

Tom Peters'

EXCELLENCE!

“THE WORKS”

A Half-Century's Reflections/1966-2016

Chapter FOUR:

**1B1: (REALLY) FIRST THINGS
BEFORE FIRST THINGS**

01 January 2016

(10+ years of presentation slides at tompeters.com)

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This—circa January 2016—is my best shot. It took 50 years to write! (From 1966, Vietnam, U.S. Navy ensign, combat engineer/Navy Seabees—my 1st “management” job—to today, 2016.) It is ... **“THE WORKS.” THE WORKS is presented in PowerPoint format—but it includes 50,000++ words of annotation, the equivalent of a 250-page book.**

The times are nutty—and getting nuttier at an exponential pace. I have taken into account as best I can (there really are no “experts”) the current context. But I have given equal attention to more or less eternal (i.e., human) verities that will continue to drive organizational performance and a quest for EXCELLENCE for the next several years—and perhaps beyond. (Maybe this bifurcation results from my odd adult life circumstances: 30 years in Silicon Valley, 20 years in Vermont.)

Enjoy.

Steal.

P-L-E-A-S-E try something, better yet several somethings.* ** * *******

***Make no mistake ... **THIS IS A 17-CHAPTER BOOK** ... which happens to be in PowerPoint format; I invite you to join me in this unfinished—half century to date—journey.**

****My “Life Mantra #1”: WTTMSW/Whoever Tries The Most Stuff Wins.**

*****I am quite taken by N.N. Taleb’s term “antifragile” (it’s the title of his most recent book). The point is not “resilience” in the face of change; that’s reactive. Instead the idea is proactive—literally “getting off” on the madness per se; perhaps I somewhat anticipated this with my 1987 book, *Thriving on Chaos*.**

******Re “new stuff,” this presentation has benefited immensely from Social Media—e.g., I have learned a great deal from my 125K+ twitter followers; that is, some fraction of this material is “crowdsourced.”**

******* *I am not interested in providing a “good presentation.” I am interested in spurring practical action. Otherwise, why waste your time—or mine?***

Note: There is considerable **DUPLICATION** in what follows. I do not imagine you will read this book straight through. Hence, to some extent, each chapter is a stand-alone story.

Epigraphs

“Business has to give people enriching, rewarding lives ... or it's simply not worth doing.” —Richard Branson

“Your customers will never be any happier than your employees.” —John DiJulius

“We have a strategic plan. It's called ‘doing things.’ ” —Herb Kelleher

“You miss 100% of the shots you never take.” —Wayne Gretzky

“Ready. Fire. Aim.” —Ross Perot

“Execution is strategy.” —Fred Malek

“Avoid moderation.” —Kevin Roberts

“I'm not comfortable unless I'm uncomfortable.” —Jay Chiat

***“It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it.”
—John DiJulius on social media***

“Courtesies of a small and trivial character are the ones which strike deepest in the grateful and appreciating heart.” —Henry Clay

“You know a design is cool when you want to lick it.” —Steve Jobs

“This will be the women's century.” —Dilma Rousseff

“Be the best. It's the only market that's not crowded.” —George Whalin

First Principles. Guiding Stars. Minimums.

***EXECUTION! The “Last 99%.”**

GET IT (Whatever) DONE.

***EXCELLENCE. Always. PERIOD.**

***People REALLY First! Moral Obligation #1.**

***EXPONENTIAL Tech Tsunami.**

GET OFF ON CONTINUOUS UPHEAVALS!

***Innovate or DIE!**

WTTMSW/Whoever Tries The Most Stuff Wins!

***Women Buy (EVERYTHING)!**

Women Are the Best Leaders! Women RULE!

***Oldies Have (All of) the Market Power!**

***DESIGN Matters! EVERYWHERE!**

***Maximize TGRs!/Things Gone RIGHT!**

***SMEs, Age of/“Be the Best,**

It’s the Only Market That’s Not Crowded”

***Moderation KILLS!**

NEW WORLD ORDER ?!

0810/2011:

Apple > Exxon*

0724/2015:

Amazon > Walmart**

***Market capitalization; Apple became #1 in the world.**

****Market capitalization; Walmart is a “Fortune 1” company—the biggest in the world by sales.**

Phew.

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Appendix: Library of Best Quotes

Chapter FOUR

1B1: (REALLY)

1st Things

Before 1st Things

1B1: (REALLY) First Things Before First Things

- 1. *1st line supervisors* are Key #1 to organizational effectiveness—and we invariably (waaaay) underplay their collective importance.**
- 2. *XFX/Cross-Functional EXCELLENCE*. Poor “XFX” is the principle element in the delay of everything—and the answer is not primarily sexy software systems.**
- 3. *LISTENING*. You might go so far as to say “Listening IS Strategy.” I’d go that far! And turning everyone into a “listening professional” is not a stretch of the imagination.**
- 4. *Meetings*, like it or not, are “what we do”—so make them Paragons Of EXCELLENCE, rather than considering them a “necessary nuisance.”**

In 2012, I published my “Mother Of All Presentations.” It had 23 parts and 4,096 slides. The first several parts were titled “(REALLY) First Things Before First Things”—these were critical ideas/contributions to EXCELLENCE that are either overlooked entirely or found in nooks and crannies of presentations. Because of their importance, I decide to showcase them.

As I now in 2016 release my major collection—THE WORKS—I decided to resurrect these SuperItems, which are more important than ever—my shorthand for “first things before first things” is

1B1. Combining these items is a new idea, but I have not updated the “substance”—said substance seems to have withstood the test of time, at least at the 3-year mark.

These ideas are of surpassing importance.

They are usually treated as secondary.

Each one can readily be translated into action steps.

Watchawaitinfor?

**4.1 FIRST-LINE
SUPERVISORS ARE
DETERMINANT #1 OF
ORGANIZATIONAL
EFFECTIVENESS**

1B1: (REALLY) First Things Before First Things

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If the regimental commander lost most of his 2nd lieutenants and 1st lieutenants and captains and majors, it would be a tragedy. **IF HE**

LOST HIS SERGEANTS

IT WOULD BE A

CATASTROPHE. The Army and

the Navy are fully aware that success on the battlefield is dependent to an extraordinary degree on its Sergeants and Chief Petty Officers. Does industry have the same awareness?

This is, more or less, no exaggeration.

**I've never had a military person disagree,
even among “disposable” lieutenants—I once
was one myself.**

***“In great armies, the
job of generals is to
back up their
sergeants.”***

**—COL Tom Wilhelm, from Robert Kaplan,
“The Man Who Would Be Khan,” *The Atlantic***

***THE
SERGEANTS
RUN THE
ARMY.
PERIOD.***

Period.

**#1 CAUSE OF
EMPLOYEE
DIS-SATISFACTION?**

Employee retention & satisfaction:
“Overwhelmingly
based on the first-
line manager!”

**Source: Marcus Buckingham & Curt Coffman,
*First, Break All the Rules: What the World's
Greatest Managers Do Differently***

Worker Satisfaction-Retention-Productivity ...
the 1st line manager-supervisor-
boss is unquestionably the key to
the treasury.

Even in a “great” company ... *an employee at odds with his or her 1st line boss is likely to be an impaired performer.* (And vice versa: In a “bad” company, an employee in synch with his 1st line supervisor is likely to be productive.)

***“People leave
managers not
companies.”***

—Dave Wheeler

Dave Wheeler has been a regular and savvy contributor to the comments section of my blog. On this topic, from his own reading, comes a compact way of making this point—with which I agree wholeheartedly.

**I am sure you “spend time”
on this. My question: Is it an**

... OBSESSION

**...worthy of the impact it has
on enterprise performance?**

Not just “important” (I’m sure you agree).

Rather:

A “*strategic* obsession.”

TEN “Obvious” Questions Concerning Your First-line Supervisors

- 1. Are you, Big Boss, a ... *formal student* ... of first-line supervisor behavioral excellence?* (**Yes, this sort of thing can be formally studied.*)**
- 2. Do you absolutely understand and act upon the fact that the first-line boss is the ... **KEY LEADERSHIP ROLE** ... in the organization? Technical mastery is important—but secondary.**
- 3. Does HR single out first-line supervisors individually and collectively for tracking purposes and special/“over the top” developmental attention?**
- 4. Do you spend gobs and gobs (and then more and more gobs and gobs) of time ... *selecting* ... the first-line supervisors? Are your selection criteria consistent with the enormity of the impact that first-line bosses will subsequently have?**

**Do you absolutely
understand—and act
upon—the fact that the
first-line boss is the ...
KEY LEADERSHIP
ROLE ... in the
organization?**

TEN “Obvious” Questions Concerning Your First-line Supervisors

5. Do you have the ... ***ABSOLUTE BEST TRAINING & CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN THE INDUSTRY*** (or some subset thereof) ... for first-line supervisors?
6. Do you formally and rigorously ... mentor ... first-line supervisors?
7. Are you willing, pain notwithstanding, to ... leave a first-line supervisor slot open ... until you can fill the slot with somebody spectacular? (And are you willing to use some word like ... ***“spectacular”*** ... in judging applicants for the job?)
8. Is it possible that ... ***promotion decisions*** ... for first-line supervisors are as, or even more, important than promotion decisions for the likes of VP slots? (Hint: Yes.)
9. Do you consider and evaluate the quality of your ... ***full set/CADRE***.... of first-line supervisors?
10. Are your first-line supervisors accorded the respect that the power of their position merits?

