SPEAKING
Of
Success

World Class Experts Share
## Their Secrets

Featuring

KEN BLANCHARD   **JACK CANFIELD**   **JOHN BENTLEY**   **STEPHEN R. COVEY**
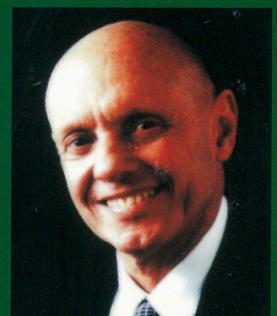
Sharpen your pencil and get out your legal pad! You'll want to take notes when you dig into this collection of inspiring interviews.

C H A P T E R   1 5

The 5 Enablers of Success

an interview with

John Bentley

THE INTERVIEW

David Wright (Wright)

John Bentley is founder and President of Power 2 Transform. He brings more than twenty-five years of leadership and management experience to the organizations he serves. He honed his skills during a twenty-one-year military career where he personally built and led more than twenty-five teams throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, Central America, and Asia. His "nuts and bolts" ability to translate complex people issues into everyday practical business solutions resulted in numerous industry awards including the Chamber of Commerce Order of Merit Award and the Air Education and Training Command's Lance P. Sijan Leadership Award.

Through his coaching, speaking and training, John has helped people understand how clearly we communicate and how effectively we connect with people determine the outcome of our personal and professional lives. He excels in and enjoys helping people put together teams of significance and power and helping leaders move themselves and their staffs forward faster. Organizations large and small now benefit from his wealth of experience, which combines an understanding of human relations and business operations.

John, welcome to Speaking of Success.

John Bentley (Bentley)

Thank you, David, I'm glad to be here.

Wright

John, you've been in the success business for a number of years.

How did you happen to focus your career on success strategies?

Bentley

Well, I believe the desire to help others is a natural human characteristic. The desire to help others achieve personal success or success in business simply branches from it. I realized the need and became involved in helping people achieve success during my first career in the military. My passion stems from my own experience on a fast track in the Air Force.

I was promoted to positions where I was responsible for producing results through others. But I discovered the approaches I used to accomplish my own work were not working for me as a team leader. In fact, my staff and I spent a lot of time finding fault and finger-pointing, which led to simply spinning our wheels, wasting resources, and delaying outcomes.

When I discovered and adopted behavior management, I began to communicate in a respectful way. This allowed us to see that our differences actually made us stronger, which led to a high level of trust. Our productivity soared and everyone wanted to be on our team.

Wright

You said that you "discovered" behavioral management as a tool.

Was this concept new to you?

Bentley

Absolutely! The philosophy I learned from my father was this: don't trust other people to get things done; do everything yourself and strive for perfection. My father is a good person; his philosophy gave me a good work ethic and I carried his philosophy into my adult life and my Air Force career. This approach was very effective when I worked by myself, but caused difficulty once I reached a point where I needed to get things done through other people.

I'm going to fast-forward a little bit to 1992. I was disgusted with the Air Force. I wasn't getting promoted as fast as I thought I should. I decided

to leave the Air Force because a $25,000 buyout was being offered to reduce the size of the military. I signed the paperwork knowing it meant the end of my career unless I received a promotion.

To my surprise, Chief Master Sergeant White pulled me aside and said, "John, if you were staying in the Air Force, I was going to move you into a new position and share with you an important life lesson. But since you are leaving, it's even more important that I share it now."

He shook the Coke bottle he was holding and handed it to me, and said, "John, I want you to open this."

Of course, I refused. He asked me why, and I replied, "Because it will spew all over me."

White responded, "John, that is exactly what you do when you're working with other people and things don't go your way. I want you to realize you can have all the talent in the world, but if you can't work with other people, you'll never succeed."

Three months later, I learned I was up for promotion. The promotion gave me a valid reason to stay in the Air Force. The main reason I changed my mind about leaving was Chief White showing me that my behavior was not helping me get to where I wanted to go; more importantly, I wasn't helping the Air Force succeed.

After deciding to continue my Air Force career, I looked for new philosophies and discovered a simple tool called "the iceberg model of human behavior." This model of human behavior provides a clear understanding of why people do what they do. It helped me discover why my beliefs were holding me back. (See Figure 1—Iceberg Model of Human Behavior.)

