

SUPER PRODUCERS

BUILD YOUR LEADERSHIP AND MAKE GREAT GAMES



Aaron Thibault
Vice President of Product Development &
Executive Producer
@aaronthibault

IMAGINE THE VERY BEST OUTCOME
AND DO EVERYTHING IN YOUR POWER
TO MANIFEST IT



YEAH?

**WELL, YOU KNOW, THAT'S JUST LIKE, YOUR
OPINION, MAN!**

THIS IS INTENDED TO BE A WORKSHEET FOR YOUR PERSONAL ROADMAP

- WHEN HAVE YOU DONE THIS? OR COME CLOSE?
- WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM THE EXPERIENCE?
- DO YOU INTROSPECT TO LEARN AND IMPROVE?
- DO YOU HAVE A MENTOR, AND/OR TRUST-SUPPORT NETWORK?
- WHEN HAVE YOU SEEN SOMEONE DO THIS EXCEPTIONALLY WELL?
- WHEN CAN YOU PRACTICE DOING THIS WELL?

PLEASE TAKE THIS PRESENTATION AND
MAKE IT YOUR OWN

- COPY IT
- ADD YOUR OWN PICTURES
- THINK OF STORIES
- CALL IT YOUR OWN
- MAKE IT BETTER
- INVITE ME TO SEE YOU DO IT

COMMON JUNIOR MISTAKES ...
AKA “OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT”

FAILURE TO ASK QUESTIONS
AND SAY “I DON’T KNOW”

OPINIONS

- NOT OFFERING AN OPINION WHEN QUALIFIED
 - FAILURE TO FEEL/ACT EMPOWERED
- OFFERING AN OPINION WHEN UNQUALIFIED
 - FAILURE TO RESPECT ROLES ON THE TEAM
 - FAILURE TO BE SELF-AWARE
- NOT ASKING OTHERS FOR THEIR OPINION

FAILING AT POKER FACE



PRACTICE TOTAL SELF CONTROL

USING EMAIL/ CHAT/ ETC AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR F2F

FAILURE TO RECOGNIZE THE BETTER ALTERNATIVE

FORCING A DECISION BEFORE THE RIGHT INFORMATION
IS KNOWN AND FACTORED

VS

TAKING TOO LONG TO MAKE A DECISION
AND FAILING TO GAIN/KEEP MOMENTUM

GETTING NEGATIVELY EMOTIONAL WHEN UNNECESSARY

- YOUR BASELINE STATE SHOULD BE CALM, INQUISITIVE AND PREPARED
- FEEL FREE TO EXTEND YOUR STATE WITH ENTHUSIASM AND GAMING PASSION!
- NEGATIVE EMOTION SHOULD BE A STARK CONTRAST TO WHAT YOU COMMONLY PORTRAY
- AS A RESULT, IT CAN BE AN EFFECTIVE TOOL, BUT ONLY WHEN USED SPARINGLY.
- EXAMPLE: A SIMPLE WAY TO TELL THE TEAM YOU CARE ABOUT THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS IN MASLOW'S HEIRARCHY.

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS
FROM WIKIPEDIA

Self-actualization

morality,
creativity,
spontaneity,
problem solving,
lack of prejudice,
acceptance of facts

Esteem

self-esteem,
confidence, achievement,
respect of others, respect by others

Love/Belonging

friendship, family, sexual intimacy

Safety

security of body, of employment, of resources,
of morality, of the family, of health, of property

Physiological

breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, excretion

FAILURE TO MAINTAIN PROFESSIONALISM

- DATING COWORKERS
- SAYING OFFENSIVE THINGS, MAKING COWORKERS UNCOMFORTABLE
- LACK OF USING / UNDERSTANDING PROTOCOL

LETTING TOO MUCH PERSONAL LIFE CREEP IN TO WORK

THIS IS REALLY MORE OF A NOTE FOR JUNIOR PRODUCERS.

- WE DON'T KNOW IF WE LIKE YOU YET. SO IT'S BEST TO KEEP THE FOCUS OF TEAM MEMBER'S EVALUATIONS OF YOUR PERFORMANCE ON YOUR ACTUAL WORK CAPABILITIES.
- DRAMA IN PERSONAL LIFE TRANSLATES TO DRAMA AT WORK LATER.
- CONVERSELY, STRENGTH IN PERSONAL LIFE TRANSLATES TO SILENT STRENGTH AND CONFIDENCE AT WORK.

