

Building Leadership Teams in Volunteer-based Environments

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Speaker Introduction:

Gregory S. Woo, PMP Past President - Mass Bay Chapter in Massachusetts
PMI Mass Bay Chapter Community Service Team Leader
PMI Mass Bay Chapter Director-at-Large

Greg was the president of the Mass Bay chapter from 1997 to 1999. The Mass Bay chapter was quickly losing momentum in 1996 and 1997. No one was interested in running the chapter and there was no formal board of directors due to lack of interest and/or willingness to commit to the demands of having a leadership position in the chapter. A small group of members stepped forward and experimented with a different formula. By the beginning of 1999, the Mass Bay chapter had over 900 members and was growing rapidly. More significantly, there are now a healthy number of volunteers. Today, the chapter has over 1200 members even after spinning off a Rhode Island chapter for its southern members, a New Hampshire for its northern members, and a Central Mass chapter for members far west of the greater Boston area.

Greg has been working in the Information Technology field for over 25 years and he has been a project manager for more than 16 years. He has worked on and managed software projects and data center projects involving data communications, IBM mainframes, UNIX systems, Digital VMS systems, a variety of mini-computers, as well as PCs and LAN/WAN environments. He currently works as a project management consultant, as well as a project management instructor and coach.

Building a Leadership Team

Some ideas to consider for building and sustaining an effective leadership team composed of volunteers

... and some thoughts for members on how to take advantage of the chapter environment!



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Every organization is likely to have a unique situation with special challenges to overcome and specific constraints to deal with. The content of this presentation is not intended to dictate how a leadership team should be assembled nor what must and must not be done to successfully build a leadership team.

Instead, it is hoped that each attendee will find some tips, ideas, or reminders that will help them build their leadership skills in a way that applies to their organization. It is expected that not all of the ideas described here will apply to your particular organization. Some of the concepts are specific to volunteer environments but with increasing frequency, many of us rely on volunteer assistance, even within the workplace. Getting help from others and building teams without formal authority can be similar in many ways to building volunteer leadership teams. Select the ideas that do apply to your environment and figure out how to implement and improve upon them.

I'm hoping that you'll find at least two ideas that you can integrate into your organization's culture with productive, team-building results.

These handouts contain the key concepts that I'd like you to have when you leave today. This should relieve you of the need to take large volumes of notes. Since the session will be as interactive as I can make it, I fully expect that you'll receive additional ideas, suggestions, and tips from the discussions that take place during the session.

Team Building Topics

- Building a Leadership Team
- ⊗ Motivating a Leadership Team
- ⊗ Tuning a Leadership Team

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Motivating a team and tuning a team for peak performance are topics that are outside the scope of today's session. However these are important leadership skills that have some components in common with building a team. In order to keep your leadership team together, continue to apply the same concepts used to build the team, and seek additional ideas on motivating and tuning the team.

While there are many ways to build a team, this session will focus on some of the simple concepts that the Mass Bay chapter has successfully employed to build its leadership team. The formula is simple so that everyone can understand and remember it. It is also consistent with the chapter's vision and mission statements.

Basic Goal

Find ways to enable members to participate in activities that grow their project leadership and management skills to enhance the value of their PMI membership.

Our formula

Use project management concepts where ever possible.

Challenge to Members

Find a way to take advantage of the unique opportunity offered by the chapter environment!

Building a Leadership Team

- Answer the WIIFM questions
- Make participation possible
- Finding potential team members
- Engage ALL the available resources
- Don't send mixed signals



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These five key focal points have enabled the Mass Bay chapter to build a leadership team in an environment where **NOBODY** felt they could provide leadership within the chapter. Prior to implementing the concepts that are described in today's session, there were a handful of people who were willing to "help" but no one was willing to take a leadership position.

After beginning to address these five points, it seemed to get easier and easier to find people who wanted to participate and to join in on activities that were structured with these types of core concepts.

If you have other ideas, or if you have doubts about the concepts presented here today, please speak up and discuss them. This session is intended to be conversational and exchange of information, experiences, and ideas is very much encouraged!

FYI - WIIFM = What's In It For Me

show potential participants what they're going to get out of taking on a leadership role in the organization.

Building a Leadership Team

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Show the potential leadership team members, or participants in general -

W = What's

I = In It

F = For

M = Me

Make sure that you pay attention to how well you are fulfilling the WIIFM "promises" to your team.

The WIIFM for Chapter Members:

As a chapter member, participation in chapter activities can potentially provide you with learning and growth opportunities that cannot be found anywhere else! Where else do you have casual access to a wide variety of talents, experiences, and perspectives in project management, in an environment that exists to support you.

Your challenge is to identify and articulate your needs, and then to help create an environment, team, activity, or event that helps you motivate others to fulfill those needs. This is a unique opportunity to grow, learn, and network. If done properly, this experience can be both time and cost efficient.