Using this model, the tip of the iceberg represents the behavior we display when interacting and relating with others. What's more important is to be able to go underneath the surface and look at our attitudes, our values, and our needs. If you really and truly want to function well with other

people, you must go under the surface so you understand their values and their needs. Values and needs are the primary sources for an individual's motivation. Values-motivated behavior has to do with "why" a person does something and are standards of right and wrong, while needs-motivated behavior has to do with "how" a person acts. Basically, it has to do with what is natural and easy for one to do. For example, one person may prefer to work with people, while another person may prefer to work with tasks.
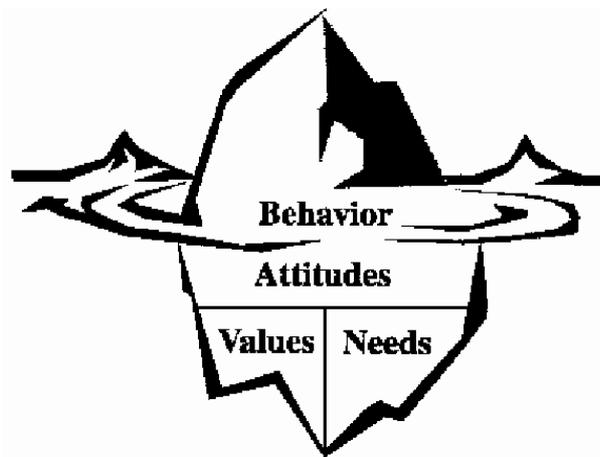
Fig. 1: Iceberg Model of Human Behavior

As I worked to understand people's needs, I was introduced to the DISC Behavior Model. It helped me understand "why people do what they do." The dimensions of Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, and Conscientiousness make up the model.

- Dominance: Direct and Decisive: strong-willed, strong-minded people who like accepting challenges, taking action, and getting immediate results.

- Influence: Optimistic and Outgoing: people-oriented and like participating on teams, sharing ideas, and energizing and entertaining others.

- Steadiness: Sympathetic and Cooperative: helpful people who like working behind the scenes, performing in consistent and predictable ways, and being good listeners.

- Conscientiousness: Concerned and Correct: sticklers for quality and like planning ahead, employing systematic approaches, and checking and rechecking for accuracy.

Becoming aware of behavioral styles was significant because it's the personal style that dictates the content of all verbal and non-verbal communications between people. One's message, whether it's to inform, explain, lead, manage, or convince, can only be communicated using one's own chosen behavioral style.

Your style is a powerful medium through which your beliefs and values, attitudes, education, skills, and everything about your life are conveyed to other people. Your behavioral style is also the source of disconnects with other people.

As we are in a life-long journey of understanding ourselves and building relationships, the question arises as to whether you can motivate other people. The answer is you can inspire them, encourage them, lead them, guide them, direct them, instruct them, threaten them, or put fear into them. But the power of true motivation lies only in each person.

Typical diversity programs focus only on our differences in race, age, and sex. These programs overlook the biggest difference in determining our success or failure in any endeavor—the whole person—represented by the iceberg model. Our behavior is what builds trust with others. When people trust one another they can solve problems. This leads to facilitating change, which ultimately satisfies the needs of the organization.

Wright

So, you learned a lot from your father in terms of approaching life differently than he did to be successful. Are there other people who influenced your growth after you started to explore success strategies?

Bentley

Looking back, I was actually influenced by others even before I discovered their success strategy. My grandmother, for example, always found the good in other people. I never heard her say a bad word about anybody. She knew the way to get the best out of people was to focus on their strengths, not their weaknesses. This reminds me of the Andrew Carnage quote that basically says you develop people the same way you mine gold. You've got to move tons of dirt before you find one little ounce of gold, but you don't go in looking for the dirt—you go in looking for the gold.

Then there's my mom. I am the oldest of her five children. My dad was a truck driver and he was usually home only on the weekends. It was my mother's perseverance I remember. She never gave up on anything worthwhile. She stuck with it and got it done.

John Cady was my supervisor when I was working in a restaurant. He taught me to become a student of every person I met because they all have something to share. We can choose whether it is a benefit to us and what to do with it.

Edwin Turbyfill taught me to give people the opportunity to grow and excel and to coach them when they make mistakes.

At one of the lowest points of my life, Dave Heuslein showed me a true friend is always with you and available to help no matter what the circumstances.

