

2022 – VOLUME 9 COMPLETE EDITION



What is Whakapapa and why should you care about it?

1/2/2022



[Whakapapa](#) is a Maori term that has several meanings, the first being how a person is connected to the Maori lineage and all things in the world, in short, their genealogy.

An additional meaning that might be relevant for you and your teams in 2022 is a **"deep connection to land and the roots of one's ancestry."**

The words "deep connection" and "ancestry" are of particular interest right now because these feelings lead to a strong sense of collective trust. It is our view that teams only move as fast as their collective trust will allow them. We have shortened this concept up over the years into the phrase **"teams move at the speed of trust."**

We learned about Whakapapa in a new book by [Owen Eastwood](#) called [Belonging, the Ancient Code of Togetherness](#) and we think it is timely given the significant headwinds we are facing with respect to trust within our teams and communities.

Eastwood is part Maori and part Englishman and works with professional sports teams around the world on building out current and authentic origin stories for teams like the New Zealand All Blacks and the South African Proteas. He helps teams create and define their own Whakapapa, and then build out processes for enabling their efforts to honor it.

Part of his process is to make sure that all members of the team feel like their past is honored and respected as they start to build a new collective vision for the team each season. This is in stark contrast to the past dominant cultures of sports teams where the new players are hazed and are not respected until they perform on the field. It is a fundamental shift away from a fear-based culture.

Sports teams are not work teams, but in some ways, they are actually more dynamic or brutal on human capital than the fastest growing tech company. If you can't impact the game, you won't see the field let alone be on the team. So why should the sports teams care about connection when everyone is just one injury away from being out for the

season? **Why go through all the hassle on the "soft stuff"?**

The answer according to Eastwood's book is that creating a sense of belonging is the fastest way to get a group of people to volunteer to climb into the physical and emotional pain cave of practice and games which are table stakes in professional sport.

Another insight is that once you create a culture of high achievement and an "all in" attitude the positive endorphins that come from being elite are being [heavily researched and scientifically proven](#). This is why many of the best runners run with other runners, and the best swimmers swim with other swimmers. To get from good to great involves pain management which starts in the brain. A great way to trick the brain to volunteer for future pain is to be around other people who are climbing the "hard fun hill."

Our aim in sharing this is to empower you with current ideas to help your teams adapt as efficiently as possible amidst the constraint which is the pandemic. As the disconnection rises all around them, your teammates will be more likely to contribute all they have to your team when they feel connected to each other.

Now is the time to create an environment where people feel like they belong.

Thank you for your readership and friendship,
Drew & Sara

Enterprise Sales 401 – What Phase are YOU in?

3/22/2022

I really love watching football, particularly the passing game where two elite and quick athlete's battle as the quarterback's pass spirals towards them.

The TV commentators have recently started using the term "In Phase" to describe when the defensive back is in the correct position while guarding the receiver. A [quick google](#) search shows that being In Phase is different depending on the route the receiver is running, but that typically the DB is positioned on the field side hip of the receiver.



Enterprise sales professionals are like DB's in that they "cover" accounts on behalf of their company and in an recent situation we broke down their job as really only being in four phases.

Enterprise sales is anything but simple with all of the nuances that come with managing the relationship between two very large companies, however the first thing you need your sales professional to recognize is what phase of the sales process are we in currently?

Embedded inside the phase recognition is the subtle change that goes on in your conversations with the buyers as **you work from being curious about a match to rigorous in your pursuit of aligning the clients priorities with the solution you are providing.**

If you lose track of the priorities and don't get the buyers to continually reiterate what matters most, you could be setting yourself up for a late stage disappointment.

Here is how we have described the four stages of Enterprise Sales (**with some humor injected**) and how to pay attention to matching the buyers priorities with their companies top initiatives.

Team,

As we continue to wage the battle of the new(us) vs the old(the competition) I wanted to outline what I think are maybe some obvious concepts that hopefully keep us fired up and focused as we leap into April.

There are really only four phases for our top Enterprise Prospects.

They are unaware of our services and therefore are lost in the wilderness of want and despair.

They are aware of our services but not engaged in a buying process because other issues are keeping them occupied and so they are losing out on all the \$\$ we can make them.

