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**Brian:** Welcome to the One Advantage Podcast, exploring the intersections of pure power, culture, and agility. Your host, Jason Richman, Mike Richardson, and Leo b Co-founders of the One Advantage Community of Practice and Advantage Peer Groups. For more information, please visit us at Ideal Outcomes Inc.

**Mike:** Hey everybody. Welcome back to another episode of the One Advantage podcast. We're looking forward to a good one today. Inclusive cultures, innovative minds, and ideal outcomes. I love it. And we've got a full house today, everybody. We've got Jason here. We've got Leo here. Before we get into the topic today, of course, we always like to find out where they've been and what they've been up to.

Let's start with Leo. Where have you been? Leo?

**Leo:** Quick trip to Vegas and upcoming to Orlando, St. Louis and Boston next week before making my final trip of the year to Bozeman, Montana.

**Mike:** Oh, I think your Air Miles account did well this year. Oh, yeah. Yeah. Hopefully catch your status and maybe even got bugged up a bit.

You weren't in Vegas for the Formula One by any chance were you? The

**Leo:** week after. Oh, it was the week after. Which I was told was a good thing. 'cause they said your hotel rates would've been triple what they were and you wouldn't have been able to move anywhere. So I was all right with that.

**Mike:** And what about you, Jason?

Are you still out here in Orange County or are you back home?

**Jason:** I'm last week there was a threat of snow in Colorado and I says I'm going to Orange County.

**Mike:** I like it. I like it. It's when the rest of the country is descending into Snowmageddon. We're still getting crisp blue skies here. We're getting up to certain mid sixties, if not mid seventies.

Yeah. Yeah. And what else you been up to, Jason?

**Jason:** Oh it the, it's it's been rinse and repeat the last couple weeks for me, Mike. It's been a lot of client engagements, a lot of. Year end, wrapping up executive coaching engagements. Yep. A lot of planning for 2024 and learning the development initiatives.

So I've really spent the last couple weeks doing a lot of client kind of year end review engagements and, talking about the good, the bad, the ugly, looking for areas of continuous improvement, all that. Yeah, so really spent really focusing in the last couple weeks and really the mo month on December of just wrapping up the year end projects with clients and setting the stage for 2024.

**Mike:** Yeah. Beautiful. Excellent. Ah, great. I've. By and large been around here but up and down more and more to San Diego. Of course you probably saw, we made an announcement that in addition to everything else I do with Ref, I'm becoming a partner with Ref San Diego. I'm very excited about, being back at the front of the room, Leo of peer forums and doing my thing again there and, also speaking to other peer forums and doing a keynote for the Orange County Ref community next week, uh, which I'm really excited about. But apart from that being at home and having Zoom calls with people all over the world, of course, uh, and quite happy that I don't have the frequent flyer miles status that I used to have, but it's a bit of a pain when I do travel.

Anyway, welcome back guys. And, our topic again today, inclusive culture's, innovative minds, and ideal outcomes. Learn the keys to success in creating a di diverse and inclusive workplace where benefits include enhanced creativity and better employee engagement. Get some practical steps from identifying current cultural shortfalls.

You're developing actionable plans and measuring progress to making your journey continuous instead of a one-time effort. Jason this is right down the middle of your fairway. yOu want to get us started? Yeah. I,

**Jason:** you. In thinking about today's podcast and relating it to what I've been working on recently, something just screamed at me and it's equal opportunities across your organization.

Ah. When you come and you come into an environment and you're trying to build an inclusive culture, right? There is such a huge leadership blind spot, and I've been dealing with this a lot lately with our clients of you, some would call it favoritism. ANd it's that fact as a leader, and it's not purposeful.

It truly is a bias or a subconscious and they link it to higher efficiency, getting things done quicker. They got higher levels of trust with certain people. And what happens? Is over time from an inclusivity standpoint is you're not really spreading out equal opportunity to everybody on your teams.

And I think that's a core fundamental of being inclusive, is taking all those opportunities, everybody on your team, inherently to some degree. Want to challenged and want to have opportunity and want to pick up a new piece or be introduced to something different. And if we subconsciously we have that blind spot that we're.

In this mode of favoritism or go to the same direction or the same path all the time. We're really depleting our level of inclusivity within our organization. And it just came to me as I was preparing for this call because it, I've been dealing with that with organizations in the last six months and my executive coaching and in our group work and our peer groups and our leadership groups.