Provide the WIIFM answer

Volunteers are more willing to step forward when they understand the benefit(s)

Structure participation so it provides benefit

- New knowledge
- Skill growth through coaching / practice
- Opportunities to try PM techniques
- Expanded network of contacts



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People are hesitant to volunteer for something when they do not know what they're getting themselves and don't know what they're going to get out of it. Clearly defined role expectations and benefits goals will make it easier for people to volunteer to take on leadership roles.

Paint a picture of the advantages and/or growth that can be attained by taking on the leadership challenge as part of your leadership team.

Create leadership positions and experiences, whenever possible, in a way that provides benefit and growth to your leadership team members. Encourage the leadership team to coach and assist each other. Also, structure responsibilities so that both the leadership participants and the general public (membership) have a solid sense of purpose and contribution. Backroom, behind-the-scenes administrative tasks that provide no learning or personal growth opportunity will quickly drive away both volunteers and enthusiasm - especially if the recognition and appreciation efforts are weak or infrequent.

Be constantly on the lookout for new ways of providing practice or learning opportunities.

Provide the WIIFM answer

Structure as many activities as possible as projects ...



offer participants a chance to practice and learn in a non-threatening environment.



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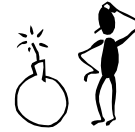
This is just one of many ways to create learning and practice opportunities that have excellent project management value.

Try to employ the entire project management process model when doing this. If the team participants are instructed to pay close attention to the process that is actually used, and to spend time comparing the effectiveness of the process to the success of the outcome, it will provide an additional opportunity for learning. The largest value of doing this is that it provides the team with an opportunity to see how others manage, organize, and lead projects. If the group discusses the process along the way, a tremendous amount of insight can be gathered by the participants.

It should also provide a “safe” environment in which to practice, discuss, and debate project management techniques and the use of project management tools. If the team is truly supportive, then embarrassment should not be a barrier to asking questions or to taking risks by trying new techniques. This PMI experience should be an experimentation laboratory where people can try the ideas they’ve learned without fear of reprimand, ridicule, or poor performance reviews. There should also be fellow professionals available who are willing to help team members grow their project management skills by offering their insights, feedback, and past lessons learned.

Provide the WIIFM answer

- Advertise the “Safe Experience” concept (help is available.)



- This is an opportunity to develop and to try out new skills ... without career risk!



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The “safe experience” concept is a key selling point when attempting to recruit leadership team members. This is especially valuable for people who have attended project management training but haven’t been able to put all the concepts they’ve learned into action.

There aren’t many opportunities for people to practice soft-skills and/or intimidating management techniques without risking negative consequences to their career.

You can provide a great opportunity for your leadership team members to hone their project management skills in a safe environment so that they don’t have to stumble as much with new skills and techniques on the job.

Most of us are reluctant to try new techniques and tools on important projects without the aid of a coach or consultant to guide us along. Here’s your opportunity to grow those new skills with plenty of feedback ... and a “safe” environment.

That’s the sales pitch ... but make certain that you and everyone actively works on creating the safe environment!

Provide the WIIFM answer

Leadership participation vastly expands your network of contacts.



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Leaders are well recognized in the organization. Networking is much easier when people seek you out for information, advice, and ideas. Leadership team members have an even greater potential for expanding their network of contacts than their non-participating colleagues.

If you present the WIIFMs effectively, and if you make it possible for people to participate, I believe that you'll find people making time in their schedules in order to benefit from this good training, experience, and practice.

Others will realize that it isn't necessarily painful to make contributions of time and talent to the organization - and that it doesn't require complete abandonment of one's family and friends.


Provide the WIIFM answer

What IDEAS do you have for your WIIFM?



Take 5 minutes to discuss some brief WIFM ideas that are of value to you.

How many ideas can your table come up with?



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What types of learning or practice experiences would be valuable to you - especially in a “safe environment?” Don’t work to develop the details right now - there isn’t much time. Just try to identify as many different ideas as possible within the 5 minutes. How many did your table come up with?

Building a Leadership Team

- Answer the WIIFM questions
- Make participation possible
- Finding potential team members
- Engage ALL the available resources
- Don't send mixed signals



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Remember that prior to implementing the concepts that are described in today's session, the Mass Bay Chapter had a handful of people who were willing to "help" but no one was willing to take a leadership position. We began to suspect that nobody felt they could help as a leader. It wasn't a simple matter of not wanting to be involved. There were practical barriers or concerns that prevented people from volunteering to provide leadership.

If we were able to remove those barriers to participation, maybe we'd be able to get more people to participate in both the leadership activities and the chapter events.

The first cue that this strategy might work came from the fact that there seemed to be volunteers who were willing to work on committees with other people ... but the committees that people expressed interest in were all related to small, well-defined, short duration tasks. We believed that it was related to "making participation possible."

Making participation possible

Minimize the Uncertainty

- Clearly define the role,
- List the responsibilities,
- Describe the environment, and
- Define the expected outcomes.



