

EPISODE 8: A FRAMEWORK FOR GETTING THE OUTCOMES YOU WANT

- [CC] My name is Christina Canters and I'm joined today by Mr. John Williams, stakeholder engagement, expert and the founder of JHW. In this episode we're talking about a framework for achieving your outcomes and this episode is more conceptual than some of the previous episodes you may have listened to.

For example, about the call plan, which was very actionable, we gave very practical tips, but it is important to understand that the concept that we're about to discuss today because it does give you a broad overview of how you might go about...thinking about learning this stuff. I hope that that's not too confusing. Now, it's important to understand that when we're learning about engagement and how to communicate better, it's not a linear process. John, can you explain? [01:12](#)

- [JW] You've already listened to a few of the podcasts, I suspect, covering a whole lot of concepts. It's not a sequential step-by-step process to lead you through from start to finish. Many of these concepts are interrelated in many ways with one another, so there's a many-to-many relationship.

We've tried to put the topics together in logical fashion that makes it easy for you to follow, but should you jump forward or jump back, then I don't think you're gonna lose a great deal because as you go through them, there will be obvious connections that you will pick up as you go through.

What we're trying to do here is outline a conceptual framework for the whole process of building engagement and delivering solutions to our stakeholders. So, that's the framework that we're gonna focus on today and then other bits, plug in to that overall framework as you go through them.

- [CC] So, if this is the very first episode that you've listened to out of this podcast...John, would you recommend that they listen to some of the others first or is this a good one to start with?

- [JW] This is just as good starting point as anywhere else, so yeah, but certainly worth dropping back after listening to this one to listen to some of the others as well, they're plugging quite seamlessly, I think.

- [CC] All right, fantastic. Now, if you want to download the PDF resource for this episode or want to read the detailed show notes, you can find it at JHW.com.au/framework. You can easily send the text version of this podcast to a colleague or whoever you think would also benefit from it and they can listen to it as well.

All right, now let's get into it. We're talking about this framework for achieving your outcomes and John, you've outlined four main elements of this framework.

- [JW] Yeah.

- [CC] Do you wanna start with number 1?

- [JW] Number 1, yes - solutions for stakeholders. What do I mean by stakeholders?

It could be my boss, he's a good stakeholder, he or she. It could be my end users. It could be the project manager that I'm reporting to on this project. It could be a customer or a client, if I'm a salesperson or a consultant.

So, I've got multiple stakeholders, we all have multiple stakeholders and we are their service provider. As a service provider, I may be a consultant, I might be an analyst within a project, I might be an accountant, I might be a salesperson or a project manager. The service provider has a relationship

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with their stakeholder and what their stakeholder wants from their service providers is solutions.

Solutions - that's what we want from our service providers. Now, first point - there's no such thing as a solution without a problem. We, as service providers, need to understand our stakeholders' problems. We talk about 'Learn before lead'. Leading is the process of helping our stakeholders achieve the solution, but there is no solution without a problem. If we, as service providers, don't initially understand the problem, then we have got no hope of providing them with a solution.

So, the very essence of the relationship with our stakeholders is learn first, understand what their problems are. This is a process of asking questions, getting it from the horse's mouth. Don't assume that you know what their needs are 'cause you will possibly get it wrong.

What we need to do is learn then lead, and we have a podcast all around solutions for stakeholders. That will be one of the next ones we do. Now, one of the big problems with learning before leading is...people don't tell their problems to strangers. Now, some of our stakeholders we already know quite well and could well be cooperative. Other stakeholders we might not know so well and other who we do know well but they don't like us much or don't value us much.

So, I'm sure we've all been in a situation where we're trying to do a good diligent service provider job, but we haven't sufficient information about what it is the stakeholder actually wants. Do we fully understand their business? Do we fully understand their aspirations? Do we truly understand what they're trying to get to? We will only get to understand that thoroughly if we have engagement with them.

- [CC] So, this is part 2 of the framework?

