Lawrence Neal: Brandon, welcome back.

Brandon Jonker: Lawrence, thank you so much. It's a pleasure to be here as always.

Lawrence Neal: You're most welcome. So thanks for coming back on. And in this segment, we're going to dive into how to make meetings productive and effective for your high intensity business or strength training business.

Lawrence Neal: So you've got a whole I know ... a structure probably in front of you there that we went through in terms of how you believe the meaning should be structured for maximum effectiveness. So do you want to just start out talking us through that structure and then maybe I can dig into it with some questions as we go.

Brandon Jonker: Absolutely, I'll walk you through the structure and then as we mentioned, I'm happy to send you that template that you can upload for any users or any subscribers that you'd like.

Lawrence Neal: Perfect.

Brandon Jonker: So we do this meeting, this is a 90 minute meeting and it happens once a week. And it happens once a week for every department in the organization. So if you have multiple locations, you do one for each staff. If you had a leadership team, they would also do one per week. So every department, every team would do one of these a week and it's exactly 90 minutes long.

Brandon Jonker: And the meeting always starts out with some role playing. And this is specifically for ... I'm describing this in the context of a location or personal training studio. It would be slightly different for a leadership team or a team of managers for example, you might not do role playing. But assuming that you have a trained staff and you are running a location, you will start the meeting out with some role playing.

Brandon Jonker: This could be on your training floor, this could be in an office. This could be where the actual scenario is going to happen. And you could role play all sorts of different things. We role played things from a professional greeting to how to deal with a specific issue to a client ... that a client was having. We dealt with things if we had a specific item that we were trying to teach a client, we would role play this.

Brandon Jonker: We often had customer service focuses that we would role play that we would want our trainers and our front end staff delivering to the client and we'd role play that. And the last thing we role play on a weekly basis would be what we call the promotional focus. This was just something that we had going on in the organization or in the location that we wanted to promote to our clients, apparel sales, for example, shake sales, for example, may be a new challenge you have coming up. And we role played at to prepare staffs or our staff to deliver that to our clients in a succinct manner.

Brandon Jonker: And I personally believe this is honestly one of the most, not the most, but one of the most effective portions of this meeting because you have to give your staff, your training staff and your front desk staff for that matter tools to be successful. And when you're interacting with clients on ... as your profession, as your job, you have to become good at that. And the only way to do that is to role play.

Brandon Jonker: The key here with successful role playing too is to make sure that it's taken seriously. It's easy to ... when you're doing role playing to maybe not take it seriously or to just kind of get through it. And as the manager or the person running the meeting, it is your responsibility to make sure that people are role playing as they would with a client and going as far to stop somebody if you feel like they're not doing that.

Brandon Jonker: For example, you have trainer Joe and you know trainer Joe always says something in a certain way and then in the role playing, he says it totally different. You need to stop him, say, "No, say it exactly how you would Joe because when ... in the situation ... when the situation actually comes up, I want you to be prepared to deliver this how you would not some made up or manifested way that you think will look good in front of all of us in the meeting."

Lawrence Neal: [crosstalk 00:04:03]

Brandon Jonker: The meeting starts out with a role playing period. Now, this role playing period is typically about 10 minutes long. But it's been my experience that if you have a lot to role play, it is okay to shorten other portions of the meeting or even eliminate other portions of the meeting to make sure this gets done. Do not shorten the role play section. Make sure that you get the role playing done and everybody has an opportunity to participate in some capacity in that role playing.

Lawrence Neal: That's great. I want to let you just flow through the meeting structure because I know that this is the first of many, many kind of milestones in that 90 minutes. And then I'm just going to chime in-

Brandon Jonker: Sure.

Lawrence Neal: If I feel like there's a pertinent point. Do you know what? There is one thing I want to ask you about the role play, which I think is very valuable. I think developing the discipline of delivering communication in an effective way is ... cannot be underestimated. And the more you practice something, the better you get at it. I know being in sales, it's just absolutely critical.

Lawrence Neal: And can you give an example of something that came ... come to mind from the previous life in terms of what you role played successfully? Is there anything that comes?