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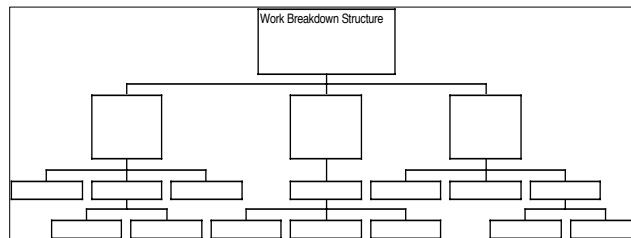
The key is to define not only the job responsibilities, but the expectations and the leadership environment as well. Remove as many of the unknowns as possible.

If expectations are not well defined, then it is difficult if not impossible for a person to know whether or not they can successfully contribute in that role. Being project managers who understand the concept of commitment and scope explosion (scope creep gone wild), many will naturally avoid stepping forward to voluntarily take on unclear, open-ended responsibilities.

Make it easier for people to grasp what they are being asked to do and to determine whether or not they can be successful.

Making participation possible

Use WBS techniques to partition work into small manageable work packages



It also encourages clarity regarding the desired deliverables.



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The concept is identical to the one used in project management.

If the work deliverables are broken into small, well organized, COMPLETE or self-contained pieces, then the responsibility assigned to a given individual is also smaller. This accomplishes several things

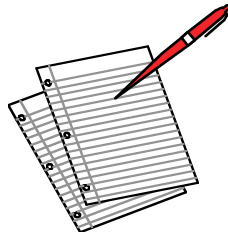
It provides someone (or some group) with the opportunity to practice creating WBS's and perhaps, more importantly - it provides some one or some group with the opportunity to experiment with different WBS strategies and analytical techniques that they might later feel comfortable trying on their "real" job.

It also makes the workloads appear less intimidating for potential volunteers who will be carrying out these tasks. People can envision throwing in a couple of hours of volunteer time over the next month ... knowing full well that there is a team handling many of the others aspects of the project. This is considerably more attractive than agreeing to take on a task that may turn out to be many hours (10, 20, or more) because the work is not structured and the team member roles have not been clearly defined and communicated.

Finally, if someone is unable to complete their relatively small piece of work, then it is only a relatively small work item that fails to be produced! It will be easier for the project team to absorb (by reassigning) that lost work item than it would be if the tasks were large and complex.

Making participation possible

Define DELIVERABLES not tasks



Clearly specify what the successful completion criteria and constraints are - refrain from dictating how to accomplish them.



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This is a fundamental project management concept too! Doing this encourages the planner and the implementers to have clearly defined completion criteria. It makes tracking, control, and risk easier to understand and manage.

This strategy has two key benefits for attracting leadership volunteers

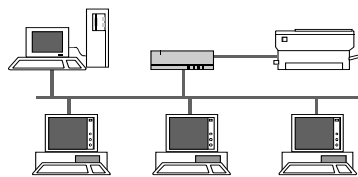
- 1) It gives them a better understanding of what has to be done in order to be successful when the work is complete and therefore better it gives them a better understanding of what the assignment really involves.
- 2) By defining the deliverable and not the task, it gives the volunteer the opportunity to explore different techniques, to try out new implementation ideas, and to grow their project, business, or technical skills in the process.

You are not as likely to inadvertently stifle creativity and growth if you stay away from detailing specific task procedures. However, it also means you have to be flexible in how the task is performed! Not everyone will do things the same way that you do them.

Manage the result by providing a clear definition of the requirements for an acceptable, successful deliverable.

Making participation possible

Be creative about gathering the team together
Consider using technology to make meetings possible for the attendees



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Scheduling meetings can be extremely difficult when people are geographically dispersed, have unaligned working hours, have conflicting personal demands on their non-working time, and/or have substantial transportation constraints (the train doesn't always go to the meeting location of your choice!)

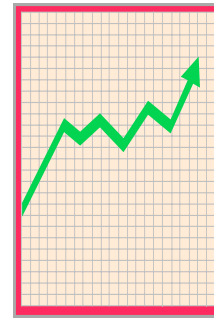
Consider using technology to alleviate those constraints. There are a variety of free and fee-based web collaboration services available for casual group use.

E-mail discussions, online chat sessions, telephone conferencing, and WWW-based information distribution can help minimize the need for traditional meetings. This may make leadership participation possible in at least some cases. Have a group put some careful thought into how to use those technologies and how to determine when they are not appropriate. Evaluate electronic sessions periodically to ensure continuous learning and improvement.

Don't ignore the need for face-to-face communications however! Especially when the subject matter is complex or when there are personal conflict issues involved. Technology will not provide a universal solution to the problem of gathering people together for a meeting but it may help in some circumstances. This environment is a perfect opportunity to personally learn and explore the use of technology enabled meetings.

Making participation possible

Don't launch tasks without first doing a preliminary analysis to understand the risks and the probability of success



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You *usually* don't launch business projects without doing some analysis to preview the probability of success. The same should be true of your chapter projects.

