

Questions - Questions

Transcript

OK, so let's get into your questions. Well, make sure that you successfully get your hard to measure team set up with their first few meaningful measures - that is your priority right now. So, we'll go through your questions, and probably hear a little bit about some of your hard to measure teams so that we can fill in any gaps that you might have, gaps in the content that I've shared with you, and therefore have greater success.



So first question, David says,

“Our team feels very cynical about measurement and thinks that managers want the performance measures to performance manage them,”

or basically hit them over the head when they aren't meeting target.

“How do you deal with this?”

The first thing I would probably do in David's situation is ask the manager is this in fact true? Ask the manager, “How are you really going to be using these measures that the team are going to come up with?” And just check that. If it's really not true, if it's just a perception that the team has, then get the manager to talk to the team and to explain how the measures are going to be used, and to do that in as much detail as possible so the team doesn't think it's just words.

But, if that is how the manager's going to use the measures, if the manager really is that kind of person who's looking for something to beat people over the head with, or to try to manage people, then talk to the manager and ask how he or she expects the team to respond to that kind of use of measures, realistically, you know? Not how the manager thinks they should respond, but how the manager knows from experience they are going to respond, and just work out, “Is that really something we want to set up ourselves up for?” If we know that using the measures in this way is going to cause people to fudge the figures, to distort the data, or to only choose to measure things that make them look good, that kind of behaviour. If that's really what's going to happen,

why should we bother, let's think of a different approach here. And this is your opportunity then to sort of influence the thinking of the manager.

The idea that you want to instil in your team is that the measures are for them, the measures are not for their manager. The measures are for them to identify what they can do to, not just to work better in the process, but to work on the process to make the process itself better. What you can do is potentially negotiate with the manager as well to give the team, I don't know, six months, twelve months to get used to using measures and improving their processes with those measures before the manager starts holding them accountable, whatever 'holding them accountable' might mean in your situation.

If the manager is really not amenable to this, if they're really, "No, I just want measures to be beat people over the head with," then probably your next opportunity would be to go to a more senior manager who gets what you're trying to, and seek their advice. You know, just say, "Look, we've got this situation, we're really worried that by putting these measures into place it's just going to drive all the problems underground and things are going to get worse, but we're just not sure how to approach our manager on this because they really seem to think that hitting people over the head with measures is going to be the way to go." And just get some advice for how to handle it, and maybe you could even get that senior manager to have a talk with the problem manager.

If none of this is going to work, if you're still not getting any luck, I would say give up. I would say just give the least amount of effort to the measurement process as possible and wait for the manager to get replaced or move on. You know, you just can't do measurement without causing more harm than good when you've got a leader who's a micromanager and who fundamentally believes that performance can only improve when people work harder. So, really there is an out clause here, there's only so much that you can do. You need leadership support, and working on that is a very important thing.

So, if you've got David's situation, I hope those strategies work for you, but really don't think you can work around the manager, you've got to address that issue head on. Don't think, "Oh, we'll just come up with some good measures and then I'm sure the manager will change his mind," well, it's probably not going to happen.

Next question, Brian says,

"Our team is the economic development division in a local government, how can we measure the right things to correlate our work with our region's economic performance?"

This is a tough question, I've got to say. Firstly, before you worry about correlating your performance with the performance of the economic situation in your region, you've still got to build that logic model; you've still got to identify the collection of performance results that show your leverage in producing the currently most important outcomes for your region's economic performance. So that really means following the steps in the hard to measure team's program. One thing that you need to remember though is that

Results Map that you end up with, that's actually a hypothesis, it's not truth. It's your best guess about the points of highest leverage in achieving the outcomes that you want. So, I guess where Brian's coming from with his question here is, "Well, I want to test that hypothesis. I want to find out what size of impact we're having by focusing on these in-process results to see the size of the impact, or to be able to isolate the impact that they're having on those ultimate outcomes of the economic performance of the region."