They are engaged in a buying process with us and most likely others so they are close to seeing the light, but sadly our competitors are out there like [Wormtongue](#) in the Lord of the Rings and so we must remain vigilant in our pursuit of truth in the context that our prospect has declared in the discovery call. **This is why we get them to prioritize the issues and make sure they remain true to those priorities all the way through the RFP process.**

They have picked us and are rolling out our solution and are on their way to the promised land or they have been bamboozled by our competition and must suffer for another 3 years in the land of mediocrity.

The fun in this is that these poor lost souls think that nothing is going to change the game.....and yet, we have references who were just as lost and are now willing to go on record and tell others that our solution is a "**GAME CHANGER.**"

The key is to know how to reveal our solution and to do it in the context of the client's current reality.

Our failure to do so can and will lead to other vendors winning with lesser solutions.

Thus we must always be willing to be curiously optimistic when speaking with our grumpy buyers early and then as things develop continue to accuse the idea that our solution is the only solution as it is clearly not.

The winning solution is the one that matches the priorities that the prospect shared in the discovery call and verifies all the way through the buying process and importantly we need to tie our category to the BIG 3 issues that the prospect is focused on from the CEO on down.

Learning how our prospects prioritize our category and then tying it into the BIG 3 is a one two punch that helps us and **helps our buyer look good internally which is really**

what they care about.

So like the good and hungry hunters that we all are, let us go into the conversations early with curiosity and finish them with rigor.

Fired up to be on your team!

Drew

Essential Elements of a Close-Knit Team: When is the Right Time to Have a Hard Conversation?

4/7/2022



"Now would be fine" is the answer we preach and teach.

Of course this is an easy answer for someone who has authority or position power.

But what about at the other end of the spectrum?

Our experiences suggest the answer is often...."NEVER is just fine by me!"

So how do we bridge this gap?

It starts with organizing and prioritizing your own schedule and continues in how you share your choices with others.

[Geoffrey Moore](#) who has successfully advised Marc Benioff at Salesforce and Satya Nadella at Microsoft recently wrote about how the word "priority" entered our language in only the singular form. He is suggesting that the CEO needs to set [THE PRIORITY](#) and that the team should either buy in or leave.

Talk about a hard conversation.

If you are leading a smaller team, like a Jeffrey Bezos "[two pizza](#)" team, or in military parlance a sub unit you may have a very clear directive from above, but there is still the challenge of managing the disparate tasks.

The team at www.thearmyleader.co.uk have a series of excellent posts about small unit cohesion and execution. The articles are current and written by those who have recently been in active military service.

No matter where you sit on the power curve when you organize and prioritize your tasks and share them with your superior you are having a hard conversation with yourself first,

TURNING A GROUP INTO A TEAM



Inside of tribes all over the world one of the first things leaders do after they control the dress code is they control who talks and what they say.

It is this command and control style that starts and feeds the conversational graveyard that starts to undermine the teams ability to trust each other and effectively execute the leaders plans.

In our last post "[Stop Saying Stupid Sh*t Outloud](#)" [Trevor Mowad](#) described how culture is built or destroyed by words and phrases shared out loud and the 7 to 10x impact of negative language on a team.

Three phrases that can help anyone who is challenged by hard conversations.

Here are three phrases that low power people can employ to help them engage in having hard conversations early and to help clean out their teams conversational graveyard.

"That is interesting, can you say more about that."

Say this when a statement is made, like "There is no way, we are going to win that business".

The response to your question will typically be the "why" behind the statement.

Once you have the why, you can get a window into the logic or emotion that the other person is carrying into that topic.

"I hear you."

This is another conversational enabler and is often best used when someone is being dramatic or dogmatic in making a point.

Conversational graveyards can create a great deal of tension for certain people and then instead of talking things out, they act them out or worse yet, they blurt them out.

Your empathetically stated "I hear you" can really land and take the air out of the balloon. Frustrated people sometimes don't need agreement as much as they need to feel heard.

"That's the easy part, can we talk about the hard part?"

This phrase is a lane changer, or kind of like putting the clutch in so you can shift gears.

It is best delivered slowly and then you should pause for a few seconds to let the other side know you are going to bring up something that may not be agreed to yet.

Understanding these phrases and then putting them into your conversational tool belt take time and practice. If you are looking to learn more about these topics we have two book recommendations.

The first is the gold standard going back decades by the team at Vital Smarts Inc. "[Crucial Conversations, Tools for Talking When the Stakes are High](#)" has sold millions of copies over the decades and is still as relevant as ever.