Consider structuring as many activities as possible, in a project format.

Then, before launching the project, do a preliminary analysis and determine what the probability of success is. Try not to launch projects unless they seem likely to succeed. If you determine that a project is risky, inform the entire project team of the risk. Then the effort can become a risk management learning experience.

It is much easier to get people to volunteer to lead and to participate in an effort that is likely to succeed. ... or one that at least has value in terms of learning, experience, and personal growth for the team members and for the chapter.

Going through the preliminary analysis also provides the potential project manager/leader a chance to help in the definition of the project AND a chance to "bail out" if he/she feels that the project does not fit with his/her skill and or availability constraints.

You'll get many more volunteers if they are not roped-in and trapped into situations that they are not completely committed to! This practice will reduce the number of bad experiences that people have. Don't forget, these people are networking and talking about their experiences to other potential leaders.

Making participation possible

Make it OK if things don't work as planned.
(manage the risk and advertise that fact)



... but be sure to harvest VALUE whenever possible.



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It is also easier to get volunteers when they know they have “an out” if something unexpected happens. People have extremely busy lives with less and less free time. They are reluctant to voluntarily reduce their schedule flexibility further by locking themselves into a time consuming PMI leadership position.

Make it well known that you're aware of the fact that things change. If someone cannot deliver, encourage them to simply ask for help. Ask for help and the entire team can help brainstorm alternatives and potential solutions ... encourage team members not to keep problems a secret.

In fact, in extreme cases, even a complete project failure can be acceptable. As long as the failure is turned into a learning experience for the entire team and/or the organization.

Be wary of jeopardizing a project with someone who has known constraints that don't fit well with the demands of a specific assignment. Accepting problems and change should not be confused with setting low goals and tolerating poor performance. When such issues arise, they must be addressed but individuals need not be tagged as “failures.” This is an excellent way to practice matching talents, logistics, and planning to productivity and needs.

A post project review and analysis can be done in a fairly small amount of time. Presenting the project as a case study can provide valuable lessons to the chapter. Even if the lessons are the same ones over and over again.

Making participation possible

Set aside time to train and mentor new leaders so they're set up for success.



Use situational leadership however! Different people will need different types of support and help.



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Things will go much more smoothly for you and for your portfolio of projects if you set your project leaders and project teams up for success. That doesn't mean you do their work for them. It does mean that you provide them with the support that they need to be successful.

This includes giving the project leaders and teams the information and resources that they need as well as making yourself available to mentor and educate them as needed. Training should be considered as well if appropriate. Many boards conduct formal orientation training and provide manuals to all new board members.

The kind of help and the level of detail in the guidance offered must be adjusted for each particular situation in order to be effective. Some leaders and team members will require more assistance than others. Seasoned leaders will need different types of information and support than inexperienced leaders will need. Adjust accordingly or else you'll undermine the benefits and the enjoyment experienced by the volunteers.

You ought to be practicing this as project team leaders anyway and this is an excellent opportunity to practice and to collaborate with others on how to do set up project teams for success. It isn't always easy - so tap into the resources available all around you - your fellow chapter members!

Making participation possible

TIME is a valuable resource -
Be sure it is used productively

- Use meeting agendas effectively
- Run meetings efficiently and keep them as short as possible
- Discourage unrelated and non-inclusive conversations
- Practice & develop meeting management skills



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Send out a proposed agenda well in advance of your working meetings with a request for meeting attendees to respond with additional agenda items and comments by a specific date.

Consider making your meeting agendas look more like project schedules. Even if you don't adhere to them tightly, the schedule format tells you early on if you're in danger of running out of time. It helps to keep meetings on track by serving as a focal point for the attendees.

Don't let 2 or 3 people have a working session in the middle of your board meeting while 8 or 9 others sit around and listen passively. It's a waste of their time and time is the valuable resource for most of us. If the conversation is educational or informative, that may be OK. If the conversation is exploratory without educational value, take it offline by focusing on the development of an action plan.

Kill unproductive circular conversations! Circular conversations are those in which two or more parties say the same thing more than three times in a round robin fashion. It means that people have stopped listening or that some barrier is preventing effective communications. In either case, it will become destructive and frustrating and once again, it's a waste of time - the one thing you can't afford to waste.

Your volunteers will appreciate having their time used efficiently and effectively.

Fun is Good!

But not if it is excessive - balance is needed

- TIME is still a critical resource for most people
- Fun is not a substitute for making a meaningful contribution, or for personal growth
- On-task related fun is ideal



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Fun is extremely important! It makes participation enjoyable and it has a way of making the work seem like something other than “work”.

Time is still the critical resource for most people though! If the “fun” is not conducive to productivity, people will begin to lose patience and they may develop a diminished sense of worth for the time spent in their “leadership” meetings.

Remember, the word spreads ... if participating in the leadership of the chapter or SIG is a worthwhile, enjoyable, and stimulating experience, others will want to join in. If it’s a tedious, painful, or dissatisfying experience, that word will get around too and you’ll find that growing the leadership team is much more difficult.