I think it's running rapid right now. Yeah. Thanks. And I think it's gotta, I think it's on a comfort level, my comfort zone and the speed of getting things done.

**Mike:** Yeah. And thanks for putting a spotlight on it because I suspect it's more prevalent than perhaps people realize. Yeah. And I think what Jason's speaking to everybody is if you're not careful, you're best at getting better, but nobody else is.

And you are really narrowing. Your capabilities and capacities, whereas you should be broadening them. Yeah. And of course, delegation, everybody is a development opportunity. Now do you delegate and forget, of course not. You need to delegate and coach and mentor.

And then that investment, you get a payoff from that investment that somebody has grown, learned and grown and failed a little bit along the way. And I know that's a huge part of your work, Leo, this sort of learning loop that you talk about. And what else Leo comes to mind for you when you start thinking about this topic?

**Leo:** tO what Jason spoke to, I think that, and things like it become the most difficult things to address because we are not even aware that we're doing them. And unless we take time to reflect and to be intentional about these things, and I think for me, when I think about 2024, intentionality really rings and really comes forward as a key word and a key concept that we have to think about if we want anything to get better.

We could cross our fingers and hope for the best, or we could actually be intentional and disciplined about these kinds of things so that we don't fall, into the behaviors that, that Jason talked about, whether it's that issue or many other things. With our, we take things for granted.

We, we make assumptions. We assume, oh, we're all on the same page, or we're all this, that, or the other, or, we don't realize that. I was doing something in a way three months ago and I've fallen off my game a little bit in the last three months, right? So I think when it comes to especially this issue of inclusivity and really being intent about making sure that you are tapping into all of the gifts that surround you in your organization, it'll be better for you and everybody.

**Mike:** Yeah. And what un what unwrapped gifts do you have in some of your people? Where Yeah. The gifts that they can potentially bring over time are still hidden from you, and how do you bring them out? One of my favorite sayings to people when I was a CEO EO everybody is a CEO's job. Is to discover the bigness in everybody and bring it out and, 'cause I believe everybody is bigger on the inside than they seem from the outside.

And that's what a leader's job is to get it to come out to the outside. Go ahead Jason. I think you were gonna pile in there.

**Jason:** Yeah, I was And it's still right in Leo's swim lane here. But we've talked about this before several times about how organizations, how much they spend and focus on the client experience, which by the way, is very important.

Your client experience impacts your business. Your retention and everything. But an area in today's world, hybrid workforces, more remote workforces, higher level of diversity, that employee experience has to come into play. If you're gonna have a level of inclusivity you have to be focusing on that employee experience.

And one way, and we're doing it across the board with all our clients, is really focusing on. Employee resource groups. Yeah, diverse employees coming together, supporting, encouraging projects, supporting resource groups, building cohorts of learning and using those cohort relationships to, to grow and to mentor and to innovate, together cross-functionally.

Yeah. So again you try to build this environment. Not only creating equal opportunities, but allow those opportunities to naturally grow and come up through the ranks, through dedicated resource groups of like-minded people, cross-functionally. I think that's a piece. We've been concentrating that a lot this whole year in 2023.

It's making major headway and we're gonna continue

**Mike:** with it in 24. Yeah, we were, we, I was in a peer forum, a ref p forum in San Diego. The other afternoon I think it was Wednesday, uh, we're forming a forum for not-for-profit CEOs. And we had a number of them there. And we were processing a case and we got to one of your favorite concepts, Leo, is you've got the verticals, but you need the horizontals to bring strength to the scaffolding kind of metaphor, right?

And we spend a lot of time talking about the horizontals. And how do we have more intentionality? As you just mentioned about the horizontals and what you are just saying, Jason, um, getting those, getting the chemistry of those horizontals to ferment together and. Tap into the power of peers and all of that kind of stuff.

And when you were talking about intentionality, Leo I'm, I've got my golf top on here because the moment we're done, I'm bolting out the door to go play 18 holes with my son. True. And because in every other walk of life, everybody, we understand that we're not gonna get better unless we practice.

Yeah, you get better by practicing, which means you're gonna make mistakes, which means you're gonna, have some mishits. I'm never gonna be as good as Leo. Leo's a really good golfer. Except if I allow myself some mulligans, I might have a fighting chance when I net the mulligans out of my score.

