

**2019 – VOLUME 6
COMPLETE EDITION**

Branches & Roots

Secret Ingredients of Winning Teams

Small Societies, Collective Excellence, and
Captain Development

Branches & Roots

Banyan Tree Strategies

Thought Leadership, Customer Acquisition,
and CEO Challenges

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Secret Ingredients of Winning Teams

Small Societies, Collective Excellence, and Captain Development

Secret Ingredients of Winning Teams

February 18, 2019

Six years ago Sara and I started Banyan Tree Strategies to help people build remarkable businesses and we are thankful for its success. In the midst of our work, we started to notice a correlation between what we were doing for companies and our past experiences as professional athletes and more recently as youth sports coaches.

What was our big revelation?

Everyone wants to be on a winning team, and nobody wants to be tagged as not being a team player.

OK. We get it, big deal, everyone knows that already.

Then why is it so hard to repeat as a winner, and why do most teams fail?

We took what we are learning from CEO's and are applying it ranging from college coaches to people coming out of college looking to grow their networks, to 6th grade lacrosse coaches. Four times a year we will share our insights called "**The Secret Ingredients of Winning Teams**," a topic we have touched on at various moments in our Banyan Tree Branches & Roots Newsletter.

We hope our research can help you in your efforts to build winning teams in all facets of your life.

These are the themes we are currently following:

- The coach's pursuit of collective excellence
- How small societies impact performance
- The evolving role of the captain

Collective Excellence

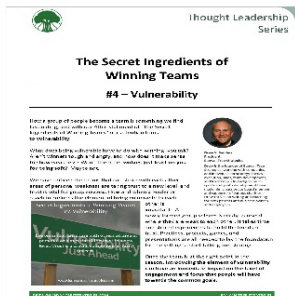
There are many noble pursuits for a coach at the beginning of the season and we hardly ever bump into one who is volunteering their time in the hopes of causing a kid to quit the sport. However, if we were to vote on one of the hardest goals to obtain, we would put **achieving collective excellence** above going undefeated and winning the all-city title.

Our definition of collective excellence has its roots in the work of John Wooden and those who also seek to build a personal relationship with each player in the joint pursuit of the team's goals. The ability of the coach to build trust with the player, to such an extent that the player can agree to the role the coach has constructed for that season is crucial. It's part sales pitch and part plea for support and trust.

Each season is as an opportunity for the coach to have a scouting report done on themselves, a book as it were. It answers the question, how do we beat this coach? Scouting reports are common on players: what is the book on that guy?

- "Can't go to his left"
- "Can't lay off the high heat"
- "Easy to get riled up and then is done for the game"

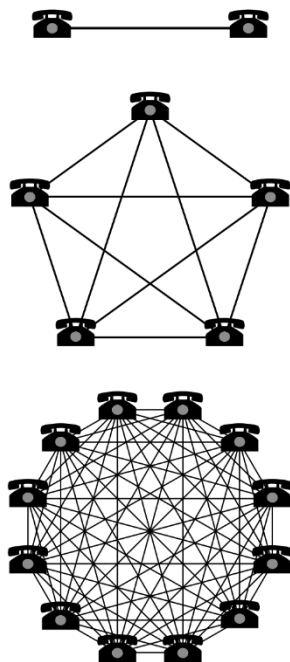
A coach should also want to know what “the book” is on them at this point in their career, and then work the next season to improve. **So what is the book on you right now?**



The coach who trusts his or her team enough to be vulnerable with them should be well on their way to existing in a state of consensual interdependence with the rest of the coaching staff and the players. [We wrote about this in one of our Thought Leadership Series](#) pieces shown here.

The pursuit of collective excellence begins with the coaching staff and then continues through to the players. If you can think of a team you were on that achieved this, please [share with us](#) as we continue to build out stories on this topic.

How Small Societies Impact Performance



We first heard this term **small societies** from UNC women's soccer coach Anson Dorrance in a talk he gave at the [What Drives Winning Conference in 2015](#). It was a scant reference at the beginning of the talk (minute 1:15), but for geeks like us, it was cause for research. Dorrance is a coach in pursuit of collective excellence. He is building a cumulative chest of wisdom on the topic of human collaboration in the pursuit of putting a ball in a net and caring about each other in the process. His research led him to discover Cesar Luis Menotti of Argentina who had the high-pressure job of being that country's national soccer team coach.

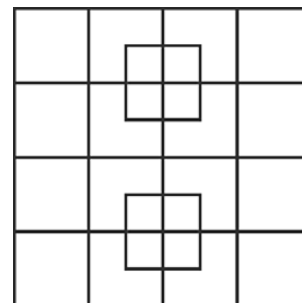
It was Menotti who started talking about the teams within the teams, calling them small societies when describing the relationships between the goalie and the fullbacks, the right

midfielder with the center forward. It is like Metcalf's law of networks and how intertwined our relationships can get.



Our current learning is this:

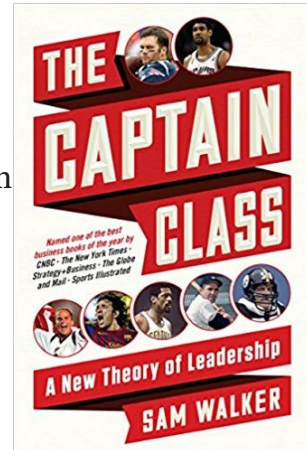
Consider looking at your team the same way you would look at this square. You know you are going to be asked, how many squares can you see? If a square is a small society that could exist on your team, how many can you see? Make a list of small societies for your team and then if you feel like it, [share it with](#) us. As the coach, you can't advise and mentor what you can't observe.



We have reached out to Dorrance with no success to date. If you have a link to him, please [let us know](#) as we would love 15 minutes to have a conversation on his current thoughts.

