



## Team Building At Work Tool

A collection of 40 original team building exercises to promote increased awareness and effectiveness in the areas of:

<b>Accountability</b>	<b>Networking</b>
<b>Commitment</b>	<b>Problem Solving</b>
<b>Communication</b>	<b>Professionalism</b>
<b>Creativity</b>	<b>Profitability</b>
<b>Customer Service</b>	<b>Purpose &amp; Pride</b>
<b>Enthusiasm</b>	<b>Results &amp; Performance</b>
<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Retention</b>
<b>Fun</b>	<b>Risk Taking</b>
<b>Goal Setting</b>	<b>Tact &amp; Diplomacy</b>
<b>Leadership Development</b>	<b>Trust &amp; Rapport</b>

Courtesy of [www.Leadership-Tools.com](http://www.Leadership-Tools.com)

**Copyright 2005 – All Rights Reserved.**

# Accountability

## Ready? BREAK...Old Habits!

**Purpose of this activity:** To show team members that they are accountable for continuous improvement. In order to grow and expand their skill-set they must remain open to trying out new ideas and creative solutions.

**Explanation:** Ask each team member to identify something very basic, something they are used to doing almost daily. For this team building idea, each task must be something that they can demonstrate right now. Ideas might include:

- Putting on their coat
- Tying their shoestrings
- Combing their hair
- Putting on their make-up
- Writing their name

Once everyone has identified their common task, explain to the group that they need to work in partnership with another team member and they must complete the task using the opposite hand that they are used to using.

Encourage each team member to try his or her best knowing full well that it will be uncomfortable. Instruct the teams to take turns conducting the task and observing the other person as he or she attempts to complete his or her task.

After the first round, instruct the teams to repeat the exact same tasks.

Once two rounds of the tasks are complete, discuss the importance of:

- Being willing to attempt new ways to solve common problems.
- The more you do something different, the easier it becomes.
- Knowing that it's FEAR of the unknown that is our greatest enemy
- Challenging ourselves to seek out new ways of improving service delivery and product quality
- Holding each other accountable for bringing new ideas to the table versus simply leaning back and being an "order-taker".

## **US vs. THEM-blem**

**Purpose of this activity:** Increasing personal awareness of how team members can positively or negatively influence the work environment by how they choose their words. This team building idea holds employees accountable for the words they use if your meetings and in the workplace.

**Explanation:** Too often, employees respond to a newly introduced challenge by using words that reflect poorly on the employee as well as on the team.

Although the employee may have good intentions, they mistakenly use words such as:

- Sure, **but** are you sure we can do that?
- I'll **try** my best.
- I **can't** say for sure, but I'll give it a shot.
- I **won't** promise anything, but I'll see what I can do.

In the above examples, while the overall message seems to be positive, gives off a sense of doubt by stating "BUT, TRY, CAN'T, & WON'T".

Employees often unknowingly send out messages of doubt, uncertainty and low self-esteem when they continually respond in the above manner.

Coaching your employees to become more aware of this in their everyday life, and especially when they are in your meetings and on the phone with customers and/or business associates, will aid them in their future success.

Encourage your employees to replace "BUT, TRY, CAN'T, & WON'T" with more positive and constructive words such as:

- AND
- WILL
- CAN

To hold employees accountable for their words and to encourage team members to become more in tune with the language of the overall team, identify or create a special item known as the **THEM-blem** award. The item can be something like a rubber chicken, a stuffed animal, or a trophy of some sort.

Whenever a team member catches another team member using negative or unproductive language, they get to pass on the award to the offending team member – in effect holding that team member accountable for their choice of words.

The person who holds the Them-blem award is now the person who must identify someone else using language unbecoming of your team.

Make the point to your team that negative and unhelpful language is fine for our competitors, but not for US. That's what THEY do, but WE are better than that. Creating an US vs THEM mentality is a team building idea that can do wonders to promote teamwork and a sense of unity.

# Commitment

## **Mirror, Mirror.**

**Purpose of this activity:** To help teams clarify what they want to become known for, what they aspire to create and hold up as their team slogan or battle-cry. To improve team commitment by clarifying for each team member what standards they must uphold in order to remain a valued member of the team.

**Explanation:** Take the letters of your team name. For example, if your team name is the Northside team, then your team needs to take the first letter of the name (in this case the first letter is N) and agree on a word that begins with the letter N that properly describes the team you are committed to create and maintain.

Continue along the same task with the second, third and fourth letter of the team name until all of the letters are used. To complete our example, here are some team building ideas and words that your team might choose as they work to define the

**NORTHSIDE** team:

- **N** = Never Give Up!
- **O** = Optimistic
- **R** = Resolute
- **T** = Tenacious
- **H** = High Spirited
- **S** = Steadfast
- **I** = Insistent
- **D** = Dogged or Determined
- **E** = Efficient

Now ask yourself, if you heard the above words connected to your team name, how would that make you feel? Makes you feel terrific, right? That's the whole idea.

## **Commitment – Self-Assessment**

**Purpose of this activity:** To raise the awareness of your team members regarding their personal commitment to the team. This self-assessment will ask important questions that will make employees re-think what they can and should be doing more of, less of, better or different.

**Explanation:** Introduce this exercise to your team by letting them know that you are going to provide them with a quick sel-assessment that you want them to complete. Ensure your team that their answers will remain confidential and that you will not be asking them to turn in their answers.

However, do let your team know that you will be asking them to identify areas for group discussion that they feel the team can benefit from if they were to modify activities and behaviors. The goal is to identify areas that the team can do more of, less of, better or different.

Provide the survey with the following team building ideas to each team member:  
*(Team members must rate themselves on each question on a scale of 1-5; 1 = Never, 5 = Always)*

- Fully participates in team meetings?
- Demonstrates a positive attitude?
- If I have an issue I deal with it directly with that person rather than complaining to a third party?
- I listen openly to new ideas?
- I sincerely celebrate others success?
- I follow through on anything I agree to do?
- I represent my team positively to non-team members?
- I willfully share the load?
- If facts are not clear, I check for clarity rather an make assumptions?
- I look for opportunities to make others stars?
- I meet deadlines?
- I take the initiative to do whatever needs to be done?

After each team member has completed their self-assessment, ask your team to now put the name of another team member by each question on the self-assessment that they feel best fits the perfect example. *(By doing this, you will be able to reward and recognize your best team members while at the same time establishing your expectations with your entire team.)*

As the leader, you now have a wonderful opportunity to lead the discussion and brainstorm with your team. Try to have your team members talking the majority of the time versus you lecturing your team. Ask team members to share what stood out to them while taking the self-assessment. Ask what they learned. Ask what anyone identified that they now feel they need to do more of, less of, better or different.

Ask team members to recognize other team members to exemplify what all team members should aspire to for each of the questions. As the leader, take time to thank and reward the employees who are identified as top performers.

As a group, identify your top three or five objectives that you want to accomplish as a result of this exercise.

Keep in mind that your team benefits simply by having a positive discussion of these important team building ideas.

# Communication

## **It's Showtime!**

**Purpose of this activity:** To promote relationship building and communication by providing workplace-friendly shows that can help to connect team members.

**Explanation:** Have you ever arrived early to a meeting and noticed that no one is really talking to one another. Maybe their quickly saying hello as they grab a cup of coffee but then quickly retreat to find a place to sit.

Leaders can utilize the pre-meeting time to their advantage by implementing one of these ice breaker ideas. Simply utilize a VCR or DVD player and a television. Place it at the front of the room and provide a movie or show that might have a theme that is related to the topics of your meeting.

For example, let's assume your meeting is focused on the topic of *Change*.

Choose a movie or show that you believe might help begin a discussion about how *change* has always been a part of any successful organization. You can make the point that the events of the present-day require us to continually take ownership of leading our team through changing times.

The show can be something just as simple as one of those old Dean Martin variety shows, or Bob Hope, or Johnny Carson, or a performance from the Rat Pack. You could play an old Saturday Night Live show or an old Steve Martin movie.

