



YOUR TEAM SUCCESS PODCAST

Breaking Down Silos: Improving Collaboration Between Teams

Shannon Waller: Have you noticed that your teams are becoming kind of siloed, only respecting their own agenda, but not appreciating other people's? Well, stay tuned as we talk about a higher level of Unique Ability Teamwork, not just teamwork amongst individuals, but actually amongst teams. Stay tuned. I think you'll like it.

Hi, Shannon Waller here, and welcome to Team Success. Today, I want to talk about a different aspect of Unique Ability Teamwork, and not one that I've really touched on all that much. We're often very focused on teamwork between individuals, how to look at things, how to appreciate other people's talents and capabilities and missions and goals and visions, how to grow your own.

But today, what I want to talk about is actually teamwork between teams. Well, first of all, I've had my own experience recently, so there's that. There's teamwork and lack of teamwork between teams. But I want to share with you a model that we have in Coach, which is called Front Stage/Back Stage. Incredibly useful framework for really appreciating where your time, energy, and attention goes. So the Front Stage is just like a theater. This is where you create the magic for your clientele, for your audience.

This is where you want them to wonder, how did they do that? And you don't actually usually tell them. So aspects of the Front Stage are creating a unique experience for people. It's your packaging and your branding, like who you are as a company persona. And then your value creation, the difference that you make in other people's lives and their businesses and their futures, and solving their problem, maximizing their opportunity, and reinforcing their strengths.

This is really what you're doing in terms of value creation. And what is fascinating, and I could talk for days about Front Stage value creation, is that value creation is in the eye of the beholder, just like beauty. A, you can think that you're putting in a ton of time and effort. But unless there's a result at the end of it that they really value, it's not value creation.

So this is why it's always worth checking in with your audience, like, "Oh, what are we doing for you that's creating the most value?" And sometimes, the thing that you really work so long and so hard on, you put all this investment, they're like, "Hmm, that's okay. But this thing you do, this small little thing, the fact that you always call me after our meetings, 'Here's the checklist.'" We're doing a renovation right now. And we walked through to see what they'd done with the demolition and three days, they did an incredible amount of work, and it's impeccable. But what was I most impressed with? The checklist that they had taped to the wall. I was like, "Oh my gosh, that's incredible." I am working with organized humans more so than myself.



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So it's like the little things sometimes that you just take for granted that are actually the most value for others. So just something to noodle on. But what we're going to focus on today is more the Back Stage form and function that produces this incredible Front Stage for you.

So the Back Stage, this is your team. We love using this theater analogy. Totally makes sense for teams, by the way. Sometimes, taking Strategic Coach concepts and tools back to the team is more challenging. They get Front Stage/Back Stage in seconds. So this is a great one to share with your team if you're in that position.

So one is capability. You have to be good at what you do. You have to be able to provide those products and those services and those experiences, and you have to have people that are capable of all the different aspects of putting that together. That's a given. Then there's teamwork and communication, kind of what I talk about most of the time.

How do you understand and appreciate other people's strengths and capabilities, and how can you mesh those together? How can you communicate better? But today, I want to talk about the third element of Back Stage, which is coordination and organization.

So this is how you integrate the individual teams together. So there's individual teamwork with one another kind of on your team, and then there's how do you coordinate your teamwork? This is vital. And I've been thinking about this for a little while. So I'm very excited to be able to talk about it today.

I just had my own recent experience. So I'm sitting in the seat of head of marketing, steep learning curve, but we're having fun, making progress. And one of the things I noticed is I, of course, am focused on the teamwork on the team and how to have people be speaking up more, more collaborative, more in their Unique Abilities as 100% my focus with this team. And then obviously producing the results that we're accountable for.

But then, also, we can be really strong and good within ourselves, but how well are we working with other teams? And lots of stuff is going really, really well. But there are a few little rubs. And also this works the other way too, when people are working with us, how they can fit well into our teamwork or where they can create some tension or some friction.

So this is like a higher level of Unique Ability Teamwork. When you really take a look at, "Okay, we're functioning well within our own team, how good a teammate are we with other teams in the company?" And sometimes this is even with your clientele. How are you in teamwork with the outside? But I'm going to focus on the inside today.

