

2016 – VOLUME 3 COMPLETE EDITION



**"Branches & Roots": A Look at Strategy and
Competition through the Lens of Business and Sport**





Branches & Roots: V3:E1, Your Next Step

1/3/2016

Happy New Year! We led off 2015 with an inspirational poem that resonated with many. We decided to kick off our third year of Branches & Roots with a new creation, focused around the different types of teams we often write about. We look forward to partnering with you in 2016.

Here we go!

Drew & Sara

Your Next Step

How will you take on the New Year?
An ominous thought no doubt.
The tasks are many and the time is dear.
Chart a course, and take the First Step.

What will your key partner need?
Potato sack races require harmony.
Understand each other through word and deed.
Listen first, agree on a goal, and take the Next Step.

How could this year make your small team take flight?
A group fed by two pizzas is sized for success.
The V8 engine roars when the timing is right.
Learn each others strengths and habits, and take the Next Step.

Your whole group gathers and agendas abound.
Leading from the front can find you alone.
Seek the middle, where the council is found.
Align the interests, and take the Next Step.

Why should a community care about each other?
Aren't we made to quarrel and fight?
Don't let the news steal the joy and smother.
Find that common why, bond together, and take a Collective Step.

Our interactions with others come in many forms and sizes.
Projects are ongoing or maybe starting anew.
Team dynamics are hard work until one realizes,
Finishing the job right is what they are meant to do.

Let's Do Something Great....



Branches & Roots: V4:E3, Don't Forget the Followers

2/15/2016

If stimulation and activity can make a day pass more quickly, than it stands to reason that the first 45 days of 2016 have been a blur. The world is in play, the start of the year has most groups advancing their agendas, and it would appear some decade old economic plates are shifting. This combined with the fact that you have a super computer on your person at all times can make us feel compelled to be up to speed with everything, the consequences can lead to feeling busy but getting nowhere. Fortunately with the right technology and some personal awareness, we can set up filters to maintain our productivity and make the best contribution possible.

Several ideas and conversation threads began to emerge from our meetings and we would like to share with you our findings, and when you have a minute we would appreciate [your comments](#) and educated perspective. We start by looking at the strength of having a common mission when it comes to helping disparate groups come together for success. A different set of meetings had us looking more closely at what it takes to be a good follower, and we close by asking you how long it takes your team to deal with conflict.

Keep the Lava Flowing

Take the business or effort that you are most committed to and think how long it would last if you left it unattended. Would your business last one day, one week, one month, or longer if you stopped calling on your customers? Could your customer get the service or product you provide someplace else? Given the maturity of most of our markets and the competitive landscape the answer can be quite short. We have used this example in several settings to help leaders share with their constituents and team members just how diligently we must care for our causes. An image that appears to accompany this thought nicely is that of an island in the middle of the ocean. As long as the lava is flowing the island is growing, once it stops the ocean starts to win the battle and eventually the island is gone. In our metaphor, the lava is the idea that binds and gives life to the effort. As time marches forward many people lose sight of the idea, and assume that the lava will always flow. Into this setting a simple question might be of use to you. What is the mission? Without the proper gravity applied to the situation, answers to what is the mission will favor the flippant and glib, so be sure to lay the correct foundation. Then sit back and listen to all parties, and hone in on the common elements that can be agreed on to keep the lava flowing. Teams come in all shapes, sizes, and styles in how they succeed, yet most have a common mission or idea that they sell both inside and outside the organization. If you are a leader of any type, we are curious what you will hear when you ask, what is the mission?



Good Followers Make Good Leaders

It is hard to go five minutes in America today and not hear about the need for better leaders. Most organizations are consistently messaging how they will help you become a better leader, and the word management has become the anti-thesis to leadership. Yet to lead anyone other than yourself you actually need someone else to commit to following you. On that topic, we have read, seen, or heard very little. Why is this? Should you care about it? How might it benefit you to be able to follow and lead as the situation fits?

The lack of attention with following might be tied to the disruption that software and long tail businesses have been having on the established norms in the past few decades. Yet disruption by technology easily goes back to the time of Martin Luther and the Gutenberg press ([Clay Shirky's Ted Talk is a good example](#)). It turns out humans grow tired of being forced to follow leaders and companies that gain an advantage and then force it upon the world. Freedom of choice and free will are glorious, and technology is affording many the chance to lead themselves. Yet eventually we do have some plumbing and infrastructure issues that require group cohesion, and we get back to the notion of following.

Pick a group situation like a youth sports team 16 weeks in duration, or your current employer, or your city's recreation and parks department. Without a clear plan for leading and following, chaos reigns. It is here where we offer some insights for you to consider and hopefully comment. A member of the team, company, or town might be thinking they have customer rights as if they are staying at a Ritz Carlton hotel. We have found it can be healthier if they embody the spirit of a Salvation Army bell ringer at Christmas time, asking, how might I help the team today, and what can I do to make this a better team environment? Key traits we have noticed in all-star followers

are empathy, foresight, and encouragement.