Please take these 10 questions

(VERY) **seriously—each of them!**

E.g.: Do you have the ...

ABSOLUTE BEST
1st-LINE LEADERSHIP
TRAINING &
DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMS
IN THE INDUSTRY?

One (VERY) good indicator.

Capital Asset!

- *Selecting and training and mentoring one's pool of front-line managers can be a “Core Competence” of surpassing strategic importance.**
- *Put under a microscope every element of the cradle-to-grave process of building the capability of our full cadre of front-line managers.**

Suggested addition to your Statement of Core Values: ***“We are obsessed with developing a cadre of 1st line managers that is second to none—we understand that this cadre per se is arguably one of our top two or three most important ‘Strategic Assets.’”***

The quality of the ... **entire cadre of 1st line bosses** ... is an asset (or liability) of the 1st order.

Therefore, “having the best” is literally a priceless strategic asset—and attainment thereof should be front and center in the corporate value set.

18-month report: ***STRIKING***
A NERVE ...

As I write, I've been banging on about this for about 18 months. In all my experience, I have rarely hit such an exposed nerve—and have rarely observed such vigorous follow-up (interestingly, especially from giant company CEOs).

Upon reflecting, most agree with the basic assertion of the “over-the-top” importance of the 1st line cadre—and, further, that they are doing a half-assed job at best with selection and development, and that they're downright embarrassed at how inadequate their training is.

**4.2 THE ABSENCE OF
XFX/CROSS-
FUNCTIONAL
EXCELLENCE IS THE
PRINCIPAL SOURCE OF
MOST ORGANIZATIONAL
EFFECTIVENESS
PROBLEMS**

1B1: (REALLY) First Things Before First Things

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PROBLEM #1.

OPPORTUNITY #1.

XFX = #1 *

***Cross-Functional eXcellence**

The Strategic Importance of XFX (Cross-functional eXcellence)

I believe that in most any organization of, say, more than a dozen people, the #1 issue is “cross-functional communication-integration.” It is both “Problem #1” and “Opportunity #1.” From intelligence pattern recognition to order execution to innovation, our INTERNAL barriers—not our competitors’ cleverness—are the principal impediment to effectiveness. I suspect we mostly agree with that. But is it—AND IT RARELY IS**—literally seen as **“SO1”**—Strategic Opportunity #1?**

(Please do me the great honor of thinking about this.)

EXPLICITLY &
VISIBLY &
RELENTLESSLY
MANAGE TO XFX
STANDARD!

If XFX is truly “Strategic Opportunity #1”—*and it is*—then manage and spend you time accordingly!

4.2.1

Lunch!

**NEVER
WASTE A
LUNCH!**

Sounds a little lightweight if the problem is such a big one. Surely a new org chart and a few million more investment \$\$ tossed into the ERP budget top the list.

I'm hardly urging you not to invest. But I do claim—in, still, 2016—that the social aspects of XFX are largely ignored or given no more than lip service—whereas they ought to rank at, yes, the top of the list.

And at the top of my “social factors” list is, no kidding ...

LUNCH.

**The sacred
220 “ABs”. ***

***“At bats”**

About 220 workday lunches per year = 220 *precious, non-repeatable opportunities* (“at bats” in baseball terms) to make hay of one sort or another.

And, to be trite, once they’re gone they’re gone for good.

Am I being obsessive?

Yup.

It’s merited.

A lunch lost is a lunch lost.

Starting ... **TODAY.**

L = XFFRA1*

***Lunch = Cross-Functional Friction Reduction Agent #1**

**If you have a passel of social acquaintances/
genuine colleagues in other functions—even
though they will doubtless be true to their
professional organizational role—typical
cross-functional friction will in 9 of 10, or 98
of 100, cases be reduced dramatically.**

PERIOD.

% XF

lunches*

***Measure!**

Monthly! Part of evaluation!

#/% of lunches with people in ...

OTHER FUNCTIONS.

(BIG deal.)

**(MEASURE. EXPLICITLY INCLUDE
IN EVALUATIONS.)**

LUNCH

> SAP/

ORACLE

I'm not dissing the enterprise software offerings from the likes of Oracle or SAP. They are marvels.

But ...

These sophisticated, expensive systems routinely deliver much less than promised—thanks to that *“damned people stuff”* that has a habit of getting in the way of successful implementation. So I'll leave the ERPs et al. to you— and try to point out effective ways to turn that “damn people stuff” into a blockbuster positive rather than a negative or neutral.

4.2.2

Personalize it!

***“Personal relationships
are the fertile soil from
which all advancement,
all success,
all achievement in
Real life grow.” —Ben Stein***

***“The terms ‘hard facts,’
and ‘the soft stuff’ used
in business imply that
data are somehow real
and strong while
emotions are weak and
less important.”***

—George Kohlrieser, *Hostage at the Table* (Kohlrieser is a hostage negotiator and professor of management)

Amen!

(From a great investment guru.)

(From a successful hostage negotiator.)

***And in absolutely no place is this
“relationship stuff” more important than in***

the pursuit of ... **XFX.**

“They brainstormed about how to turn this [catastrophic] misunderstanding around, and came up with a simple plan— every day for the next three months she would have lunch or coffee with one of the partners. Today she is executive vice president for [Fortune 50 company].”

—Betsy Myers, on an extraordinarily talented professional who had been blocked from leadership positions in her firm, from Take the Lead: Motivate, Inspire, and Bring Out the Best in Yourself and Everyone Around You

A talented partner at a prestigious law firm kept missing the promotions she clearly was due. After some analysis and coaching, it appeared that she had her head down working hard and effectively—but had not bothered to bond with her fellow partners; she assumed that the clearly brilliant work would stand on its own.

The coach and she came up with a plan:

DO LUNCH. That is, initiate a systematic process of bridge building, with lunch as the chosen vehicle.

It worked.

Big time.

“Don’t ever use that word ‘synergy.’

***It’s a hideous word. The
only thing that works is natural law.
Given enough time,
natural relationships will develop
between our businesses.”***

**—Barry Diller, responding to a student question, address at
the Harvard Business School (from Marshall Goldsmith,
What Got You Here Won’t Get You There)**

The topic here is not synergy among businesses. Yet such a topic is enormous. Business after business promises “synergies”—and fails to deliver in 9 cases out of 10.

Diller says synergies may well emerge—but “emerge” is the key word. They will emerge through friendships (“natural relationships”). I.e., courtesy ... **SOCIAL FACTORS.**

Which of course is ... precisely ... my point re all-important XFX/Cross-functional Excellence.

“Allied commands depend on mutual confidence and this confidence is gained, above all through the development of friendships.”

—General D.D. Eisenhower, *Armchair General**

***“Perhaps his most outstanding ability [at West Point] was the ease with which he made friends and earned the trust of fellow cadets who came from widely varied backgrounds; it was a quality that would pay great dividends during his future coalition command.”**

General Eisenhower's success in the D-Day adventure, those close to the scene agree, stemmed to an extraordinary degree from his ability to keep warring tribes from each others' throats. (Oddly to some, the nastiest infighting known to man can occur among generals and between generals and their political bosses.)

Eisenhower may or may not have been a great strategist. He was definitely possessor of an extraordinary temperament and a peerless bridge builder.

George Crile (*Charlie Wilson's War*) on Charlie

Wilson: *"The way things normally work, if you're not Jewish you don't get into the Jewish caucus, but Charlie did. And if you're not black you don't get into the black caucus. But Charlie plays poker with the black caucus; they had a game, and he's the*

*only white guy in it. The House [of Representatives],
like any human institution, is
moved by friendships, and no
matter what people might think
about Wilson's antics, they tend
to like him and enjoy his
company."*

Not quite as profound as the Eisenhower story ... but revelatory nonetheless. (Oh, and Charlie to a certain degree did “change the world”—i.e., contributed significantly to the implosion of the Soviet Union.)

**PROMOTE INTO
FUNCTIONAL
LEADERSHIP
POSITIONS BASED
PRIMARILY ON ...
TEMPERAMENT.**

**We all know
“temperament” is
“important.”**

**In fact it is ... decisive.
(Act accordingly.)
(Starting now.)**

4.2.3

R.O.I.R.

R.O.I.R.

> R.O.I.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT IN RELATIONSHIPS

R.O.I.R. beats traditional R.O.I. by 20 furlongs!

“Keep a short enemies list. One enemy can do more damage than the good done by a hundred friends.”

—Bill Walsh,

***The Score Takes Care of Itself* (Walsh was the “hall of fame” coach of the San Francisco 49ers football team)**

100=1

**R.O.I.R.
Always #1.**

**You'll see this slide again.
As well you should.
(I should use it 50 times!)**

**100:1.
Put your ego on hold.
“Who was ‘right’” is (wholly) irrelevant.**

**100:1.
In the GRG/Great Relationships Game ...
which in the end is “the only game in town”
... making enemies is “Sin #1.”
(What a waste!)**

100:1.