Brandon Jonker: [00:05:00] Yeah, I mean absolutely. Really what we would role play around and I put ... A second ago, I didn't do a great enough job of explaining this. We would always role play around three or four things, okay? We'd always have a teaching focus. This was a piece of education that we wanted our clients to learn. So an example, this would be the understanding that resistance type doesn't matter. At the end of the day, resistance is resistance, muscles contract against resistance, they don't understand that this is a $10,000 weightlifting machine or your car axle. So we'd role play that.

Brandon Jonker: And we've role played teaching that to a new client, we'd role play teaching that to a veteran client in order to be able to succinctly describe that in the midst of a 30 minute session. So we called that our teaching focus and we would do that every single week. We'd roll play one teaching focus.

Brandon Jonker: And we had a large list of numerous different teaching focus that we wanted to rotate through. And that list was probably about 30 long and just every week, we'd rotate through them and then throughout the year, we'd hit hit them once or twice. And we just continued to role play at every single meeting. So we got better and better and better and better at delivering that message. That was the first one.

Brandon Jonker: The second one was a customer service focus. And we would choose a specific customer service focus on a weekly basis, same thing we did with the teaching focus. But this wasn't necessarily something that we would obviously teach to a client and customer service focus was something that we needed to role play. So when we had a customer service issue or encounter that we were ready to handle that in a proper manner.

Brandon Jonker: So an example of this would be dealing with an upset client, for example. We had numerous steps that we would take in order to deal with an upset client. So we'd have someone role play being an upset client and then we have a staff member work through those steps in real time to handle that issue. So that was our second one is customer service focus.

Brandon Jonker: And the final one was a promotional focus. And again, we would try very hard to have a promotional focus every single week. Occasionally, there'll be weeks where you wouldn't have it but majority of the weeks, we'd have a promotional focus. And this can be anything like I said, from apparel sales to an upcoming promotion that you have as far as ... like a challenge that's going on. It could be numerous other things that you're just trying to promote to your clients.

Brandon Jonker: And when we would role play, in effect, selling this or bringing this up to our clients. And again, in a succinct manner because we believed firmly that if you didn't role play, if you didn't practice it, then when ... It's naive to say, "Okay, trainer Joe, just go out and tell this person about this challenge." That they'd stumble over their words and wouldn't be successful. So I think that says ... I think I said that was the final thing but I actually lied. There's one more, I said four.

Brandon Jonker: The last thing is what we called becoming a better teacher document, okay? This was just something that we knew we had to be great educators, we had to be great teachers in order to be successful in our jobs as a personal trainer. Because our job at the end of the day is not only take somebody through a workout, but to educate them because knowledge breeds passion, okay?

Brandon Jonker: So we came up with numerous different scenarios here that was just focused around our staff becoming better at teaching the material that we wanted them to teach.

Lawrence Neal: That's great. No, I think that's perfect. And it's so important because like you say, you can stumble over your words or revert to type and just not get better at delivering these really important segments of communication that you've covered there.

Brandon Jonker: Exactly. And it's important to continue to revisit them. One of the focuses that we had and that was really a passion for me was simplicity, okay? But being able to be really good at 10 to 12 things as opposed to mediocre at 40 things is substantial and super impactful when it comes to delivering a message to a client.

Brandon Jonker: So we were focused on that. These lists, I mean some of them got a little bit long. They were hard to cut down. But none of them were longer than like 30. And most of them were around the 10 to 15 range. Because then you're hitting them three to four times per year or at least one to two times per year if they're bigger.

Lawrence Neal: Cool. So what's next.

Brandon Jonker: So the next portion of the meeting and this was really something that we pride ourselves on but I think is extremely applicable not only to on the high intensity community but the exercise community in general. And this was what we called a project learn discussion. We called it project land but it was a formal review of a research article and a formal discussion of a research article on a weekly basis.

Brandon Jonker: And this could be on numerous different things from load to nutrition to exercise modality to mental response to exercise. I mean you name it, we covered it. And that particular article was always sent out a few days in advance so the staff had an opportunity to review it and we just discussed it as a staff. And there wasn't any specific format for doing it, it was really an open discussion. So someone would say a comment, someone else would rebute or agree with that comment. And it was just a fruitful group discussion.