So I'm very happy to have mulligans and just try again. I have to be willing to fail and to practice and that's how we grow those horizontals in our business and we develop our people and it isn't just the best getting better. It's everybody. What would you weigh in on all of that, Leo?

**Leo:** And to your point, it's more than just a top down. If you want, inclusivity to be and truly permeate your organization, it has to be among. People as well. So if I'm, I want to see the best in my peers, I wanna invite them into situations where we have opportunities to work together where I may not otherwise.

It's where we build trust. It's where we, again, discover those those packages, that, that are wrapped until, we can bring forward. Those incredible gifts and talents they bring to the table. But until you work with them and until you build trust, that's when we start inviting that inclusivity far more intentionally.

And it isn't just a top down, it has to run across your organization as well. If you can get everybody, including everybody, that really starts to make a huge difference.

**Mike:** Yeah and the other thing that popped when you were talking about intentionality is, my work around agility.

You, you both know that I love to talk about luck. Luck is huge in agility. Yep. And sometimes we'll go visit a CEO's place of, factory or office building or whatever it is, and there'll be other CEOs there and they'll perhaps notice the buzz. They'll notice the team, they'll see this sort of stronger horizontal, broader base bench strength of capabilities and capacities in the team.

And they might one CEO might say to that CEO, oh, you are lucky that you've got such a broad base, strong team. I'm not so lucky as you. It's got nothing to do with luck, everybody. It's not about good luck or bad luck. It's about good intention and investment and practice and accumulating and compounding over time.

Your development and evolution and strengthening of your team so that you end up in that place where people are pointing at you saying, wow, you are really lucky. It's got nothing to do with luck. What would you add, Jason?

**Jason:** I would say that any organization, um, that, that doesn't believe in the power of inclusive cultures are.

Are gonna face consequences. There, there is study after study and research after research. Inclusivity drives results and if an organization has consequences by being non-inclusive, then I think then I think that zero tolerance to the kind of the behaviors that create non inclusivity need to be in play.

tHere has to be consequences for leaders and groups and executives that. Do have these biases that do have discrimination or harassment issues or that, that are going against the process or the initiative of being inclusive. It can't just be talked about.

It can't be a poster on a wall. Yeah. It has to be followed up with actions and behaviors. Yeah. And I think a really inclusive. Culture has that level of zero tolerance and consequences

**Mike:** built into it. Yeah. Yeah. I like that. Yeah. Leo, what else would you throw on the fire here? Yeah,

**Leo:** just this idea of investing in our employees, right?

And how important that is. I. It reminded me of one of my favorite quotes where some CEO was complaining. He said, what if I spend all this money investing in my employees? And then they just leave and the person says the alternative is you don't invest him in them, and then they stay. They stay.

But again, it's more than just that. I'd like to be able to ask employees, what have you done to invest in your coworkers? How have you done that? What does that look like? How are you helping one another? How are you inviting people into projects? How are you tapping into and accessing, all the resources around you in a way that makes the, that this is where you make the whole larger than the sum of the parts, right?

Yeah. Yeah.

**Jason:** The word.

**Mike:** Jason is off to the annual Dale Carnegie Convention next week in Scottsdale and Alan Mul is the keynote speaker. And so this will be a chance for Jason to actually meet Alan, given that Alan, gave us a quote for the front cover of our book and reviewed our chapter and all that.

And so I was sharing with them both that I was lucky enough in 1999 to be. The keynote speaker at Dale Carnegie Annual Convention because we'd made a big investment in the UK and then globally around my division using Dale Carnegie's. Great stuff. Which ideal outcomes is now a sort of on steroids.

we Had a huge investment in our people and it re and we saw it really pay off, and so they asked me to come and talk, about the case study. And then of course I ran a company again for three years in the last five years. And we made another huge investment in our people and we won it again.

And that's when I first met you, Jason, you flew into town to present us the award. Yeah. And it pay, it pays off big time. It's, you must see that time after time, Jason. Oh,

**Jason:** I ab, absolutely. Every week every client we're working with, again, today we're talking about, inclusive environments and innovative mindsets and you know how they link together, right?