4.2.4

Space

(Way) Underutilized Lever

SPACE!

SPACE!

SPACE!

SPACE!

Manipulating space is a (**the?**) stupendous and unsung and doable opportunity to affect the quality of cross-functional co-ordination.

A case can be made: Space management =

#1 determinant of human interaction patterns.

Yes, damn it ... #1.

And it is seldom attended to with appropriate urgency and reverence.

(And, since it is largely unsung, it's a tool often available to relatively junior folks.)

**Geologists +
Geophysicists +
A little bit of love =**

Oil

Case in point: In a consulting study I did years ago, one oil company was ahead of the pack in terms of discovery success.

The critical difference seemed to be the *co-location* of geologists and geophysicists.

The typically warring tribes developed a deep appreciation of one another's skills and worldview—and measurable success ensued.

(Nothing so complex is ever so simple—but this was certainly a big piece of the puzzle.)

4.2.5 XFX: SOCIAL ACCELERATORS ...

XFX: SOCIAL
ACCELERATORS ...

The key “XFX” (CROSS-FUNCTIONAL EXCELLENCE) attainment tools are social—not technological.

E.g. ...

XFX/Typical Social Accelerators

- 1. EVERYONE's (more or less) JOB #1: Make friends in other functions! (Purposefully. Consistently. Measurably.)**
- 2. "Do lunch" with people in other functions!! Frequently!! (Minimum 10% to 25% for everyone? Measured.)**
- 3. Ask peers in other functions for references so you can become conversant in their world. (It's one helluva sign of ... GIVE-A-DAMN-ism.)**
- 4. Religiously invite counterparts in other functions to your team meetings. Ask them to present "cool stuff" from "their world" to your group. (Useful. Mark of respect.)**
- 5. *PROACTIVELY SEEK EXAMPLES OF "TINY" ACTS OF "XFX" TO ACKNOWLEDGE—PRIVATELY AND PUBLICALLY. (Bosses: ONCE A DAY ... make a short call or visit or send an email of "Thanks" for some sort of XFX gesture by your folks and some other function's folks.)***
- 6. Present counterparts in other functions awards for service to your group. Tiny awards at least weekly; and an "Annual All-Star Supporters (from other groups) Banquet" modeled after superstar salesperson banquets.**

Present counterparts in other functions recognition/awards for service to your group: *Tiny awards at least weekly. An “Annual All-Star Supporters (from other groups) Banquet” modeled after (and equivalent to!) superstar salesperson banquets.*

XFX/ Typical Social Accelerators

- 7. Routinely discuss—A SEPARATE AGENDA ITEM—good and problematic acts of cross-functional co-operation at every Team Meeting.**
- 8. When someone in another function asks for assistance, respond with ... more ... alacrity than you would if it were the person in the cubicle next to yours—or even more than you would for a key external customer. (Remember, XFX is the key to Customer Retention which is in turn the key to “all good things.”)**
- 9. Do not bad mouth ... “the damned accountants,” “the bloody HR guy.” Ever. (Bosses: Severe penalties for this—including public tongue-lashings.)**
- 10. *Get physical! “Co-location” may well be the most powerful “culture change lever.”* Physical X-functional proximity is almost a ... guarantee ... of remarkably improved co-operation—to aid this one needs flexible workspaces that can be mobilized for a team in a flash.**
- 11. *Establish “adhocracy” as S.O.P.* To improve the new “X-functional Culture” (and business results), little XF teams should be formed on the spot to deal with an urgent issue—they may live for but ten days, but it helps the XF habit, making it normal to be “working the XF way.”**

***The subtext of many,
if not all, of these ideas
is moving from implicit
to explicit focus on
XFX—it should noisily
intrude into (literally)
every discussion!***

XFX/ Typical Social Accelerators

12. Early project “management” experience. Within days, literally, of coming aboard folks should be “running” some bit of a bit of a bit project, working with folks from other functions—hence, “all this” becomes as natural as breathing.

13. Work proactively to give as large as possible numbers of people temporary assignments in other functions—especially Finance.

14. “Get ’em out with the customer.” Rarely does the accountant or bench scientist call on the customer. Reverse that. Give everyone more or less regular “customer-facing experiences.” She or he learns quickly that the customer is not interested in our in-house turf battles!

15. Consider creating a special role, or even position. Specialty chemical company Buckman Labs established “*knowledge transfer facilitators*,” effectively former “middle managers,” with 100% of discretionary pay based on success at spurring integration across previously impermeable barriers.

XFX/: Typical Social Accelerators

- 16. Formal evaluations. Everyone, starting with the receptionist, should have a significant XF rating component in their evaluation. (The “XFX Performance” should be among the Top 3 items in all managers’ evaluations.)**
- 17. *Every functional unit should have strict and extensive measures of “customer satisfaction” based on evaluations from other functions of its usefulness and effectiveness and value-added to the enterprise as a whole.***
- 18. Demand XF experience for, especially, senior jobs. For example, the U.S. military requires all would-be generals and admirals to have served a full tour in a job whose only goals were cross-functional achievements.**
- 19. “Deep dip.” Dive three levels down in the organization to fill a senior role with some one who has been noticeably pro-active on adding value via excellent cross-functional integration.**
- 20. XFX is ... PERSONAL ... as well as about organizational effectiveness. PXXF (Personal XFX) is arguably the #1 Accelerant to personal success—in terms of organizational career, freelancer/Brand You, or as entrepreneur.**
- 21. *Excellence!* There is a “State of XF Excellence” per se. Talk it up constantly. Pursue it. Aspire to nothing less.**

**Formal evaluations. Everyone,
starting with the
receptionist, should have a
significant XFX rating
component in their
evaluation. (The “XFX
Performance” should be
among the Top 3 items in all
managers’ evaluations.)**

The preceding list is meant to be suggestive, not all inclusive—the idea is to get your juices flowing. Again ... **SOCIAL ... is the key word.**

(Make your own list. It could easily be three times longer than mine. But, today ... GET GOING.) (*“Get going” = Pick **1 RIGHT NOW. Take 1st implementation steps in the next 3 working days.*)**

(In fact, I’ve got a longer list, “The XFX 50,” which appears as Part **“2A” to this section of the presentation.)**

**4.2.6 SPECIAL
SUGGESTION/
“COMMAND”
COMING ...**

“Incidentally” ...

Women's Negotiating Strengths

- *Ability to put themselves in their counterparties' shoes**
- *Comprehensive, attentive and detailed communication style**
- *Empathy that facilitates trust-building**
- *Curious and attentive listening**
- *Less competitive attitude**
- *Strong sense of fairness and ability to persuade**
- *Proactive risk manager**
- *Collaborative decision-making**

Source: Horacio Falcao, cover story, *World Business*, "Say It Like a Woman: Why the 21st-century negotiator will need the female touch"

There is a “gender issue” which is arguably of the utmost importance here. (Let’s not call it “issue”—let’s call it “opportunity.”)

Consider the previous slide enumerating women’s relative effectiveness at negotiating. Quite simply, among other things, women are less sensitive to hierarchical considerations and more willing to invest time in relationship building throughout the enterprise—at any level.

Such skills are central to “XFX.”

Hence “gender balance”—or “gender IM-balance” favoring women in key roles—likely tilts the playing field in the direction of XFX.

4.2.7

$$C(I) > C(E)$$

***“You’re
spending too
much time
with your
customers!”*** [bill-paying]

C(I) > C(E)

I suggested to a successful systems salesperson that she was *“spending too much time with your bill-paying customers!”* [External Customers, or C(E).]

Huh?

She'd said her principal roadblock to more business with current customers was delivery slippages. I said a significant part of the fix was to develop more and deeper relationships with her ... **“Internal Customers”/C(I). I said that in fact those *internal* customers ought to be her **#1** priority.**

(Think about it.)

(Hard.)

RETURN ON INVESTMENT IN RELATIONSHIPS

**FYI: “RELATIONSHIP
POWER” =
“MONOPOLY
POWER”**

$$C(I) > C(E)$$

Goal/s: (1) “Unfair”
“internal market
share”! (2) Have your
whole organization
zealously working to
make you successful!

The goal (for that systems salesperson) is clear—an “unfair” “market share” of attention from those internal staffers.

She unabashedly pursues through good-better-best relationships a de facto monopoly—the monopolization of other important folks’ love and affection and time, as it were.

She wants, in effect, her whole-damn-company working for her!

$$C(I) > C(E)$$

Lunch!

Kudos!

MORE kudos!

Learning/Presence/Presentations

Insider facetime with C(E)

Transparency

Awards

Co-locate/e.g. Geologists-Geophysicists

Time!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Motherhood (“If I don’t take credit but give it to others ...”) (Give *others* credit. The sale still goes on *your* ticket.)

**GIVE THE “OTHER
GUYS” THE CREDIT
FOR EVERY-DAMN-
THING AS A MATTER
OF COURSE—NEVER
EVER FORGET THIS.**

E.g. ...

Give your internal customers facetime with your external customers; usually a big turn on for those “stuck inside.”

