



YOUR TEAM SUCCESS PODCAST

## Managing Up, Part II

**Shannon Waller:** Would you like to make a greater contribution? Do you want to make a bigger difference in your organization? Stay tuned for part two of "Managing Up."

Hi, Shannon Waller here, and welcome to Team Success. Today, I actually want to go back to something I've talked about, and the last time I talked about that was March of 2014, so it's kind of time for an update. It's called "Managing Up: Part 2." I'm doing this because I've been asked for a little more detail, a little more explanation, and I want to share just some recent experiences I've had that have given me some more clarity on what the heck managing up actually means. What it means is that you as a team member or even team leader with your owner or entrepreneur is that you are looking out for them. It also means that you are looking at things from their perspective, not just your own. And this is vital. This is actually a leadership capability that I've noticed. And people who are good leaders, especially great leaders, they have a bigger perspective. They're just not focused on the tasks in front of them. They look up to see, okay, what's the longer perspective here? How far can I see down the road? What are other people doing? How are they looking at things? This is actually part of having a leadership mindset.

So managing up means looking very specifically at your person, your "Who," and asking yourself, you know, how are they looking at things? What are they worried about? If you think about Strategic Coach's D.O.S. structure, you know, what are their goals? R-Factor? So, you know, their relationships, in terms of your relationship with them, what's their three-year vision for themselves, for your team, for the company? And then relative to that, what are they worried about? We call those dangers. What are they excited about? We call those opportunities. And what are they confident about? And those are their strengths. And when we get to the practical portion of this, having that conversation with them would be very strategic so that you can find out this intel. You can't really support them if you don't know where they're going or what they're worried about.

So why is this important? Well, I think it's important for several reasons. Number one is, it's important for the person you're supporting. They could really use your help. They could use your intelligence, your care, your consideration, your perspective, your expertise, your insight on the issues that they're facing, which is probably going to be slightly different than what you're focused on. You're focused on your particular area of expertise, but they have other things that they're also thinking about, and you could undoubtedly make a contribution, even sometimes just by being a sounding board. Even if there's nothing you can actually do, just being the person that they can talk things through with will be huge. So it really benefits them because they've got a partner, they've got someone else who cares, they've got someone to talk things through with, they've got someone to share a different perspective. Everyone has their own way of looking at the world.



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And if you've listened to even one of these podcasts, you probably know how much I love profiles, because it really just gives common language to our perspectives, how we strive, what we care about, what's most important, our strengths, all the things. But it's really valuable to have other people's insights into things. So that's the key one. The other thing is, it benefits you. So it benefits you because you learn how you can be of most value. If you think about creating value and providing direction and confidence and capability, you now know what is most important. You know what to emphasize. You know what to de-emphasize. And then you know how you can create value. What can you step into? What can you take off that person's plate? How can you give an idea that might help solve the problem? You know, this is how you can be super valuable. And if you're super valuable, guess what? You get rewarded, you get compensated, you get new, interesting, challenging projects. You're not bored, which is a big danger for a lot of really smart team members. So, it's going to help you grow and you're doing that by really helping to support your team leader.

Now, let's dive into some very clear specifics on exactly what you can do, what you can say to make this make sense for you. And I wrote down a whole list of things I wanted to share with you. So the number one thing you can do is ask, "How can I help?" So I had a situation where it was kind of took over this somewhat messy project and what I would have loved more than anything is if one of my talented team members had come and said, "You know what? I know things are super chaotic right now. How can I help?" Oh my gosh, I would have fallen at their feet in gratitude. Didn't quite happen that way, we worked it out, but still. You know, just that "how can I help?" if you can recognize that things are hard, challenging, again chaotic, which is not completely abnormal in entrepreneurial life, and being that person, you're a helper.

I always love the story that Mr. Rogers from Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood told. He would talk to his mom about this, you know, there'd be some accident or some, you know, trauma that had happened on the news. He goes, mom, mom, it's like bad things are happening. And she would tell him, "Look for the helpers. There are always people willing to help." Be that helper. Oh my gosh, you will not be forgotten, you'll be remembered, you'll be lauded, you'll be celebrated for being that person who showed up in that moment. Huge, I cannot begin to tell you. The other thing that you can do is not leave them in the dark about what you need to be successful. So this means actually speaking up. This means saying, hey, I want to get this done. What would make it so much faster, easier, and get a bigger result is if I had this piece of technology, or if I had this equipment, or if I had this training, or if I had this other 20 hours of someone to help me get it done.

If you are presenting part of the solution, as opposed to just suffering through it or things taking forever and you're not hitting your targets, you're not accomplishing your rocks, you're not hitting your numbers because you're missing something but then you're not speaking up about what that something is. That's super frustrating, I can tell you. So, you actually knowing



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what you need and saying, hey, is this a possibility? You're not making a demand, you're not acting entitled, none of that, but you're letting the person know, hey, this would really help us accomplish our goals to get this done. Oh my gosh, that also, so, so appreciated.