Oh Captain, My Captain

No topic has captured our attention in the area of teams more in the past six months than the role of the Captain. Both Sara and I were captains of our high school and college teams. Both of us found it an arduous role to fill. In the decades since we have spoken to countless others who had similar experiences and were delighted to find that Sam Walker did years of research and published “[The Captain Class.](#)”



His goal was to answer one of the most challenging questions in the history of sport: **who are the best teams of all time? In all sports, in all time?** Talk about a Mt. Everest goal. He also had a second goal. **If he could make a claim that there was one class above the rest, did they have any characteristics in common?**

Turns out he could and there was. It was that they had a certain type of **Team Captain**. He then went on to identify that those captains had seven characteristics in common.

This was pure catnip for us and led us to interview as many college, high school, and youth sport coaches we could and ask, if this is true, then how can you incorporate identifying potential captains and then developing them as part of your program?

What we heard and how coaches are changing what they are doing in response to the data is encouraging.

- Coaches are talking less
- Coaches don't have to pretend to get mad to get players to hustle

- Coaches have more time to plan and think
- The players can lead themselves

We will continue to review this effort in this section of the publication. [Here is a copy of what we send to coaches](#) prior to our conversations with them, feel free to send it to any coach you know, and we would love their advice and comments.

Thank you so much for your readership and engagement with our research on building and maintaining winning teams. Winning together is a jump for joy moment and we think those are worth the blood, sweat, and toil that goes into being collectively excellent. We will be back to you in the middle of May with our latest insights that we glean from our network of awesome contributing coaches and leaders.

Branches & Roots

Banyan Tree Strategies

Thought Leadership, Customer Acquisition,
and CEO Challenges

The First Pivot of the Year

February 18, 2019

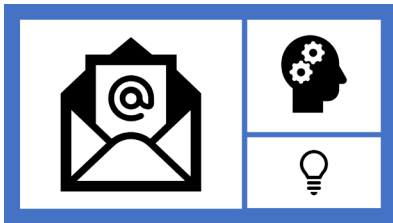
Welcome to the middle of the first quarter of 2019, which for many business owners is a vital check-in moment. You may have been planning for a great first quarter of the year since the end of last summer, and now that future is your present. **What is going the way you planned, what isn't, and why?**

We spent the last 45 days traveling, visiting companies, and attending a few conferences with clients. We are happy to share our insights on the three themes we are going to follow this year as we seek to help our community run re-markable businesses.

Themes for 2019

- Thought Leadership and its impact on your business
 - Customer acquisition frameworks
 - CEO leadership challenges
-

What is New in Thought Leadership



Email continues to be the killer app for developing and maintaining a respected position with your clients, customers and prospects. [Recent data](#) shows that enterprise and individual customers spend the vast majority of their time reading and communicating inside of an email application.

What does this mean for you?

It means that unless you have a business which really wants to attract a customer that it doesn't know and offer them a commodity (think owning a McDonalds franchise) you don't really need to spend a ton of money on social media. Your best course of action is to have a well-developed email communication plan that integrates with your website and sales team.

Key Insight

The frequency of your email communication should depend on the type of service or product you are delivering. It can range from a travel service emailing you multiple times a week, to an estate planning law firm that shares its findings once a quarter. If you want our advice on what your cadence should be, [click here](#).

What is A Customer Acquisition Framework?

Consultants can bring diversity of thought to a company; they also bring new terminology that at first glance may not make sense. **We use a customer acquisition framework (CAF) to describe how a business wants a potential customer to learn about, and then accept its offer.** It might be called sales and marketing and in other places it's called marketing and sales. Regardless, the biggest change we have noticed in this area are the options available to your company relative to just five years ago. That is why it is one of our themes for 2019. It might make sense for you to [revisit your strategy](#).

In 1995 the phone and the fax machine were the money makers, and having a toll free number was a big deal. You might have had a marketing department, but you didn't know what worked and what didn't, and the magazine ad salespeople were really happy about that.



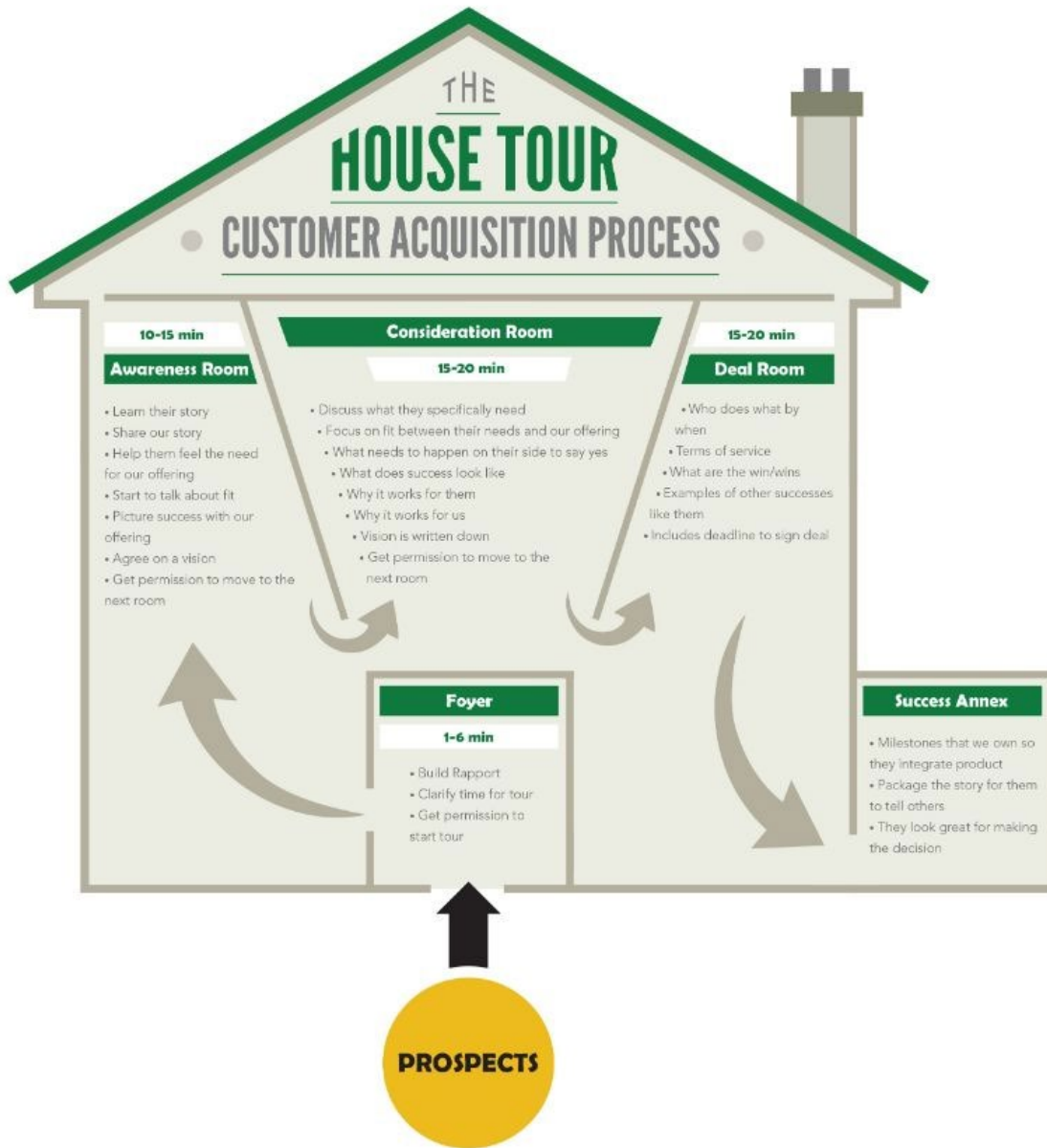
Today marketing executives can show up to a meeting with real data that tracks and predicts future behavior by your target customers.