I already mentioned Russell White and his Coke bottle analogy. It taught me you can't lead sitting behind a desk and it is important to give feedback to others so they can learn and grow.

Two of my closest friends, Bill LeMaster and Kevin Rueter, with whom I've completed numerous projects in the Air Force, taught me none of us is as smart as all of us and you should always work from your strengths and allow others to do the same.

Dean Croiser taught me leaders care about their people and help them during difficult times in their lives.

I learned from Don Busbice you should live each day as if it were your last, and figure out what matters most and go for it.

My personal mentor, Anne Minton taught me relationships are what make our world of family, friendships, affiliations, teamwork, and businesses go around. Just as important, she helped me access, accept, and act on my God given gifts, which led me to believing more in myself.

Last and certainly least, Laura, my beautiful wife helped me accept and learn to love again.

Wright

When did you start your own consulting firm, and what is the origin of the name: Power 2 Transform?

Bentley

Well, I started Power 2 Transform after I retired from the Air Force. I wanted to continue to deliver learning experiences that allowed people to enrich their lives and create winning work places. I describe "work place" as a family, an organization, a team, a church—basically anywhere we go to interact and relate with others. Through experience, research, and training, I expanded on the concept of personal behavior management to craft strategies creating successful organizations. When you discover and live your values while embracing change, you have the power to transform. The company name embodies my goal of working with individuals, teams, and organizations.

Wright

How do you see your past experiences contributing to the consulting services Power 2 Transform offers?

Bentley

The goal in any endeavor, no matter how large or small, is always to achieve a successful outcome. Everybody wants to succeed, but most don't know how to prepare for it. While in the Air Force, I worked for over twenty different leaders, each with different talents, personalities, backgrounds, lifestyles, religions, and prejudices. As you mentioned in the introduction, I built twenty-five teams around the world, so being successful meant knowing how to manage up, down, and across. I had the chance to learn about a large number of different personality types and discover the secret to helping them work together effectively. However, I think the most important insight my past experience has offered is the knowledge of how clearly we communicate and how effectively we connect with people determine the outcome of our personal success in all areas of our lives.

Wright

How would you describe the system you use for helping an individual team or organization to become successful?

Bentley

Having the opportunity to observe different individuals I was introduced to a model I apply with my clients and myself. I learned it's not the smartest or the strongest who succeed, but those who adapt the most readily to changing environments.

Preparing for success isn't about stopping an organization to fix it. It's about equipping an organization's people with the ability to adapt to a changing environment while maintaining a focus on its purpose, goals, and guiding principles. Further, I approach each organization as a system. Organizations are made up of a number of systems, including strategies, structure, leadership, technology, and people. When a decision is made in any of these areas it affects every other area. If you don't lead people and manage organizations as a system, you won't achieve success.

Understanding and applying this principle helps my clients avoid worrying about keeping what they have or acting out of fear. It shifts the focus to improving individuals within an organization. This is an empowering approach that helps people in the organization grow and move forward faster. They have a strategy to follow that everyone can support because they can see how it will work and benefit everyone.

The strategy—the "5 Enablers of Success"—offers the ability to change, innovate, improve, reinvent, and renew using logic as opposed to acting out of fear, which inevitably drains one's ability to succeed. Most people just want to survive by not losing what they have. This philosophy will not motivate over the long haul. It offers no promise of forward motion, accomplishment, or improvement. The 5 Enablers of Success help organizations overcome assumptions that have always been in place regarding each other, customers, competition, and opportunities for growth.

Wright

What are the 5 Enablers of Success?

Bentley

The 5 Enablers are Vision, Skills, Motivation, Resources, and Execution Plan. (See Figure 2.)
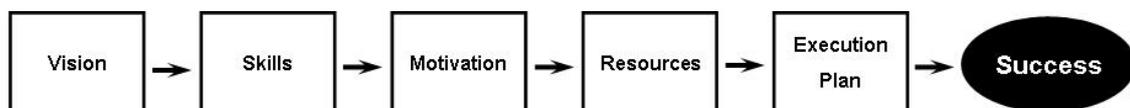

Fig. 2: 5 Enablers of Success

I would like to start with the first one—Vision—and then briefly discuss the last one—Execution Plan. I call these the enterprise-level management issues.