What happens to us when we are tasked with following is we go through a process of seeing the needs of those around us, and learning how to keep thinking while someone else is in command. What you are thinking about is key for you to then train those who follow you when your turn comes to lead. We close this thought with a hope that you will see the benefits of following as a pathway to leading others more effectively in the future. Seek to make those around you better, understand the groups needs and advance the common cause and soon enough you will have more responsibility. At that point you may look around you and wish that you had been a better follower, who could now teach others what to do so you could focus on your role as leader.

How Big Is Your Conversational Graveyard?

All of us have a conversation or two that we have held off having because the cost benefit analysis did not add up in our mind. Any group of people who assemble will eventually have a misalignment of goals and conflict and emotion will enter the room. It is at this moment that our graveyard grows, or we address the issue and move forward more equipped to tackle the next conflict as a unit. Think about your own graveyard at work or at home, is yours bursting at the seams? Recently the team at Vital Smarts shared a video where they declared the health of an organization could be tied directly to the length of time it takes them to address conflicts.

Part of the reason we all have a graveyard is that emotion is one of hardest things for our body to process, and we decide that it is safer to bury it. The challenge is that conflicts don't dissolve, they fester. Situations arise where the old emotions reappear in an instant, and then everyone around you sits back to watch you squirm, or better yet give them a front row seat to a fireworks show. Building a conversational tool kit to manage these conflicts is one of the most empowering and career advancing things you can do for your team. It will also save your team hundreds of hours that aren't wasted with people talking about the latest battle, or from people working at half speed dealing with the emotions in their heads.

So look at your own conversational graveyard, and think about the story that is in your head with respect to the other party. Consider setting a goal of addressing it in the next week. Like a big project that is finished, a conflict resolved can be one of the most reenergizing feelings in the world, if you want some help, [give us a call](#) and we will share some tips we have learned that make tough conversations a little easier.

Thanks for collaborating with us and sharing your thoughts on these topics [here](#), and we will see you at the beginning of April.





Branches & Roots: V3:E3, Citius, Altius, Fortius

4/2/2016

Welcome to the second quarter of the year and the beginning of the last 45-days where work is still at the top of everyone's priority stack. Your efforts to make 2016 a success should be in full swing and with a good start under their belts, many will be looking to stay the course. It is at this exact moment that quite a bit of self-sabotage occurs as we look to strike a balance between overdoing it, letting off the gas too much, and losing our momentum. Thousands of athletes are counting down the days to the 31st Olympiad in Rio; many are swift, others are strong, and all are focused. Yet how will they spend the next 124 days competing with their best self and for those of us competing in the Olympics of life, how do we keep the flame of inspiration and effort lit over the long haul?

Having great relationships with others who we share commonalities in genes, interests, and abilities has shown to enhance the quality of our existence. Coming together as a group to form a cohesive team also helps us all to strive with. Striving with, or being with are common origins of the word "Competition" and in this issue we are going to look at concepts like culture, influence, and agreement as outcomes that can be improved when the principles of striving with are implemented. Speaking of competition, The Masters is this week and we end with a golf viewing tip for you, as the splendor of Augusta National hits your television.

Is Your Culture a WOW! Or a Whatever?

One of the benefits of helping companies work on turning groups of people into teams is that you get to visit a wide variety of settings and environments. A recent trip to a professional college had us buzzing and prompted the above title. This team of 125 teachers, administrators, and service staff were on fire from the very beginning of the two-day long all-hands meeting all the way until the end. Every member of the team was making a sacrifice to be present, and the business itself was closed the entire time. Thinking of the total cost to the enterprise would make most owners blink, yet like clockwork for years these days are reserved to fill up the tanks of the people that make the company tick. If your current culture is more of a Whatever these days than a Wow, see if implementing a few of these tips we gleaned will help.

An initial idea to consider is having a common way to signal the end of a situation or event. Most companies will have gatherings, and even with the best clock management they can run long. With attention spans waning you increase the chances of having the end of your meeting being a dud, which sends your people scattering and potentially lacking vigor. Consider having something everyone does together to officially signal moving on to the next task. Think of a football team clapping their hands as they break the huddle. Your group should have its own authentic act, but

as corny as it sounds it brings your people together.

Another tip is to allow your long-standing employees to talk about their experiences at the company. You will be shocked at how seriously they will take this, and it signals to everyone that commitment to the company is honored and appreciated. You needn't have a perfect culture to accomplish this, and the people you are honoring will have had challenges along the way. Regardless, this ceremony binds your people to each other and your enterprise.

Finally, give your new employees a chance to answer a few key questions in front of the group, and make sure they are made to feel very welcome. One of the questions can be serious enough to let the entire group know that not just anyone qualifies to be on this team, and we are all looking to make a contribution. We really liked the question; what do you intend to contribute to our purpose, mission, and objectives? As newcomers stand in front of a group of warm fellow teammates and are given a resounding ovation after they share their answer, you are well on your way to having a culture of Wow vs Whatever. Here is a [short video about how Zappos built a culture of Wow](#) in Las Vegas where the call center employees are motivated to keep customers on the phone longer....