PUTTING TOO MUCH IMPORTANCE ON TITLES

UNAWARE OF THE CURRENCY
AND ECONOMICS OF CREDIBILITY

DON'T SEE THEMSELVES AS A LEADER

FAILURE TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF EVERYTHING

IN THEIR PURVIEW

TRYING TO BE TOO COOL

- IT'S NOT YOUR JOB TO BE COOL DAWG.
- DON'T BE UNDER THE INFLUENCE AT WORK.
- IT'S YOUR CALL WHAT TO DO AT OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS GIVEN YOUR WORK CULTURE.

DON'T DIG INTO DETAILS, DO THE LEG WORK TO BE THOROUGH

- IS A MEETING ROOM OVERBOOKED, OR BOOKED AT A STANDING MEETING TIME FOR ANOTHER DEPT?
- IS SOMEONE ON THE TEAM VEGETARIAN OR HAVE A FOOD ALLERGY? DID YOU PASS THE INFO ALONG?
- IT'S TIME FOR THAT FOLLOW UP MEETING, BUT DOES EVERYONE REMEMBER THE OUTCOME OF THE LAST ONE? WHEN ARE PEOPLE GOING TO BE OUT, AND DID YOU FACTOR THAT INTO MEETINGS, DELIVERABLES, PRESS TOURS, COMPANY EVENTS, ETC?
- DID THE CONTRACTORS' INVOICES GET PAID?
- DID THE JOB DESCRIPTION GET POSTED?

MEANINGLESS, ENDLESS NOTE TAKING

- TYPE, TYPE, TYPE
- SCRAWL, SCRAWL, SCRAWL
- MEANINGLESS BECAUSE IT BECOMES WASTED EFFORT
- NO FOLLOW UP OR MEASURABLE ACTION ITEMS
- IT ONLY LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE DOING SOMETHING IMPORTANT

THIS CAN SOMETIMES BE FOUND MULITPLYING WITH THE NEXT BIG OFFENDER...

MEETINGS WITH TOPICS BUT WITHOUT AGENDAS

INFORMATION HOGGING

- WHETHER ACCIDENTAL OR INTENTIONAL, THIS IS A KILLER
- MISTAKING THE POWER OF INFORMATION WITH JOB SECURITY OR IMPORTANCE

DISTRACTIONS

- **QUALITY RESULTS FROM FOCUS AND TIME**
- I DON'T WANT YOUR SPLIT ATTENTION
- DON'T SET A BAD EXAMPLE; STREAMING, HYGIENE, ETC.
- PLEASE DON'T SCHMOOZE AND/OR GOSSIP

FAILURE TO GIVE A HEADS UP (WARNING)

- THINGS CAN FEEL LIKE THEY'RE COMING OUT OF THE BLUE, EVEN IF THEY'VE BEEN DISCUSSED BEFORE. BECAUSE, YOU KNOW, PEOPLE ARE BUSY AND FORGET.
- IN THE ABSENCE OF REGULAR, USEFUL INFORMATION, TEAMS FEEL INSECURE

FORGET / FAIL TO SUPERVISE

SOMETIMES WE DON'T PAY ATTENTION LIKE WE SHOULD.
THEN SHIT GOES BAD. BE MINDFUL AND AVOID SIMPLE
NEGLIGENCE.

POOR EXPECTATION MANAGEMENT

- FAILURE TO DOCUMENT AND REPORT CHANGES QUICKLY
- FAILURE TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION
- FAILURE TO DESCRIBE IN SIMPLE AND HONEST TERMS

CAN BE CAUSED BY...

MAKING UNCHECKED ASSUMPTIONS

- “I ASSUMED YOU KNEW THAT.”
 - “DIDN’T YOU SEE THE EMAIL?”
 - “HE SAID HE WAS GOING TO TELL YOU.”
 - “SHE SAID SHE WAS ON IT.” (MISSION CRITICAL SIDEWAYS DELEGATION SHOULD BE CHECKED – WATCH YOUR TEAM MEMBERS’ BACKS)

MAKING TOO MANY COMMITMENTS

FAILURE TO DEAL WITH THE PRODUCER'S DILEMMA

WHEN THE PERSON YOU HAVE IS BETTER THAN NO ONE

FAILURE TO THINK ABOUT THE BUS



MISTAKING CANDOR FOR CONFLICT

- DIFFICULTY BEING DIRECT
- ASKING TEAM MEMBERS TO DO OR REPORT WORK AS A FAVOR

DISCOMFORT WITH DIRECTNESS / FEAR

- COVERING FOR TEAM MEMBERS WITH THE WRONG OTHER TEAM MEMBERS
- MAKING STRAWMAN ARGUMENTS
- JOKES INSTEAD OF ACTUAL INFORMATION
- CAN LEAD TO OR BE SYMPTOMATIC OF PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR
- CAN LEAD TO LYING

THE QUALITIES OF SUPER PRODUCERS

IDENTIFY THINGS THAT MUST IMMEDIATELY STOP.
THEN CAUSE THEM TO STOP.

