

## **Episode #16: How to Manage Difficult Career Situations**

Welcome to THE CAREER ACCELERATOR, the podcast where corporate managers will find tips and tools to deliver results through others.

Hello. In today's episode you will hear tips on how to manage difficult career situations. I'm your host, coach Percy Cannon.

In our last episode you heard an example of how to be proactive and ask for support from your boss to help you achieve important business or organizational objectives.

I suggested not to be shy about it. And as outlined in previous episodes, I reminded you of the importance of identifying "What's in it for your boss" when you ask for their support.

In the anecdote I shared, one of the managers on my team wanted to bring-in somebody whom he considered to be a very talented employee. He knew this would be a clear win-win for him and for myself as his boss.

Today, I will share how I managed a difficult situation in my corporate career, and the lessons I learned both from what I had done right, and what I should have done better.

Imagine you are the pilot of an airplane about to take off. Your engines are ready to accelerate the plane. However, unless all three sets of wheels are operational, the plane will never take-off.

Likewise, as we have seen in previous episodes, if your plans do not involve three clearly defined audiences—your direct reports, your peers and even your boss—it will be very hard to deliver your performance objectives and accelerate your career growth.

These three sets of wheels—your three audiences—can help you as long as you start with the mindset of finding out "WHAT'S IN IT FOR THEM".

Some of the tips we've covered in previous episodes of this podcast will help you:

- gain the trust of these three audiences,
- learn how to treat them the way they, not you, want to be treated, and
- add value to every person you interact with at work, and—as a result of this—you'll be adding value to your company.

On this last point, and especially with your bosses, I have stressed the importance of ensuring they clearly perceive the value you are adding. Remember, value is what your boss perceives is of value, not necessarily what you think is of value, nor what you think your boss should think is of value. Always remember, it's about what's in it for your boss. You should constantly clarify and update what your boss expects from you.

But what happens if you've engaged all three wheels for a successful liftoff—and you run into a mid-air emergency?

That happened to me 15 years into my corporate career.

I had back-to-back promotions and several international assignments under my belt. Life was good. I thought I had the job for life.

And then, on a cold April afternoon, a vice president, my boss, called me into his office and gave me a dreadful notice: they were merging the company I headed with another one, and they were choosing the other general manager to lead the consolidated company. My job was going to disappear in three months.

I was completely caught by surprise. How could this happen to me, someone who thought of himself as a “high-flier” corporate manager? How could I be tossed aside?

The following days and weeks were awful. I went from denial, to secrecy, to feeling like a victim. I was not managing the mid-air emergency well.

Before the news of my departure was announced publicly, an ex-boss somehow found out about it. She said: “How can I help? I have acquaintances in high places in companies around the world.”

For several months she relentlessly sent me referrals. I followed up with every one of them. I made phone calls, sent emails and faxes, and hopped onto airplanes to meet connections and hold interviews.

One of the several executives I spoke with found a potential fit with a new role that was being created in his company, so he referred me to the hiring manager. After an extensive interview process, I landed the job. It took me eight long months to address my mid-air emergency.

The process taught me three core lessons on which I based the rest of my corporate career and my current coaching practice:

1. The first one is, **assume 100% accountability for managing your career**. As you have been hearing from me in The Career Accelerator podcast, achieving results through others can indeed accelerate your career growth. However, don't make the same mistake I made thinking that this would be enough to guarantee perpetual employment with the same company. As I was once reminded by a senior executive, beware that at some point we all will reach a plateau in an organization. That's why it's so important to become a professional student and an expert networker.
2. The second lesson I learned was to **be humble**. Admit your mistakes. Recognize your weaknesses. Ask for help when needed. Accept help when offered.
3. And last but not least, **become more people-oriented**. Be a manager-coach with your Direct Reports. Do not be indifferent to anyone who needs career advice. Volunteer to mentor junior employees. Offer to help those looking for a job.

Don't wait until you experience a mid-air emergency to proactively apply one or more of these lessons.

I hope you enjoyed today's episode. In the next one, we will cover tips on how to improve your networking results.

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This is coach Percy Cannon, working to help you *make the rest of your life...the best of your life®*.

Thank you for listening to THE CAREER ACCELERATOR, the podcast where corporate managers will find tips and tools to deliver results through others. Stay tuned for our next episode!

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#### Percy's BIO

Percy provides corporate managers and leadership teams with customized coaching programs that help them develop the skills and capabilities needed to significantly increase their business results through others and accelerate their career growth.

Percy is an "alumnus" from three multinational corporations, Procter & Gamble, IBM & Microsoft, with whom he spent close to three decades.

Since 2011 he has been helping corporate executives, managers and employees *make the rest of their life...the best of their life®*.

Percy has worked in the United States and across several countries in Latin America as an Executive Coach, Leadership Team Consultant and Keynote Speaker, serving companies such as Microsoft, Procter & Gamble, Citibank, Tiffany & Avianca.

Percy is a Certified Professional Coach from Wainwright Global, Authorized Partner for "The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team" and "Everything DiSC" and certified as a "Go-Giver" speaker & coach.

He published his first book in 2012-13 in English (*The Business Apostolate: Insights to Define and Achieve Your Mission in Life*) and in Spanish (*El Negocio Más Grande de su Vida*).

Percy is a Consulting Partner with Grupo Azimuth and the Chapter Director for the COO Forum in Southeast Florida.

He has lived in 9 different cities and 5 countries, and speaks English, Spanish and Portuguese fluently.

Percy is married, has 3 children and 6 grandchildren, and is a passionate runner & reader.

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