Something else you're going to need to do is to make sure that you've clearly defined what 'economic performance' specifically means in your region. Is it a clearly defined set of results as well that already have measures? Or isn't it? Is it still this waffly idea that people haven't really pinned down yet. So you've really got to pin that down.

Then, once you have your logic model, once you've got your Results Map and economic performance has been translated from its weaselly, waffly, vague words into true performance results language, and to correlate your team's performance with the region's economic performance, you've got a few options. Firstly, you've got to be measuring. You've got to be measuring your results and you've got to be measuring the results associated with economic performance, because you need that data to be able to work out if there is any correlation.

Your first option is to identify all the factors that have a measurable impact on the economy in your region. That's your impact and all of the other things that can influence, in a significant way, OK? In a measurable, observable way, the economic performance in your region. Then when you've got all of those factors identified and data collected for all of them, you can build a multi-regression model to work out the impact of each part on the economic performance.

Now, if you're sitting there going, "What the –?" You should be, because that's a very, very difficult thing to do. It's probably near impossible because there's so many factors that can impact something as broad as the economic performance. And you may even not be able to find enough data to make any kind of model robust and rigorous, and reliable enough. But, theoretically that is probably the best solution.

The second option that you have is to deliberately restrict the work you do to perhaps just one industry or one sector in your region, and then measure the difference in changes in economic performance between just those areas, industries or sectors you've worked with, and compare that to those you didn't work with. The idea being here is that if your stuff works you would see an improvement in the economic performance in the area that – or the sector, or the industries you've worked in, that's a bigger improvement, or a better change than the economic performance in the ones you didn't work with. Now, that's also a little bit impractical as well, so it may not be a viable thing to do. If it is, sure, go ahead and do it.

It's kind of like doing a controlled experiment where you're just putting a treatment into one part and not into another part. So, the areas of your region that you don't work with would be your control group, and the areas you do work with are obviously your treatment group. And, you're using the data and measures of the economic

performance you'd be able to see what kind of impact your actions have had. Of course you'd have to make sure that the only difference between the groups you worked with and the other groups was your input.

Again, that's challenging, but there is a third option, this is probably the least – I don't even know why I'm suggesting it, it's probably the least practical, isolate your region from every effect on its economic performance, except your own work, and then compare your region with the performance of other regions, but that really is ridiculous because you can't isolate the other effects, you know? You can't isolate the effect of the global economy on your region's economy; you can't isolate the effects of government policy on your regional economy. So, really I'm going through some standard approaches to being able to correlate your results with the results of an outcome that other things affect, and I'm coming purely from a statistic theoretical point of view, but that's the kind of thinking we need to do if we want to take that question really seriously.

Sometimes these questions are just too hard to answer and what would be much better to do is to just simply stay in touch with the customers in your community and find out from them how helpful they are finding the work that you do in helping them either cope with the economy or to improve the performance of their own organisations in that economy.

I mean lots of people want to do this, they want to isolate their effect on an outcome, that they only influence in part, but usually the complexity and the cost of doing it just isn't worth the knowledge that you're going to get. So, yeah, I think the best suggestion here is just to stay in touch with your customers and see if what you're doing is helping them feel like they're coping and adapting in the economy as best as possible.

Next question, Julie says,

"In Step 2.2, when asking customers to grade their level of satisfaction and importance do you make recommendations or guidelines around how many important things can be graded high, medium, or low? We have a culture in our organisation where everything is top priority and super important, and it's often difficult to get out of that habit. I really like the approach you've presented, but worry that we would still get most of our clients grading everything as most important and we wouldn't get out of the exercise what we should."

I do like this question because it's an indication that you know that priority and focus is really important and you're trying to find a way that virtually guarantees you're going to get there. What I would say is that at Step 2.1, when you are working out what the priority attributes are, you're not really interested in doing any rating or grading there. You're simply looking for frequency of mentions, so how often something gets talked about by your customers, either in comments from existing data, or in focus groups, or in one question surveys. That's really about deciding what the short list of attributes are

going to be, and that short list is going to take you to, you know, whatever we said, between six and twelve attributes of service.

