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LEADERSHIP & BUSINESS PODCAST

EPISODE 42: PHIL HEAVILIN – ACCELERATING YOUR CAREER

Ken White

From the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. This is Leadership & Business. A weekly podcast that brings you the latest and best thinking from today's business leaders from across the world. We share the strategies, tactics, and information that can make you a more effective leader, communicator, and professional. I'm your host Ken White. Thanks for listening. Well, as a society, we like to change jobs. The median tenure for U.S. professionals in their current position is just under four and a half years. Many people changing employers to get promoted and to earn higher salaries. But what about professionals who prefer to stay with their current employer? Those who want to get promoted and play a larger role in their current organization's success. If that describes you, our guest today has advice on what you can do to earn that in-house promotion. Phil Heavilin is the Executive Director of the Graduate Career Management Center at the College of William & Mary's Raymond A. Mason School of Business. He provides career counseling and coaching to MBA students and professionals from a range of fields. He joins us on the podcast today to share advice on how to get noticed and eventually promoted in your current organization. Here's our conversation with Phil Heavilin.

Ken White

Well, Phil, welcome back to the podcast. We saw you last in January when you were sharing some tips with us about looking at your career at the beginning of the year, and we thought we'd talk to you today about when you're in a situation you're working for an organization, you like the organization, you like the job, but you're not being recognized. You're not getting promoted. Do you hear this a lot in your coaching in your counseling?

Phil Heavilin

I do, and thanks for having me back. I really enjoy it, and that's exactly right. So we do work with a lot of mid-level managers or even entry-level folks who really enjoy the organization that they're a part of, but they're just maybe they hit a ceiling, something is not moving them forward. And so, hopefully, today we can share a few tips that maybe if you implement within the next couple days or a couple of weeks and maybe you'll see some positive momentum coming your way.

Ken White

Yeah. Great. And you're gonna share four tips with us to sort of accelerate your career, especially again if you if you're in a position and in a company, an organization, and you'd like to stay. So what's tip number one?

Phil Heavilin

So tip number one is something I call visualize the accolades. So this is something I actually do myself as well. So we all work on projects, we all do presentations we all have deliverables within our organizations as to what I would ask you to do is before you submit it. I want you to imagine what kind of reaction that you're going to get from your boss, from your colleagues, from your clients based on what you have put together and if it's maybe a reaction where okay, well, this is acceptable. This is good. This will this is a pass. Ask yourself, is that what you want? What kind of reaction do you want? Do you want a wow? This is exactly what I'm looking for more, or you really went above and beyond what I was anticipating. This is incredible. I'm going to share this with my colleagues you know in the industry. Imagine what kind of accolades you want to get for the work that you produce and if it's not what you are anticipating. Go back, make some changes get it to where you think you're going to get that big impact reaction. And if you do that and if make that a regular habit, then you're going to get noticed after a while.

Ken White

And it works doesn't it if you say to yourself I'm going to knock it out of the park with this I'm going to knock it out I'm going to knock it out. And you often do.

Phil Heavilin

That's right. And sometimes, I mean, we know when we put just average work out there.

Ken White

Yeah.

Phil Heavilin

We all know that, right? And so before you pull the trigger, just hold back, give it another couple hours or a day of work, make those additions that are going to take it to the next level.

Ken White

Yeah. Why don't we do this? Do you think with every project?

Phil Heavilin

You know, I think you know many of us are in positions where we're overwhelmed, and it's just nice to get something off your plate right. But remember that every time you deliver something, that has your stamp on it. That belongs to Ken. That belongs to Phil, and that is going to either keep you where you're at, or it's going to actually help you be promoted within your organization.

Ken White

So visualize the accolades turn in the work that's going to require people to say that was extraordinary.

Phil Heavilin

That's exactly right.

Ken White

Do that enough times in a row. You're going to stand out.

Phil Heavilin

You're going to stand out.

Ken White

Excellent. Visualize the accolades, what's the, what's step number two, or tip number two.