Anything from the past that appeals to the mass market can be effective ice breaker ideas. These shows can spark discussion on how one of the performers or actors from long ago has had to change and evolve in his or her career in order to grow and expand their skill-set.

These old shows are fun to watch, and they will no doubt bring back fun memories for your team members. The laughter that is heard will liven up the atmosphere of the room and help to wake folks up and prepare them for a fun and engaging team meeting.

One more added bonus is that your team might just realize that you actually have a good sense of humor. :)

## **Outlook = Outcome**

**Purpose of this activity:** To teach team members that they control their outcome by how they choose to see the world. How they choose to communicate their feelings and opinions to others.

**Explanation:** In general, people tend to either react negatively or respond positively to any given situation.

Use the definitions below to spark discussion among your team as to how they communicate and go about identifying issues and solving problems. Leaders can use the following definitions as a leaders guide, but try to get your team to come up with the definitions themselves.

There are three categories of people when it comes to how they see the world:

1. **The Victim** - this person is the complainer, the blamer, the attacker, seeing the glass always half empty, it's always someone else fault.

He believes that someone is always out to get him. He has no hope for a brighter tomorrow and he puts himself first and is quick to overreact to any given situation.

2. **The Passenger** - this person remains neutral. He makes every attempt not be noticed, flies in under the radar and is careful not to make waves or call attention upon himself.

He appears satisfied on the outside but may very well be talking trash behind everyone else's back. Depending on the situation and who he is talking to he may respond positively or react negatively.

The passenger goes through life simply as an order-taker. He let's the world happen around him and waits for circumstances to happen to him.

3. **The Leader** - this person has developed an instinct to thoughtfully respond to situations. He or she makes every effort to hold his or her self fully accountable for the events taking place in his or her life.

A leader expects things to work out to his advantage. He believes in himself and his team members. He knows there is a solution for every problem. He is a free thinker and doesn't allow others to determine his path.

A leader puts other first, because he knows that by doing this his team will respect him and make every effort to ensure the team is successful.

**KEY POINT: Our outlook commands our outcome.**

Now that you've placed your team in the proper emotional state, now is the perfect time to ask them an important question.

Ask your team members to get out a sheet of paper and list every single thing about their job that they like and appreciate.

The list will quickly grow as people begin to focus their thoughts on what they'd miss if they didn't work for your organization. For example: income, retirement/401k, heating and air conditioned workplace, benefits, co-workers, business associates, career development and training, short commute, free parking, challenging work, etc.

Completing this exercise is a great way to communicate and remind your people of all the good things in life as well as all the great things going on in the workplace. For new employees, this is one of our most effective ice breaker ideas.

# Creativity

## Silly Me!

**Purpose of this activity:** To lead your team to think more creatively. This activity depends on the leader's willingness to have fun and put his or her self out there, perhaps being a little silly, in order to take away the fear and anxiety team members might have over making a "silly" suggestion that could be worth millions.

**Explanation:** Create a short audio or video "INVITATION" that announced the agenda of your next strategic planning meeting.

As the leader, it's your job to rally your team and get everyone on board with thinking of ways to produce more revenue and be more cost efficient.

Utilizing a combination of music clips, photographs, video and audio clips, illustrate your invitation to your employees. Let them see your humor and fact that you want this process to be fun and entertaining.

It's best to write out your invitation first. Then, think of ways to illustrate the words in a fun and humorous way.

For instance:

- **To all of my TOP GUNS** (play the sound track of the movie Top Gun in the background, showing Tom Cruise high-fiving his co-pilot as they say "I feel the need for speed!")
- **You are cordially invited to attend a breath-taking event.** (play a clip from Close Encounters of the Third Kind as human catch their first glimpse of aliens)
- **As a member of this unstoppable team,** (play an assortment of athletic clips in quick progression of basketballs being slam dunked, football players making touchdowns and wrestlers being body slammed, etc.)
- **I'm counting on you to help lead this team to victory.** (show clip of a scoreboard counting down, followed by scenes from a Rocky movie as the wins the heavyweight title of the world!)

Hopefully the above example inspired your own ideas of how you can take these team building activities to the next level. Perhaps you film some footage of yourself doing some crazy stunts and use those clips to make your key points.

With today's technology being so widely available, the options are truly limited only by your own imagination.

The more engaged the leader is in the creative process, the better the team will ultimately perform. So, go out there, BE SILLY, and inspire your team to have fun.

## **Finding The Hook**

**Purpose of this activity:** To assist employees in capturing their creative ideas and not losing the opportunity to make a real difference in the success of the team.

**Explanation:** It's a well known fact that every successful songwriter carries a pen and paper where ever they go. The reason for this is that they must capture an idea or a phrase for a song immediately when they think about it or they might very well forget the idea within a matter of hours or even minutes.

Capturing ideas is a skill that every good leader should promote.

Quality ideas are the lifeblood of every successful organization. However, many times your employees might identify terrific ideas but never share them simply because they don't remember the idea, or because they are never asked.

As the leader, you can promote creative thinking and increase awareness of this issue by making this a topic of your next staff meeting.

It's a fact that whatever we focus on, we tend to gravitate towards. Perhaps you've heard the old saying, "When the student is ready, the teacher will appear."

The same is true as you challenge your team members to focus on coming up with new, original and innovative ideas. The more they are aware of the need to think creatively, and the more you ask them to contribute creative ideas to the team, the more they will positively respond with some wonderful, and potentially profitable, new ideas.

Songwriters are always seeking "the hook", or catchphrase that will stick in the music listeners mind. You want your people to be seeking "the hook" or the one simply tweak to the system that will help the company produce more or spend less.

Let your team members know that you may not have all the answers, but that you are confident in their collective intelligence and creativity to find multiple solutions to key issues.

Encourage team members to seek out "hooks" when speaking to business associations, with customers, and even competitors.

Meet again in one or two weeks to discuss their findings. This meeting will certainly be an eye opener for everyone!

# Customer Service

## **Play-It Backward, Flip-It Forward**

**Purpose of this activity:** Increase awareness of the importance of living up to your Customer Service standards. Clearly communicate what customer service activities are expected from all staff.

**Explanation:** This is one of our most simple, yet highly effective, free team building exercises.

Leaders can quickly engage team members in a discussion asking the following two questions:

1. **What can we do today to make certain that our first customer closes his account today?**
2. **What can we do today to make certain that we obtain zero sales today?**

Although your team may mistakenly assume you've gone mad. Remain serious in your quest for logical and realistic answers to each question.

Write all the responses on a flip chart so you can refer to them later.

Next, make a point of recognizing that at times you're organization make very well have been guilty of some of the errors listed. Make another point of telling your employee that many of your competitors are currently and will continue to make some of these same mistakes, which will cost them loyal customers.

Now, it's time to turn all those negative practices into positives. As you turn each negative action into a positive goal for your team you can state, "Okay, let's Flip-It Forward."

Your team has already identified the things that they must NOT do to a customer. It should now be very simple for them to identify the right things they should be doing in order to retain existing customers and attract new customers.

As a team, identify your top 3-5 goals and create specific ways for measuring your success. Goals should be written clearly – stating how much, of what, by when, by whom – for each goal.

## **Service for Results**

**Purpose of this activity:** Teach your team the direct correlation between their ability to minimize and quickly resolve customer issues through top-notch customer service, and the organizations ability to grow and maximize profits.

**Explanation:** Smart leaders understand that RESULTS are the one main reason for constantly measuring and improving customer service standards.

The results produced by your team will most likely be directly impacted, positively or negatively, by how well the front line employees are treating their customers.

These free team building exercises provide an easy way for leaders to impress upon their employees that above all else, their focus can never be taken away from what the customers are actually experiencing.

In your next team meeting, ask your team to identify 3 ways that they can show their customer how much they care and appreciate their business.

Zig Ziglar says, “People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care.”

As a team, identify 3 things that employees can do to show the customer how much they care about:

- The Customer
- The Department or Team
- Their Job
- The Company

Create key phrases that team members can work in to their customer service scripts. After hearing how happy these employees are, your customers will feel an increased sense of gratitude and appreciation for your organization and for your employees.

