

Announcer:

Welcome to The Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast, a podcast all about leadership, change and personal growth. The goal? To help you lead like never before in your church or in your business. And now, your host, Carey Nieuwhof.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, hey everybody, and welcome to episode 444 of the podcast. It's Carey here, and I hope our time together today helps you thrive in life and leadership. I am very excited to bring you Chris McChesney today. This is something I have done a deep dive into. His material in the Four Disciplines of Execution is something that our company has been living by for a couple of years. We get to explore it. If you have used the Four Disciplines of Execution, you're going to love this. If you haven't, I would encourage you to open your notebook. It's amazing for remote and in-person teams. This episode is brought to you by Pro Media Fire. You can save time and grow online with Pro Media Fire's complete social media management. You get 10% off for the first year by going to promediafire.com/carey. And by Remodel Health, if you want to save a lot of money on employee health care next year, check it out and go to remodelhealth.com/analysis.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Use the code CAREY50 for 50% off. So, Chris McChesney is the Global Practice Leader of Execution for Franklin Covey. He has helped pioneer the Four Disciplines of Execution that thousands of companies have adopted around the world. This is mostly used in the business space, but if you're a church leader listening, pay attention, this is so, so helpful. And I've got a confession. I had heard about the Four Disciplines of Execution for years from people like Craig Groeschel and others. And I always thought, "I really want to do it." But for some reason I had in my mind that this was like a 792 page book and it was super technical. And then I heard him, Chris, on Andy Stanley's leadership podcast a couple of years ago. And I'm like, "Oh, that sounds simple." And then I bought the book.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's actually very easy to read and so powerful. So we talk about how to get more done. For more than decade, Chris has led Franklin Covey's, ongoing design and development, the Four Disciplines of Execution principles, as well as the consulting organization that has achieved extraordinary growth in many countries around the globe and impacted hundreds of organizations. He has personally led many of the most noted implementation of the four disciplines, including in the State of Georgia, Marriott International, Shaw Industries, the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Kroger, Coca-Cola, Comcast, Lockheed Martin and Gaylord Entertainment, and a whole lot more. We actually talk about the Opryland Hotel today. It's a great example of how to get more from your existing team. So I think you're really going to enjoy it. Of course, we got show notes for you at careynieuwhof.com/episode-444. I've also got a Ask Me Anything About Productivity.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'm going to talk to you about the thief of my productivity. I'm going to answer Cameron's question today. Cameron, thanks for your question. So are you looking to grow your non-profit or church online? Well, you got a couple of choices when it comes to digital. You can do all the work or your team can, or you can hire Pro Media Fire. Get an entire team of experts, a lot of whom have worked in the industry more broadly, and they keep up with all the trends that will help you grow online. So the choice is yours. Do the investing all yourself, or for less than the cost of a staff hire, you can go to Pro Media Fire. You

save time and you grow online while they do all the work. It's complete social media management and digital growth, just a few clicks away. So as a listener of this podcast, you get 10% off for the first year.

Carey Nieuwhof:

If you go to promediafire.com/carey. And as you think about healthcare for next year for your team, whether it's a small team or a large team, have you yet checked out Remodel Health? Listeners of this podcast alone, have saved \$2.1 million on healthcare premiums. That's not spent, that's money saved on healthcare premiums, and that's just from listeners of this podcast. So you got to check it out because your employees can actually get better health benefits probably for less money. And wouldn't that be a great way to head into 2022? So Remodel Health's exclusive health benefits analysis provides you with custom comprehensive evaluation of your organization, and you can see what they can save you. So go to remodelhealth.com/analysis to get your health benefits analysis and use the code CAREY50 for 50% off by going to remodelhealth.com/analysis.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, you can see this as a really fun interview. Chris and I have a blast actually, so let's get right to it. Chris, I've been excited for this for a long time. Welcome to the podcast.

Chris McChesney:

Thanks Carey. I'm delighted to be on.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. So as I shared with you, as we were getting started, my company has been in the Four Disciplines of Execution now for about a year and a half, 18 months. We started at the beginning of 2020. We love it. I would say mostly because of CEO and the founder of the company, we'd give it a B in implementation. We're trying to get it right. I'm working on it. So can you give us the overview? Because I think most leaders have heard of the Four Disciplines of Execution, but it's like a term out there and you do such a great job explaining it because we've watched all your videos. Can you give us the overview of what the 4DX is?

Chris McChesney:

Absolutely. And Carey feel free to chime in as well, but I'll be as succinct as possible just to get this up front up. First thing, I think to know, if you're new to this, you could hear the title Four Disciplines of Execution and think that this is a way to run your whole operation. And that's really not the intent. The intent of the Four Disciplines of Execution is to execute on the next breakthrough. That's in addition to what you have to do every day to maintain your operation.

Chris McChesney:

And that's, I think, that's a really important line in the sand to draw that this is not a shotgun for executing the sum totality of everything you have to do. This is a rifle for that next critical breakthrough. That's always competing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

For your growth.

Chris McChesney:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Like, how are you going to turn your corner.

Chris McChesney:

Right. Whatever it is, the new market, the new strategic pivot. But there's almost always leaders have this sort of dual responsibility where, "I have to maintain whatever operation I've got stewardship for. But there always is the next thing I'm trying to do." And those two things they don't get along at all.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You are right.

Chris McChesney:

And so the disciplines are like, "How do you get that next thing done right in the face of that 100 mile an hour. We call it the whirlwind of maintaining everything else. So that's what it is. And so very quickly. Okay, so with that context in mind, I can go quicker now. So the first discipline is focused on the wildly important, and that's just getting clear about the: what the next thing is, what is it? And not just in terms of, narrowing a focus, but also getting very clear on the starting line, the finish line and the deadline. And for a single team, this could be quite simple. For an organization that's made up of multiple teams, it really is an exercise in determining where we're going to place disproportionate energy.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay.

Chris McChesney:

And it's like a currency. And so the organization may have multiple things it needs to address in the way of breakthroughs, but really at the frontline where work gets done, what we've learned is you can only give people one of these things in addition to their day job. And so discipline one, is all about figuring out all right, what's going to get deliberate disproportionate energy? Discipline two, now gets into the work itself. So once a team, once a group has identified that critical target, the second discipline, which is the title of it is Act on the Lead Measures. What this is, is a way of identifying leverage.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right.

Chris McChesney:

And how do we get traction on an objective that's been out of reach or in movable up to this point? And it's all about the team defining what is both influenceable, something we can get our hands on, and what is predictive of outcome achievement. And this is over the years we've learned, this is a great, almost sneaky way of sucking people into the problem.

Chris McChesney:

It's a little bit like solving a riddle. And what we've learned is, "Don't, even if you're sure the answer boss, like don't give in. Let them come to you. Let them be part of the solution, and you'll be surprised what will happen." And that's the so the second discipline, the first discipline is target identification. The second discipline is okay, what are the lead measures? So the first discipline might identify weight loss on an individual level. The second discipline might identify how many calories we're going to burn, or how much X you know, or how many calories we're going to reduce in terms of intake or something like that. So sort of discipline one and two sort of create a bet or a hypothesis, and then discipline three, because the nature of these always revolves around human behavior. It's really interesting. The breakthrough is rarely something that doesn't require a change in human behavior.

Chris McChesney:

It if didn't, they'd have done it already, right? And so the third discipline is keep a compelling scoreboard on until this hypothesis, this game in a sense goes live, and I can see it in real time. The day job will dominate the breakthrough or what we term the wildly important goal and discipline one. And so being able to see it in, real time, both the lead and the lag measures is the critical third discipline. It sort of encapsulates it. And then the fourth discipline is called create a cadence of accountability. And this is a discipline every week, right? In the middle of that whirlwind of distractions, each member of the team committing to do something that week that will ensure we're going to really do the lead measures this week. Right? Okay. So if we're back to diet and exercise, and I know my lead measure is five miles of running a week, and I know it's going to rain next week and I hate running in the rain.

Chris McChesney:

My commitment is all right, I'm buying the treadmill. I'm signing up for the gym membership. I got to do something so that no matter what I make good on those lead measures. Otherwise, I don't know if I don't run the play, I don't know if I've got a good play, and that's the...So the fourth discipline in a sense is force against leverage. If the second discipline is defining the leverage, the fourth discipline is putting the energy against the leveraged. So that, that simple little formula can be thought of as a treatment for once I've identified that thing that's got to happen. And it's going to require people's buy-in and commitment and energy, or it's probably not worth doing. And that's, I think that's where we fit in the sort of performance ecosystem.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. So that's a really good overview we're going to spend about an hour unpacking which is really worth unpacking.

