

## **Episode #26: The Top Three Characteristics of a Successful Manager**

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 share with you what I consider to be the top three characteristics of a successful manager. I'm your host, coach Percy Cannon.

In our last episode I covered the concepts of Multipliers and Diminishers, based on the definitions from Liz Wiseman in her book, *Multipliers*. Multipliers tend to increase intelligence in the people and organizations in which they interact. Conversely, Diminishers tend to be absorbed in their own intelligence. They underuse the people they work with and tend to leave capability on the table. I shared three suggestions that can 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.
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 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.

Today I want to talk about the top three strengths I have observed in successful managers, both during my close to three decades inside the corporate world, and throughout the last ten years as an executive and team coach. Before I start, I want to clarify that this is by no means a comprehensive list. A lot has been written on leadership and management. What I want to do is share the top three highlights of what I have seen in the large sample of managers I have worked for and with.

1. **Successful managers are strong leaders.** They should first be crystal clear on where they envision themselves and their area of responsibility in the future. After this, they should “sell” this vision of the future to those people with whom they wish to be followed by. History has shown several examples of leaders whose vision of the future was so clear and persuasive that those who were invited to follow them did so. One of them is Winston Churchill. He led Great Britain into World War II with his famous line of “We will never surrender.” A second one is Mother Teresa of Calcutta’s commitment to “serve the poorest of the poor.” To this day, thousands of women continue to follow her leadership in dozens of countries. An example closer to you is to practice “bottom-up” leadership with your boss. Have you detected an opportunity to improve your area of responsibility? Have you developed a solution for it? What can you do to “sell” this improvement to your boss so he or she treats it as a priority? Is there a way to make it a win-win proposition for your boss and you?

Regardless of your current position in the organization chart, look for the opportunity to practice bottom-up leadership with your boss. In fact, I invite you to make it a personal goal to come up with at least one such initiative in the remaining months of 2020, for implementation in 2021. Can you commit to this right now?

2. **Successful managers are effective manager-coaches.** In a previous episode I highlighted the key difference between the mindset of an individual contributor and a manager. Individual contributors tend to rely mostly on themselves to deliver their performance objectives. Managers, on the other hand, need to rely on their direct reports, their peers from other areas, and even their boss to achieve their objectives. From these three groups, managers can have the biggest leverage through their direct reports.

You can influence them either through the old school way of “carrot and stick” or by coaching them. Throughout my early years inside the corporate world, I was fortunate to have excellent manager-coaches. One of them coached me by brainstorming with me. He would call me to his office, share a business challenge we were facing, then switch to brainstorm mode. Throughout these sessions, he would coach me on different business concepts and procedures. He would even explain how to approach different company players in order to develop good relationships with them. Another manager coached me on how to make presentations to senior management. One of such tips was to start presentations by providing the context of the decision to be made and then move from the big picture to the details.

Make coaching part of your daily routine. Look for the opportunities to teach your employees something, big or small, formally or informally, every day. Make yourself always available so they can initiate a coaching moment from you on demand. The time and energy you invest in your employees will have a high rate of return for you, especially now that most of them are working remotely.

3. **And of course, successful managers are strong team players.** If you are like most corporate employees, you belong to several teams and spend an important portion of your day in team meetings. You may lead some of these teams and be a participant in others. In either case, you are trying to obtain results through others.

In a previous episode I referenced *The Ideal Team Player* model from best-selling author Patrick Lencioni, where he presents three virtues that can elevate your team-playing capabilities:

- **The first virtue is to be humble.** I find managers struggle the most with this quality. It’s hard for them to admit their mistakes, ask for help, and praise others. Corporate cultures tend to reward individual over collective accomplishments, which makes it hard to show your vulnerabilities. However, being humble is a choice you can make and, for those of you who lead teams, you can role model.
- **The second virtue is to be hungry.** I find elements of this virtue in most successful managers: They are willing to go the extra mile to deliver results above expectations. However, the challenge I see is how to demonstrate this passion and personal responsibility not only for their individual objectives, but also for the greater good of the team.
- **And the third virtue of the ideal team player is to be people-smart.** This is about

active listening and showing empathy for other team members. It's also about treating others the way **THEY**, not **YOU**, want to be treated.

In summary, successful managers show the following three strengths:

1. Leading others, including their bosses,
2. Being effective manager-coaches for their direct reports, and
3. Knowing how to lead and participate in teams.

Work on building or growing one or more of these three strengths to become an even more successful manager.

I hope you enjoyed today's episode. In the next one, I will share tips on how to make difficult decisions. 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®***.

#### 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.

**He can be reached at [percy@cannon.consulting](mailto:percy@cannon.consulting).**