Trailblazer Video Series - Under CEO Tony Hsieh's innovative leadership, Zappos leverages Net Promoter SystemSM to connect service to profit

Your Moment For Maximum Influence

This summer in Rio there will be moments where everything will be on the line and an announcer will say that the athlete must live with the consequences of the outcome for the rest of their lives. In almost all cases there will be only one gold medal awarded and the winner will have a moment that makes the difference in their victory. The tension captivates millions of viewers around the world, yet what about our lives and careers, do we have similar moments? We believe you do, and would like to outline two situations that you can look for to increase your ability to influence positive outcomes for your team.

The first moment occurs when a potential customer responds to your company's offer with a standard “no thank you” objection. Very few customers answer in the affirmative when first approached, and most offer a common objection. Unfortunately, many people within the company and even the sales people accept the response as a final adjudication. This may not be the final javelin throw in the Olympics, but it is still a moment for maximum influence because the candidate has engaged you in dialog by responding to your offer with a no. You have a split second to keep them in dialog and inside your funnel of potential customers, or risk having to come back and restart the process, and take the chance to get a second no out of them. Rational people are happy to say no once, but repeating themselves on any matter is certain to draw their ire. It is at this moment of “no thank you I already have a cpa” that your team should have planned a few key statements that will allow the prospect to look at their needs in a new light.

Winning in this setting is not an accident, good teams plan through the standard responses, have them cataloged and are prepared to keep a prospect in dialog just long enough to either move to the next step or establish clearly that they are not a prospect.

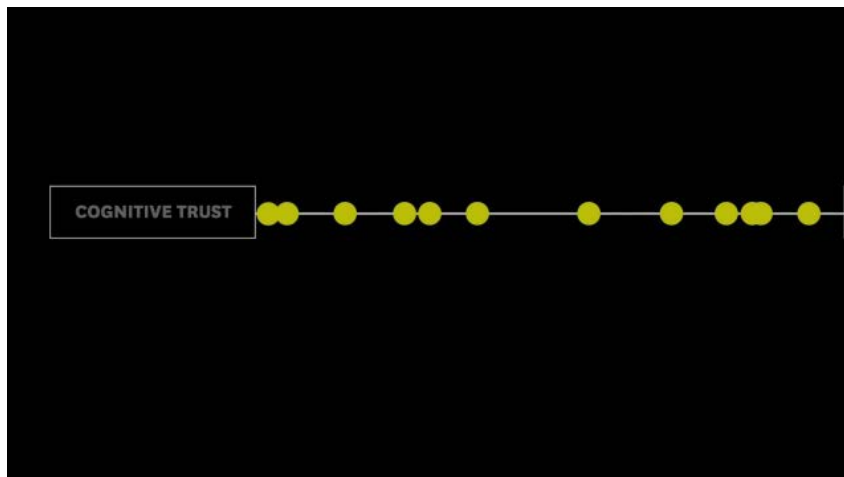
The second area is a derivative of the first, and has to do with how long it takes an organization to respond to a potential conflict or disagreement. If you are seeking advancement it is great to be known as someone who easily handles conflict without losing their cool. This is especially true if you are not endowed with great authority inside the group. A low power person who can navigate a disagreement between two parties is a future leader, and a company that addresses conflict quickly is going to outpace a similar company that prefers to bury their issues and hope they will disappear.

Having an eye for advancement and an ear for conflict should be accompanied with some training on how to maintain mutual respect and agree to mutual purpose, and in all cases, keep the dialog safe. In short, do not run into a burning building without a plan. Yet conflicts occur every day and being equipped to handle them will present you with moments for maximum influence.

Getting to Agreement When We Don't Even Celebrate the Same Way

No better example of culture clashes that make you fall out of your chair laughing exists than “My Big Fat Greek Wedding”. The image of the parents of the groom showing up to the “let's meet the other family before the wedding party” with a Bundt cake still makes us chuckle. But what about when things are a little tenser and the stakes are higher? [Dr. Erin Meyer has a new short](#)

[video](#) out on how we can improve our chances of working with other cultures and it begins by seeing and understanding the habits of other cultures when it comes to things like celebration and disagreement. Given the diversity of most work forces, sharing insight with your team about these fundamental differences should go a long way towards allowing everyone to agree, even when we might express our agreement differently.



What to Look for After Your Favorite Golfer Has Driven Down Magnolia Lane

Next week 92 golfers will be searching for their highest and best self to appear to wear a most coveted green jacket, and pick the menu for next year's champion's dinner at the Augusta National Golf Club. The rest of the golfing world will be watching in earnest to see who has the goods to get past Amen corner and close the deal to win the first men's major of 2016. If you are fortunate enough to watch the CBS broadcast, we suggest you pay particular attention to the dialog between the player and their caddy when they are picking a club. Golf at its highest level requires precise touch during a mildly violent act. Moving a stick around your body in such a way as to propel a golf ball hundreds of yards and to have it stop where you want it requires an athlete to have above all things; rhythm. One of the places we build rhythm is in the cadence of communication and movement prior to getting set over a shot, and that place can be a swamp of confusion when it comes to what club to hit and how to hit it.