Finally, use humor thoughtfully. Making fun of yourself is usually safe. Humor at the expense of others may or may not be received well. The problem is that you will not always be able to tell whether or not you’ve caused injury or damage because not everyone expresses their feelings when they’ve been hurt. Unless you know your audience very well, proceed cautiously with humorous assaults on others.

Building a Leadership Team

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Be patient and be consistent in terms of creating the proper environment for the team to flourish in. Recruiting becomes automatic once people begin to realize that this environment produces winning results in an enjoyable manner.

Until that happens, here are some ideas to start with.

Finding potential team members

It's more enticing to volunteer time to a specific and important purpose.

- You must have a mission and vision to communicate to potential team members
- Potential members must be made to understand that they CAN contribute
- Consider adjusting your organization's activities to fit the interests of your volunteer pool



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This relates to the earlier concept of having a clear role and a clear set of expectations for potential team members. People find it much easier to join a team when they perceive the team to be a winning team, an effective team, or a team that is well aligned with their own set of values. A well communicated mission and vision can help with this.

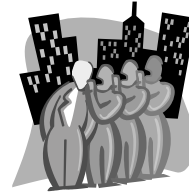
If there is no vision, it can be difficult to convince potential leadership team members that you've got a winning team with a clearly defined direction.

It is also absolutely necessary to show potential members that their participation is valuable for the organization. For some volunteers, you may also need to show them that they are capable of making a significant contribution. This may involve coaching and guidance from the balance of the team - or it may mean restructuring the task so that it is realistic and achievable for that individual.

Finally, if you have a pool of volunteers who are interested in working on projects other than the projects in your organization's current portfolio, consider changing the portfolio. After all, your organization exists to serve the members, and projects that have activities that are interesting to your members provide a significant source of potential services to your members. It is also easier to get commitment to tasks that the participants are passionate about.

Finding potential team members

- Deploy the entire leadership team in a continuous search for additional volunteers
- Ask for volunteers but don't call it 'quits' if response is weak or non-existent
- Ask individuals for their assistance and leadership whenever possible



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Don't do everything yourself.

Don't restrict the leadership team to a select few.

And don't give up the search! It is an ongoing process which must be continuously monitored and improved. In many instances, people need time to become comfortable with the idea of taking a leadership role before they volunteer. This means that you should publicize participation opportunities continuously.

It is also important to know that many people will respond to a direct personal question more readily than they will to a general request to the group. Asking a specific person for help, face-to-face, will often result in a "Yes, I'd be glad to help out" answer even though that same person didn't respond to the call for help that was published in the newsletter. Have everyone on the leadership team keep their eyes and ears open for potential volunteers who might respond to a personal invitation to join the leadership team.

Finding potential team members



Success breeds success!

Invite the entire membership to some of your board or leadership meetings.

Engage them in your winning team!



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If the leadership team is doing good things and its members are experiencing personal growth in an enjoyable manner, others will find out and they will want to join in too!

Encourage participation by inviting others to experience your meetings and to participate in the leadership discussions by opening your board meetings. You'll also be able to get a sense of whose committed to participating on a regular basis These people make excellent candidates for recruitment.

It has been my experience that open board meetings will not be overwhelmed by crowds of members. You can still afford to provide refreshments and you can still get business accomplished in an open meeting format. If you have controversial issues to discuss, simply lay out the ground rules at the beginning of the session so everyone knows what to expect and what to do.

I have found that the advantages of open board meetings far out weigh the concerns that most people express regarding the open meeting format.

Finding potential team members

Cultivate enthusiasm in the environment

Publicize the positive experiences of the participants in current projects



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It's easy to “forget” about being enthusiastic about the work you are doing and the work the team/group is doing. Both enthusiasm and lack of enthusiasm are contagious! If something is going to be passed around the team, chapter, or community, you might as well make it “enthusiasm and excitement.”

This is another way of expressing the concept of “success breeds success” but I’m repeating it because it is VITAL and it’s something that is easily and often overlooked.

You must be passionate about the work that you and others have done. You must also communicate this passion to the rest of the community (in this case, the chapter membership) so that others can see that there are real WIIFM opportunities and that it is possible to benefit from participation in the chapters activities.

Finding potential team members

Recognize that different people are different!

Pushing people into participation often produces poor long term results.



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The world today has an endless variety of people in it with diverse backgrounds, knowledge, experiences, and desires. No single strategy will work for reaching out to potential participants, volunteers, and leaders for your endeavor or organization.

Therefore, it is both appropriate and necessary to use a variety of approaches in terms of communicating, describing, and asking for participants in your learning experiences / opportunities. It may also be necessary to consider a variety of structures or strategies to employ in order to build a team that is energized about achieving your vision and goals. Be steadfast in your desire and goals to learn and grow but consider the use of flexibility in how you get there.