As employees continue to make positive statement to their customers about their job and the great company they work for, they will begin to realize they really mean what they are saying and they will feel a renewed sense of dedication to the organization.

# Enthusiasm

## Reflect the Positive

**Purpose of this activity:** To re-energize employees and provide fun solutions to team issues.

**Explanation:** Leaders must constantly be looking for ways to re-fresh and re-new the workplace. Providing fun and creative ideas, through free team building activities, is most helpful to a team that is experiencing a low point.

The key to this exercise is getting your employees to see themselves differently. You can utilize a variety of props to help you quickly accomplish this with your team.

For example, provide each team member with big circus sun glasses and have them attached big smiley face stickers on the front of the glasses. Don't have any glasses? No problem, just have them stick the stickers right on their forehead.

Hey, it's no big deal. It won't leave a scar and the whole idea here is to have some fun, so got for it, okay?

Anytime you feel the room becoming too serious, slap a smiley face sticker on your forehead and remind folks that "Our future is only getting brighter."

Yes, your team will probably think you are nuts. BUT THEN YOU TELL THEM HOW THEY CAN EARN THEIR STICKER OFF THEIR FOREHEAD. AH, now everyone's listening.

Instruct your team that every few minutes you will call on a team member and that person will have an opportunity to make a witty comment or joke about the "smiley face" and then they can remove their sticker.

With the glasses and the sticker in place, direct your team to tackle the important task or issue at hand. Enjoy the laughs and the team building aspect of the exercise.

Write down all the funny statements. After everyone has earned their sticker off, take a vote for the best comments, award prizes and have fun

## **Bits O'Honey**

**Purpose of this activity:** To support and maintain a positive, energetic working environment among all staff members. To raise confidence and help promote a sense of teamwork.

**Explanation:** Everyone likes to be recognized and appreciated. To some extent they even expect that it's the boss's job to do that on a fairly regular basis.

However, sometimes the boss can provide the opportunity for other team members to be the one to praise, recognize and reward their co-workers.

This is one of our easiest free team building activities. All it takes is a little bit of planning, some pencils and pieces of paper.

Prior to your next meeting, perhaps during each of your weekly one-on-one coaching sessions with your team members, ask each member of the team to write down on a small piece of paper something nice and positive about each of her co-workers.

Instruct your employees to be brief in their description, while at the same time providing enough information so that their comments will be clearly understood.

Ask each team member to hand these notes in to you as you will be collecting them. As the leader your job is to sort all of the notes and to gather the collection of positive comments in to a small package for each employee. You might even want to wrap the package up with a nice big bow!

At your next staff meeting, present the Bits O'Honey package to each employee. It's not necessary to have people read theirs aloud. Simply have your team open and read their notes to themselves.

Watch their faces. Watch their body language. Take particular note of how the mood of the room will lighten up as everyone is enjoying the gift of praise and recognition.

You might begin a quick conversation with your team about how this gift made them feel, pointing out that each team member has the power to give gifts like this to other co-workers at any time. Encourage your team members to look for opportunities and reward and recognize each other.

# Expectations

## Expect the Best

**Purpose of this activity:** To illustrate and clarify for your team what your expectations are. To show team members exactly what it is that you are looking for as they work with each other and as they serve their customers.

**Explanation:** The leader is responsible for continually inspecting and measuring job performance. This highly effect teamwork activity will assist you in completing this task in a fun and creative way.

At your next team meeting, have your team make a list of the top 5 or 10 key activities of their job. Ask each team member to pair up.

Over the next week, it will be your expectation that each team member complete a picture collage of their partner, with proof in pictures of the employee meeting the expectations of his or her job.

At the next staff meeting, each employee will make their presentation to you and the team, highlighting their partner employee as they are “caught in the act” of delivering quality customer service, supporting other team members and working creativity to improve production and improve efficiencies.

This teamwork activity is a great way for you to add energy to the workplace and delegate some responsibility of recognizing employees to other team members.

## **No More Secret Identify**

**Purpose of this activity:** To clarify expectations of the team and to assist team members in understanding the value they bring to their customers and to the organization.

**Explanation:** As a group, work with your team to make a list of the Key Value Point and/or Benefits that they bring to their Customers and to the Company.

First, focus on the Customer and have your team clarify **What We Offer?** For example:

- The service or product that is sold
- A commitment to quality and customer service
- A strong sense of ownership to make things right
- Quality relationship building through regular contact
- etc.

Next, still focusing on the Customer, ask your team to clarify their expectations of **How We Perform?** For example:

- Warm smiles and eye contact
- Using the customer's name during each interaction
- Always thank the customer for their business and let them know you value their relationship
- Ask customers what you can do better to serve them – gaining competitive feedback

# Fun

## Hot Potato!

**Purpose of this activity:** To add fun and energy to a team meeting. To assist with product knowledge retention.

**Explanation:** Leaders should check in and inspect the product knowledge of their employees on a regular basis. This unique team building activity is a fun way to review and inspect the level of product knowledge for your team.

Create some sort of object that can be quickly passed from one employee to the other. Objects might include a ball or beanie baby or stuffed animal. This object is your HOT POTATO.

Gather your team in a circle and explain to them that the object of the game to NOT get caught with the Hot Potato. Whoever gets caught with the Hot Potato after 2 minutes of play, will be asked to complete a task no one else wants. This task should be something simple like doing the lunchroom dishes or something similar in nature. (Keep in mind, the idea here is not to make it a negative, but simply to provide some motivation to NOT get caught with the Hot Potato)

With your team members in a circle, set your stop watch for two minutes and inform your team that you'll be asking product knowledge questions. As soon as one person answers a question correctly, he or she can quickly toss the Hot Potato to another employee. It's now that employee's turn to answer the next question.

As the 2 minute time period approaches, you read your questions quickly so the person answering the question has time to answer. If you run out of time in the middle of a question, allow the person to answer the question. If she answers correctly, she does not have to keep the Hot Potato, but if she answers incorrectly she is the Hot Potato winner!

You can be flexible in determining how many rounds you choose to play. You can use this unique team building activity to engage your employees and infuse a little bit of fun into an otherwise mundane activity.

## **That's Entertainment**

**Purpose of this activity:** To provide a fun and entertaining way to engage your employees and effectively reward and recognize top performers.

**Explanation:** Whenever you have an opportunity to reward and recognize your employees, you can easily elevate the level of energy and excitement by making your presentation into a competitive exercise.

Identify your top two performers for any certain task or area of performance.

Recognize each individual for their performance. Be specific in your praise and give clear examples of what each employee has done to be deserving of your recognition.

Explain that both top performers have won an opportunity to win a larger prize. It can be something as simple as movie tickets, lottery tickets or a bottle of wine.

Bring out two hoola-hoops. Have each team member try out the hoola-hoop. Give each participant a minute or so to practice and prepare. Keep in mind; most people haven't used a hoola-hoop since they were in grade school.

Watch the team observe these top performers as they practice their hoola-hoops. The fun has already started!

Instruct each top performer to get ready, get set, GO! The person who can hoola-hoop the longest will win the Prize.

This simple activity is a sure-fire winner.

# Goal Setting

## Resume Builder

**Purpose of this activity:** To provide an ice breaker activity that will help to identify your next project or team leader.

**Explanation:** This exercise is a fun way to get your people involved in identifying their next team or project leader.

Let's say you have a new project that you need someone to lead. You have a lot of existing employees who have a high desire to become the new team leader.

Since your team members already know each other, you can be certain that there is already some office politics going on as people begin to jockey for position for the new role.

Your task as the leader is to not only identify the new leader, but also to do it in a way that supports the new leader. The new leader must have credibility in the minds of those that will be working for him.

Gather your group together and create ice breaker activities that get everyone involved in defining the key roles and responsibilities of the new prospective leader.

Next, get everyone involved in defining the skills that are necessary for this new leader to be effective in the role.

What you are doing here is getting your entire group to help define and eventually identify their new leader. By getting the feedback of the group, you are already helping to build valuable credibility for the person who is ultimately selected.