A more recent offering from retired FBI negotiator Chris Voss is "[Never Split the Difference](#)" and while the title connotes that you will learn negotiating tips, the first thing you learn is a mindset and tool kit for entering into a conversation where the outcome is in doubt and therefore could be unsafe or hard.

Regardless of your role as leader or follower we hope that we have enabled you with a few more tools to answer our title's question with a resilient and patient...**NOW WOULD BE FINE.**

Eight Essential Elements of a Close-Knit Team #4: Define What's Fair & the Difference Between Leadership & Management

6/28/2022

We are finishing up the first half of 2022 with our 4th post on the Eight Essential Elements of a Close-Knit Team which appears fitting as we head into the "half time" of the year. Defining what is fair and the differences between leadership and management are crucial for any unit that wants to adapt quickly on their path to this year's championship.



Sport and work teams correlate easily and yet the tension that exists around playing time and who has the ball at the end of the game seems to be unique to sport. What is fair, how people lead themselves and how they allow themselves to be directed are foundational issues on a sports team. **Understanding how the best teams have dealt with this tension could afford the business leader some transitory insights.**

Fairness and Roles

Warming the bench or getting garbage minutes can really challenge a person's commitment to putting in the extra effort in practice. The great arbiter of sport is playing time on a team that is competing to win a championship. The coaches control playing time and they need players who are ready to perform their best inside the system they have designed and taught in practice. **It is very challenging to create an intense practice environment with players who know they have different amounts of playing time during the game.**

Sometimes the starters want to take it easy and rest up for the big game and sometimes the backup players aren't sure the effort is worth it. Why hustle to just watch the game from the bench? The coach has the whistle and can change practice from the fun of scrimmaging to the drudgery of conditioning, but most don't want to go that well too often.

John Wooden, who was voted the coach of the 20th Century by ESPN deployed a tactic and a methodology to address these issues. He communicated individually with each of his players the role he anticipated them playing on the team as early as he could. This declaration was based on what he knew at that time, and he made sure to balance the reality of the present with the possibility of a better future.

In business **Reid Hoffman** and **Ben Casnocha** wrote [“The Alliance”](#) where they introduce the concept of meeting individually every 45 days during an 18-month tour of duty for key employees in an effort to have their best performers feel that the company’s mission and their personal contribution were connected. Importantly the meeting was focused on the employee first and the company second and proved to greatly increase retention rates.

In both settings, **knowing your role and understanding how that role helps the team succeed goes a long way to maximizing the daily contributions** everyone chooses to bring which enables the leaders to build a high-performance team.

Wooden’s methodology for fairness is also a piece of timeless treasure that many young coaches and managers fail to implement. Discipline and compliance to small details have become hallmarks of championship lore. Nothing spreads faster than when someone breaks a hard and fast rule of being late to practice or another rule that is in place to keep a large number of people in order. For some reason we all take solace when somebody else gets some time in the penalty box.

Zero tolerance can really catch a leader off guard late in the season and potentially have the team distracted at precisely the moment you need them focused on a championship performance. **Wooden established early that fairness was not a horizontal line, rather introduced the concept that fairness was earned and deserved based upon past contributions or performances.** This subtle change gave him room to have strict rules that enabled buy in by all to prioritize the team above other distractions and yet to not allow small infractions to get in the way of allowing everyone on the team to accomplish the goal of winning the championship. Swen Nater & Ronald Gallimore go into more detail on this methodology in their book [“You Haven’t Taught Until They Have Learned.”](#) Swen is a great resource as he was Bill Walton’s back up for three years at UCLA under John Wooden and hardly saw the floor and yet was a first-round draft pick and had a successful 11-year pro career.

Defining what is fair and then connecting people to how their role maximizes the contribution they can make to the unit’s success is something a leader should do early and when consistently administered should give everyone the latitude they need to adapt to outside issues that inevitably arise.

Leadership and Management

Over the last 10 years leadership and management have seen a blending of their definitions and management has been taking it in the teeth with meme after meme declaring the benefits of leadership and the horrors of management.

However, when looked at through the lens of competing to win a championship the players and coaches need to work in consensual interdependence and **both management and leadership should be clearly defined and differentiated**. Understanding and honoring the differences can be a key contributor to the unit's success.