Finally, never use guilt or pressure to push someone into participation. This is especially true when it comes to leadership positions. People who have been pushed into leadership positions have an uphill battle when it comes to being successful compared to people who have chosen to be a leader.

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Engage ALL the available resources

“Cockpit Resource Management (CRM)”

CRM involves:

- Using ALL available resources effectively
- Outstanding work coordination and productivity between team members
- Outstanding team communications
- No communications barriers



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The airlines have understood for many years now that a good portion of the accidents that have occurred were directly or indirectly the result of poor coordination and ineffective use of the human resources in the cockpit.

I like the idea of using CRM techniques for leadership team environments too. If you want to “build” a leadership team and to have a leadership environment that attracts volunteers, then these principles must be applied.


- 1) make sure that everyone has some contribution - don't let your volunteers sit idle or feel like they aren't contributing. (This means you have to talk with them about their participation experience every now and then.
- 2) promote outstanding coordination by having clearly defined roles and highly effective and complete communications between team members. This does not mean the team members should bury each other in e-mail or memos however ... it's not effective communications if there's too much information to get through.
- 3) break down any barriers to communications. The president and/or senior officers must be approachable and open to messages (even bad news and criticism) from chapter members and especially from leadership team members.
- 4) cover for each other. There will always be times when people need a little extra help. Team members need to provide that to each other instead of hiding behind .."it's not my job". Highly effective teamwork will attract new highly effective team members.


Engage ALL the available resources

Teach the team about CRM and practice it with them!

Have clearly defined roles and expectations

Don't use "Fire and Forget" communications techniques



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CRM concepts need to be taught, refreshed, and practiced! They do not come automatically for most people. You must have enough trust and respect in the team environment to allow for open communications and to encourage constructive criticism and feedback.

I suggest starting by having clearly defined roles and expectations that include the need for CRM techniques ... and make sure that these roles do not create barriers to effective communications - this includes communications of both good news and bad news. (ie. Just because you're the president doesn't necessarily make you "right" all the time - you need to at least listen to other people's complaints and ideas ... and give them serious consideration)

My pet peeve is "fire and forget" communications in which someone tells somebody something in passing ... or leaves them a message ... once. After that, responsibility is passed to the other individual and no further follow up or action is required? A lot of balls get dropped with this practice. Especially when no attempt is ever made to verify that the receiving party got the message and understood what it meant!

Engage ALL the available resources

Make certain you communicate with your team - don't make them operate in the dark.

- Clearly define expectations and roles
- People like to know what's going on - keep them informed
- Coordination is key - everyone has to do a superb job of communicating



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People with leadership responsibilities hate to be left in the dark. It is very frustrating to be in charge of something and not to have any information about it Or not to have correct or current information about it. It is very difficult to be engaged and efficient when you lack the information required for success.

Encourage team members to think about who needs to have information and who might benefit from having information. Then strive to get the information to both sets of people.

Practice being clear and avoiding ambiguity.

Think coordination.

Engage ALL the available resources

Always find some way for volunteers to participate constructively.

Encourage creativity and exploration of new ideas and leadership techniques.

Make sure everyone on the team is involved and is contributing.



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Have you ever volunteered to help out in response to a call for help? Have you ever volunteered and not been called upon to actually help? How much help did they really need? - obviously not much. It's easy to inadvertently let volunteers slip through the cracks, but the negative effects can be long lasting. Find ways to put volunteers to work at constructive, meaningful tasks.

Telling volunteers they're not needed is a real "turn-off". It will be much more difficult to engage them the next time around. Also, meaningless busy work is a waste of time. We must AVOID WASTING PEOPLE'S TIME.

If there is busy work to be accomplished, try to avoid dumping it on just one or two people. Rotate the duty. Make sure there is value in having the work done and then make sure that the volunteers and the beneficiaries know the real value.

Give your leadership team members some maneuvering room and let them exercise creativity and experimentation. If you sold them on the learning value of volunteering their time, then you'll have to deliver on that promise, even if it means that they use a different process than the one you would have chosen. Control the quality and definition of the deliverables ... not the means by which they are produced. You can certainly discuss and compare your ideas to make an information exchange learning experience however.

Don't let shy or quiet team members go unnoticed. Just because they don't speak out, doesn't mean they don't want to be involved and contributing!

Engage ALL the available resources

Be certain that team members can communicate, complain, and express criticism openly without consequences



LISTEN! Don't squelch communications or creativity with negative and/or dismissive reactions to team member's ideas - word gets around.



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LISTEN! LISTEN! LISTEN!

Concentrate and work to learn what the other person is saying ... from the other person's point of view. Don't jump too quickly to the conclusion that you understand the other person's message.

LISTEN! LISTEN! And don't squash the energy and enthusiasm!

Phrases like "... it doesn't work, we've tried that before" and "well that's not how we like to do it" send a very clear message. That message is ...