Recent brain science is starting to show what part of the brain is working when we are thinking, speaking and visualizing. The question that our athletes appear to be answering for us as they play Augusta National is which part of the brain produces the best result. So this week as you are watching the telecast, tune out what the broadcasters are saying and see if you can watch the body language of the player and how it changes when they find it easy to get to a number vs when it takes them longer. If you spot something cool, make sure to [email us](#) and share your findings. We will be curious how long it takes Jason Day to get into the shot, he does a lot of eye fluttering. We will be listening to Phil Mickelson talk it up with Bones, he has a high twitch brain. In the end, we will also be listening to and rooting for Jordan Spieth, he rolls his ball with purpose.



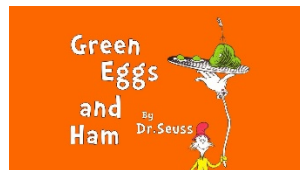
Branches & Roots: V3:E4, Eggs Anyone?

5/13/2016

Welcome to the final 45 days of the first half of 2016, a time of great expectation. Business deals need to close before summer starts, and the long days and warm evenings of June and July creep into even the most focused mind. Thoughtful leaders are aware of this dynamic, and are wise to let the thoughts simmer without boiling over. You can just hear the manager thinking, "Yes, let's dream a bit, but also finish our work as well, that customer would like to have our product before they go on their own vacation."

Into this short season we offer thoughts on how you can stay adaptable in the face of a new constraint, consider a fresh way to view the difference between power and influence, and what a flywheel can teach us about our network. We close with an entertaining video on how to best use Skype for a job interview.

Eggs Anyone?

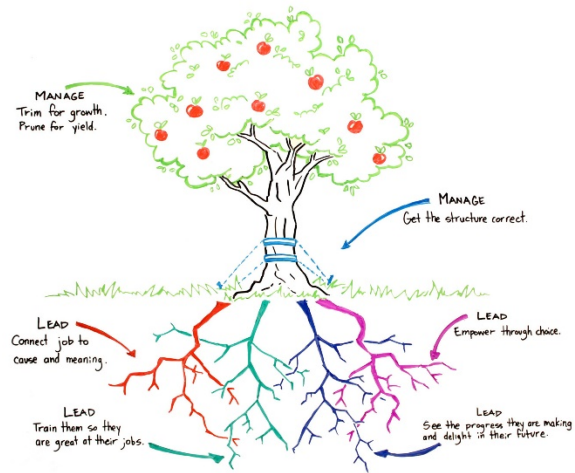


What does Dr. Seuss have to do with your ability to use a constraint to improve your performance? Well, it turns out most of us only have so much resolve to repeat a task over and over, and there is a point of diminishing returns with the "rinse, repeat" strategy of human learning. This is where the concept of adding a constraint to your practice enters our field of view. Most of us have acquired some level of skill to meet our consumption needs, and if we are fortunate we enjoy the tasks we are paid to perform. Yet the forces of [creative destruction](#) are high, and it pays to keep improving and adapting (anyone reading this on a blackberry??)

[A recent study](#) showed that when participants were given a constraint to their practice, their output increased over the average. A living example of this is the book "Green Eggs and Ham," which was written when Theodore Geisel was given the constraint of writing a children's book with no more than 50 words. A frequent way to think about this concept is in daily life, the moment something changes to the negative see if you can ask yourself, what is the advantage in my apparent disadvantage? Does this new constraint open an opportunity to enhance my performance?

Connecting this back to you and your team's production, how might you change up the practice and or rhythms of the group with a fresh constraint? How might thinking about changes this way improve both the resiliency and the adaptability of your team? Consider asking a few folks to diversify your data set and then [let us know](#) what you come up with.

YOU LEAD THEIR ROOTS. YOU MANAGE THEIR FRUIT.

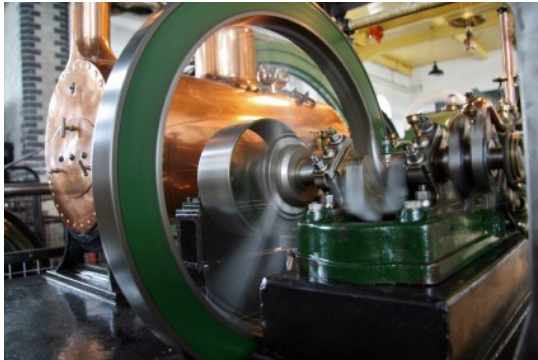


415-843-1216 DREW SANDERS @BANYANTREESTRAT @DAYNADRAWSTUFF

Power vs. Influence

Several years ago, our work led us to draw the Tree of Performance above as a way to illustrate the difference between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation for a group of managers who were struggling to hit their goals. The idea of the image is to give the person in charge an idea of how many more levers they must work with inside an individual, as opposed to the obvious "carrot and stick" behavioral outcome options. Recently, we began to return to this image to suggest to business owners and executives that when it comes to power and influence the same could be true. **Power** typically only extends to the end of where the holder can monitor and therefore control outcomes (think US Military in a foreign country like Korea.) **Influence**, however, moves freely around and under borders, and trades on a completely different exchange: that of human emotion. It is our "ism" that flies around the world confounding leaders, and this greatly adds to our influence. Capitalism speaks to the roots of a persons need for self-improvement as they climb Maslow's ladder.