Brandon Jonker: And this usually lasted five, maybe 10 minutes at most, we tried to keep it around the five range. So it's not ongoing. We are not exhaustive I would say in the fact that you're beating it to death but you're getting the main points out of it and you're getting some good take homes that we can then relay to our clients. So we called that a project learn discussion but it was just a formal review of an exercise or of a research article.

Lawrence Neal: That's a hard to keep it down to five to 10 minutes because let's say you're looking at ... I'm just thinking paper that comes to mind, right? Would be like Brad Schoenfeld's [meta analysis of single versus multiple sets.]

Brandon Jonker: Yes.

Lawrence Neal: No. Or was that James Krieger, one of those guys, which is something that I know a lot of people in HIT disagree with and that's fine. And I could imagine there being a very ... I mean that's something you could talk about for hours, how do you keep that discussion condensed to five or 10 minutes? How do you teach all that?

Brandon Jonker: Yeah. So really that comes up to ... or is the responsibility there lies on the person running the meeting, the manager, whoever it may be. Their job is to outline the main points, not let discussion roll for too long and then at the end of the time period, literally, if we're doing it for five minutes, we just cut it off. We say, "We're not running past five minutes here, we're done right there."

Brandon Jonker: And that's one of the keys to this meeting that we're going to talk about a little bit later on, is staying on time to these allotted time periods. And literally saying, "After this five minutes is done, we're cutting it off."

Brandon Jonker: Because a lot of times, meetings do just what you were alluding to there, you start talking about a project learn article or a certain article and it consumed your entire meeting and you actually didn't meet about anything at the end of the day, or anything operationally productive if that makes sense. So two things to answer your question a little more succinctly. The first thing is it's the responsibility of the person running the meeting to keep them on track. And then it's also the responsibility of the person writing the meeting in this particular area just to get the main points in advance and make sure they come to light in that discussion. And it might be three to five main points that we need to take home here.

Lawrence Neal: Got it. I love that because if you have, and I guess now I'm talking to the listeners, if you've got trainers who are really passionate and want to learn ... And I know for me personally, I'm always interested in reading the research, but sometimes they need a little bit of a push because a lot of this, a lot of these texts can be quite intimidating, right? Especially if you don't understand the scientific method as well or understand how to read these things and a lot of the terminology.

Lawrence Neal: So that's really cool to go, "Okay, this is the paper for the week. We're going to pick it up in the weekly meeting." So that kind of forces you to get some sort of understanding of what the paper shows and its methods. And then I'm sure yourself and Luke and your colleagues back at DS were like quite competent talking about these papers, which for someone like me, will be so valuable.

Lawrence Neal: So where I'm going with this is I think if those are the things [inaudible 00:14:10] ... If you've got passionate trainers who want to learn, this is going to add so much value to them as people. They're going to enjoy their work more because they're learning so much but then also be able to put it into practice what they're learning. And so obviously, that benefits the business.

Brandon Jonker: That's 100% true. And frankly, One of the nice things about this is you don't get ... or if you ... I mean [inaudible 00:14:34] and really a lot of people in the high intensity community or the evidence based community whatever you want to call it are exactly as you described. They're deeply passionate learners. They want to know about the research. Well, they're still having the opportunity, of course, to read the full article. But for time sake in this meeting like I said, we try and keep it to a few specific points or have them come prepared with their two to three specific points so they're not going rambling either, if that makes sense.

Lawrence Neal: It does. Cool. So what's next after that?

Brandon Jonker: So the next portion of the meeting is called a segue. And this is literally just as it sounds, it's just segue into the meeting. And there's two things that we'd highlight here. Each person, excuse me, each person would go around the meeting and they they'd give two points. And the point was to not not have them ramble, be succinct, have them prepared. And it was the personal and professional highlight of the previous week.

Brandon Jonker: So I might say something like, "My professional highlight was I got John to-do 500 pounds on leg press for 12 reps." Whatever it maybe, something like that. And the personal highlight could be something like, "I paid off my final student loan." And then it'd rotate to the next person. But it's just a way as opposed to jumping right into the meeting and just thinking work, work work, to get a little more acquainted with your colleagues, to understand them on a personal level and to have a nice easy segue into the actual grit of the meeting.