Peter Drucker liked to say that to manage was to think with someone and if necessary to think for someone while they were learning the task. [Jack Clark of University of California Rugby fame has a YouTube talk](#) on the differences between leadership and management and how he defines them on his teams. From Clark's perspective he requires that every player leads themselves and adheres to the values that make up their culture. They accomplish this by having a series of questions they ask themselves and by answering in the affirmative they show their fealty to the unit.

Clark further outlines that within the team they need to waste as little time as possible on contextual matters that can be delegated to a small subset of the team, the captains. Everyone on the team consents to being managed and directed by the leaders so they can focus on playing the highly adaptive game of rugby where the coach hardly speaks to the players during the game and only the captains can speak to an official. As an aside, wouldn't the NBA be a more enjoyable game to watch if they had the same rule?

Companies may appear to have some advantages over sports teams when it comes to establishing questions that allow their people to lead themselves, yet we seldom come across them. Identifying your teams most valued values is something you can learn in about two hours with [this DIY worksheet](#). We have found that it really brings people together and allows you a starting point to building out the questions that empower your people to bring their best which is ultimately what they want to do.

As a coach or a business leader please consider learning from these dedicated practitioners of unit cohesion. We all know how hard it is to keep it fair and not lose your team's commitment while you are competing. These greats dealt with the same issues of human nature, and we hope they help you as you are building your best teams in the future.

Eight Essential Elements of Close-Knit Teams #5 Getting to Your Best Team Effort Through Assertive Practice and Play

9/9/2022



Along with team building and listening to your players, **coaches and leaders should seek to create an environment where everyone can learn how to go at game speed both individually and as a unit.** A leader needs to have a plan and a correlating structure for going all-out together because power without control can get you off the rails and, in the ditch, quickly.

The cauldron of controlled conflict will allow your team to trust each other more as they see that others can match their best and that you can even get the sum of the parts to add up to more when the active ingredients of **trust, precision and planned adaptability** are inserted into your practices. Your best performers are going to want to push their limits, and you will need hard practices to allow everyone to improve together.

As Tom Hanks so perfectly said in his role as the washed-up Jimmy Dugan in “A League of Their Own,” **It is the hard that makes it worth it.**

Why do you need trust?

Sports teams give us great examples of this and while the correlations to work are not 100% they are close enough. The team that doesn't trust each other when under duress will stop sharing the ball and a form of “hero ball” will ensue. Bill Belichick of New England Patriots fame has been known to try and force this on his opposition by taking away one key player from the other side and seeing if the other team can adapt. Adaptability is another key ingredient, but before you can adapt you need to be able to trust each other.

In a work context this could happen if a colleague who normally plays a key role leaves your company or is out sick. Who else can step into their shoes and be ready for the big presentation to a prospect or provide an internal report?

Our magic formula for building trust is SE=C=T=Success

SE stands for Shared Experiences, C stands for window into your Character, and T stands for Trust.

Going full speed in practice or in a conference room and being hard on the idea or ball and kind to each other is a fantastic, shared experience. With enough of these shared experiences everyone on the team starts to understand the character and commitment of all involved and this organically builds a trust that is experience born.

Why do you need precision?

To manage is to think for, with, or through something by yourself or with others. In this situation a good manager is thinking through the process of running an effective all-out practice or meeting where everyone is committed to being hard on the idea or ball while still being respectful of others.

The precision comes in the form of the constraints you will put the team in before you release them to perform. In a sales context you could create a scenario where you are up against company B for an RFP and the buyer says that they are offering a similar product but for 20% less. What questions should you ask and how should you respond?

In a sports context you can create drills where you are giving one side an advantage and then teaching through the constraint to help the players adapt.

The best in business and sport identify moments of maximum influence (MOMI's) and train their teams to be aware of them and how to react and perform with great fundamentals.

The prior preparation of the leader is crucial to leveraging the effort that assertive play is asking of your team. **Don't ask them to go 100% if you haven't prepared for everyone to receive at least that much in return for the effort.**

Why do you need adaptability?

The final triangle in John Wooden's pyramid of success is **Competitive Greatness**. "To be at your best when it is needed. Take enjoyment of a difficult challenge."

It has been decades since Wooden's UCLA teams dominated college basketball but even then, it was a highly competitive sport with hundreds of great players on different teams all of whom were striving to win the NCAA title.



