Our players are encouraged to think divergently, create new skills and ideas. Don't think outside the box, think as if there is no box.
- Humility: When it's over, it's over. Win, lose or draw we act with dignity to our opposition and their supporters. Spectators should never know the result of a game through our players' body language or actions.

Learning Environment

PDS system.

The Evo Way approach to learning is informed by contributions from the disciplines of ecological dynamics, neuroscience, and continual learning. Participants are immersed in a dynamic environment designed to encourage creative thinking and develop problem-solving skills.

A core element of our learning environment is based on the internationally acclaimed Performance Development Systems (PDS), for which developer Mark Bennett was awarded an MBE. The PDS methodology is now being applied by leading professional sports teams and athletes around the world including Premier League football clubs, international and premiership rugby teams, U.S. university and college gridiron football programs, U.S. National Hockey League programs, the England athletics and golf teams, and Team Britain Olympic athletes. The Evo Way enjoys a productive partnership with PDS both in South Africa and internationally, including all The Evo Way coaches and managers being competent in the

Taken together, these components ensure a stimulating learning environment that addresses the key challenges of (a) making skills acquisition sustainable and (b) catering for the need to have skills transferable to broad life requirements.

Benefits of The Evo Way learning environment include the following:

- The learning process is designed to be self-reinforcing by focusing on preagreed success criteria and objective outcomes which are regularly assessed by the participants themselves.
- Participants learn to actively contribute to the learning process, which encourages stronger engagement and commitment on their part. Moving on to

- new learning objectives is a process determined through self-assessment, peer review, and instructor facilitation.
- Skills acquisition is structured according to three types of sessions learning, performance, and competition - each of which has varying degrees of instructor input. This allows participants to progressively master specific skills based on self-reviews and supportive feedback from peers and instructors.
- Strong emphasis is placed on communication skills through regular session reviews and by having participants provide thoughts and ideas relating to learning objectives and outcomes.
- Ultimately, participants are empowered to become independent thinkers and problem-solvers who use core principles to generate creative solutions to challenges and critical situations, rather than adopting a stagnant and counterproductive focus on problems.

Coaching Methodology

The Evo Way coaching methodology is based on the practice of continuous incremental improvement. Participants and instructors are provided with cognitive and communication strategies to continually assess and track progress according to mutually agreed success criteria. This encourages participants to be more engaged in the development process and to take ownership of their developmental journeys, while also ensuring an objective basis for assessing improvements in performance.

Because the approach adopted emphasizes process dimensions of coaching (i.e. how skills are acquired), instructors adopting TheEvoWay are not constrained to focus on specific skills or compelled to pay less attention to technical aspects which they regard as important to individual or team performance. Rather, the methodology allows instructors to decode specific skills into constituent components which can then be subject to continuous improvement methods. This process of decoding is ideal for complex skills motor skills and can both improve level of accomplishment as well as pace of learning.

The Evo Way coaching methodology progresses participants through four levels of accomplishment:

- Induction: for new and very young players, where the focus is primarily on encouraging them to love the sport or activity while acquiring basic core skills.
- Technician: the focus is on acquiring specific technical skills and all-round competency.
- Artist: focusing on excellence in specific skills, positions, or situations.
- Tactician: developing participants to be creative decision-makers who show allround excellence and can apply their skills in dynamic and effective ways to have an impact on competitive outcomes.

Performance Lifestyle

Sustaining peak performance levels is as much about lifestyle choices as it is about acquiring specific skills. In the absence of this, even the most skilled of athletes will not be able to consistently perform at their best. In TheEvoWay, we empower our participants to develop a critical and mature understanding of the lifestyle choices they need to make and apply to support their development. This is a critical component of what we term TheEvoWay journey, and the importance of participants taking responsibility for those decisions is reflected in TheEvoWay motto "The Story is Yours".

The core focus areas in encouraging a performance lifestyle in The Evo Way are:

- Developing a professional mindset, including cognitive (mental) and self-management skills necessary for sustainable performance. Examples include self-discipline, self-motivation, structuring performance objectives, and understanding the need to make certain sacrifices in pursuit of personal excellence.
- The importance of nutrition, with subject matter experts advising on ideal nutritional habits.
- Educating participants to understand the need for daily habits to maintain physical fitness and how to apply recovery techniques.
- An understanding of personal wellness as a habit and its impact on overall performance. This includes equipping participants with an understanding of key mental health issues (depression, anxiety, self-esteem, etc.) and when to seek help if necessary.