What does this mean for you?

It means you have more leverage with your marketing dollars and your sales team. Just ten years ago you were still guessing with your marketing dollars and the sales reps could hold you hostage with the relationships they initiated.

Key insight

In the House Tour image below think through how far you could have a potential customer get without the help of a salesperson? As an owner you have an incentive to get them as far through the house as you can. Get this right and your cost of sales will plummet and your profitability will rise.



CEO Leadership Challenges

Somewhere between Salt Lake City and Grand Junction this January while climbing a scary mountain pass in a four wheel drive it came to us that a way to look at the CEO's job is as follows:

To determine how much stress the balance sheet of the company and the people that work for it can handle at this time in the company's life.



You may have a different view of it, or a different way to say it that works for you and we would love to hear from you about how you see it, but humor us for a minute.

It appears at times that even at some pretty large companies that the only person who is really thinking about the future of the entire enterprise is the CEO. Everyone else is in their department looking for more resources, and hopefully in the words of Peter Drucker, focused on the next most important task.

What does this mean for you?

It means you need to be relentless in your pursuit of what is true from your direct reports because they may have an inherent bias to keep you on a consistent drip of flattery and fluff. It also means that having a board of directors that can help you think about the company from the outside is vital.

Questions a good board can help you wrestle with are:

- How much debt should we be working with now to grow the business?
- Where are your next threats coming from?
- What innovations are going to allow you to increase your margins?
- Where is your current leadership team in their own personal life cycles?

The rub is that building and maintaining a productive board of directors is a

challenge. Too often it is such a hassle that you don't even have one. CEO's can often feel like the coach of a professional sports team. The players on the field are your employees, the fans in the stands are the customers, and up in the owner's box sits the board of directors. Where does the coach stand? **Sometimes they stand alone.**

Key Insight

Ask yourself the following question: What is the company telling itself right now that we want to be true, that may not actually be true? Many department heads will be talking about growth because they know that is what everyone wants to hear. **The challenge is that if the company doesn't manage its balance sheet and time the growth correctly outside forces can end up owning the business.** You may have a growth mandate but try as we might most of us can't make water go uphill, so back up your mandate with facts and processes you can trust and measure. This rigor and dialogue can save your business.

See You at the End of Q1

That's it for now, thank you for allowing us to drop into your mailbox six to eight times a year with our insights from the road. We love helping interesting people build re-mark-able businesses that "never stop growing." [Email us here](#) if you want to start a conversation.

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Branches & Roots

Banyan Tree Strategies

Thought Leadership, Customer Acquisition, and CEO Challenges

Are You a Pirate or a Cowboy?

April 25, 2019



There was a romantic comedy that had a bit of a cult following in the early 90's by the name of "The Princess Bride" with a mythical character that was known as the Dread Pirate Roberts. He had a habit of telling his captives, "good night, sleep well for I will most likely kill you in the morning." It was all an act, but he later explained that establishing a healthy sense of fear in people was the easiest way to lead them.

Another movie that included people using a long journey to learn a little about themselves and leadership was "City Slickers" with Billy Crystal and Jack Palance. Palance is the sage cowboy who leads Crystal and his pals through a search for their **one thing** while managing a cattle drive. He used a group effort to help each individual find their role, and in the process the group became a team.



Which leads us back to our question: which one are you and which environment do you prefer? A pirate ship or a cattle drive? Both are journeys, both have codes, and both have success that they can point to as validation for their way of

life.

Yet the two environments have stark differences. The pirate ship is a cauldron for bullies and the chief bully is the captain. **On a pirate ship you are always waging war both internally and externally.** There is blood everywhere and the sea is full of losers who have walked the plank.

The funny thing about our work environments is that many people will tolerate bully behavior at work from a high functioning a..hole. The crazy designer, the coder who treats people poorly, or the salesperson who crushes quota and everyone that comes in her path. Worse yet is the CEO who uses the term “radical candor” as a smoke screen to berate and belittle people who aren’t “all-in” at the company.

The hard part for the employee is that often the pirates appear to be friendly and mostly human like in the “Pirates of the Caribbean” when the sun is out. They need people, lots of people, because they go through so many and thus, they are very charming. Especially the CEO. But when the moon rises the pirates are all bones, and it is at that moment that the new employee realizes they have **joined the wrong crew.**



In the right environment the employees are being challenged to push themselves on tasks that help the company achieve its goals and that also help identify the roles that each one is best suited to fill.