So, really Step 2.1 shouldn't be too much of a problem because you are relying on the wisdom of the crowd to sift out and filter out the most commonly mentioned attributes of service to get that half to a dozen.

Now, at 2.2 is where you're saying the problem is, Julie. So, if you're worried that people are – when they're asked to rate their importance, the relative importance of a set of six to twelve attributes of service and you think they're all going to give them a high – you do mention high, medium, and low, and I'm not sure if you meant that literally, just in case you did, in case anyone is thinking that high, medium, and low is the way to go, I would say no. Go to using a scale of '1' to '7,' so rate importance on a scale of '1' to '7' and that might help split things up a little bit.

I do often see that some attributes of service will get mostly '6's and '7's by the majority of people, and some of the attributes of service will get mostly '5's and '6's, very rarely do you find that anybody in a quantitative survey measuring satisfaction and importance is going to rate any of the attributes of service down around '2,' or '3,' or '4,' and that's because you've gone to the trouble of finding the things that are most important, so their importance is going to be quite high, but they'll be some variation and that usually separates them out enough that you can see that some are more important than others.

It does come back to the performance priority graphs as well, and I think I might show you one, just to demonstrate what I'm talking about here. OK, so here is the discovery team's customer priority quadrants. Now just have a look at the importance scale here, if it's not too small for you to see, but I'll tell you it ranges from '4' at the bottom to '7' at the top. It doesn't range from '1' up to '7,' even though the importance scale ranges from '1' to '7.' It ranges from '4' to '7' because it was between '4' and '7' that all of the average importance ratings landed. So, if yours lands between '5' and '7,' then '5' will be the start of your vertical axis on your customer priority quadrants. It's more about getting separation, it's not about making sure that some are rated low and some are rated high. So if they're all rated pretty high on the scale, it doesn't matter, you can still separate them out a little bit.

Even if you ended up with the situation where every single one of your service attributes were given 7/7 for importance by every single one of your customers, if that truly does happen, then you fall back onto the satisfaction scale as your way of prioritising. So, in a sense you won't have priority quadrants, you'll have a priority scale, where you're only interested in looking at satisfaction. But, I think that the chances of anyone ending up with all your customers rating only '7' for every one of the service attributes, I think that's a very, very rare situation. But like I'm saying, if it does happen, it's not the end of the world, you can rely on the satisfaction scores to help you do some prioritising and still find what would be not so much in your red quadrant, but maybe on the red end of your scale, which would be the lowest satisfaction scores.

OK, our next question is from Carol. Carol says,

“Our team has hundreds of customers, and I think that doing more surveys will just annoy the customers and cost a lot of money and time. Can’t the team just use their own knowledge of the customers to decide what the priorities are?”

So Carol is referring to Step 2.1 and Step 2.2. Firstly, I would say look at any surveys that you’ve done in the past, ask around, do your best to figure out if there have been any surveys already done. I mean you’re saying that more surveys will just annoy customers, so my feeling is that you probably do already have survey data, because your customers are feeling a bit surveyed out. If they aren’t, if you just worry that you’re going to annoy customers but you haven’t surveyed them in the past, go ahead and do it. If you do it in the right way customers will feel like you really are trying to listen to them and they will value that opportunity and they will help you by giving you data. But, if you have got lots of surveys go and start looking at those.

If you can’t afford the time and cost of a properly designed set of focus groups and satisfaction surveys, then another thing that you can do is to go with smaller samples. I mean we did have one little discussion through the program about the importance of choosing sample sizes, if you can just choose a sample that is as big as you can afford, as long as it’s chosen at random, a randomly selected sample, you can still get better information than you would by just relying on your own team’s perceptions of what’s important to customers.