Really from a leadership perspective, in my opinion, being inclusive of your team is absolutely a mindset. I had a business mentor very early on in my career and I remember as I was developing and learning and growing and moving up and across the organizations, I asked Bob, I said what are, what's a key differentiator?

What and this goes with Leo's point he just made, he says, what separates. Leaders by creating high performing teams and inclusive environments and, people working together and Bob said curiosity. You have to have an appetite of curiosity. Yep. How can you include people?

How can you work with them? I'll get you to delegate to them if you are truly not curious about who they are as an individual and the world they live in and the world around them. Yeah. And that, that, that's one of the life lessons or turning points in my career was that conversation all around the power of having curiosity around the people regarding the people you're around every day.

**Mike:** Yeah. Yeah. And curious about how other departments look at this issue. Curious about how other personality types look at this issue. Curious about how other people with their other experience bases look at this issue. Maybe even people outside of our, normal comfort zone and domain and solution set right.

Let's go talk to people from completely different walks of life and how they look at this issue. That's the power of a peer group, isn't it, Leo? When you get that sort of 360 degree rounded view from a whole, from a very diverse, inclusive process of perspectives. Then you end up shining a light.

From so many different angles that there are no blind spots left. What else would you say, Leo?

**Leo:** This is where you get back to intentionality, right? It's one thing to say people should include people and ask questions and be curious and all that, but unless you are intentional about creating forums for making that possible.

Yeah. So when you bring people together in that way, it's amazing what happens when people start to really get to know each other, not just as coworkers, but to get to know each other's story. They get to know what their aspirations and what makes them tick. And they look beyond the wrapping, right?

And they get to see who and what these people are all about. And when you think about it from the perspective of learning and development, it provides a mechanism for operationalizing learning. Because when, whether it's micro-learning or we have day offsites or whatever happens to be, we can get a lot of great content and then what happens?

We have to go back and we get sucked back into all the things we missed while we were gone doing all of our learning. And we get back into this. Frame of mind of just having to get our jobs done. Everyone gets dispersed and you don't have an intentional way of bringing people together where peer groups are hardwired to benefit.

The individuals teams are for, a collective effort or a shared work product. So when you get people coming together and saying, Hey, of all the stuff we learned, what's the one or two things that together? What if we focused on that? Because we think if we did these one or two things, they could be game changers for us.

Yeah. But now you can put them in a place where they can actually make things like that possible. Otherwise left to their own devices, it's not gonna happen. Yeah. So this is such a great way to

**Mike:** include everybody. Yeah. I couldn't agree more. As you were talking, I was thinking about, how many times do we take teams offsite to do a ropes course or.

To go drive, go-karts or go on some other, jolly together. Which of course it's nice to do every once in a while. But you know what, I would much rather, if I'm trying to build a team, I would much rather put 'em in a peer forum than take 'em on a ropes course. And that takes me back Jason, to when I was a Dale Carnegie instructor.

For a few years. And I did the Dale Carnegie program, back then, the 12 week program. And I loved it, absolutely loved it. And people would ask me, that's a, they would say, isn't that a public speaking course? And I would say, actually, no. I Said, it's a self-confidence course. And I said, think about it like this.

I could take you on, a, an offsite and I could march you up a mountain and I could march you back down again. And as a team building exercise. I said, but once you're off the mountain has no value to you. The mountain we choose in Dale Carnegie is called public speaking.

For who? For most people, that is a mountain. It's the biggest fear they have in life. So we're gonna march you up that mountain and march you back down again. anD in the process you're gonna become so much more self-confident, and the mountain has value to you. Because you will also have developed your public speaking skills.

So going back to the peer forum, I would much rather put people in a peer forum where they're gonna get value out of the self-confidence that emerges from the process, but they're also gonna get value out of the content of what gets discussed in there. anD what issues surface in there and what epiphanies and our hearts and perspectives they gain in there.

And you get the fantastic March. You upper amount marched you back down again. Team building that just naturally evolves from anything like that. What would you add, Jason?

**Jason:** To me, it just summarized the definition of continuous learning. Yeah. It's it's very difficult. It's very tedious for an individual to continually focus, try to learn something on their own every day.

Yeah. And it gets tiring to be focused on continuous learning. If you're really tapping into the people around you and you're in an inclusive environment, learning comes easy. Yeah. If you're work and you can do that in a remote workforce. If you go into work situations and meetings and with the mindset and the attitude that regardless of the outcome of this, I'm going to learn something.

