

Episode #39: Should You Focus on Your Strengths or on Your Weaknesses in 2021?

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 tips on how to thrive with your strengths and manage your weaknesses in 2021.

I'm your host, coach Percy Cannon.

In our last three episodes I shared how you can help your organization become a competitive advantage in 2021, leveraging Patrick Lencioni's program, "Organizational Health", which he outlines in his book *The Advantage*.

I indicated that a healthy organization could 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, could act as a negative catalyst, slowing down progress and hindering success.

Your organization can become a competitive advantage in 2021 by working on the following four steps:

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

In a recent workshop where I was coaching a leadership team on this Organizational Health model, one of the participants asked me if they should focus on their strengths or weaknesses.

In an almost automatic way, I replied: "Focus on your strengths and manage your weaknesses."

Today I want to elaborate on this answer.

A couple of decades ago, when I was still working as a corporate executive, I was exposed to several of the concepts on strengths and weaknesses from bestselling author Marcus Buckingham.

There were two key lessons I learned from his work. The first was to focus on your strengths. He indicated that a strength starts with a natural talent and is augmented by learned skills and knowledge.

The second lesson I learned from Buckingham's work was to manage your weaknesses.

I realized that this approach was not practiced by corporations, and I am afraid it hasn't improved much since then. Take performance reviews as an example. What is the one area that you remember the most from your last review? Was it how to maximize your impact on the business through your strengths? Or was it to address your areas of opportunity, which is a more positive way of referring to your weaknesses?

My first suggestion to you is, as you can probably anticipate, to focus on your strengths.

The basic principle behind this suggestion is that the odds of successfully delivering on your performance objectives are much higher if you do so through your strengths. If you are in Sales, you'll succeed by building strong relationships with potential buyers and by understanding their needs. If you are in Finance or Engineering, you better be good with numbers. Aim to be really good on what your natural talents are. By doing so, you'll deliver better business results, and you'll enjoy your job more.

Likewise, consider developing the strengths of the people who report to you as a key priority to improving their impact on the business.

My second suggestion is, as you can probably also anticipate, to manage your weaknesses. I

want to call out the difference between FOCUSING on your strengths and MANAGING your weaknesses. FOCUS equals making it a top priority. MANAGE means assigning it a secondary priority. You can MANAGE your weaknesses by delegating related tasks to people on your team or colleagues who are more talented than you in those areas. If feasible, you can also try to redefine your responsibilities so that your exposure to these WEAKNESSES is minimized.

However, if you have a controlling WEAKNESS, one that is preventing you from delivering on your basic job description, then you may need to consider moving to another job where this particular weakness is not a critical part of your responsibilities.

And if you have people management or team leader responsibilities, consider applying the same suggestion to those reporting to you.

My third suggestion is to be crystal clear on which talents you have and which you don't.

Important? Yes. Too basic? Maybe. However, why risk it? With this knowledge you can look for jobs and responsibilities where most of your time and energy is spent on leveraging your talents, and where little to no time and energy is depleted on using talents that you do not have, those commonly called "weaknesses."

In previous episodes I introduced you to Patrick Lencioni's new model, "The 6 Types of Working Genius." The premise behind the model is that, when it comes to work, everyone has a set of talents they are naturally good at and which give them joy and energy. Lencioni calls these talents your "genius."

Instead of guessing what your genius is, Lencioni's model will help you understand how to discover your genius and implement it in your work. These talents are great candidates to become your strengths.

This model will also help you discover areas of frustration where you do not have a genius and should therefore employ on a limited basis. This second set of talents will most likely map to your weaknesses.

Let me explain what each of these six geniuses is:

1. The first one is the Genius of Wonder: People with this genius thrive by constantly asking WHY. They question whether things could be improved in the world that surrounds them.
2. The second genius is the Genius of Invention: This type of genius is all about creativity. People who have it love to generate new ideas and solutions to problems like those identified by people with the Genius of Wonder. But Inventors often require somebody to challenge their creation.
3. And that's the Genius of Discernment: People with this type of genius have amazing instincts. They connect the dots.
4. Once a good idea is solid enough, they need someone with the Genius of Galvanizing: This type of genius is about bringing energy and movement to an idea or decision. They however need somebody on the receiving end of their promoting...
5. ... which takes us to the fifth type of genius, the Genius of Enablement: People with this talent get things lifted off the ground. They are quick to respond to the needs of others by offering their cooperation and assistance with a project, program or effort.
6. But organizations also need the sixth and last genius, the Genius of Tenacity: Tenacity is all about pushing things across the finish line. They build on the work done by the Enablers to ensure that a project, program or effort is taken to completion and achieves the desired result.

If you want to leverage the “The Six Types of Working Genius” model to learn about your natural talents, I invite you to get started by taking the assessment at Lencioni’s website: www.tablegroup.com. Use the introductory promotional code ATTHETABLE (in CAPS, no spaces in-between) at checkout to get a 50% discount.

This model will help you identify the type of work that will maximize your strengths and manage your weaknesses.

Count on my help as needed.

I hope you enjoyed today’s episode. In the next one, I will provide tips on how to define the core values within a leadership team.

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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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