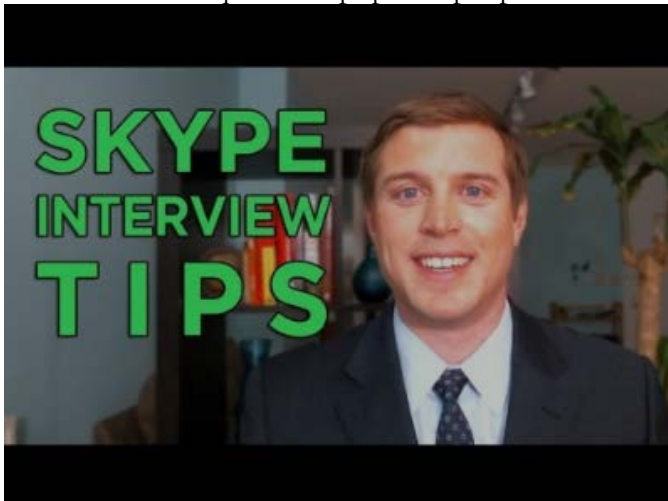
Your Personal Flywheel

If your network is the sum of all your shared experiences, and your production is the outcome of your efforts, then we would like you to consider that your [personal flywheel](#) is the combined influence of all of your connections. The great thing about having a network of people you have shared life experiences with is that they are a primary source on you and your character. Another benefit is that your network also

cares deeply about their own success, and they are actively growing their own careers. As the calendar year turns towards the summer months, consider allocating some of that lost time of production to feeding your relationships with genuine inquiries regarding well-being and current plans. [We wrote a white paper on this topic](#) so if it feels awkward, you can follow our script. The interaction with your network will keep your activity and acuity levels at game-ready speed at a time of year when things can slow down. The norms of reciprocity will also be in your favor, as you seek to understand what's new with them, they will return the inquiry. Give it a shot and [let us know](#) how it goes.

Video Interviewing

Video conferencing has been around for at least a decade, and for many it is received with a mixed bag of emotions. Do I really need to see you while we are talking? Do I stare at the screen or the camera? Can we please change the camera angle as I am distracted by seeing how awful I look? These and other questions pop into people's heads as reasons not to like video conferencing. Yet



the technology is not going away, and a company by the name of SKYPE has become a global standard for communication, and therefore it pays to understand how to use it effectively. With that in mind we share a very entertaining and short video on how to interview well on SKYPE. You may want to forward it on to a friend who is graduating from college, or watch it yourself for some helpful tips in video conferencing etiquette.

We close with the reminder, when change happens, what is your new advantage?



Branches & Roots: V3:E5, Conflict is King

7/3/2016

Happy 240th Birthday to America! As we think about our nation's birthday during an interesting political time here in the USA, World News has really dominated the last 45 days. Trying to shed light on all the scenarios in Europe is daunting, but if we use our lens of 'group into teams' we found some similarities in the happenings in London with what companies face when they don't fully engage all their constituencies. Henry Kissinger's paragraph in a [WSJ op-ed this week](#) synthesized it best for our tastes. "The coin of the realm for statesmen is not anguish or recrimination: it should be to transform setback into opportunity." Seems like you could change the word statesmen with coach, manager, leader, or parent and it still rings true.

The Fourth of July and the US 240th year had us thinking about anniversary numbers and things long past being relevant still today. We noticed that this is the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare's death. Historians have been helping us understand just how much our Presidents have been influenced by The Bard, even after 400 years. [Here is an interesting article](#) by Edward Rothstein.

The number 400 then had us leaping off to the upcoming anniversary of our country's discovery by Europeans in 1620. We started to wonder if there is anything we can learn from those early pioneers. Our research turned up something we found of interest. It turns out that even though this group of explorers had to be bound close together and cooperate in order to survive the journey, once they got here, [conflict reigned](#).

From a media perspective, conflict makes for good copy, and it appears that we are entering a period of well documented strife. This time around, however, thanks to the smart phone, we have three billion journalists jamming the endless channels. We wonder where a young Kissinger would find the opportunity in that?

Cat Scratch Fever

If a politician must communicate why they are the right person for the hour at hand, and we have for decades laughed at how they will say anything to get elected, then the time may have come for the mid-career professional to take a page from their book. Two economies, the old and the new, are crashing into each other with massive force and frequency these days. The collateral damage are the people who work as employees. The language we use to discuss how a company shrinks its employee base will always mask the harsh reality for the person who has been let go. Terms such as RIF (reduction in force), normalize, and other catchy explanations keep the people who remain comfortable in their seats, yet in the back of their mind they must be wondering: Am I next?

Recent engagements and meetings had us learning more and more about what a professional could

be communicating when it comes to their strengths and capabilities. We have named a new tool the Strategic Career Assessment Training, or SCAT. We are happy to share with you the basics of what have learned so far.