So it's just been really fun. In fact, just had a meeting yesterday that I'm very excited about because there's certain things that marketing does that are working extraordinarily well for others. And together, we produce great things. So we were meeting with production. And there's other things where just mostly on the timing basis, it was like there was a rub there.



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And I don't know about you. But as a person, I don't like working with people in a way they go, "Oh, something else from Shannon. Oh no, not getting it in time to do my Unique Ability. I don't have enough time to be creative. It's rushed again. It's last minute. I'm not clear on what she's looking for." I don't want to be that person, and I don't want that to be my team either.

So we just had this really fun, creative meeting about what's really working, what we appreciate about one another. We kind of did more Coach tool, The Experience Transformer, which starts with what's the situation—coordination/teamwork between marketing and production. And then what's really working. And we had such a long list of what's working—the talent on the team, the ideas, the volume of stuff that gets produced, sometimes pulling off miracles at the last minute when something's unexpected, especially like production does, I was going to say produces, is incredible.

I mean, it's just amazing. It's a joy to receive and to see what they come up with and make the ideas from the marketing team real, into something that's a graphic, a tangible, a writing, all the things. So there's lots of appreciation and from their side too.

And then what is not working. And there weren't very many, but they're consistent. And by the way, the problem is almost never the people. Dan has said this, I totally agree, is that what's the system or the process that we need to improve to make it work? And that's kind of what I'm suggesting you take a look at with your own team, your own company today, is take a look at how well is your team working in terms of its own teamwork and communication, but then how well are you working with other teams?

Is there constant friction? There tends to always be an issue between sales and the delivery of that. Sales goes and promises everything to everyone in a really short time frame for less money. And then the company is responsible for delivering on that. You're like, "What? How is that even possible?"

So sales and manufacturing, you hear about that all the time. So how can we really make it work for one another? And it's a fun conversation to have. I have to say it's exciting. It's knowing that you're not going to be an irritant. It's producing results that are faster, easier, cheaper, with bigger impact.

It is, again, being very results oriented. It's actually being alert, curious, responsive, and resourceful to what your other teams need as opposed to being in a silo. So this is really about breaking through silos. And it just has to do with that appreciation and willingness, appreciation for the other team and what they're producing, what they do, and then a willingness to engage in that higher level of teamwork.



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And we left that meeting yesterday with some very clear tangibles, including something that's going to be the subject of one of the next two future podcasts, and that is the importance of having things written down in a way that everyone can contribute to it.

So in Coach, we use The Impact Filter, and there's lots of different rifts on that to really state your intentionality, what's going to happen. Two of the people are going to go off and create some templates and really make sure that everything is included so that the team knows exactly what's expected.

I brought up the phenomenal book called *The Checklist Manifesto* by Atul Gawande, G-A-W-A-N-D-E. And this is *The Checklist Manifesto*, brilliant book on how simple checklists save lives in hospitals. He was a doctor for the World Health Organization, and how to reduce hospital deaths, especially after heart surgery.

And it turns out that even surgeons with 15, 20, 25, 30 years' experience need to follow the checklist because, and we're guilty of this too, we know something so well, we're like, "Oh yeah, I could just get away with this, or I know what to do." And getting experienced people to follow the checklist was actually the hard part.

My dad was a pilot, and pilots have checklists, for which I am grateful. I do not want someone forgetting a key step as they do their walk around the plane. It's really fun to see. Even in commercial airlines, it's really fun to see that, the pilot walking around the plane and checking things because it'd be easy to forget. Are the chocks still underneath the wheels? Check the prop, make sure the gas is full. And we hear about, hopefully nothing fatal, we hear about problems when someone didn't follow the checklist.

And so someone has a super short Follow Thru on Kolbe, not a natural list maker. If I make a list, I lose it. It's still for me is it gave me a true appreciation for a checklist. And that's often the handoff document that you need to give. And, of course, it's not actually probably going to be paper anymore. It's going to be digital. But just having a way to communicate between teams, especially if you co-create those, it is super effective.

So again, what we're talking about is really this Unique Ability Teamwork between teams, kind of take it up a level, take it to a higher level. And it's critical because if you don't do it, you're going to have ongoing friction. And when people are constantly frustrated, it actually becomes institutionalized resentment, which is the last thing in the world that you want. It's really hard to break through that.

