

Sarah Robb O’Hagan

Renowned Business Leader, CEO of EXOS the Performance Coaching Company, Former President of Equinox, Former Global President of Gatorade, Former Marketing Director at Nike and the Virgin Group

From Burnout to High Performance: How to Build a Kick-Ass Hybrid Work Culture. When Sarah Robb O’Hagan began leading the turnaround of the \$5 billion global Gatorade business amid a global recession, she was also preparing to give birth to her third child. Largely skipping her maternity leave, the combination of extreme hours and late-night childcare led her to experience an extreme and painful “burnout” that changed her perspective and her approach to work life forever.

Years later — taking on the role of CEO at EXOS, the human performance company, at the start of the global pandemic — she decided that a successful business turnaround while burning people out was not an option. As a result, she partnered with the performance science experts on her team, as well as some of the best organizational psychologists in the world to design and implement a far more sustainable and enjoyable way of getting business results while working under immense pressure.

In this talk, Sarah outlines:

- Why high performance and productivity do not have to happen at the expense of human wellbeing — with proprietary research and data to prove the case
- How to balance the load of intense work and pressure, with periods of intentional recovery to optimize the human system for higher performance
- How to design your workplace with simple hacks to improve the wellbeing and performance of your team so that you can attract and retain the best talent
- How to understand the connection between your mind and your body as it relates to overcoming feelings of intense stress and exhaustion
- The magical force multiplier of getting into “flow state” to drive greater productivity for the team, and fulfillment for individuals

Epic Teaming: How to Build High-Performance, High-Fun Team Cultures. Sarah Robb O’Hagan has a strong track-record of implementing game-changing innovation and growth strategies, which is why she knows that the only way to bring out the best in ourselves is to bring out the best in others. With her decades-long career, predominantly in the sports and human performance industry, she has seen up close what epic teamwork looks like and how the common characteristics of great teams translate seamlessly from the world of sports to business.

With this talk, she explains:

- Why we need to understand the most important “unwritten role” we can play on a team to tap into our greatest sense of fulfillment
- How often people make the mistake of trying to bend the team’s needs to their strengths instead of the other way around
- Why we naturally see our own efforts improve when we surround ourselves with “worthy rivals”
- How to build a team dynamic that eliminates imposter syndrome in individuals, to accelerate output and performance
- How to understand the difference between a team, and a community — and the importance of both in creating cultures that people *want* to be a part of

With anecdotes from her days working for highly team-oriented corporate cultures (including Nike and Virgin), as well as insight into the strategies she used while transforming major global companies, she describes what it means to build and contribute to an “extreme team,” how to work through intergenerational workforce dynamics, and how to get proximate with those least like yourself to truly understand the unique gifts that individuals can contribute to your team.

Leading Through Turbulence: How to Turn Headwinds to Tailwinds. Sarah Robb O’Hagan is no stranger to huge business headwinds. Stepping into her role as CEO of EXOS in early February 2020, she found herself not

in the “dream job” she thought she had just accepted, but in the fight of her life leading a business that consisted of hundreds of brick-and-mortar gym sites around the world, which would be severely impaired by the global pandemic. Despite the complexities surrounding them, she and her team kept the business afloat and evolved it into a far stronger company as they shifted their focus to tackling the next phase of its growth. Earlier in her career, she had successfully led the turnaround of the \$5 billion Gatorade business in the midst of a global recession after inheriting what the media called a “flaming mess,” so she knew the playbook and how it needed to be adapted to succeed in the big, long climb ahead of her.

These successful turnarounds, as well as her decades in the human performance industry have taught her innumerable lessons about succeeding in life and business, the most important being this: There is no way to get through life without experiencing adversity; Knowing how to harness the lessons to bounce back stronger is a skill everyone should have.

With this speech, Sarah outlines:

- How dramatically the business environment has changed — with cycles of tailwinds and headwinds switching on us more quickly than ever before — and why you need to use the headwinds to sharpen your performance to take advantage of tailwinds when they come
- Why you need to take risks, “crash more,” and use failure to fuel your personal growth
- Why rejection is the beginning, not the end, on the journey to a personal breakthrough, and how to build the kind of resilience it takes to get great ideas to actually work
- Why different generations in the workforce have different tolerance for risk and how to foster courage in a workforce where the dominant cohort has only known strong economic conditions
- How to “change the game” in your competitive landscape so that your competitors need to follow you, and not the other way around