Vision is comprised of several components: a definition of an organization's purpose, why it exists beyond just making money; its guiding principles, commonly referred to as core values that define how the organization interacts internally and with customers to achieve the

vision; and achievable stretch goals that link to individual and team objectives.

Of these, the most important to you and your organization are the guiding principles. Your guiding principles and purpose, when properly formed, should never change. Everything else—your business practices, goals, structures, systems, policies, and procedures—must be open for change because a constantly changing world demands it.

You may be wondering why you need to establish a vision in the first place. Why not let the organizations or teams operate by themselves and see what happens? That would work only if you really do not care whether the organization is successful or not.

By creating a vision, you provide a target to shoot for. All actions and efforts will be focused on achieving the vision. The Vision also provides employees with a sense of direction—a glimpse of where they're going. It provides a means to evaluate the organization's success and reward the people appropriately. It creates alignments, up-holds an organization's guiding principles, and reinforces its purpose, which stimulates continuous improvement. If you don't shape your own future someone else surely will.

In fact, a recent study found that most companies have strategies, but 70–90 percent of them failed to execute those strategies. Execution is where organizations fall down most often. They fail to develop the second piece of this enterprise level, which is an execution plan.

In this step you create the road map to achieve your vision. It identifies short-term tactics and actions intended to move you and the organization in the direction of the long-term vision. It also identifies the groups responsible for implementing specific actions, a timetable for completion of these activities, a benchmark for monitoring progress, and other related information. The resulting execution plan is designed to be revised and updated several times over the lifetime of the Vision.

Wright

So, after the groundwork is laid at a management level, what comes next?

Bentley

The management level actually does lay the groundwork by involving the people in the process and creating a shared vision with common values. The next three enablers are skills, motivators, and resources, which gets down to the individual level and must be included in the execution plan.

Let's start with skills. When moving toward a vision, it's a given new skills will be required. Training is not new to small businesses or to large corporations. Employees must be trained to perform specific skill sets within their job functions and to follow global policies and procedures. This is especially true in today's constantly changing business environment.

It is imperative you provide adequate training and time to practice any new procedures. This is required to develop a new comfort level to replace the old. It usually takes about four weeks to develop a new habit, so training should be designed with this fact in mind. It's not effective to present a short seminar and expect someone to be confident after one or two sessions.

Invite your staff to tell you when they feel comfortable and confident with changes. This is important when training on new technical skills. But just as important, and probably more relevant, is the ability to work successfully with each other to solve problems and facilitate change.

Based on my experience I've learned that improving people skills will take you further than any technical or job improvement skill. So work to improve your ability to help people cope with change. Ask yourself: can you and your people work in teams to solve complex problems, and can you communicate clearly in print and in person? These skills are important to accomplish your organization's purpose and vision. Among the skills that will help workers are self-motivation, time management, strong oral

and written communication, relationship building, problem-solving, information evaluation, and leadership.

In the future, even more emphasis will be placed on the skills that cannot be automated. These are termed hyper-human skills including caring, judgment, intuition, ethics, inspiration, friendliness, and imagination.

To achieve your Vision, you need the right skills, but just as important, you must understand why people do what they do—the motivators. Never forget that the greatest motivational tool is to be able to respond to the question, "What's in it for me?" For most individuals and most organizations motivation is about achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, and personal growth. So be sure the execution plan and communication addresses motivation opportunities for your people.

One way to do this is find out what individuals love to do and channel their work in this direction. Recognize an organization is a collection of individuals and address each person on his or her goals and desires. One thing to remember is you cannot motivate other people, but you can create an environment that allows each person to tap into their own personal motivation.

The DISC behavioral model is extremely helpful in this area. Challenge, power, and authority motivate the dominant behavioral style. The influential behavioral style is motivated by social recognition, group activities, and relationships. Stability and sincere appreciation motivate the steadiness behavioral style. Lastly, the conscientious behavioral style is motivated by clearly defined performance expectations, with quality and accuracy being valued.

When you approach each person based on his or her own motivational needs, you give each the ability to understand and connect in a way that makes sense to him or her. This creates buy-in and helps insure everyone is pulling in the same direction. Keeping the general workforce informed of what is happening, why it's happening, how it will affect them, and what

will be expected is essential if conflict is to be minimized and resistance neutralized.