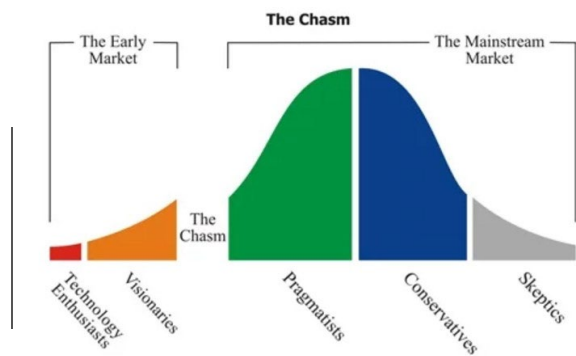
The hero of the company is the product and the customer it serves, not the people at the company. Recently an open-source leadership outline of Bill Campbell’s work was compiled by the name of the [Trillion Dollar Coach](#). It was compiled after 80 interviews of leaders that worked with Bill during his lifetime and include people from Google, Apple, and Intuit.

We would like to think of **Bill Campbell as the Cowboy leading all of us** on the cattle drive of life. A place where through the hard work and the

focus on the cattle you can find your role, and no amount of effort is spared in the saving of a lost member of the team or the herd. There are plenty of trials on a cattle drive but there are no planks to walk.

If you want some tips on how to spot a pirate ship that is recruiting so you can avoid them, [email us here](#).

The Hard Thing About Innovating



Geoffrey Moore is a best selling author of books that focus on disruptive innovations and technology. His best seller is "Crossing the Chasm" and it addresses the issue of going from the early adopter category of customers to the bigger section of buyers labeled

“pragmatists.” Recently, he posted a short piece on LinkedIn about this still pressing issue for all innovative companies. I posted a question to his post and as fortune would have it, he responded with an answer. Our interaction and his post is [compiled here in a PDF](#). To read [directly on LinkedIn click here](#).

The interchange gave us confidence that we are in alignment with a great thinker and adviser to the CEO’s of companies like Microsoft and Salesforce. It also allowed for some reflection on just how much the phrase **“sales and marketing” is out of date**. Professionals used to call the category of customer acquisition Sales and Marketing. Sales was first and Marketing was next, second, or last depending on the company. Sales and its people were the heroes.

In the past ten years the script has flipped, and we now live in a world of

marketing and sales. In our world the word marketing really means Thought Leadership Marketing (TLM). TLM for some is crazy, because their marketing is all about sounds and movies and clicks and moving a human through a process like a sheep about to be sheered. Those processes matter mostly for very small dollar purchases.

Our clients provide goods and services to enterprise customers with multiple decision makers who all have different professional biases and disciplines that they own in their roles as CFO, General Counsel, or COO. These professionals don't make decisions based on catchy headlines and short videos, they read and analyze data and facts. They want to see case studies and interviews with people like them who are faced with similar issues.

These C-level buyers respond to thought leadership, and it is through this medium that you can then earn an audience and begin your sales process. The two processes are different, but they fit nicely with each other when designed correctly. It starts with a thought leadership marketing story-line that your company produces and it moves to an enterprise sales process which focuses on alignment, belief, and urgency.

If you know of a company that is innovating and struggling with the chasm as Moore describes we have a [Thought Leadership Customer Acquisition Program](#) that is made for building the bridge that leads your products and services into the large pool of customers that are the pragmatists.

Questions That Have Been Making an Impact

One of the benefits of being a consultant is that we are in a lot of different "team" rooms and, like the honey bee, pick up lots of different pollen/ideas from each team. We have noticed that the right question can really stimulate engagement, creativity, and accountability. Here are a few questions that stood out as being particularly effective.

- **What are we telling ourselves that is true, that might not be true?**
 - This helps you get to the bottom of some confirmation bias and helps you make a contingency plan.
- **What came to you while you were away?**
 - This helps people who are recreating (which is vital) reflect on their reflections and then helps you study how that reflection might be helpful to the unit.
- **What could be true in one year?**
 - This is a vision casting question that seeks to flush out doubt and call a group of people higher.

We hope they help stimulate and foster dialogue that leads to positive actions.

Branches & Roots

Secret Ingredients of Winning Teams

Small Societies, Collective Excellence, and Captain Development

Secret Ingredients of Winning Teams (SIWT)

June 6, 2019

The shorter duration of sports teams' seasons allows for more efficient research and we also find they correlate well with companies, non-profits, and families.

Secret Ingredients of Winning Teams (SIWT) is leading to the creation of a management process for coaches and businesses to implement.

SIWT is for coaches and owners who believe the best teams are made when both the individual's and the team's needs are met. This dual goal takes leadership and management to a higher level, it's not for the lazy coach or boss.

[Our first edition](#) focused on **Vulnerability**. This edition we turn our focus to **Following**.

Secret Ingredient: Following

Thought Leadership Series

The Secret Ingredients of Winning Teams

#3 – Following

If the leader is an intermediary to a vision, then a follower in a team context is someone who agrees with that vision, and then subjects themselves to the needs of others in order to reach the agreed upon target. This sounds easy, yet a series of subtle forces are at work undermining group success. Individuals are efficient at calculating their own cost benefit analysis of their time, level of engagement, and compensation needs as they seek to optimize their return on effort.

It is our third installment of "The Secret Ingredients of Winning Teams" we are going to dive into a critical component that turns a group of people into a team, the act of following while still thinking. Today's group efforts demand a fully engaged collective body where every person is thinking while they are following. Gone are the days of being able to blindly follow, now at a moment's notice any member of the team may be called upon to lead. If they don't have the vision in their mind, the outcomes will suffer.

Learning how to follow while staying highly engaged in something that resonates with you as a team member often struggle with as they lose the individuality of school and enter the rigors of work life.

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Great Following Trait #1: Stay close and Observe

Google may have replaced mentors as the best source of knowledge in general, but on a team the subtle needs and tricks to great performance are still passed on human to human. The closer you can stay to your immediate leader, the more they will pass along in either word or deed. First year cadets at West Point are taught to observe and adapt as they start the tightly manicured 4-year matriculation. There will be distractions everywhere at work, from coworkers, to trade shows, to all-hands meetings. Navigate all these with discretion and **observe how your boss behaves and mirror it.**

Great Following Trait #2: Anticipate

Some of the best teams in the world come in pairs, and seldom is that pair splitting each task 50/50. They often deploy a divide and conquer strategy with each one owning a series of duties and relying on the other to deliver on their stack. As the team builds beyond a pair, a collaborate-to-innovate strategy can start to evolve. It is at this point that the ability to anticipate the needs of others plays a key role in how great followers enable successful teams. **At the root of anticipation is empathy. Empathy requires setting aside your thoughts and seeing the world through the eyes of another.** New members of work teams who seek to serve the needs of the group first will not stay at the bottom of the totem pole for long.