In brief, we all need to be able to communicate what our strengths are, what type of team player we are, where we work best, all wrapped up in the context of the market reality for the institution. Companies are adjusting to the needs of their customers every year, and this creates an opportunity for an individual who can articulate their value to the company's needs in the future.

While some of this may seem like timeless advice, the difference these days is the duration of the commitment. The more flexible the individual can be when engaging with an institution, the more they will be able to charge for their services. A large reason for this comes from the heavy government oversight companies face when it comes to the category of an employee, and how quickly customers are changing their mind. This keeps organizations reluctant to hire someone full time. The one-two punch of a fickle customer and a strict regulator can make any business

owner gun-shy.

Taking a page from a congressman who runs for re-election every two years, building your career with two-year tours of duty within a company appears attractive. How you articulate this and how you go about finding the right company to team up with now becomes a very important skill to have. Gone are the days of attending the best college possible, or to acquire the best training program possible from the largest company, and then not have to think about career positioning ever again. The frequency with which the professional will need to assess if a company is a good fit, and then communicate how their contribution will make the greatest impact, is on the rise.

We welcome your feedback on our one pager [here](#).

Hey Buddy, How About a Lyft?

If there ever was a shining example of adapting their individual talents to the needs of an enterprise in the context of a market reality, it has to be Shaquille O'Neal. A giant from the day he was born, Shaq dealt with all the hype that came with being "The Man" in college and then the pros. He handled the expectation and learned how to share the ball and won multiple NBA titles.

Recently he has joined the team at TNT to analyze NBA games with Charles Barkley and Kenny Smith. Shaq's voice is so low, you have to turn up the TV to hear what he says, but it is always worth it. He talks and preaches about "the others" and how you only win when you get the ball moving in all five players hands. He also is completely comfortable in his own skin, and uses humor as a fantastic motivator and collaborative elixir.

His recent marketing efforts with ride sharing company Lyft had us in stitches and even if you don't find this as funny as we do, consider how Shaq is using his attributes to his advantage and adapting to the market realities of the day. Well done Shaq!

We welcome any comments and have a fun and safe Fourth of July!





Branches & Roots: V3:E6, Membership Matters, Where Do You Belong?

8/25/2015

In a perfectly efficient world, we at Banyan would be able to know the first thing that popped into your head when you read the title: where do you belong? Collecting the data from several thousand people all at once would be amazing. We feel certain that you did have an answer, as we all belong to some sort of group. Families are groups, as are schools, sports teams, churches and with the Olympics ongoing it is hard to leave countries off this list. For most of 2016 we have started to notice another enterprise that is paying attention to our human need of belonging, and our strong sense of group. That group is the for-profit business.

As we head into the fall and the fast dash to finish 2016 on a high note, we thought we would share a few things we have noticed about our sense of belonging. Even though it is remaining as strong as ever, it seems that we are distributing it to more entities. We appear to be in a time of great expansion when it comes to options for membership. In our lifetime, we have gone from three TV channels and no remote to millions of options on YouTube. When it comes to your personal tastes in reading, our subscriptions have expanded from maybe a magazine or two, to hundreds of likes on Facebook that keep us connected to a brand or cause. It also looks like our belonging is expanding from the big three of family, religion, and country, to everything we purchase or consume.

As students of how groups become teams in both business, sport, and life, we thought a few quick vignettes on the expansion of the membership economy could be of use to you as you lead your collective teams.

The Power of Extending Membership to Someone Else

The Olympic Games in Rio have had a series of compelling story lines that accompany the stunning vistas of the Rio skyline, with none more heart wrenching than the delegation of refugees who are competing without a country. Think about that; they don't have a country. They don't belong to one of the big three groups. Yet here they are, competing under the Olympic flag. Is there a country in the world that wouldn't want an Olympian as a citizen?



Our guess is the prospects for these athletes are solid. They will find countries, and chances are they will contribute greater than some who were born into that nation. Being without something can make one cherish it when it is returned or found. This is exactly where we think business owners can make a difference in a person's life. When looking at your potential

employees, you are extending to them a chance to belong. They get to become a member of your team, and membership can lead to access and to success. As you are scanning the horizon seeking great talent to transform your company, keep an eye out for those scrappers who may be a tick light on talent, but will never undervalue access to your group.

Can Your Brand Connect into a Customer's Sense of Belonging?

If a brand is a promise wrapped up in an experience, and membership equals access to scarce resources, then the question is can your brand deliver a sought-after experience? An example is that anyone can go to Disneyland, but only the members get the back-stage conversation with Mickey and Minnie. In fact, Disneyland has its own executive training center that allows other companies to learn how they have created millions of members around the world who vacation almost exclusively at Disney properties. Talk about a small world...

Most companies would die to have this sense of connection with their customers. During segmenting their members, Disney still finds a way to make the person who bought the general admission ticket feel like their access to the Magic Kingdom is scarce. Brilliant! Our central question here is, how can we incentivize our customers to want to become members? If you are having success with this at your company, please [share with us here](#).