Give everyone a blank resume form. The resume form will have areas that need to be filled in for the following:

- Skills
- Accomplishments
- Leadership Abilities
- Team Building Abilities
- Customer Service Abilities
- Education Requirements

Inform your team that they cannot complete their own form. Instead, they need to talk with various members of their team to discuss and agree on what is needed from the new leader who is selected to head the team.

Each team member, upon completing his or her resume form will hand it in to you to assess. These forms provide great tools for group discussion and also provide insightful information for the leader to analyze as she works through the important process of selecting the new team or project leader.

Once you've selected your new team leader, you can make the announcement to the team that in fact THEY selected their new leader via the process of defining the perfect resume for the job.

## Details for Results

**Purpose of this activity:** To engage the team in identifying the smallest details of a project in order to ensure maximum positive impact to the organization.

**Explanation:** While we often hear very well meaning, yet somewhat negative, thinkers make comments like, “The devil is in the details”, it sounds much more productive to turn this phrase around and state, “Success is in the details”.

When leaders are confronted with an opportunity for action planning for any particular goal or objective, this is a great time to get your team involved in creating a clearly defined plan.

The more detailed the team can be in identifying every key aspect of the task, the more likely they are to succeed.

First take your group through a short exercise by asking them to complete the following:

- Write down your next vacation destination.
- Make a list of tasks that must be completed prior to leaving (booking travel and lodging, arranging for pets, packing, arranging itinerary, planning to be absent from work, etc.)
- Make a list of things that must be planned for during their trip. (meals, activities, childcare, etc.)
- Make a list of items that must be addressed upon your return from your trip (paying bills, unpacking, getting photos developed, getting kids ready to return to school, etc.)

Team building and ice breaker activities point out to your employees the fact that there are a multitude of small details that must be identified and pre-planned in order to limit the number of mistakes that are made, and to ensure the ultimate outcome of the project.

Make the point that most people take more time to plan their vacation than they do to plan their retirement. This is why 65% of all retirees must count on government assistance. Unfortunately, the government will not be here to bail the team out if they fail to properly plan for the success of this project.

Highly effective teams and organizations are very detailed in their pre-planning. The more you put on the table before you begin the project the better prepared you will be to adjust and adapt to issues and barriers you encounter throughout the process.

Now that you’ve made your point, get your team on track with planning their next greatest Success in a highly organized and detailed way.

# Leadership Development

## **No = Don't Know**

**Purpose of this activity:** To encourage team members to educate their clients rather than accepting No for an answer. To ultimately increase sales and bottom-line results.

**Explanation:** Ice breaker activities can be used to teach sales management lessons.

Team members should always respond to an initial “NO” from a client, as a probable “I don’t know.”

The reason for this is that most customers instinctively say no because they are busy and really don’t want to make the time to fully consider your offer. They are constantly being bombarded with sales offers and would prefer to get on with their list of tasks to complete for the day.

Your challenge as the leader is to teach your sales staff how to turn those “No’s” into an opportunity to educate their clients so that they truly understand the cost of saying no.

Until your customer is fully educated about the benefits of your product or service, they truly do not know whether or not it makes sense for them to buy it.

The customer must understand the true value of what they are being offered. If your sales staff can define the value as being much larger than the actual price of the product or service, your sale will skyrocket!

Use this icebreaker activity to help your sales staff define every possible key benefit of your product or service.

Provide each team member with a form to list every potential benefit of the product or service. Ask team members to mingle and discuss with the many benefits available to their customers. Encourage out-of-the-box thinking and reward your employees for the most creative and unique ideas.

Gather the lists and provide a master list for your sales employees. They are now armed with the tools that will help them turn a “No” into an “Absolutely!>”

## Winner's Choice

**Purpose of this activity:** To teach team members the important life lesson of choosing to respond to adversity rather than simply reacting to it.

**Explanation:** Mary Crowley once said, “We are free up to the point of choice, then the choice controls the chooser.”

Our success in our job and in our life is directly dependent upon the personal choices we make. In order to ensure your team members are making good choices you must make certain that they understand the difference between reacting and thoughtfully responding to any given situation.

As leaders we simply must not allow ourselves the luxury of having a bad day in public. Does that mean we never have a bad day? - not at all. However, the leader is disciplined enough to realize that it does no one any good him to share his bad day with others as it will only encourage others to do the same thing. If everyone were constantly telling his or her tales of woe, the workplace would become a very dismal environment.

At your next staff meeting ask your team members to identify three scenarios that occurred recently that was disappointing or not in line with their expectations. List one instance in each of the following three categories: *(Ensure your team that you will not be asking them to hand these in, the paper is for their eyes only.)*

1. Personal Relationship
2. Customer Relationship
3. Co-worker Relationship

Next, instruct your team to list what actions they took following their disappointing discovery.

Finally, ask them the following question. **In hindsight, did you emotionally react, or did you thoughtfully respond?**

Make the point that an emotional reaction tends to be an indulgence on the part of that person. It's a choice that is made almost without contemplation and leaves the person open to being perceived as being undisciplined, unprofessional and unstable.

On the other hand, a thoughtful response will almost certainly help to gain credibility and respect from others. A thoughtful response demonstrates maturity and discipline.

Make the final point that if your doctor prescribes you a medicine for an illness, it's most desirable to “respond” to the medicine rather than have a “reaction” to the medicine.

Teaching your team members this important life lesson will assist them in virtually every aspect of their personal and professional life. They will always remember who taught them how to make the Winner's Choice.

# Networking

## Lunch Anyone?

**Purpose of this activity:** To teach team members the importance of learning more about the people that they interact with. The ability to make a personal connection with a client or co-worker is an important way to ensure customer and employee retention, as well as increased sales opportunities.

**Explanation:** This ice breaker and team building exercise provides a tasty opportunity for team members to connect with one another while learning an important sales management skill.

The benefits of simply taking someone out to lunch are often missed on those who do not plan for an outcome. If you are going to take someone out to lunch, you should have a goal in mind.

However, the first goal should be to LISTEN and LEARN as much as possible about what makes the other person tick.

As you learn more about this individual, you should be trying to identify common interests that you can discuss in an effort to build rapport and connect with the other person.

Ensure that you are doing your part to uphold your end of the conversation. Don't allow yourself to take over the conversation and make certain that your comments are more about the other person versus only about yourself. Asking questions to learn more about someone else shows that you are sincerely interested in them and is flattering to the other individual.

After explaining the importance of networking and connecting, assign your team members to go to lunch with one another sometime over the coming week. Provide them with the task of learning more about the other person. Seek to find out fun facts that they would otherwise never know.

In addition, ask them to identify common areas of interest and topics that helped them make a more personal connection with each other.

Bring your group back the following week to present their findings and enjoy learning a whole lot about your team than you would have ever learned otherwise. This icebreaker and team building exercise will provide a terrific opportunity to learn and laugh together with your team.

## **Library Inventory**

**Purpose of this activity:** To teach team members a way to learn more about those they meet and to recognize common areas of interest that can be utilized to create more solid personal and business relationships.

**Explanation:** A famous speaker once explained that whenever he visited someone's home he couldn't help but take inventory of the various books and magazines that were visible throughout the house.

The reason he became so accustomed to noticing book titles is that he recognized that it gave important clues to the individual's outside interests.

Ask your team members to quickly make a list of all the books they've read in the last 3-60 days. Ask them to also identify the book they are currently reading.

As each person shares their list, seek to identify common ties between the types of books they are reading and ask them why they chose those particular books. Ask what got them interested in certain genres, etc. The details that will come from their responses will provide important insights into your team members outside interests.

As a leader you might also take note of titles that employees are reading that assist them in their current roles. It's easy to recognize who reads just to escape, and who reads to learn and grow.

Famous author and speaker, Ken Blanchard encourages every person to become a lifelong learner. So what does your 30 day Library consist of? Are you seeking out new information and resources that will assist you in getting to the next phase of your career?

Take a personal inventory of your library today – and help your team members to do the same.

# Problem Solving

## Walk-A-Bout

**Purpose of this activity:** To encourage team members to take time to effectively problem solve by creating win-win solutions to important challenges.

