

## **Episode #25: Tips to Become a Multiplier**

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

Hello. Today I want to provide three tips on how to become a multiplier, building on the excellent book from Liz Wiseman, *Multipliers: How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter*. I'm your host, coach Percy Cannon.

In our last three episodes I covered the three drivers of dissatisfaction at work outlined by the bestselling author Patrick Lencioni in his book *The Truth about Employee Engagement*. They were:

1. The feeling of anonymity, which happens when a manager doesn't really know the employee.
2. The lack of relevance of one's job, where it is not clear to the employee how their job matters to somebody.
3. The absence of a clear way for the employee to assess and measure the success or failure of their work.

I invited you, as a manager, to tap into the huge upside potential of addressing these three drivers of disengagement by getting to know your employees, clarifying how their job is relevant, and agreeing with them on how they can measure, on their own, the progress of their work.

Remember, now, more than ever, you have to take care of the human component of your employees.

Today I want to talk about Multipliers and Diminishers.

Two decades ago, I was invited to participate in a two-day leadership development event sponsored by the company I was working for at the time. On the one hand, I felt honored to had been included in the short list of some 60 participants from the Americas. On the other hand, I didn't really know what to expect. No prework had been requested, and little information had been provided on the agenda ahead of time.

Day one started with the host of the program, the Global Sales & Marketing VP of my division, explaining that several senior executives in the company would be sharing their personal stories with us on how they made it to their current positions.

At mid-afternoon the host VP came back on stage and shared that there were three business challenges that kept him awake at night. He gave us a brief overview of the three challenges and requested that we work on them for the rest of the day.

He said that day two would be allocated to hearing the proposals from each group on how to solve their assigned challenge. He also said that other senior executives would be listening to our presentations, and that he was looking forward to receiving some innovative solutions.

With this, he left the stage. The facilitators immediately split us into small groups, assigned the topic we were to work on, and ushered us into meeting rooms.

After a round of introductions from the group, each person was requested to share their initial ideas on the assigned topic. I chose to go last, as I wasn't sure I had anything meaningful to add. And I rapidly realized that our VP was not alone: Most in the group didn't know how to address our assigned challenge either.

When it was my turn to speak, I confessed that the only thing I could add to the discussion was that somebody on my team had started a small pilot test a couple of weeks before. They were adapting a program that could potentially be used to address our assigned topic, but we didn't have any results to report yet.

No sooner had the suggestion left my mouth, I started receiving all kinds of questions about our pilot test. It seemed it was the only potentially feasible idea to fulfill the challenge raised by our VP. I was invited to represent our group in the main session the following day. Two or three of my other colleagues would build on my program with other ideas they had.

I wasn't quite sure if my small pilot test would meet the expectations of my VP and the other senior executives, but it seemed it was all that we had going for us.

The following day our team was chosen to present first. Somewhat timidly, I started with our presentation, not quite confident of the attractiveness of our proposal. After only a few minutes into it, our VP requested me to stop my presentation. He asked me to go back to a slide where I had shown the expected sales revenue that could be generated out of this pilot test in Latin America, which was my geographical area of responsibility back then. He wanted to understand how I had estimated it. I wasn't quite sure where he was heading with this line of questioning, so I kept answering the questions he was throwing at me. He then inquired about the size of the Latin America market relative to the global one. As I answered this last question, I started to realize where he was heading. He had quickly made some calculations in his head and was asking me to validate his math. He had extrapolated my revenue estimation to the global markets and had come up with a huge number.

Upon finishing our short presentation, he requested me to speak to one of his lieutenants. He wanted him to review the details of our small pilot test and validate the VP's enthusiasm to expand this pilot test globally. I spoke with his lieutenant who, after validating the data and calculations, requested that I move to headquarters to expand my small pilot test to the rest of the countries where our company had operations.

I accepted the offer and adjusted the pilot test for global expansion. Fortunately, the original program and a second version of it delivered very good results.

My Sales & Marketing VP acted as a multiplier. In her book, Liz Wiseman defines Multipliers as those who increase intelligence in the people and organizations in which they interact. On the other hand, she says Diminishers are typically absorbed in their own intelligence. They underuse the people they work with and tend to leave capability on the table.

Wiseman reports that, “by extracting people’s full capability, Multipliers get twice the capability from people as do Diminishers.” She outlines five behaviors displayed by multipliers, most of which were exhibited by my ex-VP in the personal anecdote I just shared with you:

1. Multipliers attract, develop, and optimize talent. My VP sponsored the training event with a clear goal of developing a group of managers in his organization.
2. Multipliers require people’s best thinking. My VP was transparent by letting us know that he had not yet been able to solve those three business problems. He was looking for fresh, out-of-the-box ideas.
3. Multipliers challenge their people. Connected to the previous point, my VP challenged all of us to solve a set of problems that kept him awake at night.
4. Multipliers promote healthy debate on key decisions. Our group did not have a lot of options to debate, but once we found one potentially good idea, everybody tried to build on their respective experiences to make a winner out of it, however small it initially seemed.
5. And lastly, multipliers instill accountability. My VP held me accountable for figuring out a successful way to globally expand my small pilot test program.

Diminishers, on the other hand, tend to display the following behaviors:

1. They show creative and innovative thinking, and believe they are stimulating ideas in their people.
2. They are dynamic and charismatic, and think they are spreading their energy broadly.
3. They are empathic leaders who are quick to rescue their people when struggling.
4. They are high achievers, action-oriented, and optimists. They lead by example and expect others to follow.
5. They shield their people from problems.

I have three suggestions to help you develop your Multiplier muscles and avoid the behaviors displayed by Diminishers:

1. Find executives or managers who display most or all of the multiplier behaviors. How do they do it? Any chance of asking one of them to become your mentor?
2. Rate yourself in each one of the five multiplier behaviors. A simple high-medium-low scale should be enough to prioritize your personal development efforts. You may choose to focus on a strength that is helping you deliver important results. Conversely, you may decide to pick a weak behavior which, if not addressed, can severely derail your career growth.

3. Likewise, determine if you have any Diminisher behaviors and develop a plan to fix them. Consider seeking feedback from your boss, peers, and direct reports, as you may not be aware of these development opportunities. Understand how your natural tendencies and preferences can be taking you down the wrong path. You can also try to do less and challenge more. Do less talking, convincing, and rescuing of others who may need to learn the hard lessons on their own.

You have a choice of which type of leader you want to be. Apply one or more of my three suggestions to define where you want to focus your improvement efforts in the months to come.

I hope you enjoyed today's episode. In the next one, I will share the top three characteristics of a successful manager. If you like what you heard today, and depending on the platform you're using, let me ask you to please rate, subscribe or follow this podcast and share it with your coworkers and friends. Also, you can request a free coaching call with me by visiting my website at [www.cannon.consulting](http://www.cannon.consulting), or if available in this platform, using the link provided in the Details section.

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

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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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