Lawrence Neal: Cool. I think that's pretty self explanatory that one.

Brandon Jonker: And that time period is about five minutes for there as well. So now you're about 20 minutes or so into your meeting. Each one of those previous was the five to 10 range. So you're 15 to 30 minutes into your meeting, your 90 minute meeting here.

Lawrence Neal: Cool. And I guess the important thing to know about I guess and correct me if I'm wrong Brandon but part of the objective of that piece, that that part of talking about personal professional win is also the feeling of weighing in the meeting, right? The feeling of being able to share something and therefore just feeling better about the process in general. Is that fair enough?

Brandon Jonker: Yeah, I would say that's definitely a fair point. Of course, when people have the opportunity to weigh in on something or in a meeting, they're more likely to buy into it. If anything else, this just gets somebody who may be ... not be a very active participant in a meeting starting to participate and feeling more comfortable with the meeting process in general.

Lawrence Neal: Yeah, because I mean back in my IT tech sales days, just ... It was just the complete opposite. I mean meetings were very unstructured, very unproductive. And typically 80% of the room didn't want to be there, people would be hiding in the back sheepishly trying not to get noticed or contribute. And any people that probably wanted to be there were, well, there'd be maybe one or two who actually did enjoy the environment and wanted to learn and all of that. And maybe they'll be someone who would just want to gloat about their achievements in sales. But apart from that, they didn't want to be there and they were very poorly run. So this is very useful and different to that. Now let's go on. Okay, so what's next after that?

Brandon Jonker: So the next portion, excuse me again, is what we called reporting. So with the reporting portion, we start with something called the scorecard, okay? And the the scorecard is reporting of KPIs. So whatever the KPIs are for your organization or if you are running just us single department, it'd be the KPIs for your department only.

Brandon Jonker: It's just a review of the KPIs if you're on track, if you're off track. And if indeed, you're off track on one of those KPIs, we drop it down to what we call the issues list which is the meat and potatoes of this meeting which we're going to get to in a second. So if a KPI is off track, we drop it down to the issues list and address that issue, okay?

Brandon Jonker: The second portion of reporting is what we call the rock review. And this was 90 day initiatives that were assigned to every individual. And it could be something as simple as ... And we might have talked about this in our previous meeting as well but it could be something as simple as retain five clients or bring five new clients into the organization in the next quarter, okay?

Brandon Jonker: This is where we get into the personal accountability. So whoever's running the meeting will go through and read every person's rocks. And as they read them, they're going to ask that person are they on or off track. If the person says on track, great, that just means it's on track to be completed in the next 90 days. If the person says it's off track, then we take that, we drop it down to the issues list as well and we process that as an issue which again we'll get into in a second.

Brandon Jonker: And the final piece here is what we call customer and employee headlines. And there's actually a separate document on your meeting agenda for this. And the customer employee headlines, another term for this can be the market research, okay? And it's the trainers and really the staff's responsibility to populate this document throughout the previous week. So for example, if your meetings are on Tuesdays, it was the Tuesday all the way back to the previous Tuesday and the staff is just populate in this.

Brandon Jonker: And this could be literally anything that happened with a customer or an employee or things that the whole staff need to be aware of, okay? It could be, for example, John, we moved her seat setting back because she was having knee pain on leg press. It could be something a little more, not advanced, but something a little more personal, like, "Hey, Michelle got married or got engaged."

Brandon Jonker: But just things that every single trainer, every single staff member needs to know. Key here so this doesn't get too long is that each one of these points needs to be one sentence long and delivered succinctly. If there warrants more discussion around one of those areas, then again you take that and you drop it down to the issues list, okay?

Brandon Jonker: And then that's really key because this is a portion ... I mean this list will get very long, very quick. But if you can deliver it in a succinct manner and not ramble or add more or try and tell a story for each one of these, then it can be extremely extremely effective tool to getting your full staff, not just one trainer, but your full staff on the same page with the issues, the highlights that are going on with both customers and employees.

Lawrence Neal: Great.

Brandon Jonker: It's in my opinion that that document, it's dangerous in the sense that it can cannibalize your meeting if you're not monitoring it, if the person running the mean is not monitoring that. But it's not something you ever want to cut out because it is utterly important for everybody to be on the same page with what's going on there.