**Explanation:** At your next staff meeting instruct all team members to arrive with their walking shoes on. (*No high heels for the team building game.*)

Divide your team into groups of three or more.

Assign each group to a specific problem that the team is responsible for.

In each group, assign a timekeeper, a scribe (someone to take notes), and a crossing guard (watch out for traffic!).

Each group will physically take a long walk outside. The goal here is take people outside their normal working routines. Critical thinking is supported as people are challenged to work outside their normal mode of operation.

Let each group know that upon their return they will be expected to present their win-win solution to the larger group for consideration.

Part of their presentation must include some sort of key message that was inspired by something they saw outside during their Walk-A-Bout. The purpose here is to have some fun and add some creativity to the process.

Reward and recognize those teams that provide the most unique and effective win-win solutions.

## All Options

**Purpose of this activity:** To teach your sales team that they must never short change themselves of additional opportunities to sell their product or service. Thinking outside the box for added benefits and value can create huge upside potential for maximum sales and earnings.

**Explanation:** During this team building game exercise, introduce to your staff to a product that has an established common use. As an example, let's use women's pantyhose. (you can use whatever product you like)

Instruct your team that their goal will be to package and promote women's pantyhose as a totally new and different product. They will also need to identify a list of features and benefits that will appeal to a male market.

The key to this task will be to unlock the door and to become totally open to ALL OPTIONS.

Each team will then be asked to make their sales presentation. Here are a couple examples of what you might hear, so be open to having a few laughs with your team:

- Leg warmers for aging athletes w/poor circulation
- Thermal underwear for the avid hunter
- Micro-Scuba Gear

Rest assured the ideas would keep you on the edge of your seat.

After completing the presentations, point out to your team how interesting it is to hear so many different solutions to what at first seemed to be an impossible problem.

Now take that same level of exuberance and instruct your team to continue their out-of-the-box thinking and turn toward how you can increase your market share by attracting new target groups to your product or service.

# Professionalism

## Area Clean-Up

**Purpose of this activity:** To teach team members the importance of keeping a professional distance between personal and workplace issues. This life lesson elevates professionalism in the work environment.

**Explanation:** Everyone has experienced days where they have a difficult time of not allowing ones personal issues work their way into their professional environment.

As the leader, it is your job to understand first and foremost that this is a common issue that you will definitely need to address one way or the other.

The key here is to address the issue before it actually happens by setting clear expectations for your workplace.

One creative manager went so far as to purchase a large golden coat hook. He proudly stood by the shiny new coat hook as his team walked into the office on Monday morning. Later, during his morning staff meeting, as if on cue, one of his employees asked what the golden coat hook was for.

The manager explained that he placed it there as a reminder to himself and a symbol to the team. He said, “You see, when I come into the office each morning, I’m going to mentally place all my personal issues onto this coat hook. I’m going to leave them right there securely on the coat hook knowing full well that every night before I go home, I will be able to walk over and pick up right where I left off with those issues. My goal is to ensure I never allow my personal issues to get in the way of my professional roles and responsibilities.”

He then went on to say, “and folks, let me be clear, this is my expectation for each one of you as well. As a team, we each must commit to this end because we owe it to one another to be at our best and we are each empowered to hold one another accountable for this expectation. So rest assured, when you come in each morning, leave your personal issues on the hook where they will be safe and secure. You have my word that they’ll remain right there for you to pick up each night before you leave.”

With a smile and a nod, each team member understood the analogy and realized that his request was a perfectly legitimate expectation for the workplace.

Frank Tyger once said, “Professionalism is knowing how to do it, when to do it, and doing it.”

## **In Demand**

**Purpose of this activity:** To raise the awareness and the commitment of your team members by pointing out the rewards for raising one's personal expectations of self.

**Explanation:** Employees should Not mistake this teamwork exercise for demanding more as a call to unionize. It's not.

Demanding more of your self is a key trait of successful leaders. Michael Jordan credits his success to the fact that he has always demanded more of himself than any coach or teammate would ever dare expect.

Leaders who excel in business, sports or any vocation, upon hearing the goals and objectives of their immediate supervisors, will instinctively start making a plan to deliver more, produce more to ensure excellence in every key measurement.

Sounds like a lot of work, right? Absolutely, however these leaders are passionate about wanting to learn and grow in their career so the extra effort is something they actually enjoy. It's the challenge of making something better that drives them to excel.

The rewards for these overachievers can be outstanding. They are typically the first ones to be recognized for the next level management position. Their energy, ambition and quality of performance quickly establish their credibility and no one seems surprised when they first to move upward.

Upon discussing the rewards of increased responsibility, commitment and accountability – direct each team member to make a list from the following questions: *(Be honest, no one else will see your answers.)*

- List every new idea that you've offered to your team in the past 30 days.
- List the most basic fundamental skills that you "Practiced" recently in order to stay at the top of your game. What special training have you pro-actively registered for without being prompted by your supervisor?
- List your key objectives for the coming year. Explain what you've done already to pre-plan for achieving these goals.
- List your current year's goals and explain if you are on target to meet those goals. Explain what you've done pro-actively to ensure success.

The above list of questions is provided to point out to team members that they are the only ones that can truly control their destiny. In one moment, in an instant with one clear decision, we each have the power to change our path and begin the process of creating an entire new and exciting future.

Personal ownership, accountability and consistent professionalism are all leadership traits that propel highly ambitious and determined individuals to success.

# Profitability

## **It's A New Day**

**Purpose of this activity:** To lead your team toward a brand new vision of what your team or organization is going to be going forward. Making today the first day of creating a brand new vision for your team or company.

**Explanation:** Provide each member of your team with three blank 3x5 cards.

On the first card, ask each team member to write 3-5 words that currently describe the shortfalls of your organization. Encourage them to be direct and honest. *(Assure your team that they do not have to put their names on the cards. Their feedback can be totally confidential.)*

On the second card, instruct your team to write 3-5 words that best describe the organization that they hope to create. *(Encourage your team to think BIG and to impose an ambitious vision.)*

On the third card, have your team members' list 5 specific actions they are personally willing to commit to taking ownership of in order to ensure that the company will be able to achieve the vision on the #2 card.

The leader can now collect all of the cards and spend some time prior to the next meeting to analyze the feedback presented.

At the next meeting, the leader will provide a detailed summary of the #1 cards listing all of the shortfalls of the current organization.

In a powerful display, the leader will either burn or shred all of the #1 cards. As the cards are destroyed, she can state firmly, "Folks, as of today we can no longer be this organization. The rest of our day will be spent on determining how we are going to be a better, more productive and more profitable organization."

The leader will then detail the vision that has been determined based upon the feedback from the #2 cards, and he will reward and recognize team players for their personal commitments to achieving these new goals. Using this team building game idea is a great way to begin a new chapter of passion and profits for your team.

## Profitable Questions

**Purpose of this activity:** To teach a sales team the power of asking qualifying questions in order to properly recommend products and services to their clients.

**Explanation:** Profiling your customers in order to recognize their true wants and needs is a must for any great sales person.

A successful sales person understands that by asking quality questions up front they can minimize the number of withdrawals, cancellations and returns of their products and services.

Customers cannot argue with the answers that they give you. Therefore, if you ask questions in a way that will get your customer to tell you what he needs, you will be able to more easily make the appropriate recommendation and receive less objections to those recommendations.

Zig Ziglar says, "You can get everything you want in life, if you will just help enough other people get what they want."

Work with your team members to identify the best qualifying questions that they can ask their customers about in order to clearly understand their needs.

For example, if you work in the financial industry and you are looking for ways to help people with their money, you may ask several key questions that will immediately uncover the customers needs. Some of these profiling questions may include:

- What are your current savings goals?
- What are some future things that you need to be saving for? *Ie. Weddings, Retirement, Education, etc.*
- How do you currently budget your money?
- Has anyone recently reviewed your monthly expenditures to see how you might realize some additional savings?
- When was the last time you had your insurance product reviewed and updated?
- What rate are you currently paying on your car, your house, your boat, other?
- How many credit cards do you have and what rates are you paying on them?