Chris McChesney:

Carey, I love that you're into this. It makes it so much better, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Total nerd on this one, because I've read strategic planning for over 25 years and you know, normally it's like, "Well, here are the 17 objectives for 2022 that we want to nail." And you look at the end of the year and maybe you nailed three of them. And some of them are fuzzy. It's like, "Be better" is a goal. Not quite, we'd never do be better. I mean, like, "Grow the church."

Chris McChesney:

It's close to that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's close, it's like, "Try harder," right? Or whatever, or, "Improve the quality of," and what was really convicting about this is it's so specific. So for a wildly important goal, the formula, and you've got a brand new, like second edition. So I've thumbed through it. I've read the first one numerous times, I'm thumbing through it. We'll talk about some of the new sectors.

Chris McChesney:

It is literally because we miscommunicated some things in the first edition. And we own that. Like, we were clear on what we meant, but when the 7,000th person tells you what they heard and it's different then you got to own it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right. But did the framework change at all or it's still those four things?

Chris McChesney:

No.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay.

Chris McChesney:

So there were some unintended impressions we left people with that we corrected. And we didn't really do a good job of differentiating between how a leader of a frontline team runs the methodology versus how a leader of leaders runs the methodology, and they are different. And I would bet every penny I have that you've already hit some of these bumps, if you're into the process. I'll bet everything I own that, that some of those nuances are going to be relevant for you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay, great. Well, we're going to get there. I want to get there, but I want to back it up for those who are kind of new to this. So the formula is X to Y by when, on a, and that's become part of our vocabulary. So I'll give you an example. When we got together, we all flew down to San Diego. And I just want to say to leaders too, and I'm so glad I didn't have this in my questions, but you reminded me. And this took so much restraint for me. Cause we're a small company, right? I led a large church. Then I moved into this small company, big audience, but a small company. There's eight of us now. I think there were six of us, five of us back then.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And long story short, it takes everything as a CEO, founder mentality, Enneagram 8, for me to shut up and let the team come up with the ideas. But that is so critical because it's so typical for CEOs to come in or lead pastors to come in. And we're like, "Okay guys, here's what we're going to accomplish this year. 1, 2, 3, 4. Let's go. And then why aren't you excited about it?" Why is it important to let the team lead? And then how does that happen if perhaps your boss is a control freak? If you're a bit of a control freak, how does that happen?

Chris McChesney:

Let's go there. So we, we have a chapter in the second edition that went straight at this question and what we found, we are not advocates of rule by democracy.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay.

Chris McChesney:

All right. And we believe that the leader will have to make the final call on strategic direction. You own that, but that doesn't mean that you're a know-it-all. And so what we tell leaders, so I'm going to do this. Can we do this in two parts here? Because I love this question. All right. Part one is, as a leader, you might have a hypothesis of what you think the critical next objective, the breakthrough is. The next thing you have a belief as a leader where you want to go. The tendency is then try and convince the organization of the merit of your vision. And we're going to tell you, "That's the mistake, it's not having a vision."

Chris McChesney:

It's burning all of your energy trying to convince them. And what we tell leaders to do is instead be transparent and say, "Look, I'm not going to try and manipulate you into my answer. And I'm not going to burn all my energy trying to convince you that I'm right. Here's my rationale. But what I want to do now is I want to listen. And by the way, I may ignore what you tell me, but I am going to be open. I'm going to hear you for first. Let's have clarifying questions. What is it about what I said or what I'm thinking that you don't get, that's unclear?" And because you think it's so clear, and then they start asking clarifying questions and you're like, "No, no, no. That's a percentage by the end of the year. That's not a rolling percentage." Or, "Oh no, that's growth over this category, but oh, I see why that would be confusing."

Chris McChesney:

So you spend a lot of time on clarifying questions and then feedback like, and be open as a leader around, "Hey, here's what I'm, even though I'm advocating this a little bit, I'm concerned about X, Y, and Z. And I've got my doubts about this." And then the team, and sometimes this is done as an individual. Sometimes this has done as a collective. So you might have in a larger organization, you might have two or three or four of you or a half a dozen of you that have come to a hypothesis. But now you've got to go from that small group of VPs out to a larger group of directors. And we're going to say, "Stop trying to advocate and just listen." And be clear about the fact that, "Hey, we're going to be really open. We're going to really listen. And then we are going to make a decision."

Chris McChesney:

Okay, so that's step one. And here's what we found that's crazy, people might argue against you. They might be really adamant that you're crazy. But if you honestly listen, they'll actually be okay if you choose something they don't agree with. What Stephen Covey used to say that, "The greatest need of the human soul is to be understood." Right? And it's not. So it's not about convincing them. And the problem isn't that they know you're the leader. They might be sitting there thinking, "Well, it's not what I would do but, God bless him, he listened. And he repeated that and he got it." And so, so step one is,

all right, leaders got to be leaders, but please don't do it in a vacuum. And if they do make a compelling argument, you may have to change, you may decide to change your mind.

Chris McChesney:

You may say, "You're right. It is a smaller category." Or, "You're right. It is, we're measuring this wrong." Or like, you may get converted during the listening process. So that's step one is really being open and, and, and being transparent. Step two now, once, and this works well within the construct of X to Y by when with target. So step two now that group of vice-presidents, or that next group of leaders, they own parts of the operation. See what you were talking about in step one was for the organization. But now when you pivot to step two, and you're talking about them, now you turn it to them. And you say, "Okay, in addition to your day job, in addition to everything that you've got to do, what's the one objective that would have the greatest impact on where we're going right now on this higher level objective?"

Chris McChesney:

And what we found, and I had a mentor that showed us this. And what we found was that people that were adamantly against the overarching strategic direction, two hours later were completely on board and what they could do to support a direction they hadn't, they didn't agree with. And I swear at hand, right? Carey, I had to see this happen multiple times before I understood the spirit was, "That's not what we would do. But you know what? As long as you're going there. And if you're asking for our help, here's what we'll give you." And then it's a question of pulling from them and letting them lead now, when it comes to their area, or as our mutual friend, Andy Stanley likes to say, "Stay in your lane," right? You let them pick, let them pick the objectives for their things. So, sorry it was a very long answer to a short question, but and please give me your thoughts on that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, I'd love to give you lots of thoughts on that, Chris. So first of all, it is like stereotypically, I would come in and I would have a direction and everybody would kind of buy in and we always had decent employee engagement. But you know, disengagement at work is a real issue. So we go to San Diego, we got this really nice Airbnb looking over the ocean. I've got them on the back deck. And I'm like, "I've read the book multiple times. I've watched the videos." It's like, "Carey, your job here is to shut up and facilitate." And so I did.

Chris McChesney:

Yeah man.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You know, we did a SWAT analysis, looked at our past year. And basically this company that I run now, Carey Nieuwhof Communications, 98% of our stuff is free and the 2% that's paid pays for everything, so that keeps us solvent.

Chris McChesney:

Yeah right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And, it allows me to pay the bills, et cetera. But I'm like, "Man, there's so much we could do," because we do a podcast, we do a blog, we could grow traffic.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And what was amazing on that first two days. So we usually do two day off sites on those first two days, Chris, this sounds like a testimonial, because I guess it is. I felt ownership of the company shift from me to them. And that was really powerful. It's not like they were bought in. I had an engaged workforce. They were excited to be employed. They weren't, they weren't like, you can't sit in the back row, there's no back row. There's five or six of us. Right. So it's small. And, but they were so dialed in with this. And what I did was I shut up and I just took all the ideas and whiteboarded them for about a day. It's like, "well, we could focus on for a wildly important goal. We could grow the podcast. We could do this. We could do that. We could do the email list or whatever."

Carey Nieuwhof:

I had two goals in my mind, because as a leader, you can't not have a goal in your mind. I mean, I don't know how you end up on the senior team and not have an opinion.

Chris McChesney:

I agree.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right. So I had an opinion, but I sat on it and I sat on it overnight. We went out for dinner, then we went back at it and about noon day two. I just kept saying, "Okay, so which ones do you think are most important?" And they went back and forth. They landed on the exact same two goals. We picked two.

Chris McChesney:

Wow.

Carey Nieuwhof:

They picked the same two I would have picked, in the order I would have picked them. And I thought, "Wow!" This is now I agree, I'd probably steal a veto power. It's my company. They're going to dig us into the ditch and I can see it, but that was so powerful.

Chris McChesney:

What a great place to land.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I know.

Chris McChesney:

Was it worth the time to have that outcome? Holy cow, whatever it feels. It feels like it may not feel productive in the moment, but wow. In hindsight, how productive?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. So we picked email list growth, which seems like a bit of a sleeper, but that really helped. We grew the email from 50,000 to over 80,000.

Chris McChesney:

I really like, it's so funny my little team, just pick that one too.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I really.