Book Review – A Book That Puts it All Together

[“The Membership Economy”](#) by Robbie Kellman Baxter

Silicon Valley consultant Robbie Baxter does an excellent job of outlining how different size companies can adapt to the emerging membership economy. She shares how to bootstrap your own idea all the way up to how Weight Watchers adapted to this new market reality. There are take a ways for how business owners should work with their employees and their customers. This is not just a book for the head of marketing, it is

applicable for any parent or grandparent as they look to stay current with how people's sense of belonging is driving their actions.

Final Thought

Going from the Big Three of Family, Religion, and Country to hundreds of affiliations can cause stress across the generations, if you get really stuck, take solace, at least you don't have it as bad as good ol' Charlie Brown...





Branches & Roots: V3:E7, Attitudes Are Contagious, Is Yours Worth Catching?

10/2/2016

The phrase "finishing strong" comes to mind as we peer around the corner at the next 45 days. Plans made for 2016 have been launched, challenged, met, and in many cases are almost complete. If your plans involved some stretch goals it is at this point in the year where the pain exists and the questions linger. Will we make it? Most of our readers are leading themselves and others through these active times, and if you ever wonder why you care about attitudes, we have found some research that backs up what your gut has been telling you all along. Energy transfers quickly between humans. Join us for a few quick looks at how some are improving in the area of team performance.

Trusting Your Spider Sense

How fast can you tell the mood of a room? How is it that in an instant we can pick up the buzz or the tone? Something in our make-up affords us this capacity, yet for decades' managers have dismissed the productivity benefits of person to person energy transfer when it comes to getting things done. Often the grumpiest person seems to be able to reign over all, and decide that smiling might hurt the bottom line. Culture-oriented advocates will run up against the dreaded "what it is the return on investment" and seldom have any real proof behind their soft skills training.

Recently Wayne Baker of the Michigan School of Business wrote a short piece for the Harvard Business Review titled "[The More you energize your coworkers, the better everyone performs.](#)" It proves that attitudes matter and can increase worker productivity. Baker writes about concepts like a reciprocity ring, and mapping relational energy, which have been effectively proven to increase the productivity of teams. We encourage everyone to click through to the different studies they have completed as you look to develop your own teams.

Colin Powell himself has stated that "perpetual optimism is a force multiplier" and if you are trying to get the team across finish line it doesn't hurt to re-read the [Little Engine That Could](#). Attitudes **ARE** contagious.

In Pursuit of Play

Something has been in the water in Seattle since 2010 when Pete Carroll took his "pursuit of play" practice methodology to the Seahawks. We think his work with [Michael Gervais](#) gets right to the heart of attitudes being contagious, especially in the highly negotiated world of NFL players practice time.

Every NFL athlete knows he is a going out of business sale, every down could be his last, and this

includes practice reps. Their finely tuned bodies must perform at the highest level or the system will produce the next man up. If that happens, the opportunity costs of being a professional athlete immediately start to show their ugly faces. Hidden by the fame and the glory is the difficulty in skill transfer to a non-sport, normal work activity. In short, NFL players have every incentive in the world to not want to practice hard. “Coach, I got this,” can be code for, why should I exert myself now if it is unclear how it is going to help me play well, and earn my next contract regardless of whether we win the game or not.

Talk about a tough culture nut to crack, yes you can scare them into practicing and try to force it. But Pete Carroll took an interesting flank into this problem. He asked the question, can we create a culture of people aspiring to be their best, and learning how to do that by competing with each other and their best self. At the core of this mindset is an attitude that is positive and adaptable, someone who is ready for anything. Gervais and Carroll have been tapping into their players imaginations and are passionately in pursuit of play. Think about your own teams, could you change things up a bit to develop a fresh perspective on learning to enhance performance? There is some good science to back this up that our friend [Dr. Glen Albaugh recently shared](#).

It's All on the Line at the Ryder Cup

The United States has won two of the last ten Ryder Cups. It's an ugly stat that very few in the golfing world are letting go unnoticed. Task forces have been formed, greats of the game have gotten into verbal skirmishes of how we should adapt, and it's been a mess.

Finally, we have the Ryder Cup the US **should** win, a huge golf course in the middle of the country, and the European team has six rookies. Yet the matches still must be played, and the putts holed. Right in the middle of the event lurks a hard truth. The Europeans like each other more, they play for each other, and they team up faster than the US side.

For us, a group of golfing, team creating, tinkerers, this is excellent theater. We are watching the following themes this weekend at the Ryder Cup, and are curious what you notice as well.

Any way you slice it, this is Phil Mickelson's Ryder Cup. He bristled under the PGA of America's leadership, used his well-deserved clout to change things, and has planned and prepared alongside Davis Love for the last two years. He is an all-world performer who loves the high stakes. Watch how he interacts with others, as he balances his drive with being too controlling for some people's tastes.

The local crowd should have an impact before the event is complete, see if you can notice in the post round interviews if it adds to the resolve of the European team, or undermines their confidence.



Let's see if the American's can live out their "13" image on their head covers promoting the "We Are 13" fan campaign and get the [Mo \(momentum\) going collectively.](#)

Book Review – Can You Keep Your Cool When the Building is on Fire?