I can tell you time and again I’ve seen that absolutely miss the mark. I’ve seen teams sit down and think they know what’s important to customers and they might get one or two things right, but they’ll definitely put it in the wrong order, because they are thinking from their perspective. The whole idea of Steps 1 and 2 in this program. The whole idea of starting out with customers for your hard to measure teams is that it’s important for them to look beyond their own perspective. It’s about trying to understand the customers’ perspective, and they can’t do that standing in their own shoes, they can’t even do that pretending to stand in their customers’ shoes. They have to go and get, like I said before, straight from the horse’s mouth.

Only last resort would I recommend this, and that is you could research other customer surveys that are done in your industry, so maybe you haven’t got the data in your organisation, but other similar organisations to you may have done some customer research and you may be able to find some of that information to identify what some of your service attributes are. But you have to do this as well, if you go that route you simply have to check to see that the survey methodology was valid, to see that they based their attributes of service on what their customers said and not what they thought, so you don’t want to – that’s even worse, isn’t it? Worse than going with what your own team thinks is important to customers is going with what a team in another organisation thinks is important to their customers and thinking that applies to your customers. So, yeah, that one really comes with a warning; is looking at other people’s research to get ideas for what’s important to customers.

And, again, the idea really is to get to know the customer from the customer's perspective, not from your team's perspective.

Now Kevin says,

"We are a continuous improvement team, measuring outcomes like process compliance is frustrating because we can't make the business groups comply, so what can we look at instead?"

Making the customers comply, you're absolutely right. You can't make them comply; you can't make people do anything. You can do things that create an environment where people will more likely want to do things, and that's the way to think about this. If you try to make people do things you're trying to act as though those people's actions are within your circle of control, and they're just not. They are within your circle of influence, though.

So, just imagine you're standing in an open space and you've drawn a circle around you. So, you're standing in the middle of a circle, that circle there is your circle of control. The idea is that anything inside that circle is something you directly have control over. It could be what you think, what you say, what you do, the things that you make; those things are within your circle of control.

Draw another circle now outside of that one, which is concentric, so it's still a circle that goes all the way around you, but it's a bigger circle, so it's much wider, and that is now is your circle of influence. So, you can't necessarily take action that causes things to happen in that circle of influence, but the actions that you can take in your circle of control can cause a ripple effect that can then increase the likelihood that something will happen in your circle of influence, and that's the way to think when you're a hard to measure team. Think circle of influence, not circle of control.

I would be curious to know what the business groups say is important to them about compliance or about the continuous improvement services that you offer them. Maybe rather than even talking to them about compliance or continuous improvement maybe chunk up a level again and talk to them about risk management or something like that, but try to work out what is this context within which customers associate what you do, and understand more about how your customers feel about that context, about what's important to them about that. What's important to them about risk management? What's important to them about continuous improvement? You want to get into the customer, I mean that's what this is about, understand how they relate to your work rather than trying to understand how your work relates to them.

They might say that important things to them about risk management are, "It doesn't take up too much time." "It doesn't take up a lot of my resources." "It feels like a sensible, realistic thing to do." "Feels pretty easy to do." Those are the sorts of things that might be important to them, and they'll give you clues about what you can influence and then obviously find meaningful measures for that aren't frustrating.

So, what are you currently doing then that affects things like the time, the resources, the realism, and ease with which your customers experience risk management? Now you still would end up measuring compliance, there's no doubt about that, but it would be more about looking for changes in the compliance level that are a result of the changes that you make in your own approach in helping the business groups to comply.

Next question, Barbara says,

“What if customers have very different views of what’s important and how satisfied they are?”

Well, you probably have different groups of customers - that would be one way to think about it. Some of the case studies that we've looked at had multiple customer personas, and that's because those different groups of customers have different needs, different views, different perspectives or experience with your team. So, you probably do need more than one customer persona. You'll need one to represent each of those different groups.

Each collection of views should be based on the most shared views. I mean if you took it too far you'd end up with each customer being its own customer persona, because it is true that just like everybody's got a unique personality, every customer has a unique set of needs from you. It's not about that. It's about finding the most commonly shared needs and clustering customers around those into customer personas. I mean you're just not going to have the resources to handle 12, or 15, or 132 different customer personas, you still want to keep it to a manageable number, and that's probably two or three, maybe four or five at a stretch. And, therefore you're actually going to need a customer priority quadrant graph for each one of your customer personas. Don't put them all on the same one, that's too confusing.