**SPEND TIME WITH C(I)s.
TIME SPENT RULES!**

Don’t “give credit where credit is due”—give credit *very* far and *very* wide and *very* deep and *very* often for “tiny acts of assistance.”

4.2.8

**“SUCK DOWN
FOR SUCCESS!”**

Loser: ***“He’s such a suck-up!”***

Winner: ***“He’s such a suck-down.”***

Likewise, regarding those “internal customers,” it’s the ones who do the “real work”—two or three levels “down”—who in fact deliver the goods (*your* goods). Hence showering attention on those “lesser” folks (*“sucking down”*) is a painstaking but

***very very* high-yield strategy.**

And, in my experience, rewarding as hell personally.

**“Success doesn’t depend on the
number of people you know; it
depends on the number of people you
know in high places!”**

or

**“Success doesn’t depend on the
number of people you know; it
depends on the number of people you
know in low places!”**

“Wide and deep” “low places” network wins over the long haul.

(FYI, one more time: *Women* are typically better [much better?] at this than men, not so hung up on hierarchy, don’t worry so much about “who outranks whom.” I was instructed on this years ago by a wildly successful ATT system salesMAN**. “*Women,*” he said, “*but not men, are willing to invest in the network several levels down in the customer organization.*”)**

George Crile (*Charlie Wilson's War*) on Gust

Avrakotos' strategy: “He had

***become something of
a legend with these
people who manned
the underbelly of the
Agency [CIA].”***

The CIA mover and shaker in *Charlie Wilson's War* was not all that senior, and was on the outs with the big big guys in the agency.

Nonetheless, he was able to move heaven and earth because he had the whole damn “underbelly” of the agency doing his bidding—because he had invested so much time and energy in these invisible folks over the years. (I repeat: He was reaping the rewards of a *longterm* investment strategy!)

“I got to know his [Icahn’s] secretaries. They are always the keepers of everything.”

**—Dick Parsons, then CEO Time Warner,
on dealing with an Icahn threat to his company**

“Parsons is not a visionary. He is, instead, a master in the art of relationship.”

—Bloomberg BusinessWeek (03.11)

***“I got to
know his
secretaries.”***

—Dick Parsons

(as CEO Time Warner, on successfully dealing with Carl Icahn)

Utterly fascinating that the ... **CEO OF TIME WARNER** ... would say that “getting to know the secretaries” was a/the key to success, in this case dealing with the tough-as-nails Carl Icahn.

(“Sucking down” is not just a strategy used by those in the middle of an organization, such as Gust Avrakotos—see above.)

***If you can make
someone junior to
you look good to
their boss—you
will have made a
friend for life!***

I *know* this.
I've *known* this.
Approximately *forever*.

But I observed it again recently.
I more or less “incidentally” said something
very positive to the boss of an event staffer
who was new.

The help that subsequently came my way
was ... **HOLY MOLY!**

(A great reminder.)

**“SUCK DOWN
FOR SUCCESS!”**



“His habit was to let the locals get primary credit— unheard of! Sometimes he disappeared into the woodwork entirely. He had the whole __PD working their butts off for him, including the [temperamental] Chief.” —close colleague of senior federal law enforcement officer

Federal law enforcement agencies have a long history of looking down upon non-federal law enforcement groups—e.g. city cops. One very senior federal regional law-enforcement exec changed all that. He did a lot of teaming with the local police force, but when, say, a joint arrest was made, he and his guys would slip to the rear and let the locals get the lion's share of the credit. (Typically the opposite path is followed—no matter what, the feds take approximately 100% of credit.) The cost to the fed cop exec was ZERO; and as my informant put it, he effectively had the local cops eating out of his hand, which magnified his ability to get the job done—*all this from pushing someone “below” him to the front for a photo-op.*

$$S = f(\#DR; -2L, -3L, -4L, I\&E)$$

Success is a function of: Number and depth of relationships 2, 3, and 4 levels down inside and outside the organization

$$S = f(SD > SU)$$

Sucking down is more important than sucking up—the idea is to have the (your) entire organization working for you

$$S = f(\#non-FF, \#non-FL)$$

Number of friends, number of lunches with people not in my function

$$S = f(\#XFL/m)$$

Number of lunches with colleagues in other functions per month

$$S = f(\#FF)$$

Number of friends in the finance organization

At one point, engineer-by-training that I am, I put “all this” in equation form for the sheer hell of it.*

All yours ...

(*There were dozens of these equations—I just pulled out a couple here. The full set is included as **Appendix IV in Part 23 of this presentation.)**

$$S = f(\#PK\text{“}\underline{W}\text{”}P)$$

$$S = f(\#PK\text{“}\underline{L}\text{”}P)$$

of people you know in the “wrong” places

of people you know in “low” places

4.2.9 ALL HAIL ...

THOSE

WHO

HELP

***More than “performance
evaluation/award”***

***More than “team accomplishment
evaluation/award.”***

***Rather: Specific and frequent and VISIBLE
recognition to INDIVIDUALS who have
helped INDIVIDUALS in other functions—
or, for that matter, our own group. E.g. BIG
VISIBLE RECOGNITION
for specific acts, small acts more than
large acts, of selflessly
helping others per se.***

**THEY ALL GOTTA SEE THE
ONE WHO SACRIFICED
TO HELP SOMEONE
GET IMMEDIATE FEEDBACK-
KUDOS. (PERHAPS MORE
RECOGNITION THAN THE
“PRINCIPAL” “DOER.”)**

Oddly enough, this riff was triggered by watching a group of about 10 young singers perform. Truth is, they are very competitive; and there will be well short of 100% winners. Yet as one sang, the others supported her with their body language. *Or not.*

It occurred to me that the primo heroes, in some sense, were those who selflessly and wholeheartedly supported their peers.

Likewise, in multi-function project work, the “heroes” who ought to have the most immediate attention showered on them are arguably the selfless helpers from other functions. The more or less “principal/s” will get her or his or their due in good time.

“Little” >> “Big”

THIS TALE OF SMALL IS VERY VERY BIG.

It's not "Thank you" for making the million-dollar sale that matters. (That's going to happen regardless.) It's, to use One-Minute Manager/Ken Blanchard's term, "catching someone doing something [some *little* thing] right."

And to the recipient, the *spontaneous* "little ones" have higher impact than the biggies.

(Please re-read: SMALL >> Big.)

ALL HAIL ...

THOSE

WHO

HELP!

4.2.10

Core Value!

Suggested addition to your statement of Core

Values: ***“We will not rest until seamless cross-functional integration/communication has become our primary source of value-added. EXCELLENCE in cross-functional integration shall become a daily operational passion for 100% of us.”***

**XFX ... pure and simple ... should be
a (*the #1?*) Core Value!**

GERALD SEYMOUR.
JOHN LE CARRÉ.

When writing this I happened to be reading two “thrillers” from perhaps the two best and best schooled thriller writers around—John Le Carré and Gerald Seymour.

The “war” of “good guys” vs. “bad guys” they depict with chilling accuracy is less about nailing the illegal arms dealer or spy than it is about the sky-high costs of the war between bureaucracies that often lead to losing the enemy—and killing off or disgracing “our own guys.”

Fiction?

Yes.

True?

Alas: YES!!

Such terrifying realities are why this section on the power of Excellence in Cross-functional communication and cooperation is of surpassing importance.

4.2.11 **Get Serious:**

XFX Now!

**THE WHOLE POINT HERE IS THAT “XFX” IS
ALMOST CERTAINLY THE #1 OPPORTUNITY FOR
STRATEGIC DIFFERENTIATION. WHILE MANY WOULD
LIKELY AGREE, IN OUR MOMENT-TO-MOMENT
AFFAIRS, XFX PER SE IS NOT SO OFTEN VISIBLY &
PERPETUALLY AT THE TOP OF EVERY AGENDA. I
ARGUE HERE FOR NO LESS THAN ...**

VISIBLE.
CONSTANT.
OBSESSION.

As in, what—*specifically*—are you going to do about “it”/XFX in the next ...

HOUR?

DAY?

WEEK?

MONTH?

90 DAYS?

2 YEARS?

XFX.
TOP PRIORITY.
TOP OF MIND.
EXPLICIT.
#1.
NOW.
TODAY/TOMORROW.
#1 = #1.
NOW = NOW.

Clear enough?

XFX.

#1.

NOW.

**ONE DAMN
ACT OF XFX
ENHANCEMENT
EVERY DAY!**

Idea of this section. Cross-functional EXCELLENCE per se ... **“Top of mind” ... every day.**

E.g. Do a minimum of ... **ONE CONCRETE THING EVERY DAY ...to enhance XFX:**

Lunch with someone in another function.

A half-dozen thank you notes (or even one) to someone/s in another function who helped you or your team—probably a “suck down note” to someone in the trenches who helped.

FLOWERS to someone. Probably not very senior, in another function to acknowledge help.

Etc.

4.2.13

Case:

100X

"When I was in medical school, I spent hundreds of hours looking into a microscope—a skill I never needed to know or ever use. Yet I didn't have a single class that taught me communication or teamwork skills—something I need every day I walk into the hospital."