Phil Heavilin

So tip number two is something I call step in to move up, and I think we've all been in scenarios where maybe a project went awfully wrong, or maybe we lost a team member, maybe our boss left us. I remember when I was in high school, I was a cook, and our head chef left us, and so suddenly, I found myself cooking as head chef. Much to the chagrin of our clients. But you know you step in, and you make an impact. You just don't let the bag lay on the floor. So what I would recommend to people is if you're in a situation where maybe you have a loss of resources, don't just stand back on the sideline and put your arms together and think, oh goodness, this is, you know woe is me this is awful. Step in, pick up the work, and make sure that your clients or your colleagues don't feel any different that they don't even know that you've lost your supervisor or you've lost your co-worker. Make it so that they don't even know the difference, and you're going to stand out because most people won't blame you for kind of sitting back, and they'll say, wow, you know this is really rough on you. You have no staff people are gone. No one blames you for just kind of sitting back and maybe complaining, but if you don't do that, if you take this as an opportunity to pick up the torch for the department or the organization and move forward and make sure that your deliverables are there, they're on time, and they're

of high quality then when it comes time for a promotion or maybe another position within the company people are going to recognize you for the effort and the good work that you put into that situation.

Ken White

And we've seen this. We've seen people who say the supervisor leaves. The team leader leaves, and someone, for whatever reason, says well, I'll just step up and do it. I'm not even going to announce it I'm just going to do the work.

Phil Heavilin

That's right.

Ken White

And then suddenly, you see that person in that role.

Phil Heavilin

You do, you do.

Ken White

And they end up with the role.

Phil Heavilin

If it's if you know it's a position that you want. And this is your opportunity to have an extended interview.

Ken White

Yeah, no doubt.

Phil Heavilin

This is your time to step in, to move up, to really show your stuff rather than sitting on the sidelines waiting for other things to happen or waiting for them to fill that new position. I recommend stepping in and picking up the torch and making sure that nobody knows any different that the quality work coming out of that department. It's still of high quality, and nobody would know any different.

Ken White

You know the extended interview is a great thing to put in your mind's eye. Where do lousy projects tie into this? Sometimes there's a project no one wants to touch but that's an opportunity.

Phil Heavilin

That's another opportunity to step in. Absolutely. And there's always those projects that individuals, for whatever reason, might not want to do. It's not very glamorous. But if you're seen as that person who is willing to take on those projects and not and do them and do them well, you're going to stand down in a very positive way.

Ken White

So that's step in to move up.

Phil Heavilin

To move up.

Ken White

We'll continue our discussion with Phil Heavilin in just a minute. Our podcast is brought to you by the Center for Corporate Education at the College of William & Mary's Raymond A. Mason School of Business. The Center for Corporate Education can help you get to the next level with its certificate in business management program coming up this fall. It's a five-day program for the professional who lacks an MBA or wants to improve on critical business and leadership skills. For more information on the certificate in business management program, visit our website at wmleadership.com. Now back to our conversation with Phil Heavilin on accelerating your career from within.

Ken White

Your next tip for accelerating your career.

Phil Heavilin

The next tip I have is what I call operating on a higher plane. This is really it's about integrity, especially integrity under fire. I give the example of I monitored the career of an individual who is a college president and dealing with a lot of political issues at the organization, and there was some conflict within the board and so on. But she conducted herself in such a way that she demonstrated integrity. She took the criticisms well and so well, in fact, that the community really rallied behind her. The local community that the students. Unfortunately, she was dismissed. Really nothing of her own doing. It was really the climate of this situation. And it was recognized, and no sooner did she end her relationship with the college. She was picked up as president of a bank of a large bank and the bank when she was hired. She asked well, why are you interested in me? I don't have any banking industry. And they said, you know what. We have people who know the industry. What we need from you is the leadership and the integrity that you demonstrated. We need you as a person to lead our organization. So my recommendation to individuals is that no matter how tough it gets within your organization, no matter how

overworked you are or maybe criticisms that are coming your way that may not be warranted. Always operate and function in a high level of integrity. Don't lose your cool. Just always maintain that level-headedness because that is going to be recognized regardless of what happens within your organization. You're going to be recognized as someone who is mature and maybe is perhaps ready to be in a different situation. It could be a promotion. It's just maybe the circumstances aren't exactly the way they should be. And so as long as you maintain a high level of integrity, then that's going to be recognized and could potentially turn into another opportunity.

Ken White

And we love to follow people who are poised and professional, and we love to hire people who are poised and professional at the same time, so basically, operate on a higher means take the high road.

Phil Heavilin

Take the high road.

Ken White

Great.

Phil Heavilin

You got it.

Ken White

Your fourth tip.