That, that learn, that lesson you learned or that piece that you learned has the value that you're talking about. Yeah. And it drives growth and promotability and credibility. So it really summarizes that whole aspect of continuous learning every day.

**Mike:** Yeah. What would you add, Leo?

**Leo:** We learn better when we learn together, period. Again, social learning theory has been, has decades in mountains of research, if you will. To go back to your metaphor there, Mike, about, how and how and why it's so incredibly valuable. But I think beyond that, you a peer group setting, it's more than just about learning things more thoroughly and more deeply.

It's about giving one another that courage and that confidence and that encouragement to try things. And to really bring it forward, which is why these groups can be so powerful. This is where they operationalize this. Yeah. They have the confidence, as you pointed out to do it, but then they have that encouragement to actually make it happen.

**Mike:** Yeah. I'm doing a, I'm doing a totally virtual, uh, mini peer forum experience right now for a global or a global community. That is home based in the uk. So there's a lot of people in the UK and London. There's some people in Europe. In theory, there'll be people all over the world, but it's mostly skewed that way.

So far it's two hours once a week. And for one of those hours we do a full blown case or issue processing that one of the members brings as this is very real for me right now. Yep. And we spend an hour going through the methodology and we prepare everybody. Beforehand and we were doing the preparation yesterday morning with the lady that's bringing the case next week and unprompted by us.

We asked her, we asked her, so how's it been for you so far and unprompted by us? She said, I get so much value out of processing other people's issues. That was some, an such an unexpected benefit. And you've spoken about that many times, Leo, you call that collateral learning. I believe not just the sort of direct learning of, the, I'm coming to this program to learn X, Y, and Z.

It's the collateral learning of A, B, and C. That I also get in the mix that I didn't expect to get. Can you comment a little bit more on that?

**Leo:** Yeah. It's, you may go to a meeting for one purpose and you get all these unintended lessons. So all these accidental lessons, all these collateral learning opportunities and yeah.

And also. By participating in these cases the way she does, she's also probably not even realizing quite yet that she's honing her skills at being present, at being a better listener at asking more precise questions that, I. Again, not jumping to conclusions. Making assumptions exactly. Rushing to judgment on things.

And it's so interesting how the more you do that, the more you walk away and go, huh, I not only learned all these things, I came here to learn, but I'm way better at all these other things now. Or I learned other things that I have absolutely no idea. Yeah.

**Mike:** Know. Just like my golf game, everybody, my golf game needs a lot of practice.

It does. I admit. Just like my golf game. Leadership needs a lot of practice. It doesn't come by accident. It comes by design. No. Through work, through intentionality. And as you said, Jason, continuous learning. What would you add?

**Jason:** I would say any any leader in any organization an inclusive workforce should be a priority for them.

And guys, I. I feel strongly about this. It starts with mindset. We gotta really, we gotta self-reflect, take a look, make sure we don't have any biases or. Hidden faults there. And start with your mindset and make it a priority to include everyone on

**Mike:** your team. And indeed.

The topic title for today, everybody is Inclusive Cultures, innovative Minds, and Ideal Outcomes. Do you see what they did there, Leo? Do you see that they snuck the company name into that title there? I guess I have no question. It's not by accident. No. Very intentional. Yeah. Jason's company, everybody is called ideal outcomes.

What a great choice of company name what, over a decade ago now. Yeah. Jason. And so it really all does arrive at it all works backwards from there, doesn't it? If you want ideal outcomes, you're gonna need innovative minds. Which means you're gonna need inclusive cultures.

Correct. Final few words, Jason, what do you wanna leave our listeners with?

**Jason:** No I just wanna say, keep practicing. Keep swinging the golf club, continually take the risk to include your people and please don't fall down this trap of favoritism, if you will. For speed.

**Mike:** Yeah. Beautiful. What would you add? Final few words, Leo. I just

**Leo:** think for those of you skeptics out there who do practice golf, but realize you're never gonna get any better, this is easier than that. If you do this, you actually will get better. So

**Mike:** I am getting fractionally better with my golf, and Mulligan is my best friend.

Thanks for being here, everybody. Another episode of the One Advantage Podcast. We look forward to having you with us again next time.

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