Chris McChesney:

That's so funny. You just said that, that one just rose to the surface for us. Interesting.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, it is a lead indicator for the entire business and course sales. And, we let them pick the metric X to Y by when, but that would be, I think we're at 53,000 people on my email list to 80,000 by December 31st, 2020. Now a pandemic got in there and the whole deal, but we still hit it. We still hit it.

Chris McChesney:

But do you know what? Let's press pause on that for a second, Carey, because what he just said folks was very interesting. "It sounded like a sleeper." But I'm going to hypothesize and you tell me if I'm right or wrong.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Chris McChesney:

The merits of this being the breakthrough with this being one of those critical, in addition to the day job business was it was a very specific, really something you could sink your teeth into that was, you could sort of own it and you had a lot of control over it. It was achievable and it had a nice ripple effect.

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:24:04]

Chris McChesney:

It would affect multiple aspects of what you were doing over time. And it was also the type of thing that would never feel urgent on a day to day basis. How am I doing so far?

Carey Nieuwhof:

No, you're exactly right, because it's like, "Oh, I see the list grew by a thousand, but I don't know how," or "I hope it grows," right? Hope is not a strategy.

Chris McChesney:

Any given day, everything feels more urgent than that thing, which in the end may ultimately be the difference maker.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, it gives you permission and this is true for all leaders, whether you're running a church, a restaurant, whatever, it gives you permission to correspond directly with the people that you serve. It's called permission marketing, right? That's what Seth Godin writes about and talks about. So suddenly you go from being some IP address in Atlanta, Chris, to being Chris McChesney at Gmail or whatever dot com, and I can have a conversation with you and we can chat. And that was really anybody who does anything on the internet would say that email list growth is really, really important. So we picked that one and then, you know what's interesting in round two because we did it again. We had to have a virtual retreat thanks to the pandemic and a closed border because it's a Canadian American team.

Chris McChesney:

Oh, right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Yeah. We couldn't fly to be together, but we did it virtually over a couple of days. They picked one I wouldn't have picked, but they convinced me. So for 2021, one of the goals it's core sales because that is the economic engine of our thing that allows us to do everything else. And we really believe in our courses and what we offer online, but it was systems. So we're a startup, we were rapidly growing. There was a bit of chaos and it's like systems? What systems? We don't really have any systems. So they flagged the need for clarity. So we're six, seven months into that now, and I got to tell you, it's been a game changer. It's been so good. But the key and this little diatribe at this point, we'll flip the mic back to you. But for leaders who are wondering, this gave the whole team ownership in a way that it never would have if I said, "Let's grow that email list." If I had just come in and by executive fiat or power persuasion, try to convince them of something. It was our goal, our collective effort, and everyone had to weigh in on it. And that's been huge. I wish I had seen this 15 years ago.

Chris McChesney:

Wow. That's awesome.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Any feedback on that?

Chris McChesney:

No, I love it. But what's interesting is that particular, the second WIG that you just identified there of enhancing your systems. That is not the type of thing that you arrive at in a casual conversation. That's the type of thing that comes out of some real introspection and say, "You know what? Until we get this right, our growth is limited." That's a really impressive type of goal to have the team itself define. They want to work on the system and not just in the system.

Carey Nieuwhof:

They're smart people, and if you follow Les McKeown, and I don't know if you know his work at all, but he says, "Predictable success is the tension between entrepreneurial zeal and systems that work."

Chris McChesney:

I've heard that, and that's very good.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Your biggest challenge ... And entrepreneurs don't like systems because it feels like you're-

Chris McChesney:

That's a great yin and yang kind of thing right there because those two things want to fight each other, but-

Carey Nieuwhof:

We had all the zeal in there and poor systems. And now we're having systems that allow us to serve people better and allow us to go to the next level. So, anyway, that's interesting. X to Y by when is one of the problems with goals that they are fuzzy, like improve customer service, or talk about X to Y by when.

Chris McChesney:

All right. So, I've got a story for you. Dear friend of mine. Dear friend of mine, CEO, 20 years. Okay? So he's had a little longer than a 20 year run, and he's really phasing the business now to a president, and he's going to be stepping out. And he showed me a list of his major breakthroughs over the 20 years. He said, "These were the things that I-" ... And he's very successful, like stock price, everything, brilliant run. I would not want to be the person that followed this person. Right? So he shows me this list and the list is divided into two columns and on one column are his misses and on one column are his makes. And he said, "I've just really looked over the years, and these are the things that I really invested in that didn't get through the wall." And he's showing them to me because it's a little bit like an execution scorecard. Okay? So I have to confess, I saw something. It was so blatant. And for once in my life, I kept my mouth shut because I didn't want to drop some trite -ism over the top of this man's 20 year amazing career. But Carey, all of the things on the left were concepts. And all the things on the right were targets.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Man.

Chris McChesney:

Do you see why I kept my mouth shut?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Because he missed all of the fuzzy stuff and hit all the targets.

Chris McChesney:

He were compelling, and I was around for something like that. He was good at talking about them, and he had zeal and they were compelling. But the language of execution, the syntax of execution is targets, X to Y by when. And they were either in X to Y by when format, or they were very close.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Chris McChesney:

And I don't know that there was an exception on either end of the list, and I didn't say anything. I couldn't. Even I have that much, I just knew. "Shut your mouth, Chris. Let's keep the friendship. Don't be the know-it-all for once in your life."

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's amazing. Now there are people listening who are like, "Chris, you don't understand. We're in the people business. Okay? We're in the making people feel good. I don't know that we could say raise the stock price or increase profitability. That's not our thing."

Chris McChesney:

Let's go there. Yeah. Let's go there. If I understand that the aspiration will always start conceptually.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Sure.

Chris McChesney:

Then the issue is where's the target within there? And that single target won't represent success on everything that's important to you conceptually in that area, but it can be a good surrogate. So if, for instance, in our people business and our very qualitative, not quantitative reality, what percentage of people come back? What percentage of people subscribe? What percentage of people recommend? What percentage of ... Where is the quantifiable indicator in there? We always use the John F. Kennedy example. Nobody questioned NASA in 1959 when their goal was lead the world in space exploration. And they would have told you it's very concrete and they had 15 metrics, but Kennedy, in a very intuitive way ... We stunk. The Soviets were beating us on every front. Kennedy, in a very intuitive way, said, "No. Man on the moon by the end of the decade. Return him safely home." This is important. That target didn't meet all the criteria of the 15 metrics under lead the world in space exploration. But it was a heck of a wildly important goal.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And everyone knew it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

1970 ish.

Chris McChesney:

You got it. Right? The normal organization would stop at lead the world in space exploration in the 15 metrics. You just would. And Kennedy didn't. He went to starting line, finish line, deadline, and a brutal accountable deadline. We couldn't get rockets off the launch pad. We're strapping astronauts to the tops of ICBMs shooting out over the Atlantic. You know what? Go watch them with those documentaries. Those capsules looked like a tin shed from your backyard, right? Those poor guys. You see them. You see the looks on their faces as they're climbing in these little capsules on top of intercontinental ballistic missiles. Great stuff. But game on.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I don't want to put you on the spot. It was in the first edition. I don't know whether it made the cut into the second, but the Opryland hotel. Do you remember that story where I think it was their customer satisfaction was low and they had to get it up to a higher benchmark, and it was a couple of really unlikely things? So again, fuzzy customer satisfaction. What is that?

Chris McChesney:

Yeah. That's really interesting that you bring that up because the Opryland was the first time we used a portion of the NASA story in the process. So one of the things they did at NASA is they asked the question, "What are the fewest battles necessary to win the war?" So if the war was, "Man on the moon by the end of the decade, return him safely home," there is this adage that was taught at West Point, and it's been around for a while. Actually, bits of it are in Art of War even. So it probably goes back a thousand years. But this question is, "What are the fewest battles necessary to win the war?" And if I'm a country fighting a war, I got limited resources. I have to win with the fewest number of battles. If I'm an enterprise, I have limited resources. And so the Opryland, which is an indoor city, if you've ever been there, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

We've been there. We did a team retreat there before we found the 4DX. It's massive.

Chris McChesney:

It's got its own power plant, its own police force, 14 restaurants. They spend a day answering that question. They had 20 potential battles. They got it down to problem resolution, arrival experience and food and beverage quality.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay.

Chris McChesney:

Right? And they had great arguments for it. And they said, "Look, we're going after top box scores. And we're expensive in the restaurants. And they can't really get off campus to eat anywhere but our restaurants. So they're a bit held hostage. If that food's not excellent, we can't overcome that. We have to win the battle of food quality." Like it's an indoor city and they're after food quality. And I'm like, "What about everybody getting lost?" They're like, "We can live with lost. You can't live with bad food." So after a day of watching this, and they wanted to improve their perfect scores from a 42 to a 55. They had never been higher than a 44 and nine months later, they're at a 61. But they owned arrival experience, problem resolution and food and beverage quality. And they had 70 different teams, all picking one thing at their level that would line up to one of those three battles.