Lawrence Neal: Got it.

Brandon Jonker: Okay?

Lawrence Neal: Yep.

Brandon Jonker: So the next portion of the meeting is ... And these next three portions are going to ... They're going to overlap a little bit. So I'm going to try and explain as best I can. But once you see the document, it'll make a lot more sense, okay? So the next portion of the meeting is what we call a review of to-do's from the previous week, okay? That's really the magic of this meeting here, this meeting style.

Brandon Jonker: So once we process an issue which we're going to talk about in a second, the last step in issue processing is always a solve, okay? And a solve is a to-do for somebody. So let's say we had an issue of we processed John's leg press issues. She's having knee pain, okay? Well the solve could be, once we discuss it, the solve could be something like Brandon change John's leg press seating on next workout card. And that would literally be typed as a to-do and it would be assigned to me, okay?

Brandon Jonker: So in this to-do, the review of to-do's, we go through however many there are. and we read the person's ... We read the to-do, we read the person's name and then we say done or not done. And here's where we get accountability. And this is, like I said, the magic of this meeting because the days of old where we just ... a bunch of us sit around and just talk about issues that are going on and maybe one of us gets something done, we actually have a specific action item assigned to a specific person that we go back and review if it was done or not done, okay? And again, that is the magic of this meeting.

Brandon Jonker: And so this portion review of to-do's was from the previous week. So all the solves in the previous week we're reviewing before we get into the issues list. This is a short period of time as well. Five minutes this should take because these are read very quickly. There might be anywhere from one or two all the way up to 20 or 30 depending upon how many issues you got during in the previous week. But whoever's running the meeting, we'll just read the solve, read the person's name and that person will say if they were done or not done.

Brandon Jonker: Now if the ... If it was not done, these are what we call a seven day to-do's. So these to-do's are written or these solves are written using that term interchangeably, to do's and solves. These are written to be done within seven days. If that's not done, we need to drop it down to the issues list to understand why it was not done.

Brandon Jonker: So if we go back to my example of the leg press, if I didn't do it, we then drop it down to the issues. And when we address that issue, we go through our issue processing and we'd say, "Okay, why didn't you do it?" And the answer can be something simple as I forgot. Okay, we'll get it done, that's the solve or it could be something more complex that we didn't even realize, okay? So I know I went a lot of different ways there but the main-

Lawrence Neal: [crosstalk 00:24:58]

Brandon Jonker: Purpose, the main purpose here is the accountability aspect to solves that come out of issues assigned to a specific person. And it should not always be the person running the meeting or the manager. They're of course going to have a lot, that's part of their role. But this should be assigned to training staff, assigned to front desk staff. Really anybody in the organization can have to-do's assigned to them, we just have to decide who that appropriate person is and then assign it.

Lawrence Neal: How do you ensure that people don't get overloaded with to-do's?

Brandon Jonker: That's a great question. And honestly, I would say that majority of the time, just by the issues that are coming up, most people are not. But if somebody was, they would ask for help or they would say, "Hey, I have 15 to-do's right here, there's no way I'm going to be able to get all these done. Can I have some help?" And we'd process that as an issue as well and maybe assign a few more to somebody else.

Brandon Jonker: So frankly, in my tenure when we utilized this document, we never encountered back. But if you did get in a situation where someone wasn't getting them done, or they had too many and that was their reasoning for not getting them done, then we would address that appropriately. Sorry for my dog by the way, can be-

Lawrence Neal: That's all right. It's some ambient noise.

Brandon Jonker: That's right.

Lawrence Neal: So okay cool, so what happens next?

Brandon Jonker: Okay, so now we dive into the portion of the meeting which is going to be the most amount of time. And I'm going to highly, highly recommend that you spend a minimum of 35 minutes here. And if it's a department head meeting or a leadership team meeting, you want to push towards a full hour, okay? And this is what we call the issues list, okay?

Brandon Jonker: The issues list is populated throughout the week and this could be literally any issue that the staff is having or that a particular client is having that a staff member doesn't know how to deal with. We drop it down to the issues list. And what this does is it avoids the back office discussion during the week, trying to solve issues, bring numerous people in, it gives us a formalized time where we can get everybody together and solve the issues of the organization.