—Peter Pronovost, Safe Patients, Smart Hospitals

Alas, hospitals are about the worst of the lot when it comes to XFX, which of course is built upon the bedrock of a teamwork “culture.” Peter Pronovost, developer of the checklist approach to patient safety that has saved countless lives, learned early on that this hyper-powerful tool is largely impotent in the face of hospital caste systems—perhaps the ultimate in cross-functional barriers.

For one thing, as Dr. Pronovost says here, docs are not trained in this “soft stuff.”

It does not have to be this way ...

***“Teamwork
isn’t
optional.”***

—Fast Company

**on the Mayo Clinic, from Leonard Berry & Kent Seltman, “Practicing Team Medicine,”
title, Chapter 3 of *Management Lessons From Mayo Clinic***

**William Mayo, 1910, on the
Clinic's Two Core Values:**

Patient-centered care

**Team medicine
("medicine as a co-
operative science")**

**Source: Leonard Berry & Kent Seltman, "Orchestrating the Clues of Quality,"
Chapter 7 from *Management Lessons From Mayo Clinic***

The pick of the litter on “team medicine” is arguably the Mayo Clinic. “Culture”? The “team culture” is in Mayo’s genes!

***“Competency is
irrelevant if we don’t
share common
values.”***

**—Mayo Clinic exec, from Leonard Berry & Kent Seltman,
“Orchestrating the Clues of Quality,” Chapter 7 from *Management Lessons From Mayo Clinic***

Competence anywhere is hugely important—especially, by definition, in the hospital. Yet Mayo is clear:

Competence is damned important—but it comes second.

“A Mayo surgeon recalled an incident that occurred shortly after he had joined the Mayo surgical staff. He was seeing patients in the Clinic one afternoon when he received from one of the most experienced and renowned surgeons on the Mayo Clinic staff. The senior surgeon stated over the phone that that he was in the operating room performing a complex procedure. He explained the findings and asked his junior colleague whether or not what he, the senior was planning seemed appropriate.

The junior surgeon was dumbfounded that that he would receive a call like this.

Nonetheless, a few minutes of discussion ensued, a decision was made, and the senior surgeon proceeded with the operation. ... A major consequence was that the junior surgeon learned the importance of inter-operative consultation for the patient's benefit even among surgeons with many years of surgical experience.”

—Leonard Berry & Kent Seltman, , “Practicing Team Medicine,” Chapter 3 from *Management Lessons From Mayo Clinic*

Wow!

Talk about busting the caste system!

“I am hundreds of
times better here *[than*
in my prior hospital assignment] ***because of***
the support system. It’s like
you are working in an
organism; you are not a
single cell when you are out
there practicing.”

—quote from Dr. Nina Schwenk, in

Chapter 3, “Practicing Team Medicine,” from Leonard Berry & Kent Seltman,
from *Management Lessons From Mayo Clinic*

***... hundreds of
times better
here ...***

XFX!

100x!

Wow!

Appendix

**THE “XF-50”: 50 WAYS TO
ENHANCE
CROSS-FUNCTIONAL
EFFECTIVENESS AND
DELIVER SPEED, “SERVICE
EXCELLENCE” AND “VALUE-
ADDED CUSTOMER
‘SOLUTIONS’”**

**I put this list together a few years ago.
About as relevant as ever.**

1. It's our organization to make work—or not. It's not “them,” the outside world that's the problem. *The enemy is us. Period.*

2. Friction-free! Dump 90% of “middle managers”—most are advertent or inadvertent “power freaks.” We are all—every one of us—in the Friction Removal Business, one moment at a time, now and forevermore.

3. No “stovepipes”! “Stove-piping,” “Silo-ing” is an *Automatic Firing Offense*. Period. No appeals. (Within the limits of civility, somewhat “public” firings are not out of the question—that is, make one and all aware why the axe fell.)

4. *Everything* on the Web. This helps. A lot. (“Everything” = Big word.)

5. Open access. All available to all. Transparency, beyond a level that's “sensible,” is a de facto imperative in a Burn-the-Silos strategy.

6. *Project managers rule!!* Project managers running XF (cross-functional) projects are the Elite of the organization, and seen as such and treated as such. (The likes of construction companies have practiced this more or less forever.)

7. “Value-added Proposition” = Application of integrated resources. (From the entire supply-chain.) To deliver on our emergent business raison d'être, and compete with the likes of our Chinese and Indian brethren, we must co-operate with anybody and everybody “24/7.” IBM, UPS and many, many others are selling far more than a product or service that works—the new “it” is pure and simple a product of XF co-operation; “the product *is* the co-operation” is not much of a stretch.

8. ***“XF work” is the direct work of leaders!***

9. ***“Integrated solutions” = Our “Culture.”*** (Therefore: XF = Our culture.)

10. Partner with “best-in-class” only. Their pursuit of Excellence helps us get beyond petty bickering. An all-star team has little time for anything other than delivering on the (big) Client promise.

11. ***All functions are created equal!*** All functions contribute equally! All = All.

12. All functions are “PSFs,” Professional Service Firms. “Professionalism” is the watchword—and true Professionals rise above turf wars. You are your projects, your legacy is your projects—and the legacy will be skimpy indeed unless you pass, with flying colors, the “works well with others” exam!

13. ***We are all in sales!*** We all (a-l-l) “sell” those Integrated Client Solutions. Good salespeople don’t blame others for screw-ups—the Client doesn’t care. Good salespeople are “quarterbacks” who make the system work-deliver.

14. ***We all invest in “wiring” the Client organization—we develop comprehensive relationships in every part (function, level) of the Client’s organization. We pay special attention to the so-called “lower levels,” short on glamour, long on the ability to make things happen at the “coalface.”***

15. We all “live the Brand”—which is Delivery of Matchless Integrated Solutions which transform the Client’s organization. To “live the brand” is to become a raving fan of XF co-operation.

16. We use the word *“partner”* until we want to barf! (Words matter! A lot!)
17. We use the word *“team”* until we want to barf. (Words matter! A lot!)
18. We use the word *“us”* until we want to barf. (Words matter! A lot!)
19. We obsessively seek Inclusion—and abhor exclusion. We want more people from more places (internal, external—the whole “supply chain”) aboard in order to maximize systemic benefits.
20. Buttons & Badges matter—we work relentlessly at team (XF team) identity and solidarity. (“Corny”? Get over it.)
21. *All (almost all) rewards are team rewards.*
22. We keep base pay rather low—and give whopping bonuses for excellent team delivery of “seriously cool” cross-functional Client benefits.
23. ***WE NEVER BLAME OTHER PARTS OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SCREWUPS.***
24. ***WE TAKE THE HEAT—THE WHOLE TEAM. (For anything and everything.) (Losing, like winning, is a team affair.)***
25. ***“BLAMING” IS AN AUTOMATIC FIRING OFFENSE.***
26. *“Women rule.”* Women are simply better at the XF communications stuff—less power obsessed, less hierarchically inclined, more group-team oriented.

27. Every member of our team is an honored contributor. “XF project Excellence” is an “all hands” affair.

28. We *are* our XF Teams! XF project teams are how we get things done.

29. “Wow Projects” rule, large or small—Wow projects demand by definition XF Excellence.

30. We routinely attempt to unearth and then reward “small gestures” of XF co-operation.

31. We invite Functional Bigwigs to our XF project team reviews.

32. We *insist* on Client team participation—from all functions of the Client organization.

33. An “Open talent market” helps make the projects “silo-free.” People want in on the project because of the opportunity to do something memorable—no one will tolerate delays based on traditional functional squabbling.

34. Flat! Flat = Flattened Silos. Flat = Excellence based on XF project outcomes, not power-hoarding within functional boundaries.

35. New “C-level”? *We more or less need a “C-level” job titled Chief Bullshit Removal Officer.* That is, some kind of formal watchdog whose role in life is to make cross-functionality work, and I.D. those who don’t get with the program.

36. *Huge (H-U-G-E) co-operation bonuses. Senior team members who conspicuously shine in the “working together” bit are rewarded or punished Big Time. (A million bucks in one case I know—and a non-cooperating very senior was sacked.)*

37. *Get physical!! “Co-location” is the most powerful “culture changer.* Physical X-functional proximity is almost a guarantee (yup!) of remarkably improved co-operation—to aid this one needs flexible workspaces that can be mobilized for a team in a flash.

38. *Ad hoc.* To improve the new “X-functional Culture,” little XF teams should be formed on the spot to deal with an urgent issue—they may live for but ten days, but it helps the XF habit, making it normal to be “working the XF way.”

39. “Deep dip.” Dive three levels down in the organization to fill a senior role with some one who has been pro-active on the XF dimension.

40. Formal evaluations. Everyone, starting with the receptionist, should have an important XF rating component in their evaluation.

41. Demand XF experience for, especially, senior jobs. The military requires all would-be generals and admirals to have served a full tour in a job whose only goals were cross-functional. Great idea!

42. Early project “management” experience. Within days, literally, of coming aboard folks should be “running” some bit of a project, working with folks from other functions—hence, “all this” becomes as natural as breathing.

43. “Get ’em out with the customer.” Rarely does the accountant or bench scientist call on the customer. Reverse that. Give everyone more or less regular “customer-facing experiences.” One learns quickly that the customer is not interested in our in-house turf battles!