Phil Heavilin

This is one of my favorite tips just because I've seen it played out in so many situations that and it's something I like to do as well, just within higher education, working with students. And to me, it's aggressively promoting others. And so this is really being a client or colleague-centered professional. You'll be that individual who. And it goes beyond just being humble you know being humble to me is kind of deflecting the accolades from others. Taking from tip one. This is just not just deflecting it, but it's actively and proactively going out and recognizing the good works of other people and being that individual who recognizes maybe a project that was delivered on time and it was done really well. You weren't on the team, but you're going to make sure that in a public setting, you're going to recognize that and make sure the individual who's responsible for that project gets the accolades that they deserve. If you're seen as an individual who is promoting others who rally behind other people, and again, going back to your comment about getting behind leaders who take the high road. This is another characteristic that I

think we all like to see is someone who's not really that interested in their own career, but they're interested in promoting the good works of other people. But the byproduct of that is that will actually accelerate your own career.

Ken White

Yeah. No doubt, and we hear that concept at wellness. We hear that in servant leadership. It's almost like karma. Right. I mean, you give, you'll receive. If someone doesn't necessarily adopt that type of thought, how can they get started? Because we see many people, especially well, I shouldn't even say younger professionals, but a lot of professionals aren't that way. It is about me, me, me, and I've got to move forward. How do you get started to be that other-centric kind of person?

Phil Heavilin

That's a great question, and I think for individuals need to step back and really think about their own behavior, and if they're not already doing that, you know, take some time and think about when was the last time I promoted another individual. When was the last time I recognized one of my colleagues on my team? Maybe it's a competitive environment. It's really all about you know me succeeding over others but really you know that's really counterintuitive. I really recommend to people that just take a moment and think about when was the last time I promoted someone else. And provided that recommendation or, you know, just went back and okay, well, this team member really did something well, but I didn't really acknowledge it and then really make a point within the next week or two to identify an opportunity where you can promote another individual. And I and you for me individually. I get so much good feeling get emotional from doing that. It just feels good promoting other people and soon, so it gives you the good feelings, but also if you're seen as someone who recognizes other people and promotes others, then I mean that's a great quality of leadership, I think. And so when opportunities come up, if you are promoting others, if you're taking the higher plane, if you're stepping in to do projects that nobody wants, then when opportunities come up, your name is going to be move forward as a potential candidate.

Ken White

And I assume that's not just within the internal organization. It's also the person who is always there to promote the client promote the customer, I assume, and those are the people. If you think about it professionally, they're the happiest people when it comes to work. Those people who are super customer oriented just love what they do.

Phil Heavilin

Absolutely. And another byproduct is you know you get the love back.

Ken White

Yeah.

Phil Heavilin

You know when you're seen as that individual who's really out to promote other people? People are love to recognize you as well. And that's really the key, and that's where the career acceleration comes from is when you have what you what you've done is you've created a whole network of advocates for yourself by promoting others, and it's just a terrific feeling it's a great strategy to help you out move up within your organization.

Ken White

So in addition to aggressively promoting others operate on that on that higher plane with integrity, step in when available to help move up, and visualize the accolades right expect people to say wow with your work. These are great pieces of advice for people who are within an organization and want to stay within that organization. When someone who is in an organization and they just don't feel they're moving up quickly enough and they meet that frustration, other than these tips, what are some things they can do? Is it a mindset? Is it a discussion with their supervisor? What do you recommend when you have you know people when professionals talk to you about that?

Phil Heavilin

You know, when I see that when people make the breakthrough, it's those individuals who engage in that self-reflection because we do get so caught up in the day-to-day of our work, and we think that what we're doing maybe is enough, but if you want to really stand out then you have to start doing things that nobody else is doing. And so these are just a few tips, but there's other things that you can do to differentiate yourself from other people. And until you're ready to make that move to stand out, then you're still going to kind of be stuck in that same role. And so I recommend going through these tips and if you and it doesn't take long and it doesn't take much. It usually just takes that extra 10 percent of effort that helps you be differentiated from other people. So if you implement some of these tips just within the next week or two, I can almost guarantee that you're going to start seeing some activity that and some and some feedback and some action that maybe you didn't see before.

Ken White

That's our conversation with Phil Heavilin, and that's our podcast for this week. Leadership & Business has brought to you by the Center for Corporate Education at the College of William & Mary's Raymond A. Mason School of Business. The Center for Corporate Education can help you, and your organization get to the next level with business and leadership development programs that specifically fit your needs. If you're interested in learning more about the opportunities at the Center for Corporate Education for you or

your organization, visit our website at wmleadership.com. Thanks to our guest this week Phil Heavilin and thanks to you for joining us. I'm Ken White. Until next time have a safe, happy, and productive week.