Brandon Jonker: So as you could imagine, this list will grow over time. If you get a lot done, you might have a shorter list. But if you only get one or two done in a particular day or a particular meeting, excuse me, then this list could get long over time. And that's totally fine. So the issues list is populated and then when we go to address issues and we actually get to this portion of the meeting, we do something called picking our top three.

Brandon Jonker: So we choose the top three issues and we rank order them as far as what is the biggest issue pressing the organization or pressing the department, okay and we choose that one. And we do the same thing with number two and number three. And then when we go to processes, we start with that first one and we spend as much possible time or as much time we needed for that issue to actually get solved. And that could be a full hour. But if it's the most important issue, that's a very good use of your time.

Brandon Jonker: If you don't choose the right issues and you're just trying to knock issues off your list, that's where you get into trouble with this. But you have to choose the biggest issue facing the organization and then attack that issue. Once you've processed those three, then you choose another three and follow right through. And same thing moving forward until you've either a, run out of time or b, solved all the issues. Does that make sense?

Lawrence Neal: It does.

Brandon Jonker: [crosstalk 00:28:47].

Lawrence Neal: It's really useful thinking about personal organization in this context as well. Regarding the issue list, so I know ... I mean I know obviously there's things that you probably can't talk about at DS but is there any that come to mind that you can? And to give an example of an issue that is particularly complex that may take weeks or months to actually resolve?

Brandon Jonker: Yeah, I mean-

Lawrence Neal: Yeah, sorry.

Brandon Jonker: Yeah, I guess I don't ... I wouldn't go into a specific issue just for privacy reasons.

Lawrence Neal: Of course.

Brandon Jonker: But I ... It was oftentimes where we would choose an issue that was facing the organization, okay? And we knew that we weren't going to solve it all there. It wasn't going to get solved 100% in that meeting. But we knew that it was one of the single biggest issue facing the department. So we had to warrant time and effort into discussing it. And coming out of that meeting, we had to have a solve.

Brandon Jonker: So there, the analogy would be taking a bigger issue and just chipping away at it, making this a slightly smaller issue concluding with a seven day to-do. That issue may stay on the issues list because we need to process it the next week, and the next week as well. But remember, we always have some sort of solve coming out of those meetings. We have to have some sort of action coming out of the meetings. If we just discuss and we don't actually have some sort of solve to move us forward, then we've wasted our time. We just got around and complained for lack of better term of an issue that was going on.

Brandon Jonker: Whereas when we challenge ourselves to come up with a solve, maybe it's not the end all, be all for that issue, we have to come back and address it again. But it gets us moving in the right direction towards solving it. And this could be anything. I mean this could be something as simple as locking the door when you leave to as complex as so and so has been a client for eight years, they're really not happy with their service here anymore, something changed and we need to address it. Or it could be like, "Hey, the toilet's broken, we need to fix it."

Brandon Jonker: Anything goes for being put on this issues list. And it's the person that running the meeting to work with the rest of the team to decide which three are the most important. And if you do that, your meetings will instantaneously become more productive and really your organization will benefit widely because you're choosing and actually coming up with a solve for the biggest things facing the organization on a weekly basis where most teams ... and I mean this not just in the fitness industry or high intensity community, most teams in business just don't do that.

Brandon Jonker: They know they have issues but they never spend time actually talking about them. And when you can start doing that and getting at least one solve to as many as you can get in that time period throughout the week or throughout the meeting, it's going to revolutionize your organization because you're actually getting stuff done and having people accountable to it.

Lawrence Neal: Yeah. And issues aren't festering away in the background causing tension and causing people to get distracted and not be focused and motivated. And that's what you see in most organizations, that happening. So this-

Brandon Jonker: Exactly.

Lawrence Neal: Totally eliminates that which is awesome.