44. Put “it” on the—every agenda. XF “issues to be resolved” should be on every agenda—morning project team review, weekly exec team meeting, etc. A “next step” within 24 hours (4?) ought to be part of the resolution.

45. XF “honest broker” or ombudsman. The ombudsman examines XF “friction events” and acts as Conflict Resolution Counselor. (Perhaps a formal conflict resolution agreement?)

46. Lock it in! XF co-operation, central to any value-added mission, should be an explicit part of the “Vision Statement.”

47. Promotions. *Every promotion, no exceptions, should put XF Excellence in the top 5 (3?) evaluation criteria.*

48. Pick partners based on their “co-operation proclivity.” Everyone must be on board if “this thing” is going to work; hence every vendor, among others, should be formally evaluated on their commitment to XF transparency—e.g., can we access anyone at any level in any function of their organization without bureaucratic barriers?

49. Fire vendors who don’t “get it”—more than “get it,” welcome “it” with open arms.”

50. *Jaw. Jaw. Jaw.* Talk XF cooperation-value-added at every opportunity. Become a relentless bore!

51. *Excellence!* There is a “State of XF Excellence” per se. Talk about it. Pursue it. Aspire to nothing less.

**“STRATEGIC LISTENING”/
LISTENING EXCELLENCE:**

CORE VALUE #1!

1B1: (REALLY) First Things Before First Things

- 1. *1st line supervisors* are Key #1 to organizational effectiveness—and we invariably (waaaay) underplay their collective importance.**
- 2. *XFX/Cross-Functional EXCELLENCE*. Poor “XFX” is the principle element in the delay of everything—and the answer is not primarily sexy software systems.**
- 3. *LISTENING*. You might go so far as to say “Listening IS Strategy.” I’d go that far! And turning everyone into a “listening professional” is not a stretch of the imagination.**
- 4. *Meetings*, like it or not, are “what we do”—so make them Paragons Of EXCELLENCE, rather than considering them a “necessary nuisance.”**

4.3.1

1 Mouth,

2 Ears

***“It is the
privilege of
wisdom to
listen.”***

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

A profound statement.

Bosses: LISTENING?

***“Everyone has a
story to tell, if only
you have the
patience to wait for it
and not get in the
way of it.”***

—Charles McCarry, *Christopher's Ghosts*

**The power of open ears and closed mouth—
as mark of respect-appreciation and
priceless source of information-wisdom.**

**(Novelist Charles McCarry is a
knowledgeable CIA vet, and in this quote
he's referring to de-briefing a defector. Even
in such an extreme situation the ...**

***closed-mouth-for-as-long-
as-it-takes* ... strategy is mercilessly
effective.)**

***“It’s amazing how this seemingly small thing—
simply paying fierce attention to another,
really asking, really listening, even during a brief conversation—can evoke
such a wholehearted response.”***

—Susan Scott, Fierce Conversations: Achieving Success at Work and in Life, One Conversation at a Time

**Same point as McCarry.
(Situation not quite as fraught as the CIA.)**

NATIONAL BESTSELLER

fierce critical, yet
honest, intense,
strong, powerful,
passionate,
eager,
unbridled

Fierce Conversations

*Achieving Success
at Work & in Life,
One Conversation at a Time*

UPDATED
WITH NEW
MATERIAL

SUSAN SCOTT

Foreword by
Ken Blanchard, Ph.D.

***“Our work, our
relationships, and, in
fact, our very lives
succeed or fail gradually,
then suddenly
—one conversation
at a time.”***

**—Susan Scott, *Fierce Conversations:
Achieving Success at Work and in Life, One Conversation at a Time***

**This book is priceless.
The hypothesis is irrefutable:
We “*do*” conversations.
(Leaders or non-leaders.)**

“Let Silence Do the Heavy Lifting”

—chapter title from Susan Scott,

***Fierce Conversations: Achieving Success at Work and in Life,
One Conversation at a Time***

***“Be Here,
Prepared To
Be Nowhere
Else”***

—chapter title from Susan Scott,

***Fierce Conversations: Achieving Success at Work and in Life,
One Conversation at a Time***

***“Fierce conversations
often do take time.***

***The problem is,
anything else
takes longer.”***

**—Susan Scott, *Fierce Conversations: Achieving Success at Work and
in Life, One Conversation at a Time***

The art of conversing is the art of leadership!

So ... how are your conversational skills?*
(*Odds are [sky] high that they are not as
good/FIERCE** as you think—not by a long**
shot.)

4.3.2

18

**“The doctor
interrupts
after ...”**

Source: Jerome Groopman, *How Doctors Think

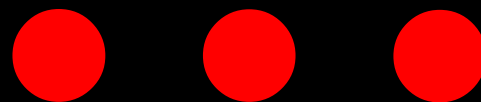
Harvard Med School doc Jerome Groopman tells us that the patient is the doctor's best source of evidence about the patient's problem.

Period.

Then, citing hard-nosed research, Groopman asks,

“On average, how long does the patient speak before the doc interrupts ...

18



18 ...

seconds!

My larger point: *It ain't only docs!*

It's doubtless pretty much all “experts” and bosses!! That is ...

You.

Me.

(An *obsession* with) Listening is ... the ultimate mark
of *Respect*.

Listening is ... the heart and soul of *Engagement*.

Listening is ... the heart and soul of *Kindness*.

Listening is ... the heart and soul of *Thoughtfulness*.

Listening is ... the basis for true *Collaboration*.

Listening is ... the basis for true *Partnership*.

Listening is ... a *Team Sport*.

Listening is ... a *Developable Individual Skill*.* (*Though women are *far* better at it than men.)

Listening is ... the basis for *Community*.

Listening is ... the bedrock of *Joint Ventures that work*.

Listening is ... the bedrock of *Joint Ventures that grow*.

Listening is ... the core of *effective Cross-functional Communication*.* (*Which is in turn Attribute #1 of organization effectiveness.)

LISTENING ...
the ULTIMATE
mark of
RESPECT.

“You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you.”

—Dale Carnegie

***Listening per se is the very heart and soul
and alpha and omega of (literally) earth-
rocking comments like this from the
incomparable Dale Carnegie!***

(Query: *Can you train this????*)

(Answer: *Damn right you can!*)

**(Though it may come easier to some than
others—e.g. WOMEN.)**

"It was much later that I realized Dad's secret. He gained respect by giving it. He talked and listened to the fourth-grade kids in Spring Valley who shined shoes the same way he talked and listened to a bishop or a college president. HE WAS SERIOUSLY INTERESTED IN WHO YOU WERE AND WHAT YOU HAD TO SAY."

—Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, *Respect*

“I wasn’t bowled over by [David Boies’] intelligence ... What impressed me was that when he asked a question, he waited for an answer. HE NOT ONLY LISTENED ... HE MADE ME FEEL LIKE I WAS THE ONLY PERSON IN THE ROOM.”

—Lawyer Kevin _____, on his first, inadvertent meeting with renowned attorney David Boies, from Marshall Goldsmith, “The One Skill That Separates,” *Fast Company*

***“The best leaders
talk with people,
not at them.”*** —Susan Scott,

***“Let Silence Do the Heavy Listening,” chapter title,
Fierce Conversations: Achieving Success at Work and in Life,
One Conversation at a Time***

Redux: *Listening = Respect & Appreciation, ultimate marker thereof.*

(FYI: *Respect* is a marvelous book.)

*“My education in leadership began in Washington when I was an assistant to Defense Secretary William Perry. He was universally loved and admired by heads of state ... and our own and allied troops. **A lot of that was because of the way he listened. Each person who talked to him had his complete, undivided attention. Everyone blossomed in his presence, because he was so respectful, and I realized I wanted to affect people the same way.***

*“Perry became my role model but that was not enough. Something bigger had to happen, and it did. It was painful to realize how often I just pretended to hear people. **How many times had I barely glanced up from my work when a subordinate came into my office? I wasn't paying attention; I was marking time until it was my turn to give orders.** That revelation led me to a new personal goal. I vowed to treat every encounter with every person on Benfold (Abrashoff was the Captain) as the most important thing at that moment. It wasn't easy, but my crew's enthusiasm and ideas kept me going.*

*“It didn't take me long to realize that my young crew was smart, talented and full of good ideas that usually came to nothing because no one in charge had ever listened to them. ... **I DECIDED THAT MY JOB WAS TO LISTEN AGGRESSIVELY ...**”*

*—Mike Abrashoff, ***It's Your Ship: Management Techniques from the Best Damn Ship in the Navy****

Mike Abrashoff is one the most pursued “management gurus.” His approach to effectively commanding a U.S. Navy guided missile destroyer is admired far and wide. Among the primary tactics he used was

“AGGRESSIVE

LISTENING” —not

exactly the norm for ship captains, or, for that matter, the average manager.

Tweets on Listening/November 2011

Hustle essential. But remember to routinely take-make the time to engage people at a personal level about professional issues-opportunities.

People are on to you! They are able in a flash to discern that even though you asked a question you are not tuned in to their response.

If you ask a question and don't ask 2 or 3 follow up questions, odds are you weren't listening to the answer.