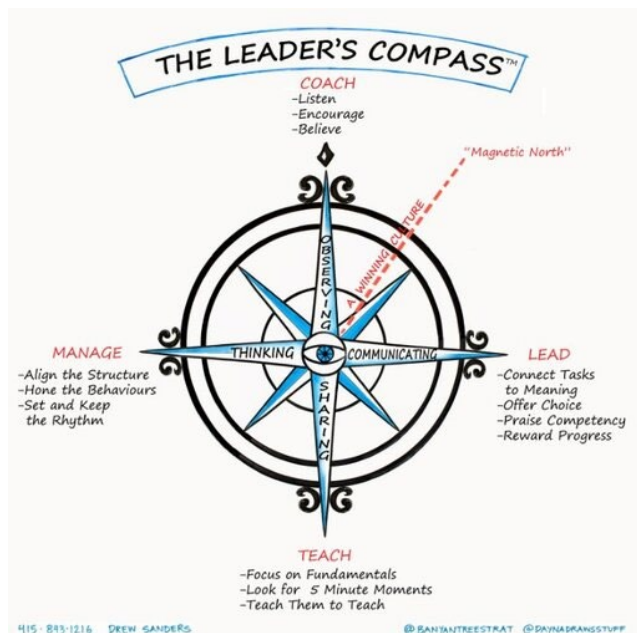
Wooden won nine titles, including seven in a row, and for most of the games would be seated on the bench.

This is in stark contrast to his fellow coaches at the time and more obviously in the present. Watch any game on TV and the second a big play is made the camera goes straight to the coach's reaction, where there is must-see TV as they gyrate and turn into a three-year-old with no filter on their feelings.

Wooden was quoted as saying that the work had been done in practice by the coaches and the players and that the job of adapting to the game itself was in the hands of the players. **Wooden knew that if his players could not recognize the tactics of the other team and then adapt that he could never call enough time-outs to do it for them.**

Changing up the practices and altering the way you practice by adding constraints to enhance your team's adaptability all can build a mental elasticity that will matter in the biggest moments.

We created the Leaders Compass years ago and continue to notice that as people lead themselves and others, they are moving on several axes with one of them being the ability to persevere balanced by the need to adapt.



On its first day Basketball was more like Indoor Rugby - A great example of adapting.

[James Naismith is credited with inventing the game of basketball](#) when faced with an upcoming rainy season in Springfield, Massachusetts. He brought the boys inside and put up a couple of peach baskets on the wall and gave them a soccer ball. He told them that

a point was scored when the ball went into the basket. The boys went all out and soon enough the injuries piled up as the boys ran with the ball and tackled each other on the hard gym floor. Regardless, the boys were happy and wanted to keep playing the next day.

Naismith used all three principles we have discussed and added some constraints to allow the boys to keep playing and stay healthy enough to play. Rules were assigned (like no running with the ball and no tackling) which took precision and adaptability, and trust was given and received by the players and Naismith.

Going all out.... That was the easy part as players love to play!

Eight Essential Elements of Close-Knit Teams #7: Scaling Championship Adaptability with the OODA Loop

11/12/2022



Our final two postings on the Essential Elements of winning teams are about **championship adaptability** and using ceremony to create a flywheel of sustainable energy for winning the right way.

In previous posts we have looked at a variety of factors that a leader can work with to help the team trust each other, go all out, use failure as a constraint to get better, and be all in. All of it connects to the hope of a championship victory which in most cases will not be handed to you, rather you will face a worthy adversary who be equally talented and similarly committed, and you will have to emerge victorious.

How do you avoid being what John Madden famously said about the NFL, which is there is one winner and everyone else is a loser and **the team that lost the super bowl is the first loser**. The words may sting but ask Marv Levy who coached the Buffalo Bills to four Super Bowls and lost them all. Ask anyone who was told they finished 2nd in the big RFP and you will get the same answer, you get to the championship to win it!

Adapt!

The massive distance between finishing first and second helps create the tension that makes for good theater. No one watches the NFL Pro-Bowl (it has recently been dissolved) because nobody cares about the outcome. Part of the intrigue in a tightly contested game is how the best act and react to each other as things unfold. Both the New England Patriots and the Golden State Warriors are famous for their half time adjustments and 3rd quarter success.