Back when I first learned about doing these sorts of graphs I was working with Queensland Rail, and at the time we were doing them for all the business divisions within Queensland Rail. And two of those divisions were related to passenger travel, the others were related to freight, and coal, and minerals, and livestock train services. But, for the passenger travel they were split then into what was called city train and travel train. And, it sort of tempting to say, “Well, they're both passengers, so can't we put them on the same performance quadrant graph?” Well, no you can't because they have different views. The city train passengers are the ones who are using trains to commute to work, to school, to shopping, to just get around their local community. The travel train customers are going on holidays, or long distance travel, and they have very different needs to commuters, so two different customer personas, and therefore two different sets of priority attributes, and therefore two different priority quadrant graphs.

Minnie says,

“How can get my get my team to even want to start this process with me? They always have such a negative perception when

performance measures and performance management gets mentioned."

To me, it's apparent that if people feel that way they clearly have the wrong idea about what measurement is and why we do it. They probably got all this baggage from how they have experienced it in the past, too much boring data collection and they never know what happens to the data, nobody ever uses it, measures being used as rods for their back, they've never been able to find anything meaningful to measure and it just feels like they're measuring for measurement's sake. They're measuring what they're told to measure, and they haven't found any relevance or use in those measures in making their work life easier. So, they've had bad experiences with measurement and that needs to get turned around.

What I like to do to start people talking differently about measurement is use three key words: focus, feedback, and fulcrum. Fulcrum is the pivot point of a lever, so you could say leverage instead, if you prefer.

Focus is one of the roles that measures take, measures focuses on the right things. So, if you're using measures that you don't feel like are focusing you on the most important things, then you've got the wrong measures, but we can find the right measures.

Feedback, that's another role that measures take, they tell you how things are going so that you can understand what's going well and what needs fixing, what needs your attention, what needs to be made better. If your measures aren't doing that, then you've got the wrong measures, but you can get the right measures.

And the third things is the fulcrum or the leverage. Measures should help you feel confident that what you're doing is the best possible thing to do to pursue and achieve performance excellence in the work that you do, in the service that you offer. So, if you feel like you haven't really found those leverage points, that you're just sort of scratching around the surface, or treating symptoms, then you've got the wrong measures.

So, those three keywords become a discussion point and guideline that suggests to people that they've got a rationale to throw out the measures that are annoying them, but there also is a process to come up with measures that they will find very valuable.

Measures are tools to help people make their processes performance better. They're definitely not tools for managers to judge how people are performing, so that's something that's really got to change too, we've got to shift that role of measures in our organisations.

Another thing you can do to help your team to want to start this is to share other successful measurement case studies, where performance measures have been used in the right way. There are three podcasts in the Measure Up podcast series that you could look at, and you can find these at www.measureupblog.com, look for Podcast # 32, that's an interview with Bec Bach and she was sharing how she was introducing new measurement techniques for schools in South Australia and how just some of

these different ways of thinking really thoroughly engaged both the teaching staff, the principals, and others at the schools to really think differently about what they're trying to achieve.

Podcast #34 is an interview with Cheryl Welch, and Cheryl worked with a team in a water distribution service in the United States, and helped them to measure a few things about managing I think it was water quality, I can't quite remember off the top of my head, but something about managing aspects of water quality and water delivery. And going through that experience with those teams for the first time they discovered some things about their processes they hadn't even realised, and discovered some anomalies that then straightaway helped them realise there were some important things to fix.

The third podcast I'll recommend is #36, and that's an interview with Sarah Coates, who works with a small business that focuses on helping car sales dealers to sell their cars, they create all sorts of applications and services for them. And Sarah tells the story of how she took nine departments, the nine departments of that business through the steps of measuring things and aligning them to the company priorities and even got the CEO engaged and involved in talking to these teams about what really mattered most.