And then people start treating each other as things, not as other human beings like, "Oh, sales always does this. Marketing always does this. Production always does this. Manufacturing always does this." And you get these negative personality characteristics attributed to teams,



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which is not kind of where we want to go. And it's not producing results that are faster, easier, cheaper, with a bigger impact.

So if you really want to accelerate your results, if you want to accelerate your productivity, for me, it's also increasing the fun factor. And even if you just want to make sure that each of your team members is able to contribute their maximum, then they need the time to do their Unique Ability. And if things are really rushed all the time, they don't have time for that. And that was one of the things that came out of our conversation.

What is most important? How can we narrow things down so they're working on fewer things, but we can produce a better result? That's a great conversation to have. Just doing work for the sake of doing work without measuring impact, not strategic, not wise.

So it can really make your business much more productive and much more profitable when you take time to analyze what's working/what's not in terms of your coordination. So what are some action steps you can take? First of all, talk to your team leaders and see whether or not they are willing to have better teamwork between their teams, to identify what is working and what's not. So this is the essence of our Experience Transformer tool.

So state what the situation is—teamwork between our teams. What is working? Is super important to do kind of a Positive Focus, a list of what already is working. Jumping into just solving the problems without people feeling appreciated first will not get you the end result you were looking for.

They'll just be defensive as opposed to open. It's very different saying, "Hey, 80% of what you guys do and how you guys do it is fabulous. If we could tweak this last 20% and get maybe an 80% improvement of the 20%, then that would be a game changer for us. That would really make sure that people are going home on time to their families. This will make sure that people are growing. This will make sure that people are challenged in a good way, not a bad way."

So it's really key to make sure that you start with that point. And then you get into what is probably one, two, maybe three things. For us, it was a bit of timing. It's having the big picture at the beginning, which is that document to hand off and co-creating that template. It was really fairly simple solutions.

Also, one of our issues was... Coach is focused on our branding and just making sure that we're current with who we are, and that that's represented and we package ourselves well. So working on that Front Stage result, but it happens Back Stage. And who's going to be in charge of the branding? Who's going to be, not the officer, but who's going to hold that and go, "Yes, no?"



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So that was actually another responsibility that we decided needed to happen. And where should it live? Well, it shouldn't live with marketing. It should live with production. So that was kind of a fun decision that we made in that particular meeting. So again, those are our particulars from our company, but you have your own as well, like who owns what?

You don't want to have a tug of war across the line on key things. So decide what the key issues are, decide if you need a "Who" for that, who's going to be the person in charge, and then just figure out how the "Hows" can happen better.

And it's often by writing them down into a template, into a brief. I am a huge fan of using The Impact Filter because it is so key. When you're communicating something to your own team or to another team, they have to understand the why, because if they understand the why, they can employ a higher level of creativity to the problem.

If they're just being told what to do: execute this little task and step. There's not nearly as much creativity as, "Oh, here's the problem we're solving." They could come up with something completely new that didn't even occur to you, and you're like, "Oh, that would be amazing. Let's do that too." Right? And I'm going to do a whole podcast on this, so don't worry. But when you're actually able to communicate the whole picture of what's needed, that's amazing. And that, again, you want to set people up for success.

You want to set people up for Unique Ability. You want to set people up for creativity. And you being really clear on the big picture in a written form, not just a verbal form, is key to being able to tap into that. So if our companies want to operate at the level of Excellent and Unique as opposed to Competent, Incompetent, I think these are absolutely critical things to do.

So I'm excited. I'm excited for you, having even better teamwork amongst your teams, much less your individuals within your teams, because I think the possibilities are huge. I'll keep you posted on what happens with ours. And again, we're maximizing here. We're taking something that's already good and already working and helping to make it incredible and a joy and a source of inspiration, not frustration, which I think is exciting.

So again, you don't have to revamp everything. You don't have to start fresh. You don't have to fire everyone and hire a new team. No. Simply focus on what's working, identify the few things that's not, and put in place the system, the "Whos" and "Hows" to make sure that that can happen.

All right. Hope this has been interesting, inspiring for you. If you sense some friction, this might be why. So I hope this context of this conversation helps you take action in a positive way, so that not only can you have great appreciation amongst your individual teams, but that, as a whole, your teams are all working in sync as well.



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All right. Well, thank you so much for listening. Really appreciate it. If you have any questions or comments, please let us know at questions@strategiccoach.com. And as always, here's to your team success.