Chris McChesney:

So this was one of them. Reducing luggage delivery from 106 minutes down to 20 minutes. It was taking them 106 minutes to get your bags to your room. And that team volunteered. That team said, "Look, if we can't get the bags there in 20 minutes, you guys are not going to win on arrival experience." Right? People get this metaphor because they know how hotels work. We came back nine months later, they weren't at 20, they were at 12 minutes. And we started to realize we're now the students looking at

them going, "All right, this whirlwind plus one thing. That can work." We didn't know what we had, I don't think, until we saw what Opryland did.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. I want to drill down on that because that's ... It's like okay, our guests ... It's all subjective. You could say customer satisfaction score, net promoter score, whatever their measurement was. The top box number. It's like hey, it goes from a 42 to a 61. But what is that? It's like, "I don't like the color of the carpet. I don't like the smell of the air. I don't like the person who greeted me. Or I had a bad night's sleep and therefore I give you a bad score." Right? There's so much subjective in there, but they narrowed it down. And then customer experience goes from, and this is what I remembered from the book, 120 minutes to get your bags to 12. Now what's really fascinating about that is that is one of the things that move the needle. And that gets us into lead measures versus lag measures. So if they don't know what a lead measure is, we can control theoretically when the bags got there. Do you remember offhand, and I'm putting you on the spot, how did they boost the score? How did they reduce the baggage delivery time?

Chris McChesney:

The luggage delivery time is still a lag measure. This is one of the things people miss in the first book.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's a lag. It's not a lead.

Chris McChesney:

Yeah. So you have to break the lags down several times until you have a lag measure, which is synonymous with wildly important goal.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right.

Chris McChesney:

You have to get the wildly important goal down at the team level. That's in the first book, but boy, we hit that with a sledgehammer in the second book. Don't go looking for lead measures off of organizational WIGs. Break the org WIGs down to the team level. So let's go into what were the lead measures then.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah let's break this apart.

Chris McChesney:

Okay. So one of the things they said was "All right, let's escort 50% of the guests to the room. We're going anyways." Right? "We got to walk those bags anyways. Let's walk. Let's see if we can walk 50% of the guests to the room." So the ambiguity ... Watch the ambiguity or the concrete. We'll watch the ambiguity fall, watch the concreteness go up. Guest satisfaction. That could be anything like you said. Arrival experience. That could kind of be anything. Luggage delivery. That's a hard objective. But now we're down to a lead measure, which is, "Okay. We had 20 guests online right now. There're 10

bellboys. We can roll right now because if we can arrive ... The bags arrive with them, the way we're tracking, that's zero." That's a zero luggage delivery time. It arrived with the guests. And then they would have, because this is a site that group tours would hit, so there'd be these buses of retired folks that would hit the lobby. And the next thing you know, you have 150 very slow moving guests that just hit the Magnolia lobby. And this mountain of luggage that came off the Greyhound. And they were like, "Okay, when that stuff hits, we got to get 90% of those bags identified. We spend half our time looking for lost bags."

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's why it was 120 minutes. They couldn't find the bag.

Chris McChesney:

Right. But these lead measures did not come from the six sigma team. It didn't come from the manager with 30 years of experience. It came ... Deming said, "People that are within 12 feet of the work are the ones that understand cause and effect relationships." This came from that team. They would run those for a while, and then after a month or two, they would say, "That's habit now. Let's go after something else." And so they would load up on a different lead measure because the bag identification ... We hit six weeks in a row without missing. We own that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Chris McChesney:

Everybody's in the pattern. So some of these, you retire some of these behaviors into the whirlwind and it becomes part of the work culture. Now you use that additional lead measure energy to go after the next thing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That is so good.

Chris McChesney:

Do you know ... It's interesting that you're asking this, Carey. Do you know that Marriott saw the video case study of Opryland, and it was baggage delivery that one over Grissen. And he had a problem at the Marriott Marquis and it was all up and down, the Time Square Marriott Marquis in New York City. And since then, they have run this for 14 years in a row.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Chris McChesney:

And Marriott ended up buying Opryland. We like to say we had a hand in it. We probably had nothing to do with it, but Opryland's results ... Marriott became the best user of four disciplines in the world arguably, and it was partly because of that one example you just asked me about.

Carey Nieuwhof:

No, it really stuck out to me because it was guest experience. I would have thought quality of the linens. I would have thought are there enough towels in the room, but bag delivery? It was just ... And I think leaders sit on problems. You're right. Particularly senior leaders. And we think in generalities, or we really don't know, but lead measures, I guess you could say, if I'm hearing you right, are a series of experimentation, like what will work.

Chris McChesney:

Yes they are. And by the way, Carey, if they're not, where's your engagement going to go? How fun is it to work out a riddle where you know the answer? We were years figuring this out. It was like we used to fight this idea that, "Well, what if we don't know the lead measure? Well, what if we're wrong?" And then one day we woke up and we were like, "Wait a minute. That's why it's fun." We watched people's engagement go through the roof. And by the way, you brought up this engagement before. The best thing we found on engagement was done in the 1960s by a guy named Frederick Herzberg. If you Google that name, some people know this from their master's degree, he pops up. But he was the guy that came up with sometimes it's called the hygiene theory. Sometimes it's called two cause, but basically here's what he says.

Chris McChesney:

And it's brilliant. And it's been forgotten. He says, "There's a dozen reasons people will quit you." In other words, there's a dozen things that will kill employee satisfaction. But, "Employee engagement is not the same as employee satisfaction. Satisfaction is how happy you are at work. Engagement is are you into the work? And they're not the same." And he says, "There's only two things that drive engagement. Am I making progress, number one, and number two, does it matter?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, wow.

Chris McChesney:

So now the baggage team, their job is still a pain in the neck. They've still got to get up at the break of dawn and work with people they're not ... Like, whatever. Right? And they don't like their benefits package, and there's twenty other things they might complain about on the satisfaction side. But on the engagement side, all of a sudden they were winning at something that was getting a lot of attention.

Chris McChesney:

And it wasn't the boss that was winning. They were winning. They were kicking the butt out of this task, and it was them. So they were making progress and arrival experience was improving. It mattered. So here's how we translate this to a leader. We think this is a profound leadership objective.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Sure.

Chris McChesney:

If I'm a leader, do the people who work for me, in some area, feel like they are winning and it matters on something? Eighty percent can be day job. Eighty percent can be a pain in the neck, but please give me one thing that I can win at that really matters.

Carey Nieuwhof:

How do you show them it matters?

Chris McChesney:

Oh, will you do all my interviews, Carey? Can we just ... Can I just have you be my surrogate? Could you be my surrogate interviewer? And maybe that's why you're watching this. He's really a good interviewer if you haven't caught it. All right. So here it is Carey. We asked this. So sometimes we want to take something. We want to flower it up and we want to tie it to some social justice thing or some save the world thing. No, what we learned is don't worry about flowering up the name of the goal. The first indicator that something matters is that my boss cares about it. They read you like a book. Your people read you. You might say, "This is so important to me." They're like, "No, it's not." A lot of people know intuitively what they can ignore that I say. He's never going to follow up on that. We don't need to do that. Like, I don't know how they know that, but they do.

Carey Nieuwhof:

They do. They can smell it a mile away.

Chris McChesney:

But the first level of if something is important, "Is anyone paying attention? Is there a spotlight on it? Does it matter? How do we treat it?" Regardless of what it is. What we tell people is it's not how you launch the four disciplines, it's how you play them. If it really matters to you. Great. Can I give you a great book on this one?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Please. Yeah.

Chris McChesney:

Lencioni's Three Signs of a Miserable Job is money.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, wow. I think that's one of his. He's been a frequent guest. I don't think I've read that one. Wow.

Chris McChesney:

He told me it's one of his favorite and it's his least well-read. He thinks it's because nobody wants to take that cover to work.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Three Signs of a Miserable Job. I've got a book for you, Chris. Here you go, boss.

Chris McChesney:

When we read it, Carey, we saw ... We understood for the first time the correlation between four disciplines and a jump in morale and engagement. Lencioni is the real thing. He is brilliant, intuitive when it comes to leadership and performance. I think he's one of the best minds in the world. Because I

asked him "How did you get here? Did you read Hertzberg's stuff?" He's like, "No, it came to me in an airport." I was like, "I really hate you."

Carey Nieuwhof:

And his dad had a bad manager. You know that story, right?