So, three great examples that you can use to help get your teams talking differently about measurement and understanding it is a different thing to what they're probably assuming that it is.

Another thing you could do is have them talk about the problems they face at work and what stops them from doing the best job they know they can. It's a good thing to assume that people do come to work wanting to do the best, it might not look like it, it might not sound like it, but really what you're seeing there is the damage and the scarring done from a long time of things just not working out for them. But this is an opportunity to make things work out for them, to put some power back in their hands.

OK, Alex says,

"I'm an IT manager in a call centre company and I'm responsible for several processes, like a help desk, projects, communication, et cetera, however I always have problems with measuring the software development team. What's best practise in measuring software development productivity?"

Well, productivity, as we all know, is measured basically by looking at outputs divided by inputs. And the idea here is to get as much output as you can from the input. It's hard to measure productivity of teams like software development, innovation, research, hard to measure teams, because usually the inputs and the outputs are a little bit harder to define, sometime a lot harder to define. Inputs for a software development team you could think of as time, "Well, it's the time that the software developers are investing." But, maybe it's also their skill, their capability, their knowledge, their

creativity. So, we're getting into some inputs there that are just a little bit more challenging.

The outputs for a software development team are software applications, sure. But, it's also the value and the impact that those software applications have for clients. Software applications can vary in size and complexity, and it's just too trivial to try and measure productivity in a way like counting the number of software applications developed per staff hour worked. We know that's not going to tell us the full story, it's a trivial measure, it misleads us.

So it might pay to talk about what productivity means and why it matters, because it's a word that gets thrown around a lot like 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness,' we assume that it's got a meaning, but very rarely does it have one consistently true meaning to everybody.

So, you know, sometimes we feel like we have to measure productivity because everyone should measure productivity, but that's not true. So maybe you're trying to measure it because you suspect that there's some waste or some rework going on in the software development process, or maybe it's because you would like software to be developed faster. Answering these sorts of questions can help you find out what real performance results you have, rather than just trying to put it under this broad banner of productivity. And when you can turn it into real performance results, then it does become easier to measure. So, don't feel like you've got to measure productivity, but if you've got an inkling that there's something around productivity that's important, then talk about it and nail down what those specific performance results are, and then develop measures for those, and it will be a lot easier, be a lot more meaningful, far less trivial and certainly less likely to cause problems for the software development team, and to encourage the wrong behaviours.

OK. Wayne says,

"Our organisation constantly reminds our team about key result areas, or KRAs, however the line between this and measurement yard sticks are often blurred, and this has resulted in confusion and a general lack of commitment across the organisation. What's the best approach to instil performance benchmarks and a corporate culture of ownership in our teams?"

The term KRA is a part of the performance measurement lexicon, but depending on who you are you're going to have varying meanings for that term. Sometimes it means a broad area, or domain of performance, like customer focus could be a KRA, or financial sustainability could be a KRA, and so could operational excellence, or service reliability, or something like that. Sometimes KRA, or key results areas, is a term used more specifically and it might relate to very particular goals like, "Increase customer loyalty," or, "Reduce operational expenditure." Then we can start talking about other words like 'objectives,' and 'goals,' and 'KPIs,' and 'benchmarks,' and 'targets,' and it gets confusing very, very quickly because those terms are just not used consistently

anywhere. There isn't a universal truth about what each of these words means in the context of performance measurement and performance management.

KPIs, sometimes people think KPIs, for example, are the same as KRAs, or the same as objectives, or goals, and other people think KPIs are performance measures, and others think they are a particular type of performance measure, which just happens to be the most important performance measures in your organisation at the moment. Getting the language consistent and giving lots of good examples of what each of the terms means in your organisation, that's going to be very important to remove the confusion. So, don't worry about looking out there for the truth, define your organisation's truths, because it's much more important that people understand the concepts rather than the labels. And, you've really got to rid of this confusion before you can attempt to try and get ownership of performance measures.