"Despite what we said in our newsletter, we don't really want your suggestions, your help, or your energy ... unless you're willing to do things our way and under our terms ... this is after all, really a closed group"

Use active listening techniques and explore the ideas that people offer to see if you've really tried before. If you have tried the idea(s) before, see if ANYONE has additional thoughts that might make another attempt successful.

Hint If the other person is repeating themselves, more often than not it is a sign that they think they have NOT been heard. Reflect on what it is that YOU are not hearing.

Engage ALL the available resources

- Recognize accomplishments and “desired behavior” - even if the resulting outcome is not successful by classic standards.
- Express genuine appreciation for efforts that support these concepts or that support your organization’s mission.



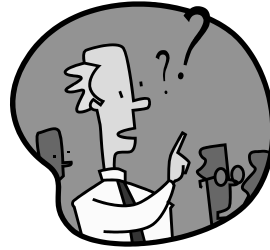
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You don't always have to have great deliverable results to warrant recognition and compliments. Make certain that “desired behavior” is rewarded with recognition and appreciation.

This also helps to advertise the type of leadership team environment that your organization has, and a winning team that expresses gratitude and recognition to its team members will prove to be a great recruiting tool for the team!

Engage ALL the available resources

- Encourage the team to voice, embrace, and explore differing viewpoints and perspectives.
- Unconditional RESPECT is crucial - especially when opinions differ.



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Discuss this concept with the team and work with them so that people can feel comfortable voicing their opinions and ideas - even when they differ from those held by other team members. If this isn't achieved, it's too easy to fall into group-think mode where the group stops considering issues with due diligence.

This cannot be achieved if there isn't a fundamental respect for ALL the team members by EVERYONE. It's also important to continuously refresh this respect through team discussion. Sometimes, when people disagree, it's easy to forget the respect criterion. This is true in both directions. The speaker can treat the receiver with a lack of respect but it is also possible for the receiver to become confused by the disagreement and to perceive a lack of respect incorrectly. Regular reinforcement is one of the keys to success here.

What does this have to do with Team Building? Remember, word of your board's activity will spread. If participating on the leadership team is an unpleasant activity, finding volunteers will become very difficult.

Also, the new team members and potential team members, those without knowledge of the team's history, are likely to have ideas that are different from the common thinking of the current leadership team. You **MUST** embrace them with respect unless you wish to send mixed signals about member participation on the leadership team.

Building a Leadership Team

- Answer the WIIFM questions
- Make participation possible
- Finding potential team members
- Employ CRM on the ground
- Don't send mixed signals



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Now that considerable effort has been made to create an environment that is safe, nurturing, and structured to provide personal growth opportunities to everyone who participates, it is crucially important that you don't send out conflicting messages like the following ...

We need your help! - but don't do that, I like to see that done "my" way.

The chapter president describes an open, safe environment for participation by everyone - but in reality, you have to be part of the "special" group in order to participate meaningfully.

Hey, don't talk to me about being busy! You committed to getting that done. If you want to see busy, try handling my workload!

Mixed signals will quickly destroy any credibility in the concept of a safe learning environment and the enthusiastic participants that are vital to creating your own learning opportunities will quickly figure out that the advertised benefits of participation are empty marketing words.

Don't send mixed signals

Be sure the entire leadership team learns to LISTEN without being defensive.

The entire leadership team must adopt the principles outlined here.



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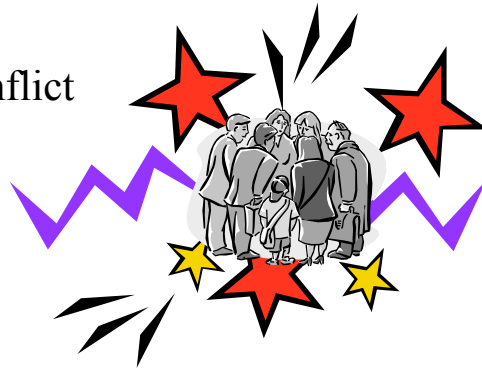
Don't pollute your pool of potential volunteers with negativity, closed minded attitudes, and defensiveness. If a member chooses to take the time to communicate with you, or if they elect to stand up at a meeting and ask a question, encourage the participation! Don't send mixed signals by stating your goals and desires for member participation, and then undo your message by contradicting those values with defensive actions.

Employ the concepts that have been presented here and use them when dealing with your entire membership.

The entire leadership team must embrace these skills. It is a very powerful way to learn about the needs of the members and it adds validity to any claim that leadership participation is a worthwhile endeavor.

Don't send mixed signals

- Don't ignore dissatisfaction
- Don't dismiss conflict



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Don't be an ostrich!


If you don't proactively handle dissatisfaction, conflict, and emotional pain, then your team will not run as effectively as it can. You will end up being personally involved in many more "projects" and activities than you should be.

More importantly, if emotions are running hot ... and they are negative with no productive channeling, your leadership team will not be something that others aspire to join!

Don't send mixed signals

- Choose your attitude and consciously set the tone for the group

REMEMBER:
Your Energy, Style, and Mannerisms are contagious!