Chris McChesney:

Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

"If my dad had had a better manager, he would have been a better dad." That is life's motivation right there. That's money. Oh, that's good to know. Okay. Three Signs of a Miserable Job. I'm ordering it. We'll link to it in the show notes.

Chris McChesney:

The human side of ... He basically ... You know how his stories are all in parables?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh yeah.

Chris McChesney:

It's a retired CEO who buys a pizza parlor that's the worst. And the CEO, this bored, retired CEO, wants to see if he can turn the pizza parlor around. So he gamifies and quantifies each role. He basically does four disciplines without knowing it to each of the roles at the pizza parlor. I was stunned when I read it and we finally got to talk about it, but anyways, yeah, I'm a huge fan.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Is that conversation public or it was just like off the grid you talked to Pat about it?

Chris McChesney:

No, we were both at Global Leadership Summit the same year.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, great, great, great.

Chris McChesney:

I'm the first speaker on day two. He's the last speaker on day one. And they all know I'm a groupie for him. So they bring me in. He's got to go on in front of 150,000 people in 10 minutes and he wants to talk and I'm like, "No, don't talk to me." He's like, "Oh, that's okay. I'll be fine." And he's chatting it up. And I'm hemorrhaging because I'm looking at the clock and I'm like, "Listen, you're on in three minutes. You're killing me right now." But this is the ... And I saw him again ... But this is the conversation. Oh, and then Carey, then he goes on stage. My wife's with me because Global Leadership Summit is a big deal.

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:48:04]

Chris McChesney:

And she looks at me with the kindest eyes, and she says, "Chris, he's really good." I looked at her and I'm like, "Honey, I don't even want to be that good."

Carey Nieuwhof:

I've had to follow Pat, we did this event together and he is that way in the green room. And he'll just talk and talk and talk and so engaged and so interested in you. And then it's like, he's on and then I got to follow him, and I'm like, "Oh, well."

Chris McChesney:

You've had to follow Patrick Lencioni? That is a unique experience.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's a toughie. He is brilliant. And he's become a friend.

Chris McChesney:

I'm a huge fan.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'm really grateful for him. He's the best. Pat, if you're listening, you know we love you, right? You know that. And he just sold another copy.

Chris McChesney:

I know, I've been trying to sell that book for him.

Carey Nieuwhof:

The Three Signs of a Miserable Job. How did I not know? I thought I had the whole...

Chris McChesney:

He's actually thinking of renaming it. And I don't know if he's done this yet, but he's thinking of republishing it under a different title because he thinks the title killed the book. Something about The Hidden Ingredient in Engagement or something like that. But I need to go and find out if it's come out under a different title. If you have trouble finding it, do Engagement and Lencioni and try that. But I'll bet it's still showing up Three Signs of a Miserable Job.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'll tell you what, we know his team well, we're going to find out, we will link to it in the show notes. And, Pat, we'll get some copies into people's hands. So, let's spend a little more time on lead versus lag because I felt like when I read the 4DX, 4 Disciplines of Execution, I'm like, "Yeah, that's a leaders thing." So in church world, it was attendance and giving and volunteers and new guests and that kind of thing. And again, by the time you get the numbers, you can't do a thing about you. In business, it's sales, number of customers, returning customers, new customers, right? Other metrics like that. And again, by the time that dashboard shows up on your device as a leader, it's too late. So those are lag measures. What are some other examples of lead measures? And you can pull from individual examples.

Chris McChesney:

Let's say this. We could publish a list. And we don't because lead measures are so situational. What works in one grocery store and what works at another grocery store, they're just going to be different. Remember what I said before, we don't want to give people the answer. We want the team engaged in solving the riddle. Now there's two parts of a lead measure and if you just think about this, and you have to give your brain a second. Predictive and influenceable. And when you first hear those words, they sound the same, but they're not. Predictive means the leads will get me the lag, they predict the lag. Like weight loss, the couch will get me the weight, the calorie and the diet and exercise will get me the weight loss. Influenceable means I can get my hands on it.

Chris McChesney:

So, for instance, a lead measure is not the same thing as a predictive indicator. Think about this, rainfall is a wonderful predictive indicator of crop growth. It is not influenceable.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right. You can't really control rainfall.

Chris McChesney:

Right. So what we tell leaders to do is don't look at your existing data set and try and figure out all the lead-lag relationships. They're all over the place. Cause and effect is going every which way, you'll just hurt yourself. What we say is first, pick the thing you're going to go for, pick the breakthrough, break it down to the team level, more pull than push. And then when it's at the team level, just on the lag, what is directly predictive of that lag measure that we could influence? If you just stay there. So, for instance, if we wanted to get new accounts on a sales team and we knew that first appointments were predictive of new accounts, right?

Chris McChesney:

But I got ask another question. Does the team know how to get first appointments? Because maybe one of the players, maybe the hot shot on the team is great at getting first appointments and the other 12 are going, "Look, if we knew how to get first appointments like Julie did, we wouldn't be sitting here listening to you. We'd be out getting first appointments." So yes, first appointments are predictive, but if the team doesn't think they can influence it, they disengage. Or go to the other side, Carey, and go on cold calls. "Hey, we can all influence cold calls, get the phone book out, start calling." Okay. Really influenceable, controllable, even. But I called all day long and I didn't get a new account. It wasn't predictive. So you can be influenceable and not predictive, or you can be predictive for not influenceable.

Chris McChesney:

And a winnable game is where those two things overlap and you go, "You know what? We have a lot of happy clients. And when we actually ask, they will give us referrals." And those referrals actually translate into new accounts at about a one to five ratio, like that dog will hunt, right? But it's thinking both predictive and influenceable, but down at the team level. What we're trying to do in second edition is get high level executives off of that topic. That is not the executive game. Your game is to deconstruct your breakthrough down to the three or seven or 27 team WIGs that are going to roll up, and then get into lead measured thinking when you're down at the team level.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's a really good idea, that whole idea of the people who can... I forget how you said it, they're 12 feet from solving the problem. Like those are the people who know.

Chris McChesney:

Demings said, "The rest of us just think we know." Those people actually define cause and effect. And sometimes you can't just ask them, you have to give them examples. You almost, "Here's what I'm thinking.", "I see why you said that, boss, but you want to know what it really is?" Or, "You want to know what we really think would move it?" You're pulling people into this breakthrough.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And that's why it's so critical, it's not top down. You've got to have the whole team engaged, everybody in. Okay. So let's talk about scoreboards because scoreboards was interesting. Again, normally our scoreboards or dashboards depending on what you want to call them or the PNL or the whatever you're looking at. They're all lag measures. It already happened. It's not influenceable. It's history. It's finished. You can't do anything except, "Well, we'll try harder next year." So with the scoreboard, how does that show up?

Chris McChesney:

What we've had to do is actually rely a little bit on a sports metaphor. And we've sort of divided all organizational data into two categories, players' data and coaches' data. So we're right in the middle of the NBA- and by the way, did Toronto get the first? Anyway, sorry, we're not going to go down that road.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'm going to plead the fifth, because I don't follow sports.

Chris McChesney:

I have Attention Deficit Disorder. Let me stay on point. Coaches' data is like the data they show a coach at an athletic event. "Here's how many rebounds we got in the first half, here's how many points we're getting off the bench, here's our assist to turnover ratio." That coach looks at that and goes, "Okay, we're going to go with a different lineup in the second half, and we're going to do this." You need that stuff to make business decisions, and it always shows up in the form of a spreadsheet. Most data shows up in spreadsheets, that's how we know. Players' data is exactly like what's actually in the stadium, hits and runs. Hits are the lead measure runs are the lag measure. Shots on goals. You want to teach somebody football.

Chris McChesney:

The first thing they have to understand, they'll be bored to death if you don't teach them down and distance. Getting first downs is a lead measure for points. The score doesn't change very often in football that could get boring. So I tell my daughter, "Okay, how many tries do they have left? Okay, they've got two tries left, and then they have to punt. You with me? They got to get to that yellow line." That's how you engage people in the game. So the scoreboard needs to be separate, the players' data is separate from the coaches' data. And I can see the relationship between lead and lag and in real time I know, winning or losing. If you get those things right, and then highly visible.

Chris McChesney:

So if you like, Carey, we do have an app for this. You can't buy the app directly on the app store because it's kind of an organizational solution, but if you go on any of the app stores there's an email, and if you just send an email to that queue in the app store, there's a person that'll call you and help hook you up on it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's awesome.

