

Episode #38: How to Turn Your Organization into a Competitive Advantage in 2021, Part 3

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

Hello. Today I will cover the last two steps that can help you turn your organization into a competitive advantage in 2021.

I'm your host, coach Percy Cannon.

In our last two episodes I shared an overview of Patrick Lencioni's program, "Organizational Health", which he outlines in his book *The Advantage*.

A healthy organization is one that has minimized politics and confusion. This translates into higher productivity and employee morale. It also results in a lower attrition of good people.

A healthy organization can become a positive catalyst to accelerate the impact of the company's financial, technical, intellectual, and other types of assets.

Conversely, an unhealthy organization, with its politics and lack of clarity can act as a negative catalyst, slowing down progress and hindering success.

In the last two episodes I dove deeper into the first two of the four steps outlined in this model:

1. **The first step is to achieve behavioral alignment within the Leadership Team** in order to operate in a functional and cohesive way. To accomplish this, a leadership team should practice five concrete behaviors:
 - a. The first one is to reach vulnerability-based trust, where every team member has to be comfortable asking for help. No one should be afraid of saying I don't know the answer or I'm not good at this.
 - b. Trust enables the team to perform the second behavior, which is to be comfortable engaging in conflict. If there's trust, each team member can participate in productive and unfiltered debate about the different alternatives being evaluated. When there's no trust, there's no conflict and no getting to the best possible decision.
 - c. Conflict is important because it helps a team to achieve commitment. We shouldn't passively commit to a decision through a timid okay. Instead, every person should know that they have given their point of view, it has been debated, and they can confidently walk out of the meeting room, real or virtual, 100% committed and aligned to the decision that was made by the team.
 - d. Commitment is critical because it facilitates the fourth behavior, where team members hold each other accountable for adhering to agreed-upon actions and behaviors.

- e. The fifth behavior is prioritizing the collective results of the team, instead of the goals of your department or your own career or personal interests.

Practicing these five behaviors in your team is the first step toward achieving a competitive advantage.

2. **The second step is to ensure that leadership team members are crystal clear and 100% intellectually aligned** around six simple but critical questions:

1. WHY DO WE EXIST? What's our core purpose?
2. HOW DO WE BEHAVE? What are our top three core values?
3. WHAT DO WE DO? What is it that the organization does?
4. HOW DO WE SUCCEED? What are the top three strategic anchors that will make the organization win?
5. WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT, RIGHT NOW? What is the Thematic Goal that will represent the number #1 priority for the team in the next three to twelve months?
6. WHO NEEDS TO DO WHAT? Are you and everybody else in the team clear and aligned on their roles and responsibilities?

Once your team is united behind the right behaviors and intellectually aligned and clear on the answers to these six questions, you are ready to move to the final two steps of achieving organizational health.

3. **The third step is to over-communicate the answers to the six questions.** Leaders of a healthy organization constantly repeat themselves and reinforce the answers to and implications of these six questions. They always err on the side of saying too much, rather than too little.

Even if you are not the number one person in your organization, you can still apply this principle to your team meetings. Reserve the last five minutes of any meeting you lead to make sure all participants agree on the messages that each of you will share with your respective employees. Just as important, you should ensure that everyone agrees on what part of the meeting, if any, should NOT be shared.

And even if you are attending a meeting but not leading it, you can still suggest at the end of the discussion that everyone should agree on what should and should not be shared.

4. **The fourth and final step to achieve organizational health is to ensure that the answers to the six critical questions are reinforced repeatedly using simple human and business tracking systems.** All those processes that involve people should support and emphasize the uniqueness of the organization, as defined by the answers to the six questions.

For example, as part of the interview process, you should continue to verify that the candidate has the technical and intellectual requirements for the position. But you should also

look for indicators of how well the candidate maps to your organization's core values, which is one of the six critical questions.

Similarly, when evaluating the performance of managers, have they delivered results only based on their individual skills and abilities, or have they done so through their direct reports, their peers and even through you as their boss?

In regard to business tracking processes and related meetings, managers should also be aligned with the six questions in step two, and especially question four, HOW WILL WE SUCCEED, and question five, WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT, RIGHT NOW.

If the answers to questions four and five are not central to the topics discussed in your meetings, then there is a clear disconnect that needs to be addressed right away.

In a previous podcast I suggested that you avoid "meeting stews", where different strategic, tactical and administrative topics are covered in one mega-meeting, usually called a "Staff Meeting". Instead, I proposed addressing tactical topics, usually related to question five, WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT RIGHT NOW", in separate and regularly scheduled meetings.

I also suggested that strategic issues, which are mostly related to question four, HOW WILL WE SUCCEED, can be addressed separately and individually every time a need for such discussion arises. For example, a candidate for this approach could be a key product or service that is consistently selling below objectives, or which is generating an increasingly higher number of customer complaints.

In summary, you can help your organization become a competitive advantage in 2021 by working on the following four steps:

1. Achieve behavioral alignment within the Leadership Team in order to operate in a functional and cohesive way,
2. Ensure that the leadership team members are crystal clear and 100% intellectually aligned around six simple but critical questions,
3. Over-communicate the answers to the six questions, and
4. Make sure that the answers to the six critical questions are reinforced repeatedly using simple human and business tracking systems.

Count on my help as needed.

I hope you enjoyed today's episode. In the next one, I will provide tips on how to thrive with your strengths and manage your weaknesses.

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, or if available in this platform, using the links provided in the notes 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 has been helping hundreds of corporate executives and their teams boost their leadership and teamwork capabilities over the past ten years.

Before this, Percy spent close to three decades working for three multinational corporations, Procter & Gamble, IBM & Microsoft, in the United States and across several countries in Latin America.

Percy is a Certified Professional Coach from Wainwright Global, Authorized Partner for "The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team" and "Everything DiSC", a Certified Go-Giver Speaker & Coach, and a practitioner of several methodologies from best-seller author Patrick Lencioni (e.g., "The Ideal Team Player", "The 6 Types of Working Genius", "Organizational Health" and others).

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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