Brandon Jonker: And another nice piece of this. And what it does is it allows people or your staff rather who are having issues, it allows them to put them somewhere. So let's say I'm a staff member and I'm having an issue, if I don't have a place for it, my mind kind of goes out, "do I talk to my manager? Do I talk to my colleagues? Who do I talk to?" And the answer is no, I put it on the issues list and then I have a platform for bringing that issue up and discussing it amongst my team. And it really fosters trust. And there can be pain points in that especially if there are personal issues but it allows for great team health if you do it correctly, okay?

Brandon Jonker: And specifically with issues here, I want to get into how to handle each issue. It's something we call the issues solving track, okay? And so let's say we processed an issue, we identified an issue. The process is what we call IDS. Identify, discuss, solve, okay? 60% of your time, once you've chosen the issue should be spent identifying the real issue. Now that sounds weird because you're like, "Well, it's already stated there on the document." 99% of time, the stated issue is actually not the issue.

Brandon Jonker: And it's the person that is running the meeting, it's their responsibility to make sure that we spend enough time identifying what the actual problem is and getting to the root. So we're not treating symptoms, we're actually solving the main the problem, okay? Once we've identified the issue, we move into the portion of the meeting or the portion of the issue solving track called discuss.

Brandon Jonker: And this is quite literally as it sounds. Each staff member or as a staff, we have the opportunity to discuss the issue. Key to this portion is that the person running the meeting gets everyone involved. So if there's someone that hasn't had the opportunity to weigh in, if I'm running the meeting, I would say, "Hey, Joe, what's your opinion on this?" Or, "Hey, Bill, what do you think of this particular issue?" And you get them to weigh in because even if their weigh in isn't the actual solve, at least they had the opportunity to chime in. Kind of like you were discussing earlier, if we get weigh in, we're more likely to get buy in even if their way in isn't the solve.

Brandon Jonker: So as far as the issue solving track, this is about 30%. So we spent 60% identifying what the true issue is, we spent 30% of the time discussing that issue. And the final one is the solve. And this is where we actually put accountability and put responsibility on somebody and we say this is the solve and it's Joe's solve or it's Brandon solve. And then that becomes the to-do, the portion we just reviewed, for next week's meeting.

Brandon Jonker: And again, that's where the magic happens, we actually have a solve and action item coming out of that. But it's important that we follow that 60, 30, 10 rule because if we just rushed through the identification period, oftentimes we spend time discussing not what the real problem is.

Lawrence Neal: Yeah. And then what ... Is that the end of the meeting or is there ... Are there other steps as well after that?

Brandon Jonker: Yep. So that the last step is just concluding. This is about five minutes long. And this is just a formal review of the to-do's that we assigned for next week. So when we started the to-do process, those are the ones from the previous week. Now, we solved issues, and we made to-do's for the next week. We just ... The person running the meeting just reviews them all and reads them aloud so everybody's on the same page, they know what we just discussed and actually came up with for the meeting and then we conclude.

Brandon Jonker: There's a couple different ways to conclude a meeting. And I'm a proponent of, especially when you start using this process, having everybody rate the meeting on a scale of one to 10. So how that would look is you just go around the circle and say, "There's two or three people," or how many people, 10 people in the circle and you just say, "Okay, Bill, what's your rating?" And he'd say eight and then Joe says 10 and Andy says five.

Brandon Jonker: And you just record them and then you record an average score. And the goal is to have an eight or above ideally trending morning more towards 10. But if you have an eight or less, or excuse me, like a 7.9 or less, that's indicative of a problem. It's indicative of the staff rating you low and that they didn't find a portion of the meeting productive.

Brandon Jonker: Now, I recommend that people use this process for about the first year of doing meetings in this way. And then it can go by the wayside because by that time people are basically the same 10 and because you've gotten better at it. But it gives the person running the meeting especially if you're new to this or if you've transitioned a new manager in or given responsibility to somebody to run the meeting, it gives them incredible feedback.

Brandon Jonker: And then they can go to that person outside the meeting and say, "Hey, Eddie, I saw you gave me a five. Can you tell me why? What can I improve on? What do I need to change?" He might say, "Well, you run 10 minutes over and I was late for my clients. That's a problem, it's not good." Or, "I felt like the role play wasn't productive," or, "You didn't spend enough time identifying my issue." And it can improve the quality of the meeting. And I recommend that, the rating process for about the first year of a new manager doing it and then you can get rid of that portion and just conclude after you've read the next weeks to do.