Now of course new skills and motivating factors are important, but without resources nothing gets done. I define resources as more than money, materials, and people. It also includes processes, policies, and systems. Here are the questions you must ask when developing an execution plan to insure you have the resources required to achieve your goals: Which of our people should take on each task? How much money will the project take? How much time will this take? How many people will it take? How much material will we need? What new skills will be required of our people? What new procedures, processes, or systems are required? These are simple questions, but they're not always easy to answer. Remember, people don't plan to fail—they fail to plan. More importantly, they don't take into account what is required at the individual level to insure your vision is achieved.

Wright

Will using the 5 Enablers work for any organization or team?

Bentley

Absolutely. Looking at Figure 3, you can determine why an organization may not be getting the results they want. We said earlier the 5 Enablers are Vision, Skills, Motivation, Resources, and Execution Plan. But what happens when one or more of these five enablers is missing?

Let's start with Vision. We know Vision sets the future direction for a company. If people are unaware of the Vision, there's a lot of uncertainty. People come to work wanting to do a good job and they are going to actively do something. If what they're doing doesn't support the Vision, you're burning up resources.

Now what happens when Skills are missing? I know when I was going to become a parent I didn't have any parenting skills. I had watched my mother, so I had seen those skills, but I didn't know if I could do them. It

actually created a lot of apprehension for me. It works the same way with an organization. If you're bringing on a new software system, for example, your staff will be unsure of whether they'll be successful. They'll be afraid to fail and will experience a great deal of apprehension and anxiety.

Another result you may get is sporadic progress. In other words, if Motivation is missing, your employees don't know what's in it for them, or they don't feel like important contributors. Again, you're burning up resources and burning up dollars in labor costs; but people aren't actively engaged and progress toward the Vision is slowing down.

If Resources aren't there, but everything else is in place, there will be a lot of aggravation. And without the proper resources, it doesn't matter what else you have, you can't move forward.

Last, but not least, if we do not have an Execution Plan—the road map for accomplishment—there's disorder. Again, people will be moving in different directions, which leads to false starts. By using this as a diagnostic tool, you'll be able to see what may be missing and can jump on board with a solution to resolve the problems.
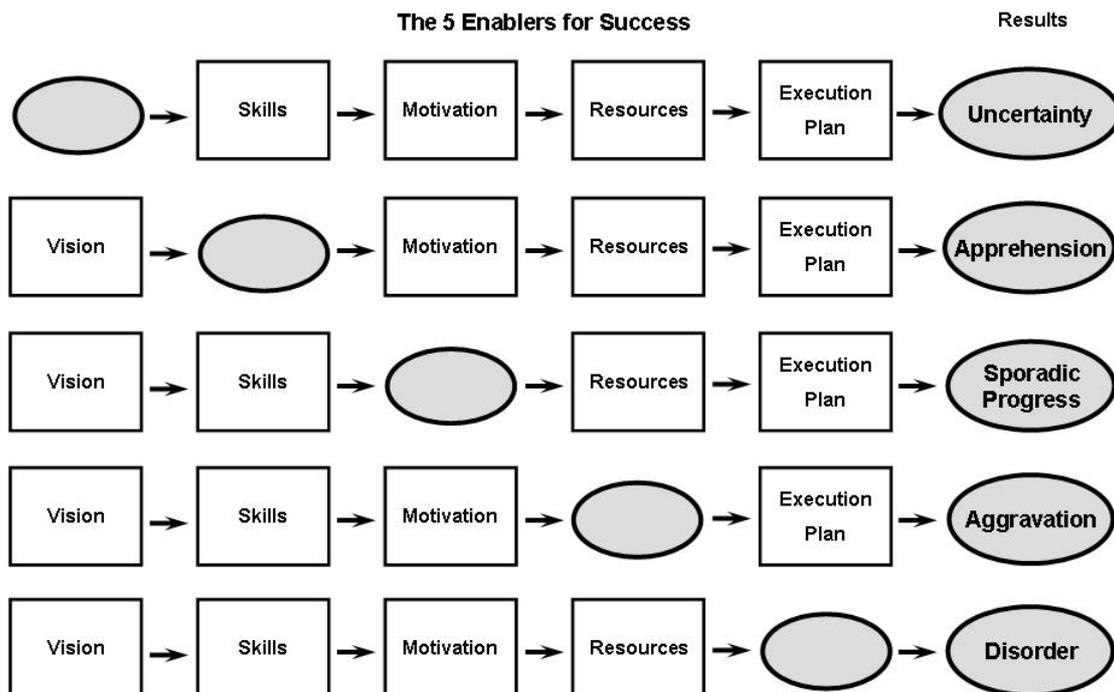

Fig. 3: 5 Enablers of Success Diagnostic Tool

Wright

After you start working with an organization, what do you find is the biggest challenge your clients face?