Chris McChesney:

It's a little bit bulky to just put out there for the masses so we put a human being in the process. The app over the last couple of years has become a very popular way to see lead-lag relationships. It's very valuable real estate on a phone.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, you know what, we're going to go for that because we designed our own scoreboards based on that. We can link or something like that in the show notes? That'll be in the show notes to this episode. This is going to be super, super valuable. There's also lots of great videos that Chris has done and others have done that are the whole thing in a few minutes, which we have used as a team as well. I'll give you an example, you know what we did for X to Y by when on email list growth, we prorated it over 12 months and if we're going to hit 80,000 and we start at 54,000, by March we needed to be at 58,000. And then it's either green, yellow, red.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And then for lead measures, sometimes you stumble on them by accident. What we discovered when the pandemic hit, our biggest burst happened when we did this free course. It's like, "How can we serve leaders?" So we ran 14,000 people through a How to Lead Through Crisis course. We thought a thousand people would take it and we didn't charge a penny for it. And it was just, "We'll take your email." And all of a sudden, our list started to grow and we're like, "Oh, okay." Now we're learning this along the way, and then we would do some other freebies along the way, and that helped us hit our goal at the end of the year. I think we came like 500 emails short, but we hit it January 2nd of 2021. But that's what you're talking about, right?

Chris McChesney:

Yeah. Carey, you said it earlier, when you said lead measures... I can't remember exactly how you said it, but like a little innovation engine, a little innovation experiment.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. And we tried stuff that didn't work. And then we tried stuff and it did work. And then we're like, "Well, let's do that again. And then let's try something different."

Chris McChesney:

Press pause right there. You just explained the relationship between execution and strategy. Because you close the loop. You don't know if a strategy is good if you can't execute on it. So, when you found out that that works, your strategy just got better. Every time you have an execution win, you learn a

little bit, and an execution loss, you learn a little bit, and your strategy starts to evolve. Hey, great TED talk for you, if you're interested, Tim Harford, he's a British economist and it's the TED talk on trial and error.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We'll link to it.

Chris McChesney:

Oh, it's so good. He has this hypothesis that all breakthroughs, all significant solutions, are the by-product of trial and error.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Chris McChesney:

It's brilliant. That's all I'll say, but it's my all-time favorite TED talk.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I haven't seen it, I'm going to watch that. So, we bought books, we're watching TED talks, we're downloading apps. This is good. Super practical podcast episode, Chris. The nemesis for a lot of leaders, I've struggled in this area, is a cadence of accountability. It's easy to stand up there whiteboard, agree on goals, send everyone off to their corners, and then in December you look at how you didn't meet the goals and there was no accountability in between. So, we have done our weekly WIG meeting every Wednesday, very faithfully. And we do our 20 minute check-ins and we find out, walk us through a cadence of accountability.

Chris McChesney:

Golfers sometimes say, "You drive for show and putt for dough." You know what I mean? The drive is the showy thing, but you really make the money on the putt. This board of execution, you really make it work on discipline four. Figuring out the WIG and coming up with the lead measure and scoreboarding it. That's a kind of sexy and fun but what really makes the difference is, can you make commitments in that weekly meeting and then report on them? Think about how we started, we talked about the day job tends to kill the breakthrough because the day job is more inherently urgent and importance does not drive human behavior, urgency drives human behavior. And so, what we're doing with the weekly cadence is we're assigning activities that would normally not be urgent at all, but because I have to report on them next week, now that thing that wasn't urgent, now it's urgent, now I got to get it done. So we're not overcoming the urgency addiction, we're sort of just riding it out. An organization's ability to put energy against non-urgent activities really defines their ability to execute on strategy in the long haul.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's so good. You're right. And that, I mean, back to Covey, you're part of the Covey company, that goes right back to the urgent versus the important, so you actually make the important urgent.

Chris McChesney:

That's it. Habit three. We got there sort of serendipitously and when we arrived there, we said, "Well, we're just back to seven habits again." This is habit three and it's the time management matrix. Can we make the non-urgent important stuff feel urgent? And that's what these teams do. So many organizations, Carey, will say when I asked them, "How do you do in the execution arena?" There's this really common response where they'll say, "We are great at executing in a crisis." I bite my tongue. Because what happens in a crisis? The urgency went up. The strategy was as urgent as the day job in a crisis. But now that the pandemic's over and I don't feel the knife at my throat, I don't feel the gun on my temple, but we still have to execute on some things. Can we develop the discipline and discipline for it? Four Disciplines don't give you disciplines, they require, not a ton, just a little discipline. But you did it, Carey. You held that meeting and by you holding that meeting, that alone sends a message to the team that, "This is a big deal to Carey," because I guarantee every week there's something that wants to push that meeting off.

Carey Nieuwhof:

100%. The other thing, if I read this right, I have to show up as the senior leader and I have to contribute. I am also accountable, is that right?

Chris McChesney:

That's it, man. You got to model this thing. It's not how you launch it, it's how you play it. And if my boss is hitting commitments... So, the first Marriott hotel to go, I mentioned, was the Marriott Marquis in New York City. Mike Stangl is the general manager at the time. Ironically, he now manages all the Gaylord properties. But at the time he is managing the Marriott Marquis the most profitable Marriott in the world. He gets a visit from Bill Marriott every month, he never knows when it's going to happen. And he lives at the Marquis.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Chris McChesney:

It's 2008, I think? Whenever the Beijing Olympics were happening.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Sounds about right.

Chris McChesney:

He gets to attend the Beijing Olympics. And then to everyone's shock, he joins the executive WIG session at the Marriott Marquis on Monday morning from Beijing. And they all know it's 3:00 AM his time.

Chris McChesney:

That message that, "It doesn't feel as urgent as the day job, but Stangl just called in from China to be on this meeting at 3:00 AM his time on vacation from Beijing." It's no surprise that the Marriott Marquis that year had the highest profitability, the highest top line revenue, the highest guest satisfaction and the highest event satisfaction in the 20 year history of the Marquis.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Chris McChesney:

What we say about Four Disciplines is that the disciplines are very dangerous in the hands of a good leader. If you're a halfway leader it's probably not going to do much. But at the hands of a good leader, these are really impactful. And at that point Marriott knew, "We got lightning here if we can get leaders to run this like Stangl and some of our others." And they have. They have improved their guest satisfaction every single year for 12 years. Not the franchise side, this is the manage side.

Carey Nieuwhof:

To encourage leaders in real world terms, having sat in the preacher chair for 20 years, it's writing that really good sermon, but hoping that maybe some people will show up or more people will show up, but not knowing and not knowing how to drive that other than I did a really good job on my sermon, but now you have fewer people in the room. Or a restaurant having a really great chef, but nobody really comes and you haven't sold all your tables out. It's that problem of growth and profitability and accomplishing a mission that this solves. We have the privilege of serving a lot of leaders in this company, but we would love to help more. And by growing our email list and making sure the courses reach the people that they're intended to reach, we're going to do it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

One of the weird goals that we picked up this year for systems, I got this off Google and we came up with this together, is that we want our staff to spend 20% of their time working on it, not in it.

Chris McChesney:

God, that's good.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, that means one out of five days, they are able to tackle problems and study a new field and try and experiment as opposed to, "Just get this podcast out for Tuesday." Or, "Hey, that sales page goes live on Friday." They're working on it, not in it. And so what we've done for our dashboard is we now have monthly goals and you have to say how many hours did you spend last week working on it, not in it?

Chris McChesney:

Beautiful. Think of it like a muscle. We're so urgency addicted. Have you ever been working on the most important project of the year, only it's not urgent and you're losing your mind, you're having to fight with yourself to do the thing that you know is the most important thing you're going to do. And you're like, "What's wrong with me?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

Uh-huh (affirmative). A hundred percent.

Chris McChesney:

That is the urgency addiction. And by you saying, "20% I need you out of the box." That there's going to be a cognitive dissonance at first and withdrawal symptoms. But wow, if you can sustain that, what an enormous competitive advantage for your team, Carey, I love that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's where the innovation is going to come from. That's where the breakthroughs are going to come from. And then when that becomes part of the system, then amazing things can start to happen. So, what's new in the book? You talked about leaders of leaders, there's a whole section, five chapters on that. That is fresh. What is the big idea there, Chris?

Chris McChesney:

We sort of touched on it with the Opryland. It's the difference between, am I the general manager or one of the senior vice presidents, and I'm trying to eat an elephant of guest satisfaction across an indoor city, and what I've got to do is I've got to tap into that currency. I really want this metaphor to stick, that each team can give you one result in addition to their day job. And that's a currency. And as a leader, "How am I going to spend that currency? I may have five different organizational objectives, but 25 teams, and five teams over here, and eight teams over here, and three teams... Can I direct that execution capacity?" And what we've learned in over 20 years is each team, no matter how intense their whirlwind is, they can give you one key result.