- THE BEST PRODUCERS TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR FIXING BROKEN THINGS.
- BE COMFORTABLE TAKING THE RISK OF HITTING THE STOP BUTTON.
- DRAMATIC CHANGE IS THE MOST NOTICEABLE KIND AND SENDS A CLEAR MESSAGE.

WALK AROUND

THE ABILITY TO RALLY TO A CAUSE

DEMONSTRATE BIG PRODUCTION PRIORITIES IN EVERYDAY SMALL WAYS

- MAKE SURE THE TEAM'S FOOD IS ON TIME (TIME)
- CLEARLY COMMUNICATE BRANCH AND BUILD PRIORITIES (SCOPE)
- KEEP A TIGHT LOOP FROM DESIGN INTENT TO QA REPORTING (QUALITY)

MAINTAIN A CADENCE OF USEFUL COMMUNICATION

- HAVE A COMMUNICATION PLAN
 - WITH THE TEAM, ABOUT PROJECT KEY GOALS AND CHANGES
 - WITH THE UPWARD STAKEHOLDERS / PUBLISHER REPS, ETC.
 - WITH TEAM MEMBERS, FOR WORK PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK
- STEER A TEAM TOWARDS THE INTENDED COMMUNICATION NORMS
 - KNOW HOW TO BE POLITE
 - KNOW HOW TO STAY FOCUSED ON IMPORTANT, MEASURABLE GOALS
 - KNOW HOW TO BE CANDID ABOUT RESULTS AND POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES

STRONG MORAL COMPASS

- DO WHAT IS RIGHT FOR THE TEAM
- ARE COMFORTABLE MAKING JUDGMENT CALLS FROM A MORAL POV
- INCORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT INTO THEIR NATURAL THINKING PROCESS
- ASK QUESTIONS IN ECONOMIC DECISION MAKING:
 - WHAT'S RIGHT FOR THE CUSTOMER?
 - IS THIS GOING TO PRODUCE GOODWILL?
 - IS THIS VALUABLE ENOUGH TO DO?
 - HOW EASILY CAN WE RECOVER IF THE CONSEQUENCES ARE NEGATIVE?

PRACTICE LANDING (PROJECT A SHIPPING MENTALITY)

- USE EVERY SIGNIFICANT TESTABLE MILESTONE BUILD AS A REHEARSAL FOR SHIPPING
- DESCRIBE THE IMPROVEMENTS THAT CAN BE MADE NEXT TIME

INCLUDE THE TEAM IN IDENTIFYING AND MAKING
IMPROVEMENTS TO PROCESS AND SCOPE

PLAY GAMES

- AWARE OF THE MARKET
- BUILD CAMARADERIE WITH THE TEAM
- PLAY BUILDS — FIND THE FUN FOR YOURSELF
- GIVE ACCOLADES FOR SUCCESSES YOU'VE GENUINELY EXPERIENCED

SCHEDULING MASTERY

- EXHAUSTIVELY COMPLETE LISTS
- MAINTAIN HISTORIC DATA
- ESTABLISH BASELINES FOR COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS
 - LEARN *HOW* TO DO COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS
 - FOR FUN, LEARN HOW ELO AND MATCHMAKING WORKS
- CONSTANT BRACKETING
 - BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS ESTIMATION RESOLUTION
 - REDUCE UNKNOWNNS
 - USE ALL THE SOUNDING BOARDS
- MAKE FRIENDS WITH RELATIVE ESTIMATION

TEAM BUILDING

- THE BEST KNOW THIS IS A TALENT MANAGEMENT BUSINESS
- TEAM COMPOSITION – GOOD TEAMS HAVE A MIX
 - LEVELS OF SENIORITY AND OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN
 - LEVELS OF CAPABILITY AND DOMAIN EXPERIENCE
 - VARYING PERSONAL MOTIVATIONS
- FOR EVERY TEAM THERE WILL BE A LEADER, A HEART AND A MIND
- YOU GO TO WAR WITH THE ARMY YOU HAVE
- MAKE THE BEST GAME YOUR TEAM CAN MAKE
- TEAMS NEED A CONSTANT SENSE OF PURPOSE AND ACHIEVEMENT