If you are "listening" and in your mind preparing your response, then, duh, you aren't listening!

I grew up near railroad crossings. As kids we had drummed into us, "Stop. Look. Listen." Bosses should religiously heed this advice!

***You must introduce a core training course in listening. Label it "Fundamentals of execution." Execution hinges on listening—
It's not a solo act.***

Listening is a purposeful act requiring effort and 100% attention. There's nothing casual or automatic about it.

Listening is expensive. It's just that the alternative is far more expensive.

F.Y.I.

***The only true
gift is a portion
of yourself.***

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

***Real* listening *is* about opening oneself up. It is a gift. And it is ... *sooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo* ... far beyond going through the motions.**

Listening is ... the engine of *superior EXECUTION.*

Listening is ... the key to *making the Sale.*

Listening is ... the key to *Keeping the Customer's Business.*

Listening is ... *Service.*

Listening is ... the engine of *Network development.*

Listening is ... the engine of *Network maintenance.*

Listening is ... the engine of *Network expansion.*

Listening is ... *Social Networking's "secret weapon."*

Listening is ... *Learning.*

Listening is ... the *sine qua non* of *Renewal.*

Listening is ... the *sine qua non* of *Creativity.*

Listening is ... the *sine qua non* of *Innovation.*

Listening is ... the core of *taking diverse opinions aboard.*

Listening is ... *Strategy.*

Listening is ... *Source #1 of "Value-added."*

Listening is ... *Differentiator #1.*

Listening is ... *Profitable.** (*The "R.O.I." from listening is higher than from any other single activity.)

Listening is ... the bedrock which underpins a *Commitment to EXCELLENCE!*

And more ...

(Pretty clear, eh?)

(Think about these, one-at-a-time.)

Best Listeners Win ...

***“IF YOU DON’T
LISTEN, YOU
DON’T SELL
ANYTHING.”***

—Carolyn Marland, CEO, Guardian Group

****8 of 10 sales
presentations fail**

****50% failed sales
presentations ... talking
“at” before listening!**

**—Susan Scott, “Let Silence Do the Heavy Listening,” chapter title,
*Fierce Conversations: Achieving Success at Work and in Life,
One Conversation at a Time***

10 Essential Selling Principles Most Salespeople Get Wrong

- 1. Assuming the problem that the prospect communicates is the real problem.**
- 2. Thinking that your sales “presentation” will seal the deal.**

3. Talking too much.

- 4. Believing that you can sell anybody anything.**
- 5. Overeducating the prospect when you should be selling.**
- 6. Failing to remember that salespeople are decision-makers, too.**
- 7. Reading minds.**
- 8. Working as an “unpaid consultant” to seal the deal.**
- 9. Being your own worst enemy.**
- 10. Keeping your fingers crossed that a prospect doesn’t notice a problem.**

Source: *Forbes*/0503.13

4.3.3 Step #1 *

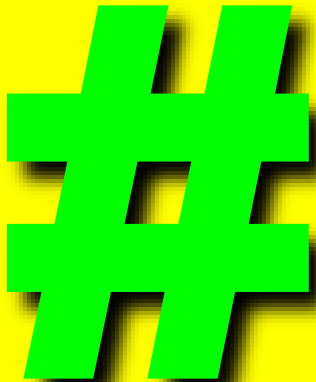
***Right now**

***“I always write
‘LISTEN’ on
the back of my hand
before a meeting.”***

Source: Tweet viewed @tom_peters

Nice.

4.3.5



Suggested Core Value

#1: *“We are Effective Listeners—we treat Listening EXCELLENCE as the Centerpiece of our Commitment to Respect and Engagement and Community and Growth.”*

Core Value **#1** .

I'm ... DEAD SERIOUS.

(Please be so kind as to consider.)

Part ONE: LISTEN*

(pp11-116, of 364)

**** “The key to every one of our [eight] leadership attributes was the vital importance of a leader’s ability to listen.”*** (One of Branson’s personal keys to listening is note-taking—he has hundreds of notebooks.)

Source: **Richard Branson**, *The Virgin Way: How to **Listen**, Learn, Laugh, and Lead*

Richard Branson would appear to agree with the primacy of listening. The entirety of **Part ONE of his book *The Virgin Way*, pages 11-116 (of 364), is titled, simply, **“Listen.”****

If *you agree with the above, shouldn't listening be ... a Core Value?*

*If you agree with the above, shouldn't listening be ... perhaps Core Value #1?** (***We are Effective Listeners—we treat Listening EXCELLENCE as the Centerpiece of our Commitment to Respect and Engagement and Community and Growth.**”)

If you agree, shouldn't listening be ... a Core Competence?

If you agree, shouldn't listening be ... Core Competence #1?

If you agree, shouldn't listening be ... an explicit “agenda item” at every Meeting?

If you agree, shouldn't listening be ... our Strategy—per se? (Listening = Strategy.)

If you agree, shouldn't listening be ... the #1 skill we look for in Hiring (for every job)?

If you agree, shouldn't listening be ... the #1 attribute we examine in our Evaluations?

If you agree, shouldn't listening be ... the #1 skill we look for in Promotion decisions?

If you agree, shouldn't listening be ... the #1 Training priority at every stage of everyone's career—from Day #1 to Day LAST?

If you agree, what are you going to do about it ... in the next 30 MINUTES?

If you agree, what are you going to do about it ... at your NEXT meeting?

If you agree, what are you going to do about it ... by the end of the DAY?

If you agree, what are you going to do about it ... in the next 30 DAYS?

If you agree, what are you going to do about it ... in the next 12 MONTHS?

4.3.6 A Profession

***Listening is of the
utmost ... STRATEGIC
importance!**

***Listening is a proper ...
CORE VALUE!**

***Listening is ... TRAINABLE!**

***Listening is a ... PROFESSION!**

Listening can be **STUDIED** and
PRACTICED to the same
extent and in the same fashion as learning
to play the piano or cello.

Listen! Ask! Read! Study!

- ***Listening Leaders: The Ten Golden Rules To Listen, Lead & Succeed***
—Lyman Steil and Richard Bommelje
- ***The Zen of Listening***—Rebecca Shafir
- ***Effective Listening Skills***—Dennis Kratz and Abby Robinson Kratz
- ***Are You Really Listening?***—Paul Donoghue and Mary Siegel
- ***Active Listening: Improve Your Ability to Listen and Lead***—Michael Hoppe
- ***Listening: The Forgotten Skill***—Madelyn Burley-Allen
- ***Leading with Questions: How Leaders Find the Right Solutions by Knowing What to Ask***—Michael Marquardt
- ***Smart Questions: Learn to Ask the Right Questions for Powerful Results***—Gerald Nadler and William Chandon
- ***The Art of Asking: Ask Better Questions, Get Better Answers***—Terry Fadem
- ***How to Ask Great Questions***—Karen Lee-Thorp
- ***Change Your Questions, Change Your Life***—Marilee Adams
- ***Asking the Right Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking***
—Neil Browne and Stuart Keeley
- ***Crucial Conversations***—Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, Al Switzler
- ***Crucial Confrontations***—Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, Al Switzler

(MUST) Start with these two:

****Crucial Conversations***

**—Kerry Patterson, Joseph
Grenny, Ron McMillan,
Al Switzler**

****Crucial Confrontations***

**—Kerry Patterson, Joseph
Grenny, Ron McMillan,
Al Switzler**

Starter reading list.

(The real point of the list is that there is such a list. That is, listening—and its mate, asking effective questions—is a subject that can be rigorously studied; getting us waaaaay beyond a few stirring guru one-liners.)

**DOES EVERYONE IN YOUR
ORGANIZATION—NEW HIRE
TO CEO—GO THROUGH A
RIGOROUS TRAINING
COURSE SOLELY DEVOTED
TO LISTENING SKILLS?**

(WITH REFRESHER COURSES FOR ALL MANAGERS.)

Soooooooo??????

4.3.7 Ear Muscle Exercise =

H-A-R-D Work!

**Trevor Gay: “I once had a boss who
regularly asked me, *‘Have
you given your
team a good
listening
to lately?’ ”***

**If you ain't exhausted
(after a serious
conversation), then you
weren't really listening.***

(*That is not a throwaway line.)

**Really listening is literally the
most exhausting activity I
know—that includes vigorous
physical activities.**

4.3.8 **1 Mouth**

2 Ears

The Last Word

***“Never miss
a good chance
to shut up.”***

—Will Rogers

**MEETINGS =
LEADERSHIP
OPPORTUNITY #1.**

(BELIEVE IT!)

1B1: (REALLY) First Things Before First Things

- 1. *1st line supervisors* are Key #1 to organizational effectiveness—and we invariably (waaaay) underplay their collective importance.**
- 2. *XFX/Cross-Functional EXCELLENCE*. Poor “XFX” is the principle element in the delay of everything—and the answer is not primarily sexy software systems.**
- 3. *LISTENING*. You might go so far as to say “Listening IS Strategy.” I’d go that far! And turning everyone into a “listening professional” is not a stretch of the imagination.**
- 4. *Meetings*, like it or not, are “what we do”—so make them Paragons Of EXCELLENCE, rather than considering them a “necessary nuisance.”**

***Bitch all you
want, but
meetings
are what you
(boss) do!***

**4.4.1 THOROUGHLY
RE-THINK YOUR
APPROACH TO
MEETINGS!**

***Bitch all you
want, but
meetings
are what you
(boss) do!***

Bosses above “hands on” shift supervisors may well ... **spend the majority of their time ... in meetings. Meetings, for one and all, participant or leader, may be the #1 topic of bitching.**

Nonetheless ...