Chris McChesney:

The second section of the book is the thinking around, "How do I organize? Where do I spend that currency? How do I engage those frontline leaders? And then how do I support the process, so that the execution at the team level, all four disciplines, really come alive at the team level?" Differentiating those two things is the main objective. I think we just got clearer on points to where people got hung up. I would say also more on sustainability in this version. And we had another decade to watch leaders that were really good at this. We're really the observers. You watch Coleen Wegman, who's the new CEO of Wegmans Grocery, a few years ago they were the number two most respected company in America behind Amazon and the number two best place to work in America behind Google, and they're a regional grocery store. We get to watch people use this methodology that are on a whole different level. And so we've tried to convey like, "What do they do?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

This may have changed from first edition to second. And again, I thumbed through the second edition. I just got it. Now it's signed by you, so I'm super happy. Thanks to your team. But, Chris, do you think a small company can have more than one goal? Can a company have more than one goal? Does it have to be a departmental? I think in the original, you said one to three, three max. We picked two both years. any advice on that?

Chris McChesney:

So, what was said in the first book was one to two at the team level.

Carey Nieuwhof:

The overall level.

Chris McChesney:

No, the frontline level or the frontline level.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, the frontline level.

Chris McChesney:

Yeah. So if a person is a team of one and they own a function, that's one WIG and it can be different.

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:12:04]

Chris McChesney:

But what we changed from version one to version two was it's not one to two anymore. It's one. We just got burned so many times like nudging from one to two for the same team, for an organization. So don't think about because organizations are all different. Some organizations have thousands of teams, right? So you can't really go there.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Like Chick-fil-A. How does Chick-fil-A have one goal? Right.

Chris McChesney:

They got different teams and they got charities. They got all kinds of stuff. Right. But what it is is it's per work unit. Every team that has a function that they own can give you a WIG in addition to that day job. And then that's your currency and that's the capacitor. One WIG per team at the front line, recognizing that it could be a team of one.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And then what about the leader of leaders. So you're in my seat. Do I have a WIG? Does the overall organization have a WIG then? Or what is the new framework?

Chris McChesney:

Yeah, so you can do it a couple of ways. And we sort of outlined three scenarios. One scenario is you might have a multiunit operation where you're looking at this going, "I'm not going to dictate it at the team level. They have different challenges and the best person to make that call is that local leader. And so here's our values, here's what our mission. You pick your own WIGs." And we've got very successful models of that.

Chris McChesney:

Other models, you might have a couple, you might say, "Well, there's this transformative goal. And we need to shift our business over the next three years. And there's five teams that have to play a part in this transformational WIG. But we also have eight teams that have got to keep, that we've got to improve our new client acquisition strategy. So we're going to pull these," right? So I'm going to spend some of my currency on the transformational thing. I'm going to spend some of my current currency, but that currency is always one WIG per team at the same time. And it's just this really easy way for leaders to say, "All right, if I'm serious about execution and not just coming up with a sexy plan, I got to think in terms of the horsepower I'm going to get from the work teams and how to spend it."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Gotcha. Okay. The other question I wanted to ask you before we wrap up and you've hinted at it already, but we're in the post pandemic era, we're moving out of it. Is the 4DX, does that change how important it is or what role will it play in the new world that we're moving into? You've hinted at it already.

Chris McChesney:

Good question. So here's the one issue that's really relevant to the pandemic is ambiguity.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris McChesney:

So San Francisco earthquake, I think it was 1906. Ambiguity goes through the roof. In other words, the amount of uncertainty that a human being has to deal with. Everybody's homes are destroyed. Divorce rates skyrocket, and marriage rates skyrocket. And sociologists argue, "Did the disaster bring them together or did it move them apart?" And what they started to realize was, "Wait a minute, it was neither." It had nothing to do with bringing people together. There is a limit, a human limit for ambiguity. And there's a point where I cannot handle any more unanswered questions. So if my relationship was ambiguous, "Well, we're thinking about getting a divorce or we're thinking, we're in or we're out." But it just tipped everybody because they couldn't handle the ambiguity. So think about the amount of increase in ambiguity that everybody experienced over the last year.

Chris McChesney:

"What's going on with my parents? What's going on with my kids? What's going on with my job? What's going on in my industry?" We buried the needle on ambiguity. Now think about what happens when an organization introduces a new goal. And everybody's pivoting coming out of the pandemic. Everybody's moving. You're doing something for survival. You're doing something for opportunity. But the number of new goals that are getting launched right now is huge. And we're having to launch those goals with people who've had about all the ambiguity they can physically handle. So you got the situation right now. And what we're saying is "Okay, if you're into four disciplines, think of the disciplines as a way to lower the ambiguity on the new thing. Let's move out of concept. Let's move to target. Let's move from high level goal to team specific goal."

Chris McChesney:

"Let's move from lag measure to lead measure. And let's take it down to a weekly commitment. So you know what, you got your day job and you know it, and then bring us that commitment and we're good. Let's make, instead of having the new goal be more crazy." Remember that line in As Good as it Gets, "Go sell crazy someplace else. We're all stocked down here." So instead of that new goal feeling like more crazy, have the new goal feel like the one piece of sanity in an otherwise crazy life. Let that be the one thing that makes sense.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, that's so good. And you know what? I almost feel people's blood pressure going down because it has been chaos. And if you can bring clarity and what was that thing you said about that obscure research from the 1960s, the two signs of engagement?

Chris McChesney:

Am I making progress? Small wins. And it's important. If you can just do those two things and relate that to parenting Carey, I've got seven kids.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, wow.

Chris McChesney:

Yeah, yeah. All but one have been or are teenagers. So I got drama and they're all different. Like we could have cast The Breakfast Club. They're all, every one of them, we've got the jock and the nerd, we got them all. But they all had drama. And what my wife and I started to realize because of this work is that you can treat the drama all day long and there'll always be more drama.

Chris McChesney:

And instead we started to realize is what's the one thing in that kid's life that they can win at, that will be a big deal? And sometimes it took several attempts, but the moment they had any, each kid we've been successful. And it hasn't always been easy, but we can tell you with each child, I can tell you every kid's name and I can tell you what it is. But once they had it and for our 27 year old that didn't happen for Aaron until last year. And he started a painting business and it's really working and he's got it. Once they got it, the one thing that they're winning at, and it really mattered, it changed the way they responded to the other 80% of their lives.

Carey Nieuwhof:

There's a profound truth there, Chris.

Chris McChesney:

We really think there is, and we didn't figure it out. We were just observers, Carey. We were three, four years into this before we started to recognize, "Wait a minute, there's something happening on a human level other than the output performance." And it was Lencioni and it was Hertzberg and several others that really helped us understand, "As a leader, do my people have a one area," like I love your 20% where you give them a little space to do something meaningful that really matters. They can handle a lot of crap if they can have one thing that matters.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Hmm. Well, I said to them, "What is going to make you feel like you're not in the whirlwind? What is it going to be that makes you feel like you've got time to breathe, time to dream, time to imagine?" And then we pulled the 20% from Google, which according to legend is where they got Gmail from and a lot of their ideas. Because they're trying to give their employees margin to think. And I know that's when I do my best work. So, oh, this has been rich. Well, this has been such a great conversation, Chris.

Chris McChesney:

Yeah, for me too Carey. Thank you. If you've seen, not all my podcasts are not like this one. We got into it with Carey. That was great.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's great. I mean, it's a great system. I'm a believer in it and it's helped my company a lot. I wish I had discovered it a decade ago when it first came out and you've just been so good with this. So people want to learn more, where can they find you and The Four Disciplines of Execution?

Chris McChesney:

Oh, thank you. That's so nice. So, Chris McChesney. It's not Christopher, it's just Chris McChesney, 4DX. That's our little nomenclature. So it's a little long. ChrisMcChesney4DX.com. There's conferences, there's seminars, you want to introduce your organization to these ideas. That's what I spend most of my time doing. Or you can go to Franklin Covey. And if you know, Dr. Stephen Covey and Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, we joined with the Franklin Day Planner people 20 years ago. And that's the Franklin Covey company. And you go to their website and that's who I've worked with for 30 years.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's amazing. Well, Chris, I hope this won't be the last time, but thank you so, so much.

Chris McChesney:

No, let's do it again.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'm in. I'm down.

Chris McChesney:

Pick the topic. You got me, Carey. You pick the topic. I will come and chat with you. This is super fun.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, I hope you enjoyed that as much as I did, that was fun and so helpful. And I would highly recommend it. I have really, really enjoyed The Four Disciplines of Execution. And leading a remote company as I do, I'll tell you, it really keeps everyone on track and ironically, more deeply motivated. So make sure you check that out. We have everything in the show notes at CareyNieuwhof.com/episode444. And before we get to Ask Me Anything About Productivity, let me give you a little preview into the next episode. We've got Amy Porterfield, somebody I have been listening to for over a decade and somebody who's helped me a lot by getting things like my current company started just by listening to her podcast, seeing what she wrote and well, we talk about online marketing. Here's an excerpt.

