Belle Walker - Standard Offerings

Systems Thinking for Organizations (Friction to Function)

When a company's goals and Operating Model (roles, responsibilities, and the interactions across teams and individuals) are misaligned, employees end up torn between opposing forces. The constant struggle to understand how work is supposed to happen drains engagement and efficiency. Such misalignments generally trace back to well-intentioned attempts to optimize one aspect of day-to-day operations without stopping to consider the broader impact. So can this situation be fixed without causing even more issues? Yes! Systems Thinking provides a framework for tackling realignments and laying a foundation for the ongoing adjustments required to stay aligned as the organizations continue evolve. Walking through a series of examples will inspire new ways of viewing challenges, introduce Systems Thinking, and start attendees down the path of building iterative systems that evolve gracefully.

Building Successful Hybrid (Collocated and Remote) Teams

After transitioning from traditional, office-based operations to fully remote work over the past few months, many businesses will soon find themselves in yet another new state: hybrid collocated and distributed teams. Blending remote and in-person interactions poses a new set of challenges, often requiring specifically adapted solutions. Information and guidance abound for remote collaboration and the physical safety aspects of returning to the office but thriving in a hybrid state requires targeted planning. Fortunately, smaller teams and companies can stand on the shoulders of giants as they plan for, or dive into, this new way of working. This talk walks through basic best practices, tips, and tricks for leaders ready to think about hybrid teams in the new light they deserve.

Cultural Alignment: Vision and Values and Goals, Oh My!

Whether the result of slow and steady change, or acute shifts such as the COVID-19 pandemic, cultures have a tendency to evolve over time. Changes in co-located or remote work, shifts in a company's culture or mission, and many other natural evolutions can have unintended, negative effects on employee morale, efficiency and communications. Get ready to be proactive about culture and

Leading in the Aftermath of Layoffs

Layoff decisions are inevitably made in limited time frames and with imperfect information yet many organizations are reluctant to make any further changes in the wake of layoff announcements for fear of change fatigue. Although change fatigue is a valid concern, implementing a basic, iterative model for adapting post-layoffs can effectively rebuild trust and re-empower teams. Acknowledge the situation, Observe the impact, Adjust as necessary, and repeat these steps until a new steady state is established. Although simple in concept, this approach can fundamentally improve a team's chances of success in a post-layoff world.

Manage Like an Engineer (Seriously!)

We've come a long way as a society from the early days of Scientific Management! Recognizing that people are individuals, not automatons, has led to huge leaps in employee engagement and satisfaction. But 21st century management rhetoric has swung so far from its rationalist origins that many engineers now believe that their technical skills become meaningless once they make the leap into management. In fact, technical problem solving and engineering concepts can often be applied directly to managerial challenges, without losing sight of employee individuality and humanity. This talk walks through several engineering concepts in both their original, technical context and then demonstrates their applicability for managers looking to lead more effective and engaged teams.

Agile Means "No Documentation", Right?

Leading an organization that had "quality" in the title in an Agile environment gave me a front row seat to some of the highlights, and some of the lowlights, of common interpretations of Scrum. This talk kicks off with the collaborative creation of definitions for "quality" and "documentation" then takes participants on a journey through the Agile Software Development Life Cycle through the lens of these "new" definitions. Attendees will walk away with a renewed appreciation for "quality" and "documentation" as their contributions to effective leadership are revealed. Better yet, they will take home actionable visions of how quality and documentation effectively manifest in an Agile environment.

OKRs, KPIs, Metrics, Goals, and Starting with Why

Humans have a tendency to focus on whatever is being measured and modern leaders have numerous models to choose from when configuring their teams' performance management expectations. So why do many teams still report misunderstandings around goals and metrics? How is it that some teams can achieve their metrics but still feel unsuccessful? When leaders jump too quickly into detailed planning, even goal planning, their vision of "why" remains fuzzy and misalignments between metrics and true success become almost inevitable. After all, OKRs, KPIs, and similar systems are tools that are only as strong as their users. This talk imbues attendees with a personal understanding of the importance of beginning with "Why" (and then Why, Why, Why, Why!) and then draws clear connections from the resulting vision to effective metrics, referencing OKRs, KPIs, and other popular approaches. Get ready for a return to basics that will prepare your team for a turboboost towards true success!