I like the lexicon that the Balanced Scorecard Institute use in their nine step methodology. They talk about strategic themes, which can sometimes be like KRAs, but a strategic theme is really a domain or a broad area of performance, and usually any organisation or business will have maybe three to five strategic themes. Those strategic themes don't get plucked out of thin air, they get surfaced out of a really deep analysis of the business environment, it's got strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, et cetera, to really emerge what the most important thrusts of performance that the organisation needs to focus on. Those strategic themes then set the context within which goals will be chosen. In the Balanced Scorecard Institute's methodology they call those strategic objectives.

So, within the strategic themes you'll have a collection of strategic objectives, and those strategic objectives make much specific statements about particular performance results. One might be to do with reducing the cycle time of maintenance. Other one might be to do with increasing customer satisfaction with accuracy of invoices. It's kind of a lot more specific level.

Then the next part of the lexicon of Balanced Scorecard Institute's methodology is performance measures. And they haven't really made a great fuss about different names for performance measures – there's metrics, there's KPI, performance indicator, lead indicator, lag indicator. There's lots of different terms. You don't need to worry about it. Just that term performance measure is nice, and indeed that's the term I always use.

So the fourth, the next part of the lexicon is targets. And that is a statement of what level of performance you need your performance measure to get to. Your performance measures will only ever tell you where you currently are, "This is where we are now. This is the level of performance we are at." The target tells you what level of performance you want to be at. So if, for example, your customer satisfaction with accuracy of invoices is currently around '4.5' out of '7,' that's what it is telling you it is now, but your target might be '6' out of '7,' so a target is different animal to a performance measure, but they work together.

And finally strategic initiatives, that's another important part of the lexicon. And it simply means what actions are we taking to close that gap between our current performance and our targeted performance? So strategic initiatives are about the doing, they're about the process improvements, the projects that we're going to undertake that should change things so that our performance measure then starts showing us that we are getting closer and closer to target.

So strategic themes, strategic objectives, performance measures, targets, and strategic initiatives – those five terms are the most important ones to bed down and have everyone understand in your teams.

Finally, the final question from Jay. Jay says,

“How can I get buy in from all the team members?”

What a question to end on. I would say don't aim for all, just aim for most. As the process unfolds, as you take people through the Hard to Measure Teams Program their buy in will naturally increase as they start seeing the value in each of the steps. So, don't aim to get everyone to buy in, all you want to do is get people to aim for – aim to get their commitment to start the first couple of steps with you. The process itself will then naturally let their buy in grow.

Make sure there's a commitment from management that the measures are not going to be used to judge people, but that they'll be used as tools by the people. So, try to make sure that managers agree that the team is coming up with measures that the team will use. The team is not trying to come up with measures that the manager's going to use. If the manager wants measures, the manager has to come up with the measures himself or herself.

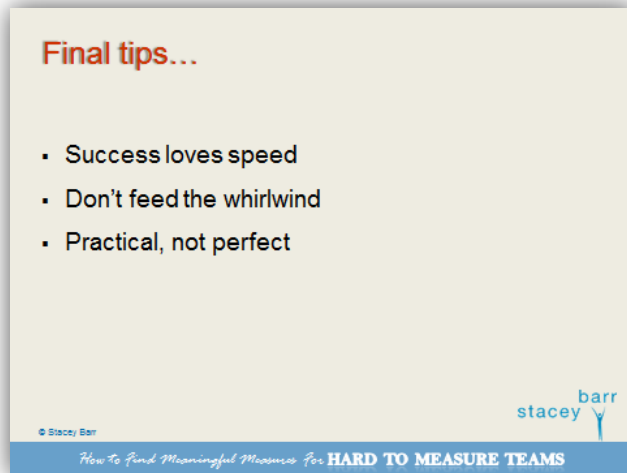
Another thing to do to make sure that the team will buy in is to let them know that you're not going to be telling them, and no one is going to be telling them what they should measure, that the decision is going to lie solely with them, that they are going to do the thinking, they are going to do the evaluating, that they are going to do the deciding about which measures are going to be worthwhile going ahead with. They will even decide if a measure is too infeasible to do, too hard to do, they won't do it. If the data is too hard to collect, they don't have to choose it. So that's the only way to get the ownership.