In previous posts we have looked at how John Wooden [would not stalk the sidelines](#) of the game as he needed his players to be adapting and didn't want to distract them. Basketball is a great example of adaptability because the ball is in play the moment it is scored and put back onto the court. Jay Bilas in his book [Toughness](#) outlined the "next

play” mentality that Mike K installed at Duke which starts with the mental ability to get over the loss of the basket on defense and the opportunity to gain a basket on the other end.

Sport can give us some good examples but inside the military there is a clean framework that is highly transferable and trainable which is what the leader is seeking.

OODA

Airforce [Colonel John Boyd](#) was a world class fighter pilot and changed how our war planes were built in this country. Colonel Boyd also left behind a decision-making framework that is the standard for our military and can be of real use to leaders who are looking to empower their teams with a way to build out championship adaptability.

The **OODA** loop stands for **Observe, Orient, Decide, Act** and is born out of air-to-air combat training that earned Colonel Boyd the nickname (40 Second Boyd) because he would allow his combatant an advantage position on him and within 40 seconds would be able to kill them.

Observe what is causing your discomfort or pain, measure the size and scope and do not hedge the size or seriousness of its power.

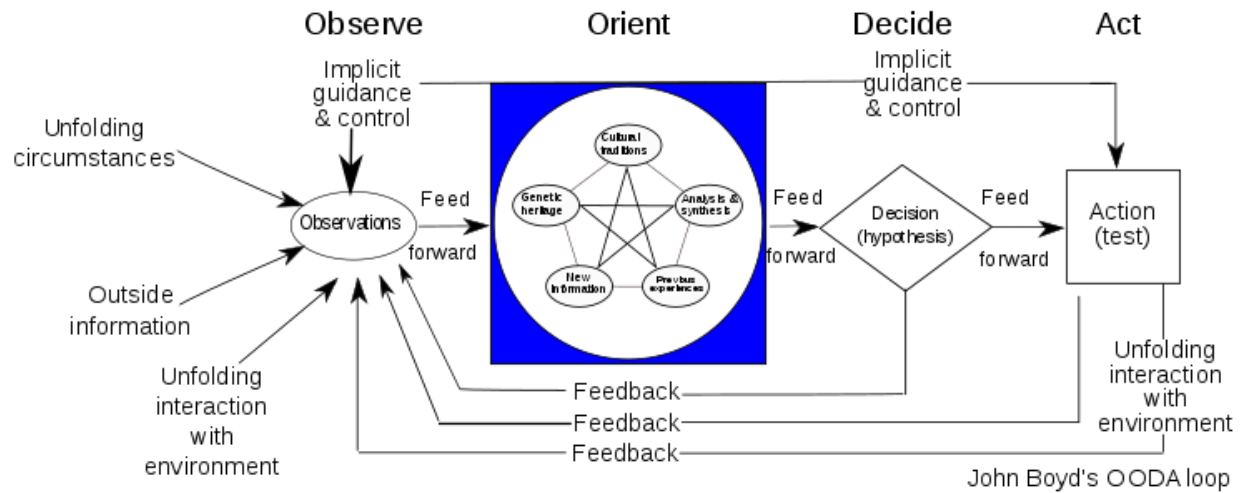
Orient yourself and your assets to the enemy. How can you adapt given what you have currently within reach?

Decide on action to take.

Act on that decision.

Reflect and run the loop again.

Much of the OODA loop training in the military is how to run the loop faster than your enemy, to get inside their OODA loop. Today's climate is perfect for taking that same point of view. **Consider running a daily OODA loop for yourself, and your family. Run a daily OODA loop for your work team.** These simple questions will allow you to get to the brutal truth as quickly as possible which will allow you to adapt.



Hopefully you can take this framework and customize it for your situation. Who is your competition? Where are they strong? How are you positioned relative to them in the marketplace? **Which factors does a potential customer need to prioritize to pick your offering over others?** How can you position the questions that are asked to highlight the factors that help you win?

Whether it is in sport or work you can overlay the OODA loop framework and start to train your team to either take physical or verbal action. As you run this loop you are increasing your team's chances of victory and getting everyone ready to adapt in the biggest moments.