These are just a handful of key qualifying type questions that you can use to uncover potential needs of your clients. Work with your team using this team

building game idea to create the best possible questions that will assist them to quickly identify sales opportunities.

As you listen to your customer's responses to these questions, try to identify potential barriers that you may need to overcome. The best way to overcome objections or barriers is by taking additional time to further educate the customer.

Your customer will truly appreciate the time you take to ask good quality questions and you will quickly earn their trust as you build credibility as an expert throughout your community.

# Purpose & Pride

## Team Battle Cry

**Purpose of this activity:** To lead your team in creating a team slogan or "battle cry" that inspires a vision of unity and teamwork. This workshop is focused on getting people to visualize themselves as a lean and mean TEAM-machine! A team working together, maximizing their talents and achieving outstanding results.

**Explanation:** At your next staff meeting consider leading your team through the following free team building games exercise.

Anyone in marketing knows that a slogan or catch phrase can be extremely important to a company's success.

For instance, when you hear "Just Do It", you think of athletes who are winners and associate that good feeling with Nike; when you hear "Quality is Job #1", you think of a quality automobile that will retain its value, and you associate that with Ford. Why not take this proven marketing technique and apply it to your own team?

Think about how the perfect catch phrase or slogan could quickly benefit your team? What is your team all about? Even more importantly, **WHAT WOULD YOUR TEAM LIKE TO BE ALL ABOUT?**

Let's think of some words that describe what your team might wish to become. Key words might include: *(Sales, Convenience, Service, Leadership, Teamwork, Business Planning, Quality, Wealth Building, Freedom, Conservation and Volunteerism, other?)*

Whatever phrases your team chooses, help them to identify their slogan in no more than 5 words. Here is a real example of how one team created their "TEAM BATTLE CRY"!

The group consisted of a region manager and five district managers that had 20 direct reports and about 200 employees in the entire region.

The management team felt like in order for them to succeed, it would require all 200+ employees to work together each and every day. After a lot of discussion, they identified their team with this phrase:

**"Our Winning Way: Everyone, Everyday!"**

Cool huh?

Here are a few ways in which they shared their vision with their team, peers and customers:

- Formally introduced their "team battle cry" to all employees via teleconference, or rally.
- Provided each employee with an item or gift with the battle cry imprinted, so each person knew they belonged to this unique team.
- All employees included the phrase on their signature line with every email they sent.
- All formal communications included the battle cry (fax cover page, memos, letters, voice mail messages, etc.)
- Employees were asked to repeat the slogan often at meetings to ensure everyone had memorized it and knew the importance of striving to meet this vision.

So, what is YOUR team all about? Have fun finding out using our free team building games and exercises.

## **Push - Pull**

**Purpose of this activity:** This lesson is focused on getting people to think in terms of leadership. Create increased purpose and pride in your team by empowering them with increased leadership expectations. When helping a co-worker, or a customer, employees must understand their role as a leader.

**Explanation:** At your next staff meeting consider leading your team through the following discussion, one of our most applauded free team building games exercise.

Introduction of the Exercise: (feel free to create your own similar story to support the exercise) Like many who come from a small town, I was amazed at the number of transients who made their home on the campus of the university I attended. At first, the idea of having to walk past many of these individuals was a bit scary. I was not accustomed to being solicited for money or "spare change".

However, after a few weeks of walking to class and regularly being asked for "a quarter for a cup of coffee", the experience quickly became routine.

In fact, after a while, if I didn't see one of the regular panhandlers for a period of time, I would wonder where he was keeping himself.

Certainly, after a brief period, the transients became a small part of my environment, part of my daily experience of college life. Over time, I got to know some of them by name and they became familiar with who I was.

One of the most notable transients was a man by the name, Uncle Ben. Uncle Ben could often be seen dragging a short rope behind him as he walked down the street.

You might think by watching Uncle Ben that he was delusional and under the incorrect assumption that he had a dog tied to the end of his rope. Uncle Ben would look back at the end of the rope as he walked, and say - "come on now, keep up."

Very often someone would witness this behavior as Uncle Ben approached, and they would ask simply, "Why are you pulling that rope?"

(At this point, give team members a short piece of string and ask them to experiment with the "rope". Pull it back and forth along the table. Then ask them to guess as to what Uncle Ben's response is going to be. Then continue the story.)

Again, very often someone would witness the behavior as Uncle Ben approached, and they would ask simply, "Why are you pulling that rope?"

Uncle Ben would quickly reply, "Well have you ever tried PUSHING a rope, it doesn't work very well." This always made Uncle Ben holler in laughter as he kept walking past the person who would inquire.

You have to give Uncle Ben credit. Indeed, you can't very well push a rope.

In conclusion, make this strong point to your team:

By "pulling" the rope, it will follow you anywhere. Try to "push" it, and the rope actually resists you and goes nowhere at all. The same can be said for the art of leadership and teamwork.

Leadership is the ability to make your people want to follow you. They do that when they see that you are willing to work alongside them and take a vested interest in their success. People will follow you if they feel you know where you are taking them. If they feel you have integrity and truly care about their success.

We must each pull our co-workers with us. We must pull our customers toward us. Otherwise, we run the risk of pushing them away.

# Results & Performance

## Visualize Exercise

**Purpose of this activity:** This exercise is focused on getting people to perceive things positively. Perception often dictates reality so it's imperative that your team begins a project with a positive outlook.

**Explanation:** At your next staff meeting lead your team through the following exercise.

Make the point to your team that they have the power to perceive virtually all things either from a positive or negative perspective.

Lead a discussion asking for attendees to offer up negative circumstances resulting from the tragedy involving the Space Shuttle Columbia. (Creating this "list of negatives" will come easily for the participants given the nature of the disaster. For example: The loss of life, the potential effects for radiation on the ground, the devastating blow to the space program, the children and families effected by the loss of loved ones, etc.)

In the interest of time, make the list no longer than 8-10 items. Next, ask the group to come up with a list of positive outcomes from this experience. (This will be harder for the group because it is difficult to voice optimism when talking about personal tragedy. You can offer up a few of your own ideas to get people started thinking from a different point of view.

For instance some positive outcomes are:

1. The space program will learn from this disaster and become even safer for future flights - thus saving countless lives.
2. The nation came together from the crisis which was good for the solidarity of our country.
3. The family members will remember their deceased as American Heroes and throughout history their family will take pride in his/her commitment to space exploration.
4. The focus on the tragedy from the national media will inspire a new generation of space enthusiasts. Perhaps a child who will become the greatest space explorer of all time.

Now challenge your team to come up with 5 additional positive outcomes. You will be surprised now by their creativity and renewed vision for what is possible.

Lastly, go through the exact same exercise. This time however, choose the following topic appropriate to your own business. **Revising our results and performance goals UP by an additional 15%.** After going through the negatives

first (limit the list to 5 items), then go through the positives, and allow your team to have a lengthy discussion on HOW this 15% production increase will be achieved. In effect, let them create a mini action plan.

Once the group has agreed on how to increase the production by 15% you can ever-so-gently inform them that the goals did NOT just go up by 15%. BUT, now that we have a plan, don't you think we should use it?

Have fun with this corporate team building game exercise. It shows people you are a leader with vision and that you understand the power of perception and belief.

## **Clear A Path For Progress**

**Purpose of this activity:** Use the following exercise to help your team members identify their limiting beliefs and feelings. Then explain how those beliefs and feelings directly impact (positively or negatively) their bottom-line results.

**Explanation:** What's holding your team back from experiencing "breakout performance"? Old beliefs/Personal Insecurities (aka: conceptual barriers)?

Before we proceed, keep the following quote in mind - it's a powerful reminder of why it is so important to complete sales management activities.