- [JW] Part 2 of the framework is - build engagement. Chronologically, it probably needs to come before the learning, because, unless we've got engagement, unless they trust us, unless they like us, unless they believe we've got some value to add, they may well not be prepared to even give us time, or even if they do give us time, they may not feel comfortable trusting us with the information we need to know.

So, step 2 - Build engagement. Probably needs to be done up front, but if I've got engagement, true engagement with my stakeholder, then they're gonna be comfortable to answer the questions that I need answers to so that I fully understand their needs. Build engagement, understand their needs, learn then lead and now we're on track to be being able to understand their needs and provide a specific solution to their needs.

- [CC] Which will enable us to then be more effective in providing that which will then help us achieve our own goals.

- [JW] Exactly. That's what makes us successful. Point 3, we now have a third complication - not everybody's the same. What works with one person might not work with another person. Horses for courses we talk about. The way I build engagement with some people won't work with others.

So, a third, major area that we spend time on our workshop about and we're gonna have a multiple podcasts around is understanding the different personalities of people and how that impacts on the way we need to build engagement with them and how we need to learn from them, how we need to transact with them.

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We have a concept, I know you've been using, Christina, 'the personality compass'. And using the personality compass, we can start to anticipate the likely preferences of the very stakeholder in front of us and we can tailor our message to the way they like to be dealt with and we can focus our technique on the way they like to be dealt with. This gives us a massive head start over people that aren't doing that, in terms of getting on well with them, and building stronger engagement with them, building stronger cooperation with them.

- [CC] And that's absolute gold, if you can do that - identify the different personality types and speak to them and build engagement and trust, rapport with them, if you can do that then you're already ahead of the game in most cases.

- [JW] Exactly. So, this is really becoming quite a sophisticated model of how we deal with people, not just rocking up and saying 'Hey, you know, everybody likes me, it'll be right.'

I think this is a much more conscious way of making sure that we do our best with every stakeholder regardless of their personality style. The final bit and point 4 is really a series of hints, tactics, tips and techniques that's gonna help us do those first 3 steps. So, like you mentioned, Christina, we've already had the core plan, which is an excellent technique for putting some of those things into practice.

- [CC] That's episode 1. If you missed that one, go back and listen to it because it's really, really effective way to get the most out of your meetings and be more effective with them, so definitely check out episode 1.

- [JW] Exactly. Another one is 'Influence and Authority'. We've talked about communication skills and communication channels in some of the earlier podcasts. Their mechanisms by which we can focus on getting through these key issues in a framework, those issues being, first of all, you need to understand your stakeholders' requirements. Secondly, they won't share those needs with you unless you've built engagement, and thirdly, engagement isn't a one-size-fits-all, we need to adjust that for the different personalities with whom we deal.

- [CC] And I think the first step for implementing these things and getting better at it is to firstly understand this framework.

So, if you hadn't ever considered this before, now is a really good time to take it on board and chew on it and go 'Okay, maybe this is why I haven't been as effective as I could've been or maybe this project wasn't (as) done as effectively as it could have.' So, you know, if you can take into consideration this framework and then start to apply some of the tips and techniques that we share in other episodes, then that's gonna really start you off well in your journey of improving.

- [JW] The key take away from this podcast is probably listen to the next three or four podcasts which will focus on each of these topics in more detail. 'How do I do my learning before leading, focusing on solutions for customers? What are the key elements of engagement and how do I build stronger engagement with stakeholders? How do I use this personality compass to recognize the different traits of people and adjust to them in a more meaningful way?'

- [CC] Fantastic. Right, thanks, John. Now, if you listened to this and you want the blog post of the episode and also to learn more about the engagement skills workshops that John runs that covers all of these topics that we discussed in the podcast in an interactive environment, go to JHW.com.au/



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framework, and if you want more information about the public workshops, engagement skills workshops that John runs, go to JHW.com.au/engagement.

And that's all from John and I for this episode, thank you so much for tuning in, we really appreciate you spending some time with us today. My name is Christina Canters and this has been Engagement Matters.