["The Red Bandana"](#) by Tom Rinaldi

Welles Crowther died saving the lives of others in the South Tower on September 11th, 2001. He had ample time to leave the building, he carried others to safety and kept going back up into the fire zone to save more. He died less than 50 feet from safety along with other firefighters. They weren't running for it, they were planning how to help even more people. The thing about Welles Crowther, he wasn't a fire fighter, he was a trader for Sandler O'Neil. His attitude amid chaos was that of clear and direct communication to



people in duress, to people on fire. He gave them a pathway to follow and saved their lives. His attitude and story are now available for all to learn about in a new book by Tom Rinaldi by the name of ["The Red Bandana"](#). The story of the families love and the survivors stories are compelling and most contagious of all is the courage so many showed that day helping others.



Branches & Roots: V3:E8, Smiling, Finishing, Dreaming, Designing

11/14/2016

The final 45 days of the year are here, and we expect them to fly by as delightful distractions abound. We are happy to be closing out another volume of Branches and Roots and want to thank you for your feedback and comments throughout 2016. We finish with four vignettes that will hopefully inspire you to spread the spirit of thanksgiving throughout your family and friends this holiday season. If you find any of these ideas worth sharing, please do so, as a new subscriber referred by a friend is the best present we can receive.

Vin Scully Retires...and Gives us a Final Gift: Perspective

Vin Scully called his last Dodger game this September at AT&T Park in San Francisco, as the Giants moved on in the National League Playoffs. His career began in Brooklyn in 1950 when Jackie Robinson was still playing for the boys in blue. 67 years later at age 87 he decided to end what must be one of the longest running media relationships of all time. Mr. Scully was honored and interviewed all season long, and in the [final article by the LA Times](#) a quote struck a chord with us on a wonderful way to think about change. When asked if he was sad to be leaving after all this time, he made a small adjustment to a line from another legend, Dr. Seuss and offered, "Don't be sad it's over, smile because it happened."

The fall of 2016 has ended many things we wish could continue, not the least of which are the lives of spouses, parents, and dear friends. We wanted to pass on to you this "smile because it happened" quote as encouragement as we work through the endings and struggle to adapt to change.

How Can 14 Wolves Change the Course of a River in Yellowstone Park?

Talk about your head scratch questions; how can a wolf change a river's course? Do they dig on the sides with all their might? We invested the four minutes to watch this video and have found a series of situations to raise the following question: If the wolf equals tension, then where in your life do you need to increase the tension a bit to reach a desired outcome?

As we seek to finish 2016 on a high note both individually and with our teams, how will you play with the constraint of tension to effectively develop practice and performance? Too much tension will suffocate most people and not enough has its own challenges. We have noticed that the best leaders work with this concept daily to understand just how much

each member needs to reach their peak. We thought the video introduced the concept in an interesting way, and if shared, could stimulate some fruitful dialog between you and your team. You might consider asking, how can we let the wolf in here a bit for our joint benefit? If you come up with something worth sharing, please do so [here](#).



What Will Your Totem Pole for 2017 Look Like?

At the end of any year, many of you will be asked to think about how to make next year better. This isn't always the question some want to hear. What if this year was an all-time year? How can we improve on that? We thought we would adjust the perspective with a different type of question. If your life was a [totem pole](#) and it takes you an entire year to complete the next section, what should it look like and why will it inspire someone? Hopefully this point of view will afford you the chance to dream about your future and to also realize that your efforts have the ability to encourage others around you to strive forward.



As you dream, if a relationship or a situation is a perceived obstacle, what are you going to do about it? Are you going to “act” it out by using silence or violence to get your way? What about learning some new communication techniques to “talk it out.” Is that possible? You may have been facing this dilemma in your head for quite some time and we would like to encourage you to look at next year as your chance to create a great work of art that could stand for decades. Dream about next year’s edition of you, this is the perfect time of year for it.

Designing Your Team From Scratch? Jack Clark has a Few Ideas For You

Another thing that leaders do this time of year is think about their teams and how they are performing, and if any tweaks are needed to improve next year. If you are in this frame of mind we highly recommend you watch this 12-minute video from Rugby Hall of Fame player and Coach Jack Clark. He has been the coach of USA Rugby and for the Cal Bears and his players for decades have walked their talk. He is now sharing how to build out a system of values for your team, and once they are codified and defined they can be measured and required.

Two things jump out to us. The first is that Clark is selling the concept of pushing decisions as far out in the system as possible. This is very hard for insecure leaders to do, they are unsure about the outcome and as such want to control everyone and have all hard questions come back through them. This is the definition of a “Kingdom” culture. Clark specifically describes how his first value of “selflessness” allows every member of his team to make quick decisions. They just ask, “What is best for the team?” and the answer appears. This is brilliant.

Clark also highlights the differences between authority and leadership. He articulates that every human system must have a chain of command, yet every member of the team has the ability to be a leader. As you are looking to equip even the newest hire to help your company, consider taking a page from his book and outlining the differences between the two. It just might empower your younger employees more than you can imagine. Authority is how decisions are made, leadership is how you inspire others.



High Performing Teams