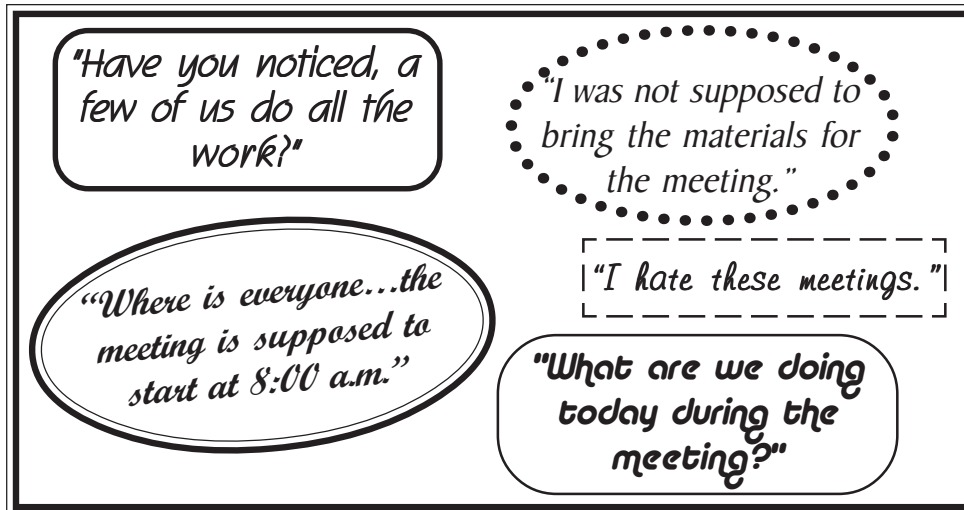


IS YOUR TEAM A CONTENDER FOR THE CHAMPIONSHIP?

By Carol Scarce,
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If any of these comments sound familiar, then you need some information in the basics of team building. Championship teams develop with people who are knowledgeable and practice the art and science of team building. Think of me as your coach. Suit up, let's practice.

Practice Session One

Why Are We Here?

Invite the team to a mission meeting. Set up the room so that no more than six people are sitting at a table. Distribute a piece of chart paper and a marker to each table. Have them write the following questions at the top of their charts:

- Why does this team exist?
- What is the value added by this team?
- What are the expected outcomes?
- What is the team's overall contribution to the system?

Ask the group to listen to your vision, including the reason for teaming. When

you are finished, ask the groups to discuss the questions on the chart and make notes on the chart itself. Walk around to each group and ask if they need more information or clarification of any points you made. Allow 15-20 minutes for the groups to respond to the chart questions. While they are working, prepare four charts, each with one of the questions from the list above. For example, one chart will say, "Why does this team exist?" The second chart will say, "What is the value added by this team?" and so on. Tape them to the wall. Ask each team to share the answers they have on their charts. Compile a master list on the appropriate wall charts. Once all teams have shared, have them look at the wall charts and clear up any misconceptions about the mission.

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

- A piece of chart paper and a magic marker per group
- Four charts with the questions written on them
- Masking tape

Practice Session Two

Momma Told Me Not To Brag, But ...

This activity is designed to give the team members an opportunity to reflect on the roles that are available and that they feel they could do well. Put the following list of roles and descriptions on a chart, blackboard, or overhead:

ROLES	
<i>Team Facilitator</i>	Leads discussion, keeps people on task, helps enforce behavior norms
<i>Leader</i>	Represents the team at other meetings, takes issues to the administration, supports the team and takes care of distributing minutes to administrator, steps in to resolve conflict if facilitator needs help
<i>Scribe</i>	Keeps the minutes for the team meetings, reads any parts to the team that they call for, keeps a team copy and gets one ready for the leader to give to the supervisor
<i>Observer</i>	Collects informal data concerning teaming skills and role performance in order to give the team feedback on how they are doing
<i>Encourager</i>	Keeps the team's spirits up, helps design ways the team can celebrate their successes and learn from mistakes
<i>Time Keeper</i>	Keeps the team aware of the time frame they have agreed to work in, gives time updates such as "ten minutes to go," etc.
<i>Materials Person</i>	Makes sure the team has the resources they need for the meeting

Tell the team they have ten minutes to read and think about the roles. Then go around the table and ask each person to say what role he or she would do well and why. The team decides who will have what role and for how long.

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

- List of the roles and role descriptions on a chart, blackboard, or overhead

Practice Session Three

What's Happening?

After the team has met four or five times, give each team member the "What's Happening?" handout. Ask them to complete it and be ready to share it at the next team meeting. At the next team meeting ask the members to share their responses. The recorder records the responses. After everyone shares, invite the team to discuss what they need to do to carry out some of the suggestions.

What's Happening?

1. What three behaviors helped the team function smoothly?
2. One thing I could have done to help the team work together is....
3. One thing I think the other team members could do to help the team work together is....

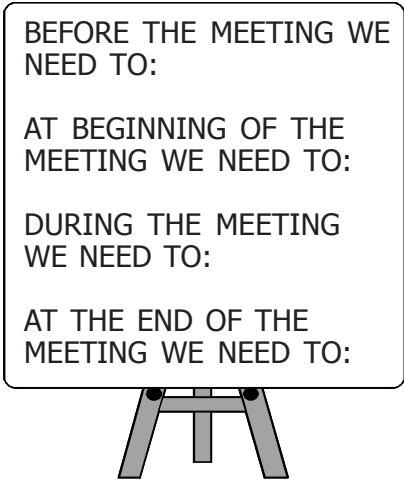
MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

- One "What's Happening?" handout per person
- One piece of chart paper
- A magic marker
- Masking tape

Practice Session Four

Preventive Medicine

Ask the team members to share what they know about having productive meetings. Have the recorder record the main points. The discussion should go on for about ten or fifteen minutes. Write the following statements on the blackboard or chart paper for all to see:



Ask the team members to suggest items or ideas under each heading that they think will help them have productive meetings. Again, the recorder records the information. Once the information has been gathered, team members discuss how and what they need to do to be sure these things get done.

- MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED**
- Several pieces of chart paper
 - A magic marker
 - Masking tape

Practice Session Five

PCI

Place the following chart on the wall.

P	C	I

Lead the team members in a discussion about what they have accomplished as a team that is positive, what they have concerns about, and what has happened or not happened that is interesting. The recorder records the responses under the appropriate column.

You can use this chart as an individual feedback tool. The observer asks each individual to fill out a copy of the PCI chart. Members are to reflect on what they

think they have done for the team that is POSITIVE, what about their individual performance is a CONCERN, and what they have found INTERESTING about themselves as they have worked on becoming a team member. Each team member shares his or her responses with the team. Again, this is a tool that is open to many creative adaptations.

- MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED**
- A large PCI chart
 - One copy of the PCI chart per person
 - A magic marker

Practice Session Six

Graffiti Board

Designate a graffiti chart or board for the team. During the last minutes of the meeting, encourage everyone to go to the board to write a word or a message that describes something the team did well during the meeting. Leave the comments up for the next couple of meetings.

- MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED**
- Graffiti board
 - Assorted magic markers

It is important, as you build your team that you continue to have clearly defined roles, operate using a code of conduct, run quality meetings, evaluate your team through feedback sessions, and celebrate your successes. If you follow the coach's suggestions you will be well on your way to becoming a contender for the championship.

Carol Scearce, M.Ed., has been in education for 30 years as both an elementary teacher and special education teacher. Now, as president of Enlightening Enterprises, an educational consulting company, she travels throughout the United States and Canada leading different developmental workshops.