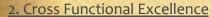# Episode 76: Things to help you stand out.

I read a great piece recently by management guru Tom Peters on this subject.
He suggested there were 4 things you could do and that you need to be obsessive about. Link is <u>here</u>.

1. Front Line Managers
People often forget how important the front line or 1st level manager is.
You should not be confused that the real work of any organization happens there.
Yes, executives make the BIG decisions but your front line make them successful.
Keep in touch with your first level managers and, where possible, their people.
You need to tell them what's what, but listen to what is really happening.

2. Cross Functional Excellence
Peters suggests that most cross-functional failures can be fixed with lunch.
Or, if we get to know other teams better and listen, we can resolve issues.
I believe this is part of the solution – but so are shared objectives.
Few cross-functional teams have shared objectives and often have conflicting ones.
When you share objectives, you resolve differences to achieve those objectives.
The Cold War was Mutually Assured Destruction; we call this sharing risk and reward.

3. Strategic Listening
Peters talks about 'strategic listening' as a key management talent.
I had one boss that called it 'root cause analysis' and another referred to it as the '3rd why'.
The trick is to dig deeper and to really understand the issues and what created them.
Sometimes you can do this by asking 'why?' repeatedly until you get there.

4. Meetings
We all think we have too many meetings and complain about others' meetings.
Peters says he's not making a point on how many meetings, but how they are used.
For each of us, there are things we can do to hold *better* meetings.
What's more, we should educate and encourage our teams to do the same.
For some time on better meetings, check out Episode 8.

Bottom line: I have seen lots of big strategies fail because of little execution issues. Sometimes it's important to sweat the
 small stuff especially if that's the difference between success and failure.