

Episode #52: Are You Strengthening or Weakening Your Organization's Culture?

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

In today's podcast I suggest three tips to strengthen your organizational culture.

I'm your host, coach Percy Cannon.

In our last episode I shared the interview I had with Maria Eugenia Gonzalez, General Manager of Citibank in Peru, South America.

Maria shared several interesting aspects of her life, such as how she managed the concurrent events of receiving a promotion at work and learning of her late husband's stage four cancer diagnosis, how she balanced work with raising her two kids, and how she made it to General Manager.

If you haven't listened to this interview, don't miss out.

Switching to today's topic, I want to challenge you to reflect on three instances where you could be potentially weakening your organization's culture.

- 1. The first challenge is: Do you have a written list of the core values in your organization?** If you don't, you run the risk of having a culture where employees will have to figure out, on their own, which values are important. Scary scenario? Starting with the CEO, and moving down to his or her leadership team, each one will prioritize those values that they perceive to be right.
Fortunately, most companies have a list of core values, which are usually posted on their websites. Unfortunately, this may not be enough to strengthen your culture.
- 2. This takes us to the second challenge: Are you a role model for your organization's core values?** If someone were to "shadow" you for a week, would this "viewer" conclude that your behaviors are consistent with your organization's values?
For example, one of your corporate values may be assigning top priority to your people. What would this viewer see when you hold one-on-one conversations with your direct reports? Are you listening closely to their words? Are you paying attention to their body language? Are you trying to get a sense of their emotional state?
In a recent coaching conversation with a client, she shared a piece of advice received from one of her previous managers. Her manager advised her that, when holding an in-person business conversation with an external constituent, she should close her laptop and take notes with a pen and paper. This would help her focus 100% on the other person and convey the message that she is truly engaged in the conversation.

What a great tip!

The same principle applies to you now, where most of the conversations continue to be via Teams or Zoom. Would this viewer see you holding your conversations with your camera on or off? Would you be checking your email or phone while you talk with the other person?

The next time you meet with somebody else, in person or remotely, think about how you can show them you truly care about what they are saying to you. And don't stop there. Make it a priority to become a role model for those values you want others to embrace.

3. **And the third challenge is: Are you holding your team members accountable to living those values?** In a previous podcast, I quoted a principle gathered from the book *Extreme Ownership*: "It's not what you preach, but what you tolerate." As a team leader or people manager, could it be that you advocate teamwork as a key cultural value, but reward only individual performance? And could it be that you tolerate the existence of silos in your organization, despite preaching the importance of teamwork?

Let me give you another example. Let's say your organization values punctuality. How does it feel when you are invited to a meeting, you show up on time and the leader waits a few minutes until most or all of the participants arrive? Worse yet, how do you feel when a meeting runs-over a few minutes and you are late for your next appointment?

Let me ask you: Do you behave the same way when you are the one running the meeting? Do you tolerate the lack of punctuality from others? If you do, consider how you can hold the late comers accountable for their tardiness. Here are a few suggestions:

- Start the meeting on time, and also end the meeting on time. Do this regardless of how many people arrived on time.
- Mention the name of each late comer as they join the meeting, indicating how many minutes they were late
- Charge a nominal monetary fine for each minute a person is late. This, of course, needs to have been agreed-upon ahead of time
- And a tougher action would be to not allow late comers to join the meeting. If it's a remote session, you can disable admission at any time. If it's in person, you can lock the door.

In any event, it's your choice what you tolerate or not tolerate.

Summarizing, today I wanted to challenge you to reflect on three instances where you could be potentially weakening your organization's culture.

1. Do you have a written list of the core values that your organization should follow?
2. If you do, are you a role model of these core values?
3. And do you hold your team members accountable to living these core values?

Your organization's culture is built by the way you and the rest of the leaders and employees behave. Beware that, bad behaviors tend to weigh more, a lot more, than the good ones. Do your best to model and reward the good behaviors and have zero tolerance for the bad ones.

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In our next episode I will share the top insights I gathered from the book *The Hero Factor* by Jeffrey Hayzlett.

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

Percy's BIO

Are you an executive or manager in a large corporation who wants to accelerate your career growth and promotability? Percy provides corporate executives, 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, DSM, Farmatodo & Avianca.

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 CAPA PRO member, the official consultant and practitioner alliance for several methodologies from best-seller author Patrick Lencioni (e.g., "Organizational Health", "The Ideal Team Player", "The 6 Types of Working Genius", "The Truth About Employee Engagement" and others).

Percy 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*). He launched his first iPhone & iPad application, *LifePlan*, in English & Spanish, in 2016, and his podcast, [The Career Accelerator](#), in May 2020.

He is a consulting partner at 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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