**They are “how we spend our time.”
Consequences?
Staggering.**

MEETINGS = #1

***LEADERSHIP
OPPORTUNITY***

If You = Your calendar (a fact) and your calendar “says” that meetings are your pre-occupation, then like it or not meetings are by definition ... *the principal stage for exhibiting leadership.*

Q.E.D.

Meetings are **#1** thing bosses

do. Therefore, **100%** of

those meetings:

EXCELLENCE.

ENTHUSIASM.

ENGAGEMENT.

LEARNING. TEMPO.

WORK-OF-ART DAMN IT

The idea of using “meeting” and “excellence” in the same sentence may strike you as absurd. But, again, if meetings are ... **your principal (leadership) stage ... then they must either be the platform for the aspiration and expression of Excellence or you are not serious about Excellence.**

Q.E.D.

Meeting: *Every meeting that does not stir the imagination and curiosity of attendees and increase bonding and co-operation and engagement and sense of worth and motivate rapid action and enhance enthusiasm is a permanently lost opportunity.*

**Fact.
Period.**

**Think about it.
Long.
And hard.**

***MEETING =
THEATER***

Meeting: **Theater of**
inquiry and persuasion
and motivation and
engagement and
enhanced teamwork

A meeting for the leader is pure, unadulterated theater.

It is the stage on which you express your aspirations and values. The stage on which you demonstrate your approach to inquiry that you aim to instill throughout the organization. The stage on which you cajole others to hop aboard and stay aboard. The stage on which the notions of accountability for actions is forged. Etc.

**Prepare for a
meeting/every meeting
as if your professional
life and legacy
depended on it.**

It does.

A meeting worth calling is a meeting worthy of intensive preparation. Your aim should be high—and *strategic*. Even when the topic is “trivial.”

When it comes to modeling and underscoring core values, there is no such thing as a “minor” meeting.

FYI: This is ... not
... a rant about
“conducting better
meetings.”

Most of the “meetings literature” is devoted to “running better meetings,” “running shorter meetings,” etc. Doubtless of value—but dangerously missing the point.

If the meeting is the leader’s principal platform for instilling values, etc., then the objective is far far beyond “efficient behaviors.”

Random Thoughts on Meetings: If They Fail to Excite ... *It's Your Fault!*

Going to a simple cocktail party last night. Found myself, out of habit, scripting 1st comments for various people. BEGINNINGS = THE BALLGAME.

*Forget the "meat." (More or less.) **Beginnings and endings overwhelm middles!***

Cocktail party, someone a little over their ethanol limit makes loudish questionable remark as they leave—that's all you remember.

Every meeting needs an energetic-exciting start and a blow-out ending which launches the "To dos" with vigor.

Never ever begin a meeting with "Let's get started." Begin it with a plunge not a tiptoe—e.g., some exciting-surprising nugget.

Perhaps begin with a show of enthusiasm, maybe a 90-second report on some little thing that went well, maybe with a kudo to someone at the meeting.

You damn well better believe that superb beginnings and inspiring endings do not occur by accident!

*Right before meeting ends, quickly ask each person how they **FEEL** about the take-aways. Deal now with frowns/dis-engagement.*

And if you've got a mega-frowner who didn't speak up, try to casually/unobtrusively catch him-her for a moment as you leave.

I NEVER start presentations with a title slide; I usually begin with a PowerPoint slide of half a quote, relevant to the presentation, without punch line—a shameless teaser.

FYI: Remember, one person's humorous remark is another person's insult. "Humorous" remarks should NEVER be at someone's expense!!!!

Some “stuff.”

Yes they (still) will.

In the age of high-tech, meetings will matter more than ever. With team-member separation increasingly the norm, more prep than ever is required to bring vitality to an “electronic meeting”—with, perhaps, a wildly multicultural composition.

Suggested addition to your statement of Core

Values: ***Like it or not, gatherings (meetings) are a big part of organized life. We are determined to make every meeting a positive platform for developing people, building teamwork, spurring innovation and re-enforcing our culture.***

Worthy of inclusion in our governing Credo.

**4.4.2 PREPARATION FOR
EVERYDAY
AFFAIRS: LARGELY
OVERLOOKED!**

REPEAT: Prepare for a
meeting/every meeting
as if your professional
life and legacy
depended on it.

REPEAT: It does.

REPEAT: A meeting worth calling is a meeting worthy of intensive preparation. Your aim should be high—and *strategic*. Even when the topic is “trivial.”

When it comes to modeling and underscoring core values, there is no such thing as a “minor” meeting.

THE THREE MINUTE

Rule: So what about
the other 45?

A basketball coach remarked that most practices focused on dribbling and shooting. Yet the reality is, star or not, that a player only has his or her hands on the ball for ... **3 to 4 minutes a game. (Out of 48.)**

And yet practice doesn't focus on how you play **94% of the time!**

Business is the same way ...

Prep! Prep! Prep! Prep! Prep!

Meetings.

Phone calls.

Emails.

Conversations.

The “94%” in business is ... meetings, short conversations, phone calls, etc.

***Do you
carefully
prepare for the
94%:*** **Meetings. Phone
calls. Emails. Conversations.**

I am a champion of opportunism, adhocracy, informality and the like. But ...

We do schedule a lot of meetings and calls and conversations. And a ton of emails.

And, my observation is that we plan out and rehearse very few of these events. Not an hour, or maybe not even fifteen minutes.

But how about 10 minutes?

Objective.

Opener.

2 or 3 key points.

**Sensitivities to
watch out for.**

Etc.

There is nothing sacred about this list. It is merely suggestive. But I would recommend you carry around a little note card or some such to remind you of something like these 4 ideas. And a little note card (paper or electronic) which lays out on a 3-inch by 5-inch square the answers to something like the list on this slide. It'll take you 10 or 15 minutes I expect to write that little 3 X 5 card—voilà, there's your prep time.

(I suggest that you not do this in your head—the idea is semi-formalism!)

The case of email!

Most of us write a ton of emails every day. Many are one-liners. But quite a few are 10 liners. A hasty 10-liner can set back a relationship for a week or a month or even forever.

I'm not arguing that you go through the four points above for every email—or maybe I am, or some approximation thereof.

The simple fact is that I know of no one who has not screwed up something big because of a sloppy email. I sure as hell have!

***You are
clueless ...***

Fact is, except in a general way, that we are clueless about “where the recipient’s head is at” ... at this particular moment.

You know where he stands on an issue (or at least you think you do). But you don’t know that he had a monster blowup with his wife last night regarding one of the kids. Or one of a hundred things like that. So when you send him that somewhat sensitive email ... you could be igniting a major conflagration.

I’m not suggesting you not send the email, but I am suggesting you give that likely sensitive remark a 2 or 3 minute look—watch out for carelessness, especially if you’re a fast typist!

THIS IS (VERY) IMPORTANT!

- 1. This is what you ... do.**
- 2. Hence this is all about leadership at the sub-atomic level.**
- 3. Take some (SIGNIFICANT) care with every item.**
- 4. *This is what you do.***

Amen.

**1B1: FOUR
(REALLY) FIRST
THINGS BEFORE
FIRST THINGS ...**

In summary ...

**Four First Things Before First Things: Core Values/
Sustainable Competitive Advantages/Pillars of EXCELLENCE**

- 1. EXCELLENCE ... First-line management cadre as *engine* of enterprise performance!**
- 2. EXCELLENCE ... Value-added *opportunity #1* through seamless cross-functional integration!**
- 3. EXCELLENCE ... “Strategic” *listening* as peerless enterprise differentiator!**
- 4. EXCELLENCE ... “Hated” *meetings* as premier leadership tool for development/“culture”/direction.**

Suggested addition to your statement of Core

Values: ***“We are obsessed with developing a cadre of 1st line managers that is second to none—we understand that the EXCELLENCE of this cadre per se is arguably one of our top two or three most important ‘Strategic Assets.’”***

Suggested addition to your statement of Core

Values: ***“We will not rest until***

***seamless cross-functional
integration/communication has
become our primary source of
value-added. EXCELLENCE in
cross-functional integration
shall become a daily operational
passion for 100% of us.”***

Suggested addition to your statement of Core

Values: ***“We are Effective
Listeners—we treat Listening
EXCELLENCE as the
Centerpiece of our
Commitment to Respect and
Engagement and Community
and Growth.”***

Suggested addition to your statement of Core Values: ***“Like it or not, gatherings (meetings) are a big part of organized life. We are determined to make every meeting a positive platform for developing people, building teamwork, spurring innovation and re-enforcing our culture.”***

PLEASE ...

**Go ahead.
Make my day.**

Get serious about ONE of these four.

**Just one.
Now.
Please.**