Great Following Trait #3: Be Comfortable with Conflict

Universities may talk a tough game when it comes to deadlines, but ultimately the student is paying for the knowledge. In recent decades the school administrators have a consistent record of caving to student and parent demands. The workplace is a different story, the customer is a fickle and petulant king, and this can turn even the nicest boss into a frustrated time-constrained leader with very challenging demands.

“Stop what you’re doing and get this done today! It has to get done now!”

What happened to: “How are you, is everything OK in your world? When you get a minute could you step in my office to discuss our latest cool project that you will love?”

Anyone who has worked for even six months knows tension and conflict arrive via phone, email, and text at a moment’s notice. **Having a series of communication tools to work with others during times of duress is a game changer.** Being able to work with conflict when you are in a low power situation starts with being able to frame what you are hearing, and then nailing what you can offer to the solution. When people disagree on the solution it is

key for the good follower to grab the similarities that exist amid the differences, and then look for a good moment to share your findings. Master this trait as a follower, and your leaders will take note and your responsibilities will increase.

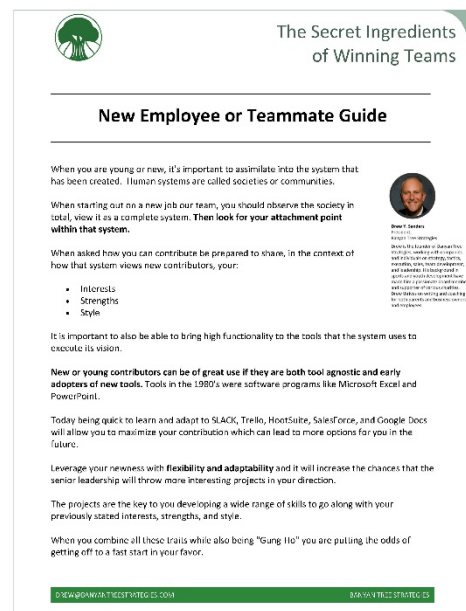
A View into Our Future


Tomorrow's leaders will be challenged to get a population of individuals to buy into the need to follow as we have defined it. Those that can sell the benefits of supplanting the self for the group and create outcomes that feed the entire team will find that word of mouth among the members will keep a steady stream of applicants at their door. Very few enterprises scale without more people, and people having a good time while winning is contagious. We all want to be on that team. **The question being asked is are you willing to follow long enough to get there?**

The New Employee

We would like to highlight a specific moment when the individual is new to a team or company. One's ability to assimilate quickly appears to have a strong correlation with later success.

Here is a quick guide for you or a friend to use when they are new:



 The Secret Ingredients of Winning Teams

New Employee or Teammate Guide

When you are young or new, it's important to assimilate into the system that has been created. Human systems are called societies or communities.

When starting out on a new job our team, you should observe the society in total, view it as a complete system. **Then look for your attachment point within that system.**

When asked how you can contribute be prepared to share, in the context of how that system views new contributors, your:

- Interests
- Strengths
- Style

It is important to also be able to bring high functionality to the tools that the system uses to execute its vision.

New or young contributors can be of great use if they are both tool agnostic and early adopters of new tools. Tools in the 1980's were software programs like Microsoft Excel and PowerPoint.

Today being quick to learn and adapt to SLACK, Trello, HootSuite, Salesforce, and Google Docs will allow you to maximize your contributions which can lead to more options for you in the future.

Leverage your newness with **flexibility and adaptability** and it will increase the chances that the senior leadership will throw more interesting projects in your direction.

The projects are the key to you developing a wide range of skills to go along with your previously stated interests, strengths, and style.

When you combine all these traits while also being "Gung Ho" you are pulling the odds of getting off to a fast start in your favor.

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Branches & Roots

Banyan Tree Strategies

Thought Leadership, Customer Acquisition, and CEO Challenges

Secret Sauce of Enterprise Sales

July 13, 2019

Summer has arrived and the first half of the year for your business was either great, good, or just OK. As the leader you know that revenue is a form of a lagging indicator, and so for many businesses the third quarter is a time where your leading indicator (first time sales calls with prospects) can drop off a cliff. While you still have the marketing and sales teams working on the top of the funnel this natural drop can afford you a time to revisit your sales habits and processes.

We recently worked on this exact issue for a company, and below is a window into what we built for them. Feel free to share it with your company and tweak it as you see fit. There isn't much intellectual property in sales processes, however, dedicated practice on the right actions of listening and communicating appears to be a timeless pursuit for the best.

Just like Steph Curry's pregame workout and his practice sessions, they are re-mark-able.

The very best pursue all types and forms of practice and they are re-lent-less in that pursuit.

If your company wants a customized practice plan or a practice partner, just [let us know](#).

Our General Bias to Take into Enterprise Sales Calls

You (our prospect) have been specifically selected:

- This isn't a shotgun talk-to-everyone exercise.
- We have spent years working on this innovation.
- It is our mission to serve people and companies like you.
- We have done a lot of research about the typical needs of a company like yours and are here to see how your individual needs may be similar or different to others.
- We have a series of questions to ask you at the beginning.

What is the outcome that your company really cares about?