Eight Essential Elements of Close-knit Teams

#8: How Ceremony Can Create a Flywheel of Positive Energy for Teams

12/20/2022



We wrap up our series on the Essential Elements of Close-knit Teams by looking at the power of ceremony and ritual to cement the bonds that can last a lifetime. How you **say hello** and how you **say goodbye** has been proven to have a lasting impact, and with a work or sports team it matters even more. The buzz of doing it right feels great and the sting of doing it poorly can last a lifetime.

Saying Hello

[We began the year](#) by highlighting Owen Eastwood's work on how to bring people from widely different cultures together. His book "[Belonging](#)" drives home how important it is to have ceremony at the beginning of a season or when a new person is added. Instead of the new person being the "low man" or paying a new person tax, they are welcomed as an important member of the community.

Getting off to a Good Start

As the leader of the team, you are weaving several different common threads together each year. You make sure that everyone can connect to the aligned vision, understand their role, and feel at home. You also give them room to push themselves and have a major say in how they are going to pursue their best self. Finally, you equip them to take that best self and combine it with others to make a collective effort that can compete at the highest level possible. The best players usually want to get better and love to work with and for people who help them improve. As you allocate the time between culture, effort, and skill you are weaving a collective rope that bonds everyone involved with the mission together.

How do you Build a Flywheel that Sustains the Right Culture?

The leader seeks to create a safe place first and then should facilitate a discussion on what matters most and how the team will take the key actions towards the agreed upon goal. Reid Hoffman wrote about the way they scaled LinkedIn in his book "[The Alliance](#)" amidst the challenges of a Silicon Valley work culture which was talented but prone to job hopping which undermined their mission.

One way to connect people to a common vision is to give them a say in what the values of the team are. We have adapted the alignment and value process they used into a "[Groups2Teams](#)" process that can take between 1 and 2 hours. When a leader facilitates this process, the team ends up owning the values because they chose them.

Jack Clark, the head coach for Men's Rugby at Cal has taken this to the next level by attaching a question that each member can ask themselves to hold them to the standard of that value. We call this a dynamic question because it activates the value and helps your team self-regulate whether they are a unit of 10, 1,000 or even 100,000 people. Here are a series of videos Jack did with some other coaches at the [What Drives Winning Coaches Symposium](#).

Once a team has a common way, they will act it becomes much easier for leaders from within the organization to emerge. These leaders will embody the values on their path to accomplishing the stated goals. The correlation between action and success only emboldens the culture. **The leaders are often called captains and the coach that can empower captains has a major competitive advantage.** Captains take recruits on their campus visits. Captains recruit people from other companies to join the team. Captains drive the herd to cull the wrong behaviors that can sabotage a team's success. Captains drive and build culture and over time as they age out or move up in a work environment, they are a major part of the organization's stored value or flywheel of culture.

Saying Goodbye and Building out the Alumni Network

Hoffman also addresses the reality of people leaving your organization and takes a page from the university system by calling it an alumni network. This connection may seem like a stretch at first because many people leave a company on different terms than when they left or graduated from their school. However, alumni fit the goal that the company should have, which is to honor those that move on in such a way that they might be a good resource for future employees.

In a sports team context, the end of a season marks the dissolving of a class or year and should not be missed regardless of the outcomes on the field. Championship teams can pass around hardware like trophies or rings but just as important is **how the players grew individually and collectively.** The armed forces sports teams are seldom national champions and yet after their tours of duty are finished every potential employer knows

the values those players will bring to the interview or job.

Over time different teams or companies will build out a competitive advantage in recruiting because the alumni network will help the leaders select the right players more often. **Bo Schembechler** was the head football coach at Michigan and had a great line about recruiting.

“If you miss the right guy and he goes across the street, he might beat you once a year, but if you take the wrong guy, he ends up beating you every day in practice.”

Your alumni network should understand what your “our kinda guys” or OKG is. With more nodes of intelligence out there the leaders have a better chance of digging down to the softer skills like heart or drive that can be missing on a video or a resume.

All these benefits are part of the reason it is so important to memorialize the commitment made, the relationships built, and the shared memories that were experienced at the end of a season. Companies can do this on a calendar basis with much of the same effect. The cadence of reflecting and honoring the past contributions can be a force multiplier as you move forward and seek to improve in the future.

In your organization regardless of your station we hope these elements are ones you can adopt to facilitate the creation of a closer-knit unit as you seek to be a force multiplier for good.

Thank you for your readership and friendship this year.