Coaches and instructors are empowered to communicate and monitor aspects relating to a performance lifestyle among participants. Where possible, key aspects are also made available to participants through online self-study programs.

Leadership Development

Leadership development is a fundamental focus and objective of TheEvoWay programs, intended to encourage a new generation of socially responsible influencers. We believe that in an age of escalating threats to the wellbeing and even the survival of humanity, leadership that is future-focused and committed to doing things differently should be an imperative of all youth programs. In accordance with this belief, we have developed an innovative program, EvoWay 4-7-12, based on more than 10 years of primary research and subjected to rigorous pilot testing in community and corporate environments.

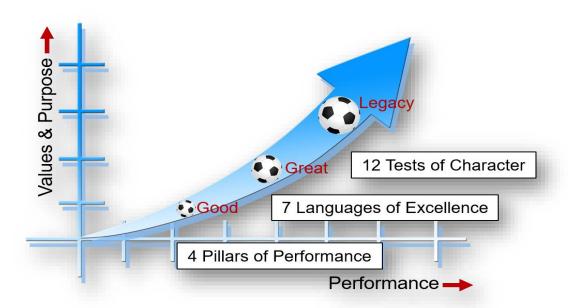
The program can be integrated into TheEvoWay structure outlined above or can be offered as a stand-along program for young leaders.

EvoWay 4-7-12 underlines the fact that leadership is not born but is rather developed through structured and systematic engagement with ourselves and those around us. This is supported by new developments in neuroscience, which show that behaviours commonly associated with leadership are reinforced through repetitive learning which activates specific neural pathways.

The brand identity 4-7-12 is derived from the 23 core leadership competencies focused on in the program. We refer to these competencies as 'languages' to emphasize that to translate into observable and meaningful behaviours they need to continually be applied in interpersonal or social contexts:

- 4 Pillars of Performance
- 7 Languages of Excellence
- 12 Tests of Character

TheEvoWay 4-7-12 program graduates' participants through levels of "good", "great" and "legacy" based on age and accomplishment in terms of both incorporation of values and purpose on one hand, and performance on the other hand. Our objective is to facilitate the development of legacy builders who go on to have a meaningful impact on society and inspire others to become persons of excellence.



Applications

The Evo Way is designed for optimal flexibility in terms of how and in what settings it can be applied. It is suitable both for short-term inputs aimed at empowering coaches and instructors to apply The Evo Way in their performance environments, and for projects focused on comprehensive performance development initiatives. The areas of possible application below illustrate the scope of possible applications of The Evo Way in performance programs, schools, clubs, communities, and other organizations.

Bolt-on Programs

Core components of TheEvoWay development framework can serve as so-called bolt-on programs, i.e. can be integrated into existing client programs. Examples include applying TheEvoWay performance development framework to specific teams or sports programs in schools, academies, or clubs, where our methodology can be readily adapted to any performance environment or sporting code (e.g. football, rugby, cricket, hockey, basketball, netball, swimming, athletics, etc.). Alternatively, specific components of TheEvoWay program, for example the methodological framework, can be provided to support specific program objectives.

Sport Academies

We assist schools and sports organizations to develop high-performance academy programs. These can cater for specific sporting codes, e.g. rugby or football, can function to support all sports activities, or can be dedicated to elite athletes with high potential to progress to professional levels.

Leadership Academies

The EvoWay can also support independent or in-house leadership programs, with an emphasis on The EvoWay 4-7-12 program and other key components of The EvoWay Circle of Excellence.

Community Programs

The EvoWay Circle of Excellence can assist in any community-based initiatives relating to youth development, providing a reliable basis for assessing and monitoring success, providing a proven methodology for outcomes-based learning, and ensuring that development is coupled with a strong values base and leadership component.

Corporate Applications

In corporate settings, TheEvoWay can serve as a powerful change management process through its focus on continuous improvement based on the five pillars of TheEvoWay Circle of Excellence. The core emphasis on values and leadership also provides a basis for sustaining a culture of excellence within organizations. In this regard, the key principles of TheEvoWay are supportive of the increasingly popular practice of 'kaizen', referring to constant, incremental improvements across all functions of an organization (kai = change, zen = good).

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