Now, if the whole team is not going to be involved actively in the hard to measure team's process, then you can involve them in other ways. Before when I talked about the PuMP® methodology I mentioned the Measure Gallery, where people beyond the actual team developing the measures can come along and get engaged in giving input and feedback, and sharing ideas about the measures that a team has selected, and then the team can go away and take that input and modify, or streamline, or improve the measures that they've chosen. So, for team members who aren't directly involved, so maybe you're working with a hard to measure team that's got 25 people in it, but only four or five of those people are going to be working with you, the rest of them can have involvement by doing something like that Measure Gallery idea.

There you have it, that's the end of our questions.

Final tips before I say goodbye... three mottos that I would like to leave you with as you continue to take your hard to measure teams through this journey to find meaningful measures:

"Success loves speed." This means move quickly through the process, don't let the momentum wane; don't get bogged down by spending too much time on any one step, or by going to the nth degree, or by trying to do too much. You really want to get a result quickly. You can always go back later and add more, and do another iteration and expand on what you did, but that first time through it should be fast. You want to get your team to feel and experience successful measurement quickly, even if it's only one or two measures. If they end up loving those one or two measures and feeling excited about them, then you have won, you have succeeded, because now they've got the energy within themselves to go back and find more of those fabulous measures that they know that they can.



"Don't feed the whirlwind." That's the second thing to keep in mind. Stay focused. If you've got one to three goals you're most likely to achieve one to three goals with excellence. If you have four to ten goals, then you'll likely achieve only one or two of those goals with excellence. If you have more than ten goals, then you'll achieve zero goals with excellence. Isn't that an interesting pattern? But it's a well-researched pattern. The Franklin Covey Institute talks about this, and the idea of the whirlwind, the daily urgencies that take our eye off the important things. Focus is really the only way to get the important things done. I mean clearly we don't have enough time to have ten priorities. It's ridiculous, our days are already full. So the key with this process is keep that focus, so your team will only really have one to three things to focus on at any one time. They may end up, like the case studies, with six or seven results and nine or ten measures, but like I mentioned earlier, it doesn't mean they've got to implement it all once, just pick one to three to start with, and that can be the focus. Then when they feel like they're doing those with excellence, then they can go on and choose the next one, two, or three.

You've got performance results because they matter, and I think if you're aiming for anything less than trying to do them with excellence, you're not aiming high enough. Excellence, however, does not mean perfection. Be practical, not perfect. Don't aim for perfect measures; don't aim to achieve perfect performance in those measures.

A new team is not likely to have the skill and experience to find perfect measures or to do perfect process improvement. I don't know if anybody does, quite frankly. Instead what you want to encourage your team to do is aim for measures that are sensible, that are simple, and that they will find very, very useful, and that they really trust, are putting their attention on the right things, and that are going to encourage them to that the right actions.

This is what you can use the Check the Bigger Picture step for, in the Measure Design template, at Step 5.1. When you come to that Check the Bigger Picture step you can ask this question, "What behaviour – what will this likely drive us to take and is that a good behaviour?" "Is that the right sort of thing we should be doing?"

Well, the ball is now in your court. Enjoy the journey that you're taking your hard to measure teams on, and enjoy the profound impact that you're going to have by showing them how to understand, and how to demonstrate, and how to continually improve that wonderful, unique impact that they have.

I've enjoyed sharing this with you – I really have. And, I'd love to hear from you about your experiences in using this process to find meaningful measures for your hard to measure team. So, please do stay in touch, and you can do that by visiting me and contacting me via www.staceybarr.com.

This is Stacey Barr signing off with a smile. Thank you all for joining me.

End of transcript.