- What are the most important flags that everyone in your company has to salute?
- What are you telling the world you are all about?
- How are you getting to that point?
- What are the obstacles getting in your way to getting to that point?
- Is it possible that our solution can help you get far down the road of obtaining the outcome that your company has stated is most important?
- *It's not enough to identify pain, you must identify and solve for a really big important pain and be able to measure it relative to other pains or they will not move in your direction in the time frames needed to be successful.*
- *Most deals die here, and we are more than happy to identify a big problem for them, put a bow on it and leave them sitting by the side of the road with that problem because it helps us keep our margins up, especially when we are innovating.*

- *Our Worksheet is used here to clearly spell out the \$\$ benefits and that can also be socialized inside the customers C-Suite to validate the decision to align with us and stop aligning with the chemical companies.*

If we can't kill this idea.... then you should move forward with it....the key issue is how many and over what time period (WHEN)

- We make machines.
- Machines take time to build.
- We like to time it right for both of our benefits so....LET'S PUT ON OUR PLANNING HATS.
- When are we making them and when are you receiving them and when are you paying us for this?
- *We also have a training and protocol timeline that we share with you that insures proper use of the equipment for maximum efficiency and effectiveness.*

The four legs under our platform are:

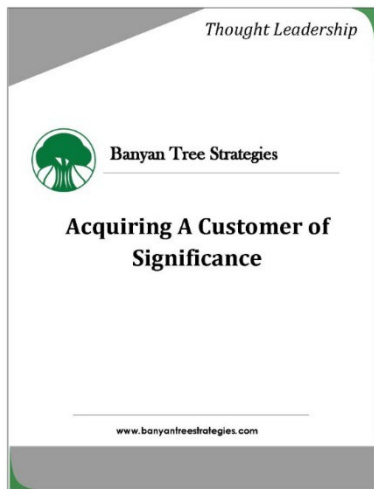
- The \$\$ it saves you over a 5-year period. (THE WORKSHEET SHOWS THIS IN DETAIL)
- The efficiency it gives you in XYZ
- The leverage it gives you in the marketplace as a ABC
- The reduction in employee lawsuit exposure you gain by DEF

The secret sauce behind the process

- We use the questions at the beginning to get them talking and to feel like they are special with a unique problem that we care a lot about and focused on (picture being sick and meeting the right doctor).
- We use the worksheet to formalize the amount of pain they are in and the amount of benefit we can deliver and to pivot to the WHEN conversation.

- We use the flank of making the machine to get them to talk to us about timelines and budgets so we can efficiently plan as two businesses in alignment towards their stated goal early in the call.
- We are now brothers in arms fighting a common foe together and not vendor/customer. We need alignment to carry the day to get through all the hassles of making, delivering and maintaining the equipment and hitting their goals.

Why/What/When White Paper



The above outlined process is an adaptation of our WHY/HOW/WHEN white paper on customer acquisition which you can access by clicking on the document or find it and other white papers on our [website CONTENT](#) page.

Enjoy the summer!

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high.

Consider a three-point solution that is working now:

1. Write about the pain the customer could be experiencing now in a manner which fits their attention span when first learning about something new. Don't drop War and Peace on them when all they want is the 411. They should be able to get the gist of what you do in less than 30 seconds and then have the ability to review for up to three minutes with your writing or video content.

2. Give them an example of a current customer similar to them and how it is working. The Case Study example can be a challenge if your solution is not focused but start with three typical customers and walk them through the experience. This should be no more than a three-to-five-minute commitment for the buyer, and it will help them relate to your other customers.

3. Make the first dialogue option as short and sweet as possible while still having enough in it for you. Unless you oversee acquiring thousands of customers a year you really don't need to be too concerned about tracking the first two data points in this example. You should be aware of the numbers but your first real leading indicator to track religiously are first time dialogues with a prospect. We suggest you use a 30-minute discovery call and really focus on the needs and outcomes desired by your buyer before you launch into your solutions.

You should be updating your writing on points one and two at **least twice a year**, tracking your first-time calls and asking the team why this is working or why isn't this working on a regular cadence.

No Thanks, We Got This Taken Care of In-House

The Issue: When your job is on the line, sometimes you would rather have an employee working for you than a contractor. The

doing it yourself vs outsourcing it tension is very real in today's economy.

Employees are expensive, and yet the “at-will” contract creates the ability for the best to turn the table on the employer and leave on a whim. This often leaves only the average to poor employees who want to stick around to handle mission critical tasks.

If the boss has their bonus or job on the line, sometimes they deal with attrition issues and building the team internally because they feel like they are more in control.

These biases mean that if your company's offering is in any way reducing head count and outsourcing a service or skill, you had better be the A team.

A SOLUTION

Part of getting someone to let go of control is to help them understand where their time could be better spent if they didn't have to worry about the problem you solve for. You can accomplish this by asking them to list out the top 10 things they deal with at work on a weekly basis, and then ask them which one has the biggest impact on their P&L.



Chances are they are spending time doing and overseeing a series of low value-add objectives. When you can take those off their plate and allow them to refocus on their high ROE objectives you are making a different case for your joint success.

For more on this topic click on the graphic or [click here](#) for a case study article from Distillery Tech.

Is It Time to Buy or Sell?

The Issue: Should we stay, or should we go?

Business transactions are a big part of the reason we are hired. Sometimes it's to guide the company to an exit and other times it's to help them with an acquisition.



In the age of disruption, the size of your balance sheet and a clear understanding of how long you can protect your margins can help you answer the question of whether you should be a buyer or a seller. An additional factor is the age and motivation of the ownership.

Can't get your customers' attention?

CONSIDER SELLING

A big challenge for many companies is the attention span of their buyers: it's really short and they struggle to keep it. Going back to our earlier example, the people who might do business with you think you are marketing a virus, while your customers know you have the cure.

The largest player in your space doesn't have this problem, their brand gets them in the door. This can become a significant competitive advantage. If the amount of time that the buyer has is limited, it is, and they are already doing business with that company, which they probably are, then you might want to consider locking up a couple of key accounts and then taking it to that larger player and allowing them to monetize it for you.

John Chambers started at Cisco in 1991 and led one of the strongest sales cultures in the world. Cisco then took its sizable balance sheet and has purchased over 200 companies to feed its sales force and their customer base. [Here is a white paper from the company on their acquisition process.](#)

Does your industry have an aging set of owners and no clear dominant players? **CONSIDER BUYING**

If so and you are between 30 and 50 years of age, you might consider becoming an acquirer of these businesses. A great example of this is in the financial services industry. The wealth in the United States has typically been advised through either banks or brokerage firms. In the last 15 years the rise of the independent Registered Investment Advisory firm has fragmented the industry while it has continued to grow in line with the wealth of the country.