YOU KNOW THE GROWTH PLANS OF
EACH OF YOUR TEAM MEMBERS

DEVELOP YOUR DECISION MAKING FRAMEWORK

BE INTENTIONAL

- MAINTAIN THE PROJECT'S FOCUS
- REINFORCE YOUR PILLARS
- VALUE CREATION
- PNL IMPACT
- MEASURED, INTENTIONAL RESPONSE:
 - CYNEFIN (KU-NEV-IN) FRAMEWORK
 - PRACTICED AGILITY
- BACKLOG PRIORITIZATION, SWOT

COMFORTABLE IN TIMES OF CHANGE: ABILITY TO STRUCTURE AND FUNNEL CHAOS

- INNOVATION IS A TERM THAT DESCRIBES STRUCTURING UNSOLVED PROBLEMS
- WE COMMONLY USE THE PHRASE HERDING CATS TO REFER TO THIS JOB

Cynefin Framework

	NATURE	RESPONSE	PREPARE
CHAOS	Unknowable unknowns Temporary state - no time No evidence of any constraint High turbulence no patterns Old certainties no longer apply	Act-Sense-Respond Speed of authoritative response vital Follow and enforce heuristics Focus on constraints not solution Use the opportunity to innovate	Establish heuristics & Parables Human sensor networks Crews as crisis management teams Simulation games for key managers Multi-perspective dissent feedback
COMPLEX	Unknown unknowns Messily coherent, patterns discernible Partial changing constraints Flux within stabilities Evidence supports contradiction	Probe-Sense-Respond Monitor safe-to fail experiments All contradiction within heuristics Flex constraints to manage emergence Agility key to amplification/dampening	Create time and space for reflection Human sensor networks operational SNS & the like to create networks Scenario planning (inc. micro) Build and monitor 'requisite diversity'
COMPLICATED	Known unknowns Ordered, predictable, forecastable Constraints evident and enforceable Stable within constraints Evidence susceptible of analysis	Sense-Analyse-Respond Determine experts or process to resolve Manage & enforce process Monitor effectiveness of constraints Focus on exploitation not exploration	Right people & process, right time Process engineering with feedback Diversity of experts in network Sound Analytical practice Stand aside but stay in touch
SIMPLE	Known knowns Familiar, certain, well worn pathways Constraints self-evident to all Stable within universal constraints Self evident solutions	Sense-Categorise-Respond Ensure sound process in place Monitor for noncompliance & deviance Test for complacency Protect some pet mavericks	Watch for outliers Usable process Right support people for key staff Automate, but no automata Anonymous appeal/whistle blowers

五輪書

GO RIN NO SHO
THE BOOK OF FIVE RINGS
BY MIYAMOTO MUSASHI

Do not engage in useless activity. Do not argue about useless things. Concentrate on your duties.

In large scale strategy the superior man will attract and keep able subordinates, bear himself correctly, govern the country and care for the people, thus preserving the ruler's discipline.

The Way of strategy is to be self-reliant, not losing at anything, to guide others, to gain benefits and honor, and to make peace with others.

- The Earth Book

DEVELOP YOUR DEFINITION OF LEADERSHIP

- THE BEST PRODUCERS CAN DEFINE THEIR OWN VISION OF LEADERSHIP, AND THINK ABOUT HOW THEY CAN BE BETTER LEADERS
- THE US ARMY DEFINES LEADERSHIP AS INFLUENCING PEOPLE BY PROVIDING PURPOSE, DIRECTION, AND MOTIVATION, WHILE OPERATING TO ACCOMPLISH THE MISSION AND IMPROVE THE ORGANIZATION.
- IMPEL DON'T COMPEL

LEADERSHIP MASTERY 1: REPRESENTING YOUR ORGANIZATION WELL

LEADERSHIP MASTERY 2: DRIVING (LEADING FROM THE FRONT)

LEADERSHIP MASTERY 3: SUCCESSION PLANNING

LEADERSHIP MASTERY 4: SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

LEADERSHIP MASTERY 5: TEACHING

LEADERSHIP MASTERY 6:
EXPANDING YOUR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE
FOR THE BENEFIT OF YOUR TEAM

LEADERSHIP MASTERY 7:
EXPANDING YOUR TEAM MATES'
SPHERES OF INFLUENCE