

Episode #53: Does Your Organization Value Profit *and* People?

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 pose the question: How does your organization value profit and people?

I'm your host, coach Percy Cannon.

In our last episode I challenged 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?

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

Switching to today's topic, I want to ask the following question: Does your organization value profit *and* people? This is one of the several questions raised by Jeffrey Hayzlett in his book *The Hero Factor*.

What I have seen in the last four decades, combining my time inside large corporations with my more recent experiences coaching corporate executives, is that the scale tilts toward profit versus people. Not by much and not all the time. However, when the financial results come under pressure, leaders may feel the pressure to prioritize short-term profit over people.

How can you, as a leader, find the right balance? Before answering this question, let me share two extreme sets of situations:

1. First extreme: The organization is all about profit.

- A salesperson does not meet the revenue targets two quarters in a row, so he or she is out.
- A plant worker causes the production line to stop, so he or she is reassigned to a more basic task or may be asked to leave.
- A company is bought by an investment fund and the number one, and only priority of this fund is to increase the famous EBITDA, which is the acronym for earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization.

Is this an exaggeration? Or have you witnessed similar cases?

2. Let's now go to the other extreme: The organization is all about people.

- A company commits to life-long job security for its employees. It may only fire people if there's a major ethical or compliance issue.
- A company focuses mostly on customer satisfaction, and its pricing may not always cover the internal cost structure required for this.

Is this also an exaggeration? Or have you seen similar instances?

I don't think either extreme is the right way to go. I think a balance between profit and people should be the target. Should it be heavier on profit versus people? Or the opposite, more emphasis on the people versus profits?

Rather than trying to come up with a magical formula, let me share two personal examples of organizations that have, in my view, achieved a balance between profit and people:

1. **The first example comes from my first employer, Procter & Gamble.** Throughout the responsibilities I had during my 15 years with P&G, it was crystal clear to me that I needed to deliver BOTH profit and people contributions. It was not one or the other. It was BOTH. And as my responsibilities grew, so did my accountability to produce concrete and ongoing profit and people results. In fact, I remember how, as a general manager, I was held accountable not only for the P&L, my key financial responsibility, but also for how many people who reported to me had progressed to senior roles.
Would a similar approach work for you?

2. **The second example of achieving a balance of profit and people comes from a coaching program I conducted with a group of executives within a large corporation.** For each coachee, I received a set of expectations from their respective managers and HR. These expectations centered around how the coachees could improve their impact on BOTH the business and the teams they led.
However, there was one factor that made this process stand out versus other programs I had conducted. It was how engaged and committed the managers and HR were to the success of these coaching programs. Unlike other organizations I had worked with as a coach, the managers and HR in this company proactively teamed up with me by raising the bar on what improvements they expected from the employees and making sure the coachees understood the progress required from them as a result of this program.

Summarizing, today I wanted to raise your awareness of how your organization values and balances profit and people. I outlined what the two extremes could look like in an organization: one with a heavy focus on profits and the other centered on people.

I also gave you two personal examples of organizations that proactively valued and balanced both profit and people.

Are you satisfied with the balance between profit and people that, implicitly or explicitly, your organization expects from you? Is there any room for improvement? Even if you can't change the balance for the whole organization, is there any room for yourself or your team to rebalance between profit and people?

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In our next episode I will start a series of principles that can help you and your team successfully transition from remote to hybrid or in-person work arrangements.

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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