Bentley

The biggest challenge is waiting for the process to produce results. We all want immediate results. We live in an instant world and expect everything to happen now. We have instant pudding, microwave popcorn, and seven minutes to buns of steel, but there really are no silver bullets or magic formulas. What you need are realistic strategies for meeting your goals. I've learned there are no shortcuts to any place worth going.

Wright

What kind of results do you see when teams or companies successfully utilize the 5 Enablers of Success strategy?

Bentley

Leaders in one organization realized they had everything in place for future growth except skills. We conducted an assessment and discovered trust was an issue. Basically, the way they communicated with each other was causing stress and misunderstandings. We deployed our communication and trust process over seven months and provided individual coaching to ensure the learning worked. The reason for a process is one-day training events do not help change behavior. Behavior takes time to change so we structure our training accordingly and we get results.

The results were remarkable. We started with twenty-two people on their management team, but when we finished the process there were only sixteen left. Six people decided that they no longer wanted to work for the company because they would not buy into the CEO's long term vision. As a result of the planning process, these six people realized that they either had to choose to change and change their behavior in terms of agreeing to operate by new guiding principles or leave. They left.

Now the organization is achieving more success with fewer people. Their conversations and hall talk are about the team members' strengths and contributions instead of what is wrong with them and how much they are disliked.

If I were to sum it up, the impact of the 5 Enablers of Success strategy on individuals, teams, or organizations would be this: It inspires leadership and innovation, not dependency; it fosters communication and teamwork, not control; it produces engaged employees, not compliant ones; it encourages change, not resistance to it, it creates a culture of trust, not suspicion; and it increases positive energy, not stress. The 5 Enablers of Success strategy leads to building trust, solving problems, facilitating change, and satisfying individual and organizational needs.

Wright

What advice do you have for managers who want to create winning workplaces?

Bentley

As leaders, you have a responsibility to recognize each individual's dignity as a human being and to learn to ask questions and help each of them remove obstacles. You do this by asking questions, listening more, and acting on what you learn for the betterment of the individual and ultimately the organization.

Building trusting and productive relationships is a part of the progression of life. Discovering your own personal strength, behavioral styles, internal motivators, and needs is your first step on the path. Awareness of these attributes and needs in others increases the possibility of effective communication and connection with your coworkers, team members, customers, family, and even with yourself.

My advice is to learn until the day you die because learning is a part of the reason for living. Good leaders allow themselves to question the status quo, assumptions, and the thinking used to generate solutions including

their own. Good leaders are able to extract themselves from events and to view them objectively, even though they may have participated in or led the event. They understand what worked before may not be an appropriate solution this time.

Success in the workplace does not depend on the boss, owner, manager, leader, or employee. It is the willingness of the entire team to work toward a common goal while valuing the differences of each individual. You produce willingness by learning to manage yourself, manage relationships, and build trust. Only then can you develop others to their full potential and create an atmosphere where everyone can succeed.

Wright

It has been a pleasure speaking with you today.

Bentley

Thank you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JOHN BENTLEY is founder and President of Power 2 Transform, and brings more than twenty-five years of leadership and management experience to organizations he serves. He honed his skills during a twenty-one-year military career where he personally built and led more than twenty-five teams throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, Central America, and Asia. His "nuts and bolts" ability to translate complex people issues into everyday practical business solutions resulted in numerous industry awards: The Chamber of Commerce Order of Merit Award and the Air Education and Training Command's Lance P. Sijan Leadership Award.

Through his coaching, speaking and training, John has helped people understand that how clearly we communicate and how effectively we connect with people determine the outcome of our personal and professional lives. He excels in and enjoys helping people put together teams of significance and power and helping leaders move themselves and their staffs forward faster. Organizations large and small now benefit from his wealth of experience, which combines an understanding of human relations and business operations.

John Bentley
Power 2 Transform
1005 Ashworth St NE
Hartselle, AL 35640
Phone: 256.612.0015
Email: john@power2transform.com
www.power2transform.com