*"Successful people DO, what unsuccessful people are not willing to do." -  
Unknown*

Here are the Four Steps to Overcome Old Beliefs/Conceptual Barriers:

**Step One - Uncover Negative Self-Talk** Ask the employee to tell you what they "least" enjoy about each step of the sales management process. Follow up by asking how that particular aspect of the process makes them feel. For example:

- Prospecting/Cold Calling - **(feels like I am intruding)**
- Asking for the Business - **(feels like I am being pushy)**
- Cross-Selling/Up-Selling - **(feels like I am taking advantage)**
- Assumptive Closing - **(feels like I am being presumptuous)**

**Step Two - Identify Beliefs that are the root source of negative feelings toward sales management practices** Go back to our prior examples of Old Beliefs that get in the way of our progress in the sales management process:

- Don't talk to strangers
- It is impolite to talk about money
- Never interrupt important people
- Wait to be asked

Help the employee understand and be aware of why it is that they may feel the way they do. Employees should understand that they feel the way they do for a reason. Once they understand this it can be much easier for them to make a decision to overcome their old belief(s).

**Step Three - Turn Limiting Beliefs into Unlimited Possibility!** Illustrate the following to your employee so they can clearly see how their beliefs and feelings ultimately "pre-determine" their outcome.

On one hand:

## **Positive Beliefs » Positive Feelings » Actions » Positive Results**

And on the other hand:

## **Limiting Beliefs » Negative Feelings » Inaction » Negative Results**

So based on the proceeding, it's obvious which hand offers the most value - correct?

**Step Four - CHOOSE a path together!** Obviously, if an employee is unwilling to work to overcome conceptual barriers, then you should agree that a sales position is not the right fit.

You should either find a more suitable role for the person or part ways so he/she may pursue a more rewarding opportunity somewhere else.

Let's assume however that the employee seeks to overcome their conceptual barriers and is willing to take ownership of their plan for improvement.

As the leader, you have an important role to play in your employee overcoming their limiting beliefs. You are responsible for supporting the employee in three key areas. Once again, they are:

- **TEACH** - lead by example, reinforce positive actions and behaviors
- **COACH** - help to improve technique, debrief progress, track results, ensure employee stays on task
- **EXPECT** - inspect what you expect, hold yourself and your employee accountable for continued improvement and increased results

In conclusion, ask yourself the following question. Can you name one person who is a top performer that:

- believed they wouldn't be successful?
- feels they shouldn't be successful?
- does not take the actions necessary for them to become successful?

The answer to each question is "Of course not", right?

So by default we must agree that in order for anyone to be successful, he/she must understand what is holding him or her back.

Then, they must be willing to work to overcome obstacles, and choose to proactively follow a corrective action plan.

Finally, they must "execute" the plan. Through this corporate team building game process he will build new beliefs that will enable him to discard those old and tired, limiting beliefs.

# Retention

## Momentum for Explosive Growth

**Purpose of this activity:** The following is a terrific team building exercise example on the importance and the success generated by momentum.

**Explanation:** Most folks know that once you gain and experience **momentum** toward reaching a goal, the outcome seems inevitable. The process quickly becomes more fun, and life in general seems a bit more rewarding.

This little team building exercise example will help you illustrate to your team the power of momentum. You will more easily gain buy-in to the notion that your team can achieve much more together than any one can achieve individually. Here is the exercise:

Take four(4) large wine bottles filled with liquid (water). Identify two(2) team members and have them compete to find out who can pour out the entire contents of their bottle the fastest. When finished, ask the team to discuss ways to increase the effectiveness of pouring out the contents more quickly.

Then with the two remaining bottles, have another volunteer pour against you. Your volunteer can try out the best idea that was created by their team.

Before you start pouring your bottle, first quickly swirl the liquid in your bottle and you will find that with **MOMENTUM**, your bottle will pour the liquid out twice as fast as the one without momentum.

As you work with your individual team members, make certain that you apply this lesson in your discussions with them about creating momentum in their career planning. This is a great way to create loyalty, employee satisfaction and team member retention.

## **Life Goal Planning**

**Purpose of this activity:** A fun team building exercise example that leaders can use in their meetings to retain team members by getting them to take time to appreciate what they've accomplished also to take the time to plan for their future.

**Explanation:** Leaders provide insightful wisdom to their team by encouraging them to take a step back to re-assess their own reality. It's too easy to forget to take stock in what the team has achieved or to take the time to feel good about those important accomplishments.

We don't always remember how important it is to occasionally stop what we're doing for a moment and just "be grateful" for all that we have, all those that we love, and for all that the future holds.

As most of us come to work each day, we sit down and plan our day. We then set out to complete and check off our to-do lists. However, how often do we sit down and purposefully plan our work, let alone our life?

Leaders can remind their team members to ask the following three questions to ensure they fully leverage their time and resources.

1. What is the (production) outcome(s) that I must achieve in order for this day/month/year to be successful and fulfilling?
2. Why is this goal important to me?
3. What specific steps must I take in order to achieve this outcome(s)?

Now ask your team members to apply the preceding questions to each of the following LIFE categories:

- Family
- Financial
- Physical
- Spiritual
- Emotional
- Professional

By going through the above exercise, you will no doubt realize how well you are currently "owning your own outcomes". Be fair to yourself, and ensure you lead a healthy and well-balanced life.

Moral to the story: **Take the time to plan your life, not just your day.**

# Risk Taking

## No More Risky Business

**Purpose of this activity:** To quickly identify and overcome the obstacles and objections before they happen in an effort to minimize risk and increase sales results.

**Explanation:** A customer's objection is the one major risk to closing the sales. Imagine if you were armed with an arsenal of ideas that would quickly overcome the customer's objection - MORE SALES right?

Here is a great opportunity to educate your team members using our all-powerful Objection Clinic. Using this exercise you will assist your team to quickly identify and overcome the obstacles that are hindering their performance.

### Objection Clinic: Instructions for Overcoming Customer Objections:

1. Lead the group to quickly list their top, most common, customer objections. Use a chalkboard or flip chart so everyone can see the entire list. Make the list as long as necessary to satisfy your team. Once the list is complete, work with the team to quickly categorize the objections as many on the list are probably closely related.
2. Point out to your team that each customer objection represents the fact that the customer who has this objection does not understand the total benefit of your product or service. (A good sales person knows their job is to educate the customer to make the best decision. HINT: Highly ethical sales people truly believe in their own product.)
3. Break your team in to 2-3 equal work groups. Assign each group to come up with the perfect "Response", to each customer objection. Make the point that no one knows what the best response is more than the experts who sell the product. Your team members are the experts, and they DO know the perfect response.
4. Ask each group to share with the rest of the team their responses - discuss each response briefly to ensure it's the very best. Let your team be the final judge - after all, it's they who will be using this information to overcome objections.

Shortly after the workshop is over, provide each team member with a complete list of their perfect responses for overcoming customer objections.

Not only will you be surprised by the true knowledge of your sales team, they will look to you as a good leader. They will see you as an effective leader who brought them all together for the purpose of helping them solve the problems that are

keeping them from being their best. You will assist them in minimizing their risk of failure.

Over the next week, make a point of supporting your team members by quizzing them on their responses. Throw out a customer objection from time to time and ask them "How would you respond to that?"

**KEEP DOING IT UNTIL THEY GET IT RIGHT.** Repetition is the key to retention. Let them know that you would rather they NOT get it right in front of you, rather than in front of a prospective customer and lose out on the sale.

Your team will thank you for it later. :)

## **Magic Time**

**Purpose of this activity:** To help team members to identify the high-leverage activities that will lead to maximum results and therefore limit their risk of losing out on potential sales opportunities.

**Explanation:** Many folks will remember one of our most famous and beloved actors - Jack Lemmon. Jack Lemmon was special for many reasons, but one thing about him that most people aren't aware of is that he had a unique way in which he put himself into a "magic zone".

Like many actors, what you see on the screen is many times surprisingly different than what you might experience if you met him/her on the street. Their talent lies in their ability to persuade an audience to believe they are - well, whatever or whomever they want you to believe they are.

Jack Lemmon, immediately before he walked on stage or came out of his trailer onto a movie set, would purposefully stop - close his eyes, take a deep breath, and say out loud (but softly under his breath) - **"It's Magic Time"**

Throughout his entire career he did this as a way of putting himself in a "magic zone".

During your next staff meeting, take the time to share the concept of "the magic zone". Consider leading your team through the following exercise so they too will experience the ultimate rewards of living in the zone.