And even more casually, sometimes just sitting down, often when leadership has meetings with you, it's about you. Sometimes you can reverse it and go, "Hey, what's on your mind? What are you thinking about? I've got time and space. I'm just curious where you're at. You know, how are things for you?" Again, kind of shocking just how few people actually do that. Usually it's very, very well received. Another thing that you can do kind of to be just a generous team member, generous-hearted human, is to assume positive intent. So when you are hearing something that might be triggering, that might be hard, that you don't agree with, you're like, what? Do not assume the person or the company is out to get you. They are not. They do not have a personal vendetta against you. And it might be hard, and trust me, I've had my own moments with this sometimes, because it can feel very personal, but you're like, hmm, the intention's good, I don't really get the strategy or the way it's happening, so I will dig deeper.

And this is why I love, love, love our Strategy Circle, which has four parts, if you've never seen it before. And that Strategy Circle has your goal, which is what you want to accomplish at the other end of the page. So left is goal, on the far right is the result. And the result is, what does it look like when it's done and done really, really well? And then you use the result to go back to column two and go, okay, what are all the obstacles that are in the way of accomplishing this result? And then you figure out column three, what are the strategies to help overcome the obstacles? Well, oftentimes, you know, in terms of where you are in the decision-making process, you might be hearing the strategies.

What I have found is, it's incredibly useful when I hear a strategy, I'm like, okay, what problem are we trying to solve? And what results are we after here? You can get down to kind of more core principles, I was almost gonna say first principles. All of a sudden, you start to see the logic of the framework. There might be a flaw in the logic of the execution, but you're asking good questions, you're being curious, as opposed to assuming—and you know what the word assume means from grade school? Makes a A-S-S out of you and me. You're not assuming something, you're finding out and being curious. You may still not agree with it, don't get me wrong, but more often than not in my learning, in my experience, it's like, okay, I see where you're gonna get to, I have a different take, are you open to that? And then it's amazing the kind of conversations that can happen.

And often, you are going to prevent what I call train wrecks. You know, you're going to prevent this thing that they don't see, they've got a blind spot, they're not cognizant of things from other people's perspective enough, and something that they would have put in place might have been a disaster, and you're going to go, "You need to kind of take a look at this." I remember coaching, this is years ago now. And I think I actually talked about this in a podcast



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about speaking up. But she goes, "I can see something really bad happening." And it actually had to do with a client. I said, "You have to speak up." This is managing up too. You have to speak up. But she didn't think it was her place. I'm like, it is your place to prevent train wrecks. Please say something. Anyway, she did avoid the train wreck, something the entrepreneur did not see at all. But it was something from her perspective that she was very evident to her that was not evident to him. This is another form of managing up is preventing disaster, preventing train wrecks, preventing trauma. Oh my goodness. That's just an intelligent way to make a contribution to a company.

And then the last thing I want to talk about is simply be a positive energy to be around. And I don't mean that to be flaky, but I mean, be someone that they are looking forward to seeing. You know, smile. Or really simple, you know, be excited about new ideas. Go, "Oh, wow, that's really intriguing. I hadn't thought about that. Let's talk about it." You know, just being open and adding your energy to things, oh my gosh, again, super contributing and very much appreciated for, I know, for me in a leadership position. It's like when I've got people who are just willing to play, we'll figure out the game as we go, but it's so great to have playmates that I can have fun with. So that makes a huge difference.

And here's a bonus one, and this one's actually from Dan. The highest compliment that Dan can give any team member is to say, and he said this numerous times, he goes, "I never think about you." Which sounds a little insulting. You're like, "What? You never think about me?" He goes, "No, I don't spend any nights worrying about you. I don't spend any time thinking about you. I know that you've got your job and your role handled." It is the highest compliment that he can give, which I think is kind of fascinating. So in other words, you don't want to be someone that other people have to think about because you're just so good at what it is that you do and that what you take ownership of. You know, he's talking about it from a worrying, concerned point of view. But I just thought that was kind of interesting, intriguing, and, you know, different. As Dan will often say things, you're like, whoa, hang on one second, what do you mean by that? But it's true. Be someone that other people don't have to worry about. That is such a powerful way to manage up. You're making a huge contribution to the company, to the goals, to where everything wants to go, hopefully growing yourself as well in that role. And that's a really powerful place to be.

So those are some newer thoughts on managing up. I hope you find this useful. If you have any questions or any comments, I would really love to hear them. So please let me know at [questions@strategiccoach.com](mailto:questions@strategiccoach.com). Thank you so much for listening. And as always, here's to your team success.