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"The state of your life is nothing more than a reflection of your state of mind."

-Dr. Wayne W. Dyer

The tone and the environment in the organization are reflections of your own personal attitude and outlook. You have more control over the situation than you may believe. Choose your attitude and the energy, tone, and enthusiasm of the group will evolve to match your outlook.

If you are frustrated, short, and removed from the present situation, the environment will be set in a matching fashion and the rest of the group will evolve their attitudes and energies to match. Likewise, choosing a positive attitude and an outlook of success, respect, and achievement will be equally catching and will energize the group.

It's your choice.

Don't send mixed signals

Have open leadership meetings.



Fight the closed circle, old-boys network image for the leadership team.

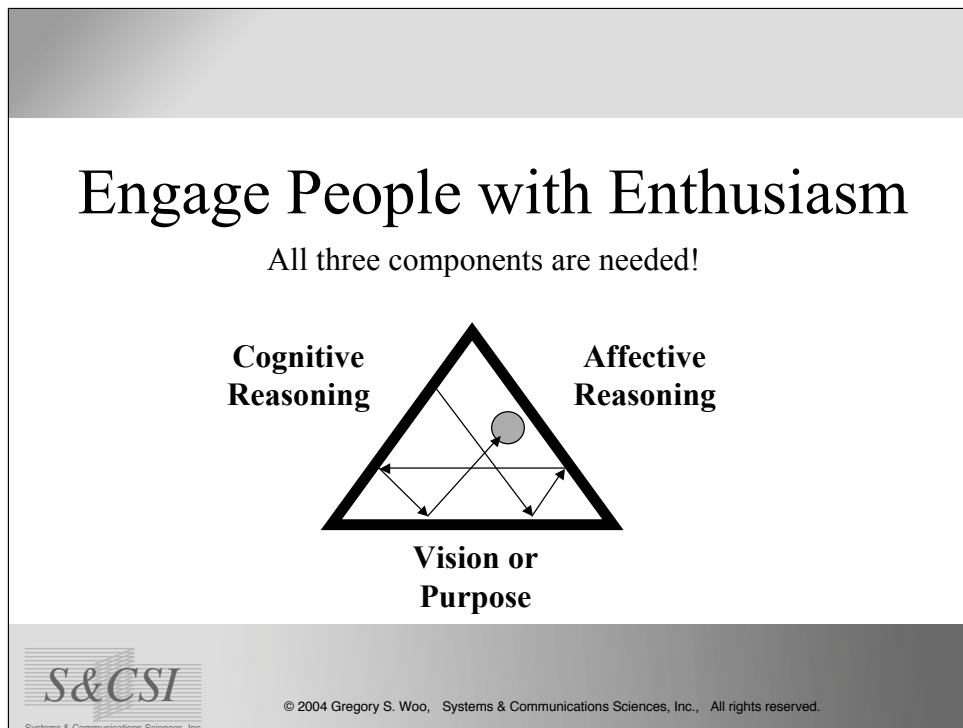


Spread the leadership team out at events -
Avoid being a clique



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It's not a closed club or a secret society! If it is ... then don't complain about not being able to get volunteers to come forward and to join the team.



People are motivated by more than logic alone. When all three sides of the triangle are complete, the magic of participation becomes very powerful.

Cognitive reasoning refers to the logical reasons about why someone might be motivated to participate in a chapter project - especially as a leader. Examples might include: to gain experience as a facilitator, to try out new ideas about motivating people or organizing teams, or to network with people who might be able to help me become a better project manager.

Affective reasoning refers to how someone feels and their emotional experiences in a situation or role. Examples include: I'll be respected more at work, I'll be looked up to by a growing network of professional friends and mentors who care about me, I'm more confident having learned important skills, or I really feel like a contributor in this group of talented, influential professionals.

Vision / Purpose refers to the need to structure peoples' participation so that they understand how they are collaborating with peers towards some meaningful common purpose. The results of their efforts will contribute to the profession noticeably, or help the community, or serve the chapter in some significant manner. The vision helps people work enjoyably together as an effective, high performance team and provides an important sense of belonging.

The final hint is that many people start out with enthusiasm and energy. If they're inquiring about a leadership opportunity or offering to help, they've already got the magic. The challenge is to address all three sides of the triangle to retain the magic and to stop it from becoming lost due to disinterest.

In Summary ...

- ENSURE BENEFIT - Focus on creating “safe” practical growth and development opportunities and publicize the benefits of participation.
- LISTEN CAREFULLY - create a team environment that encourages participation, unconditional respect, and member-to-member support.



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If you do these two things well, you will be off to a great start in terms of providing a unique, valuable, and enjoyable learning and growth experience for your participants that cannot be easily found elsewhere in today’s busy and turbulent business environment.

You have the people, knowledge, and enthusiasm to accomplish great achievements sitting all around you tonight! Find a way to take advantage of this tremendous resource.

Best wishes, *Greg*

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