High Net Worth individuals and medium sized nonprofits will attribute trust to an individual easily and this has allowed yesterday's Morgan Stanley advisor to become today's Registered Investment Advisory business owner. With most companies offering similar services to their clients, and the clients' reticence to discuss their wealth with multiple people, turnover remains low. The term "client for life" is often used in this industry.

However, the advisor does end up retiring, lives do end, and the assets and their associated fees and revenues leave. Some advisors don't plan for this, and they wait until the last minute. Others plan ahead. If you are in the middle of your career, it can be a great way to grow your customer base.

This is especially true if you are struggling to acquire new customers of your own. Your revenue per customer will be lower as you will be sharing that with the seller for a period of time, but if you establish trust with the customers and their dependents the lifetime value of the customer should make the cost to acquire that customer worth it.

The lesson: when growth is slow, acquire older players and recruit young service professionals.

Branches & Roots

Secret Ingredients of Winning Teams

Small Societies, Collective Excellence, and Captain Development

Triangles Make the World Go Round

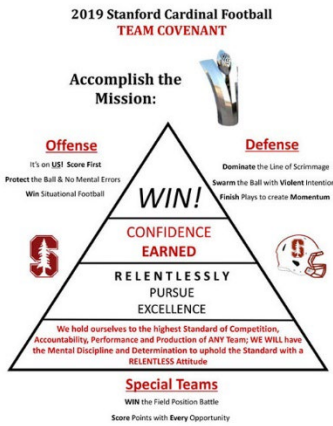
September 11, 2019

Greetings,

The fall brings many activities and choices to team up in life and sport and in this edition of the Secret Ingredients of Winning Teams we analyze the recent proclamation by the Stanford football team on their collective values, principles and mission. It's all rolled together in one image, and we think it looks similar to some of John Wooden's work and our own Groups to Teams (G2T) Triangle.

Secret Ingredients are everywhere in Stanford's proclamation, and it makes us think that the proclamation itself could be a valuable element. Read on to make your own determination.

Similarities, Constraints, and Duration

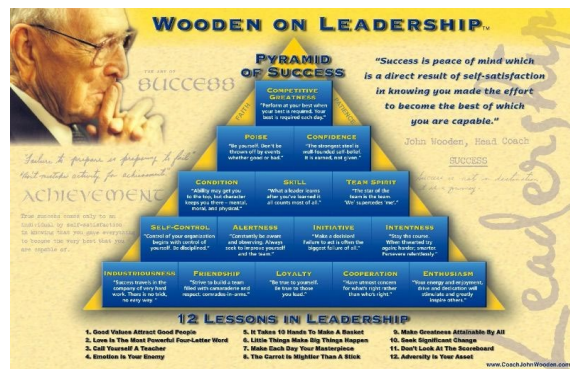
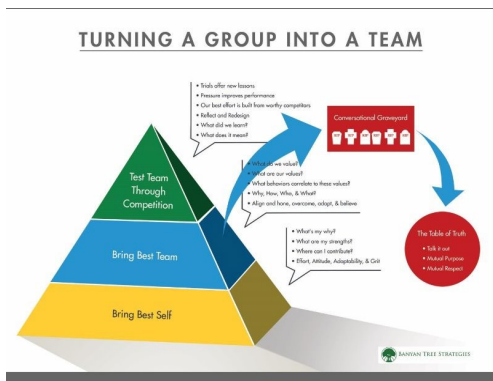


All three of these triangles have different layers that build from the base and come to a point at the top.

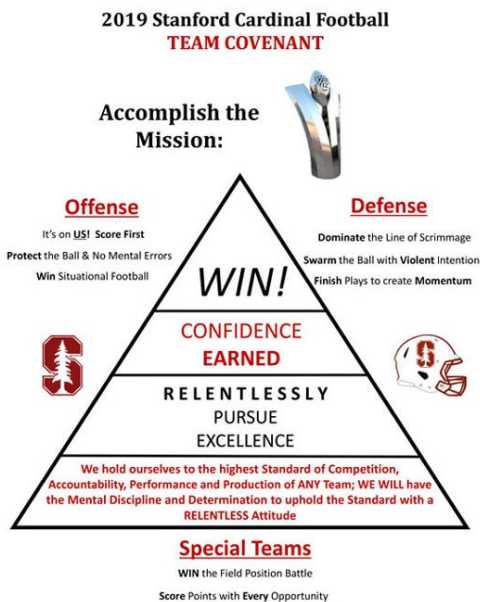
The constraints of the triangle shape help us start with a broad coalition and then start to narrow the focus of that coalition on a target or a destination.

Sports seasons are shorter in duration than many of our life and work teams. They are like the crop that has four iterations per year, we can observe and learn quickly. Fortunately, the principles of going

from a group to a team are portable, and what we learn from sport can work in life.



The Stanford Standard



The three units of the football team: Offense, Defense, and Special Teams all have action-oriented words that sit outside the triangle.

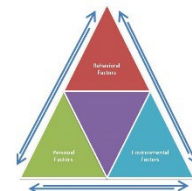
- Score first on offense.
- Finish plays to create momentum on defense.
- Score points with every opportunity on special teams.

These words were created and are lived by the players and this helps them own the responsibility the words give.

The base of the triangle has personal accountability built in everywhere and also uses the corporate word **WE** multiple times. **All Stanford players are together here.**

The next two layers point to the persistence with which they will pursue their goals and then there is special twist on the word confidence. **They are stating that they are earning their confidence** which is a post accomplishment iteration of the word confidence. Prior to the game, you can choose to be confident, it is an act of mental strength that is tied to self-efficacy which has been [proven by Dr. Albert Bandura](#). Post accomplishment confidence builds cumulatively in many areas of your life and can lead to that wonderful trait which is humility. A team of humbly confident football players who are relentlessly pursuing excellence is a **force**.

