

Why strategy mind games like the Rubik's Cube can help your business

Strategy mind games are becoming increasingly popular. As we celebrate 40 years of the Rubik's Cube - and the Red Bull Rubik's Cube World Cup Finals takes place this weekend in an entirely digital format - it seems we're just as baffled and fascinated by the complex design as we were when it first hit our shelves.

With working from home now the norm, we arguably have more 'free' time than ever before - making it more important than ever to focus on mental agility. Whether it's chess, scrabble, sudoku or the humble Rubik's Cube, it's not just good fun - these mind 'games' can help stimulate our thinking.

From getting in 'the zone' to setting clear goals and improving logic, strategy 'play' can teach us many skills that are applicable in our everyday lives.

Learn to compete against yourself

As a professional cuber, many people assume that because I compete with other speedcubers, I'm in constant competition with them. While that's true to some extent - I do regularly compete against other cubers - the real beauty of

the Rubik's Cube is that you're only ever competing against yourself.

In fact, we all are. Every speedcuber is striving for their own personal best, which makes the sport unique – and makes learning it a highly transferable skill.

In our daily lives, learning to better our own achievements helps us strive for improvement – whether that's in work, sport or our other passions. Strategy games like the cube help focus our attention on our personal achievements. With practice, you see small improvements which in turn help to build self-confidence.

Repetition makes perfection

Being able to balance the various cubing algorithms and use them together means I need to ensure different moves and tactics are fully ingrained in my brain. When I'm solving, I don't have time to stop and think. Everything has to be subconscious, recreating the patterns I've learnt over time. There's no real substitute for this other than allocating time to repeating these processes.

The old adage 'practice makes perfect' really is true.

On average, I'll usually spend two to three hours a day practising and repeating. When I don't have much on, I can cube for 12 hours straight and complete up to 1,000 solves.

I want to constantly strive to be the best I can be – in practice, this means using whatever time I have available to repeat and master techniques which will help me solve the cube faster.

You can apply this principle of repetitive training to most things – after a while, processes start to become automatic and your mind becomes more

agile, allowing you to focus on more complex tasks.

Achieving a 'Flow State'

Athletes strive for 'flow state' mindset, but few achieve it. These 'flow states', also known as 'the zone', happen when your mind is completely relaxed, and any external stressors and distractions have been eliminated, allowing you to focus completely on a single task.

Once you're fully immersed in what you're doing, your mind is at the peak of its problem solving ability.

While incredibly beneficial for athletes, 'flow states' are also where creativity thrives, making it a desirable skill for many other aspects of our lives. Research has shown the mindset to be linked with productivity, motivation and loyalty.

With motivation being especially important in today's working world, if you can manage to achieve this 'flow', you will reap the benefits in all aspects of your life.

Work Towards a Goal

In early 2019, I noticed I was getting reasonably fast at solving the cube - around the nine-second mark. This was getting close to the national record for single and average solve time, and as soon as I knew that was in reach, I wanted it.

Having a clear goal gave my training purpose: I knew what it was I was working towards and what I needed to achieve to beat it.

This not only renewed my focus and motivation, but I ended up beating the record. This is not only a great life lesson to learn, but also something that can be applied to pretty much anything: have a goal, visualise how you're going to achieve it, then work towards it.

It might take some time and you'll definitely need to work at it, but once you get there, there's a great sense of satisfaction.

Then you can reset, and work towards your next

goal.

Learning to cube has brought me many great things, including some valuable life lessons for both in and outside of work. Strategy games like this are becoming increasingly popular and it's easy to see why. The benefits go far beyond just play, and the techniques you learn become useful tools that help you take on each day.

To catch Chris and the other Red Bull Rubik's Cube World Cup finalists in action, tune into <https://www.twitch.tv/redbull> on Saturday November 7th.

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