Lawrence Neal: Yeah. And I guess, sometimes some people are going to get experiences where they'll get a very low score for reasons that aren't necessarily to do with the the way the meeting was run but because that person really doesn't want to be there. And that's a problem.

Brandon Jonker: Exactly.

Lawrence Neal: And I think that's a good way of identifying people that perhaps should be in your organization.

Brandon Jonker: You're 100% right. So it also gives you the opportunity to say yes ... to manage that person and say, "Hey, you gave me a five three weeks in a row, What's going on?" "I just don't like these meetings. I don't want to be here." "Okay, well, what do I need to do to engage you more so you like these meetings?" And maybe you come up with a managerial tactic there that that gets them more engaged or like you said, maybe it's time to say, "If you don't participate in the meetings, maybe we have to have a people discussion here."

Lawrence Neal: Yeah, awesome. And I guess one thing that came to mind also is ... I'm just thinking about the tools that people could use to run these meetings. And I think you could quite easily use something like a Google Sheet as a means to create these different lists if you're looking for the least expensive and I think a Google sheets are free unless you've got G Suite, which is very, very affordable. And that's one way of doing it, right?

Lawrence Neal: And you can make that Google Sheet shareable so that all of your staff, whenever they have an issue, they can add it there. They could just open the sheet and add it and everyone can see and everyone to edit it. And you may want some controls around it but that's ... I mean how did you guys do it?

Brandon Jonker: That's exactly what we did. We used Google Sheets. We shared them with everybody, it's the best way to do it. When we first started, we were ... This isn't a knock. We just weren't with the times. We didn't understand Google Sheets. And so we were sending the document back and forth to everybody or the staff would email the manager and they would populate it all but it just got to be too much.

Brandon Jonker: So Google Sheets changed the game, I would highly recommend doing that, sharing with everybody so they can just go in and add. But if you didn't want to use that, you want to use Excel or something, having somebody email the manager or creating like a Dropbox file where they can just add things to is another way of doing it. But Google Sheet is by far the most efficient way of doing it.

Lawrence Neal: Yeah. It's so key to make these processes efficient so that they work well and are sustainable. And this ... A lot of what we're talking about it comes from Traction by Gino Wickman. Is that correct? Is that the author's name?

Brandon Jonker: Yep. Exactly. So this is ... I'm glad you mentioned that. This is the L10 format by Gino Wickman, it's from the traction process. We just took it a little bit and made it our own as far as the separate customer employee headlines document, the role playing. He didn't have that stuff in there so we kind of tweaked it to make it our own and obviously did have the project learn discussion. But the general format comes directly from him. And so you can get that from his website, his book and there's even some good YouTube videos on it too.

Lawrence Neal: I'll definitely be reading that at some point. Because I can imagine that it's ... As you said there, it's ... I'm assuming the concepts in the book are applied on a general basis not necessarily to fitness businesses, is that correct?

Brandon Jonker: Yeah, that book and that process is a absolute game changer. And frankly, if you start with the book Traction, it's very ... I would say action oriented and very dense so it can be overwhelming. But he wrote a series of books, one was called Get A Grip, which is basically a fable that's supplying all the Traction tools. So that's actually a great place to start, you start with Get A Grip, then go back and read Traction so you understand the tools in action.

Lawrence Neal: So yeah, I encourage the listeners and subscribers to definitely check those books out for even more context and go deeper on this. But it's so useful to hear it being implemented successfully in a strict training business context because then it's just ... People can just use that.

Lawrence Neal: Brandon, thank you so much as always. This was so helpful for me. So what's the best way for people to contact if they have any questions or want to get in touch?

Brandon Jonker: Sure, emailing me would be great. It's just my first name Brandon@jonkercc.com.

Lawrence Neal: Nice.

Brandon Jonker: That's the best way to contact me directly. Of course, you can find me on social media. I'm on LinkedIn, I'm on Facebook as well. So you could find me on there and those would be appropriate as well but probably the most immediate is email.

Lawrence Neal: Cool. All right. Awesome Brandon. Take care and I'll talk to you soon.

Brandon Jonker: Thanks, Lawrence.