Bandura's Triadic Reciprocal Determinism

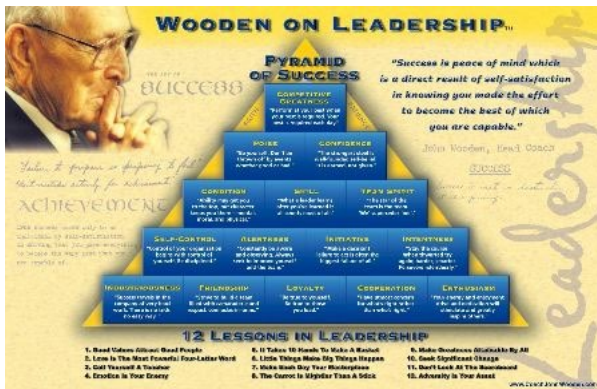


The tip of the triangle says it all, WIN. And what do they want to win? The PAC 12 Championship.

Leaders Insight

The coaches are accountable for working with the players and the standard they have set. As the learning moments come during the season the coaches now have a common language that is already established. The great part of this standard is that it establishes the **WHY** and a little bit of the **HOW** for the season. The balance of the practice time can now focus on the **WHAT**.

The John Wooden Pyramid



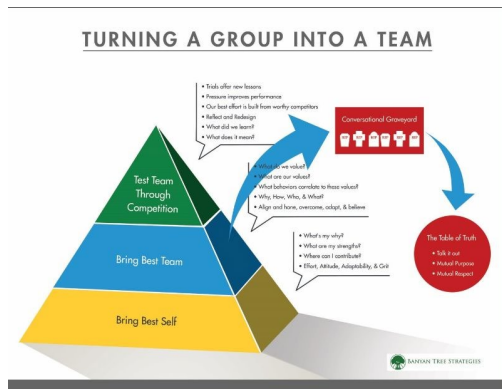
Wooden's pyramid was a strong brand in the second half of the 20th century and its impact is still felt today in many different learning settings. Language evolves in human culture over time, and as such some of the original words in the pyramid, like industriousness, have less impact when read

today. **Yet the structure of the layers going from self to others, to team, and from practice to competition still resonate.**

Notice how competitive greatness is only possible in Wooden's eyes when the individuals understand how to work with the system of playing the game that the coach brings to the season. It's during the preseason that the coach looks at the players strengths and then determines the adjustments that are necessary.

What didn't change over time were the attitudes and mindsets that Wooden and his coaches expected and modeled with those teams.

Groups Into Teams (G2T)



Several years ago, we were tasked with helping a company build a culture and we pulled much of what Wooden had written about and re-framed it in the image below. We summarized the triangle base with the calling of “**bring your best self**” and then we went about facilitating what that meant for that company.

The next layer was on the challenge of bringing our “**best as a team**” and this involves the natural issues that come up as people disagree. What happens when they bury the issues? The need for a process of flushing out conflicts on a cadence made a big difference, as did identifying that all companies have a conversational graveyard.

The top layer helps people realize the best test for their principles and values is ardent competition. We helped build out a culture that was hard on the ideas and kind to the people with this image and the correlating processes we went through together. Got a group? Want to turn it into a team? [Give our process a try.](#)

Summary

The persistence required to accomplish worthy and challenging tasks can be significant. The distractions that arise to take individual and collective focus are many. We suggest that as a leader or organizer of others a simple shape and a few key questions can make a big difference as you seek to succeed again and

again. If you feel an outside voice would make a difference, we would be [happy to help](#).

Branches & Roots

Secret Ingredients of Winning Teams

Small Societies, Collective Excellence, and Captain Development

Captain Challengers

November 23, 2019

Happy Thanksgiving to you and your family. We are very thankful for the blessings 2019 has brought and the contributions we have been able to make in our efforts with others. In our final communication of the year we look at how your captains with a natural challenger team player style can impact your season.

In our research we have found two common elements to championship teams. The first was they had captains who were willing to become an extension of the coaching staff on the field. The second was that captain had the **challenger team player style**.

The Challenger



Back in February of this year we highlighted a book by Sam Walker by the name of [*"The Captain Class"*](#) that identified the captain as a key element to long term team success.

While digging deeper on the topic for our clients we noticed that the correlation of Walker's captains with Glenn Parker's work on team player styles and the most volatile team player style, **“the challenger.”**

Parker's work was mostly inside large corporations in the 70's through early 90's but his book [*Team Players and Teamwork*](#) is still relevant today. His research lays out four traits for how people will behave when working with others: Contributor, Communicator, Collaborator and Challenger. Everyone exhibits all four traits when interacting with others, however, it's the order they prioritize them that impacts the group. The group that prioritizes being a challenger is the smallest, and his perspective about how to work with and advise this group has been of prescient.

Why you want Challengers on your team:

“Challengers push the team to talk openly about problems and things getting in their way of success.”

How others can react to a Challenger:

“Ironically, many Challengers are accused of not being team players because they raise objections to team decisions.”

What a coach needs to share with their Challenger:

“The real mark of an effective Challenger is their knowing when to stop pushing.”

Sports teams can be great places for challengers, the rules and boundaries allow them to flourish as they can focus their drive to excel and not be distracted by some of the constant changes of life. In work or family settings the challenger can be a bit exhausting to those with contribution or collaboration as dominant traits.

Our key learning when combining Walker's and Parker's work is to **empower**

the challengers to call the team higher while making sure they realize others will have different needs. If one of your highest performers is also a challenger consider having the team take the [Parker Team Player survey](#) so the rest of the members will have a better understanding of these traits. This can lead to mutual respect being maintained over the course of a season or year when tensions rise due to losses or setbacks in goal obtainment.

As a leader or coach, establishing a common language for your team in some key areas is a big part of defining who is “on” the team. How people naturally want to act when with others is something you can leverage to help the group become a team. We hope Walker’s and Parker’s efforts will allow you to effectively identify your team’s traits so you can manage and lead them to challenge each other to find their best collective self.

Interested in other posts on similar topics? [Check out our blog.](#)

The Banyan Book

We are excited to announce coming in the first quarter of 2020 will be the Banyan Book, a compilation of our best practices, writings, and tools in a handbook for business owners and managers. As always, we welcome the chance to [speak with you.](#)

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