Amy Porterfield:

One thing I learned more than anything is that any piece of content must educate as well as entertain and inspire. And this is something I didn't know before. I was all about, I could educate. I could tell you step-by-step exactly what to do. And in that case, we were talking about creating limiting thoughts and dealing with challenges and how to overcome. That was the content we were creating. And becoming a leader and being stronger in those areas. So I could create the steps to get there, but what I really missed and what Tony taught me and where he interjected is the funny stories and the anecdotes that he added and the case studies of other people. And what I realized is that a really good piece of content rounding it out has to have all those elements of the stories and the examples and bring it to life.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Amy and I also talk about what she learned working with Tony Robbins. You will enjoy that conversation. Also, if you subscribe, you'll get Max Lucado, Scott O'Neil from the Philadelphia 76ers, Erwin McManus, Charles Duhigg, Mike Todd, and a whole lot more coming up in the next few weeks and months. Really appreciate all of your ratings and reviews as well. If this episode helped you, please share it with your friends and shared on social. Maybe share it with your team.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And remember, we got show notes for you too. Thanks to our partners at Pro Media Fire. You can get them to do your social media for you and grow online and you will get 10% off for the first year if you go to promediafire.com/Carey. And if you want to start saving money on healthcare and give your employees better benefits, go to remodelhealth.com/analysis. And if you do that today and use the code, CAREY50, you'll get 50% off. Go to remodelhealth.com/analysis. So in the Ask Me Anything About Productivity section today, we are going to take Cameron's question. Here we go.

Cameron:

Hi Carey, here speaking to Cameron. I'm the Operations Manager at Father's House Church in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. I run the young adults ministry and I preach for the youth on Friday evenings. I believe I'm quite a productive person by nature. I truly try to understand the value of time and make the utmost best conscious decisions to value in time. We're attending as a church The Global Leadership Summit tomorrow and I'm really excited to hear you speak. Upon doing some research, I found this on your website and thought what a great opportunity.

Cameron:

My question is trying to do the balance within your time management. I'm recently married. I'm doing my MBA at the business school in Port Elizabeth, obviously preaching for the youth I mentioned on, and as my normal responsibilities at church. My question to you was a lesson learned in your life in terms of what was a negative aspect component of your work orientation with church? What goes one of the most negative and thieves, maybe is a nice word, of your productivity that you wish you had found out sooner? An example I could reference was not spending good energy after people that weren't closest to my call. I would rather send a message or a phone call to people closer to my call and a far reach to someone I maybe haven't seen in three to four months. That's one for me. What's yours?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Cameron, thanks for your question. My thief was this. When I go back to before I burned out, this is the thing that got me almost more than anything. It was twofold. My thief was seeing a blank space in my calendar as free time available to be given to other people whenever they asked for it. So I was a pastor at the time and you want to help people. You got a lot of need in a growing congregation. And if I had a blank space in my calendar, it would be like, "Well, I'm free Thursday or I'm free Tuesday," or whatever that happened to be. Now that created two problems. Number one, I didn't block time for the work that really needed to get done, the things that really move the mission. Because as you probably know, pastoral care doesn't move the mission. Random meetings don't move the mission.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What moves the mission? Excellent, clear vision, great communication, great preaching, an aligned team. Things like that really move the mission. And I wasn't blocking time for the work I needed to get done because my calendar was just open except for appointments. So if you said, "Hey, can you come by Tuesday," and I had nothing in my calendar, I'd be like, "Okay." So that was a productivity thief for me. Now what that meant, that was the first problem. I didn't block time for the work I needed to get done. The second problem is I actually let other people determine how I spent my time. And you know who suffers for that? It's your family, it's your mission. And even your health will pay the price. And that's what happened to me. Because I would fill up my days with appointments at other people's requests. And that could be people from the church, people from outside who wanted to figure out maybe how our church was growing or whatever.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And I would just say, yes. I would default to yes. And that meant I didn't get my most important work done, including the message, which happens to come around if you're involved in a church every seven days, sometimes more frequently than that. If you've got some other services or funerals or that kind of thing, and the people who always pay the price for that were my family, myself, and ultimately the mission. Because it becomes a cap on your growth, right? If you're not spending things, if you're not working on your business, if you're not working on the ministry of your church and only working in it, it makes it very, very difficult to grow. So how did I change that? Well, I moved to what I talk about in my new book *At Your Best*. And thank you to everybody who rallied around an incredible launch for *At Your Best*.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We are very excited with how the book is doing and getting it into thousands of leaders of hands, but it's built around the Thrive Calendar. So I came to call it the Thrive Calendar, thrive is all about living in a way today that will help you thrive tomorrow. And what I do, you've heard me if you're a regular listener to this podcast and otherwise you can go to atyourbesttoday.com and learn a little bit more about the system I'm going to explain to you. But I divide my day into green, yellow, and red zones. Green, where my energy is at its peak. Red, where it's kind of waning, which for me is like four o'clock in the afternoon. And then yellow, everything in between. And then I do what I'm best at when I'm at my best. And I'm best, my green zone happens for me in the morning.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So I'm actually recording this for you in the morning, and now I'm going to go and get some writing done. I've got an article that's due for a national publication. I've got some work to do on my own site. And then in the afternoon, I'll open it up to meetings. Now what that allows you to do by making time blocking in your calendar available for your most important work is when those requests come in and people say, "Hey, can you meet with me to do X?" You can say, "I'm sorry, I have a commitment Thursday morning." Now your commitment will be to yourself. Your commitment will be, "I've got to get that vision document done." That commitment could be, "I've got to get the sermon done." That commitment could be, "I got to spend a date day with my wife and kids," because you're married and you're juggling a lot of balls, Cameron.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So you see that allows your priorities, and this isn't selfish. This isn't like, "Oh, I'm just going to do what I want to do." No. You have really important things you need to do to move the needle in your life and

also on mission at the church and in your job. You want to make sure those things are done. And then if you've got a couple of slots leftover for people, you can do that. Now you're like, "Well, what if there are more requests than there is time available?" Note, there will always be more requests than there is time available. That's just the way it is for most of us. So then what you have to do is you have to prioritize and you have to figure out, "Well, who do I really need to meet with in those two available slots this week, and who do I not need to meet with?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

And that will help you scale and grow. Because if the organization revolves around you, it is not going to grow. That caps out in a church context at about 200 attenders on the weekend. It caps out in a, well you'll never make it probably to seven figures if you're an entrepreneur, you're just not going to do it. You're not going to be able to reach your potential because basically you are the lid in the system. Everything has to go through you. If you're in every meeting, if you have to meet all the people, you're just not going to have a lot of people. And by constricting that and saying, "I only have so many slots available this week to meet with the people who want to meet with me." What that allowed me to do was number one, prioritize who I met with. Number two, delegate.

Carey Nieuwhof:

All of a sudden we developed a small group structure at our church and suddenly hundreds of people could meet with each other and I wasn't needed anymore. I could focus on what I needed. Now eventually we hired a groups director and everything. It also gave the staff other opportunities to meet with people. It also meant that people learned how to solve their own problems. And what that means is that you can then have a growing organization. So it allowed me to get a lot more done in less time. My family stopped paying a price. I stopped paying the price. And Cameron, you've got a lot going on in your life. You've got school, you got church, you got work, you got a family, you got kids. And what I would say is I would look at what is most essential in each of those areas, spend some green zone time on them over the course of your seven days, including on your days off, just prioritize your family and nothing gets in the way of that on your day off.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And then let some of the other stuff that's less important fall by the wayside and you'll probably become even better at productivity. And congratulations on already being good at it. So hope this helps. If you have a question, go to CareyNieuwhof.com/podcast. Scroll down a little bit. You'll see, Ask Me Anything About Productivity. We're going to do this for a little while longer, and I would love to be able to serve you and answer your questions specifically.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Thank you so much for listening today. And if you haven't yet picked up my new book *At Your Best*, you can get it anywhere books are sold. It's been endorsed by Patrick Lencioni, Adam Grant, Seth Godin, Annie F. Downs, Nona Jones, and so many others, Greg McKeown, Cal Newport. And I would love to get this in your hands. And teams are picking up hundreds and in some cases even more copies of the book so they can work through it together as a team. If that interests you, let us know. If you've got a custom order, you can go to atyourbesttoday.com or just email my team. We will let you know how we can serve you. Thank you so much for listening and I hope our time together today has helped you thrive in life and leadership.

This transcript was exported on Sep 18, 2021 - view latest version [here](#).

Announcer:

You've been listening to The Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast. Join us next time for more insights on leadership, change and personal growth to help you lead like never before.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:32:48]