- Identify on a flip chart 5-10 high-leverage activities, that if done continually will lead to maximum results.
- List out on a separate piece of flip chart paper all the potential benefits of living in the zone. I.e., more money, security and a feeling of being in control, greater fulfillment, increased joy, increased market share, improved customer and employee retention, lower training costs, earlier retirement!, etc. Make the list as long as possible.
- When the lists are complete, place the two lists side by side. Point to the "benefits" list and say to your team, "Folks, this is our motivation. We deserve all these things and more! And in order for us to experience these rewards we must.. *Then point to the high-leverage activity list*)..LIVE HERE. This is where the rubber meets the road and these are the activities that will make the difference."

Help your team limit their risk and realize maximum success by find their own *MAGIC - In The Zone*.

# Tact & Diplomacy

## Power of Suggestion

**Purpose of this activity:** To teach your team about the power of suggestion and the importance of the choosing the words they use. Their words carry great influence their co-workers and their customers so it is important that they understand their responsibility of using words that are tactful and diplomatic.

**Explanation:** Leaders can often underestimate the impact (both positive and negative) that their words can have on a group or an individual.

Share with your team the following excerpt that was originally published in 1911 by O.S. Marden. This excerpt illustrates the fact that our words can have significant influence on those we lead, or those whom we come in contact with.

### The Power of Suggestion

*We little realize how much suggestion has to do with health. In innumerable instances people have been made seriously ill, sometimes fatally so, by others telling them how badly they looked, or suggesting that they exhibit symptoms associated with a dreaded disease.*

*A prominent New York businessman recently told me of an experiment that the friends of a robust young man made upon him.*

*It was arranged that beginning in the morning, each one should tell him when he came to work, that he was not looking well. They did this subtly, in a way that would not make the man suspicious.*

*At one o'clock this vigorous young man had been so influenced by the suggestion, he quit work and went home ill - thoroughly convinced he must be sick.*

*To be sure, we are under the influence of suggestion every moment of our waking lives. Everything we see, hear, feel, is a suggestion, which produces a result corresponding to its own nature. Its subtle power seems to reach and affect the very springs of life.*

*It is almost impossible for a patient to get well while people are constantly reminding him how ill he looks.*

*What people need is encouragement, uplift and hope!*

*Instead of telling a friend in trouble that you feel sorry for him, try to pull him and help to restore his energy and reserves. Help the friend picture his ideal image, his better self.*

*The suggestion that comes from an enthusiastic and optimistic person can move mountains. Many a life has been stirred and inspired by only a few moments of positive conversation.*

*Many men and women have made their place in history, largely because their ambition was aroused by suggestion: some book or some individual who gave them the first glimpse of their possibility and potential, and enabled them to feel for the first time a thrill of the power within them.*

As leaders, we all can identify others throughout our careers that have helped us along our journey.

Take the extra step each day to provide an employee with words of encouragement and support. If you have an employee who is still not quite producing to the level you expect, recognize that employee for the effort they are putting forth and for any incremental improvement.

Your words are powerful.

Because your employees look to you for leadership, understand that your words have the potential to either inspire the heart or dash the dreams of those who seek your approval.

Use the preceding excerpt to lead a discussion with your team about how each team member is responsible for lifting the team up via their choice of words in the workplace.

Lead your team in creating a list of words that are not acceptable in your workplace. Words such as "can't" and "won't". Encourage your team to hold one another accountable for spending each day approaching new tasks with optimism versus doubt or fear.

## **Are You Determined?**

**Purpose of this activity:** To teach your team about how simply re-phrasing a question can gain an entirely different response or reaction. Tact and diplomacy depends upon your ability to choose quality questions.

**Explanation:** In business, the word "commitment" is often overused and has become somewhat of a cliché.

In your next team meeting, instead of asking for every team member's "commitment", ask "What are you determined to accomplish?"

Simply by re-phrasing an over-used question will shake things up and arouse your team's curiosity.

Now that you have their attention, take your team through the following steps:

- Identify one key activity or end-result that each person is determined to accomplish. Be specific.
- Ask why this is important. What is the ultimate purpose?
- Ask if they are certain the task is achievable. Make sure their goal is realistic. If their stated goal is too broad, help to break it down into smaller tasks that can be managed for effectively.
- Get clear on how their success will be measured. How will he/she know if their determination has paid off?
- Ensure that a time for completion is stated clearly. By end of week, end of Month, etc.

Does the above process sound familiar? Hopefully it does - you have just walked your team through setting **SMART** (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time Sensitive) goals.

The key point here is that you did this in a new and very creative way that got your team thinking.

Instead of mindlessly stating their "tried and true" weekly commitment - they went a little deeper and considered more thoroughly their plan for accomplishment.

Pat yourself on the back You are using this free team building exercise effectively and pro-actively leading your team.

# Trust & Rapport

## Who Are We?

**Purpose of this activity:** Use this team building lesson plan as a blue print for how a Leader can build trust and rapport by clearly communicating the importance of Leadership, Teamwork and Customer Service.

**Explanation:** Consider using the following Leader's Notes as Talking Points for your next staff meeting. These notes contain universal team building lesson plan bullet points so you may even want to use these key talking points over several team meetings.

### Leadership

- Teach/Coach/Expect - talk about the importance for all managers to be hands-on in teaching and coaching employees - only then can they justify holding employees accountable to meet all expectations. Leader's take ownership and are accountable.
- Motivation - It's a personal choice every employee makes every day when they walk in the door. It's not our responsibility to motivate employees, but it is our responsibility to hire self-motivated individuals and then provide a working environment that supports and inspires employees to want to consistently improve their skills.
- Lead a Growth Environment - every 90 days we must grow. Businesses either grow, or eventually die. We will grow by anticipating and meeting our customers needs, improving current relationships and developing new ones.

### Teamwork

- Definition of "FUN" - Fun in our organization is defined as when we realize/achieve our goals after working extremely hard. The thrill of victory is only a thrill if the prize is hard-fought. When we are creative in finding solutions, plan appropriately and then put forth monumental effort toward achieving our vision - the feeling we then experience is: FUN!
- Energy/Enthusiasm > Experience - While experience is certainly valued in our company, it's been proven that individuals who are highly energetic and enthusiastic can more quickly gain experience and do a phenomenal job. To the contrary however, experienced individuals who do not possess the energy and enthusiasm for their job, should go somewhere else to work. Those without a passion for their work should go work for any one of our competitors.

## Customer Service

- Every Employee Takes It Personal- When a customer leaves to do business with a competitor, you should take it personal. Taking it personal means you care. Taking it personal means you are disturbed enough to change what you are doing so that next time you win the business. Taking it personal ensures you get to the top and stay on top. How "disturbed" are you?
- We Have The Advantage! - We have the secret weapon. We have something that none of our competitors can claim to possess. We have "what makes the difference". What is it you say? Simple, WE HAVE YOU! YOU are the key to the success of this organization. YOU make the difference with each customer interaction. YOU are my secret weapon - and I truly value and appreciate all that you do.

## People Power!

**Purpose of this activity:** To build trust and rapport among team members by providing a team building lesson plan exercise that will open dialogue and build strong working relationships.

**Explanation:** In an effort to build added trust and rapport, have each of your team members take a sheet of paper and write down the following facts:

1. List three words that they feel best describes their professional talents. *(Try not to give away your job description or you will be easily identified.)*
2. List any particular skill or talent that you possess that no one in the workplace is currently aware of.
3. Name 2-3 things that you aspire to learn or experience during your lifetime.

The leader will collect all of the sheets and post them on the wall. The leader must assign a number to each of the sheets as a reference point.

Next, have each team member write down the names of all of their co-workers and then try to match the names of their co-workers with the correct numbered sheet that is posted on the wall.

Once everyone has finished, the leader will lead a discussion asking team members to identify their sheet. Ask each team member to elaborate on his or her special skill or talent. Inquire what has motivated their life goals, etc.

In conclusion, the team leader can make a point of recognizing the "collective talent" in the room. They may even find that some unknown talent can now be used to help the team in a current or future project.

Learning new things about team members is a great way to further strengthen trust and rapport between team members.