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# Developing a High Performance Project Team

Course No: K10-003

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## COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is designed for any project manager, project engineer, or human resources/training professional responsible for the development of an effective team on a pending large project. (We use “large project” to mean involving more than 100 people and with duration of more than eighteen months. It will work as well with smaller project teams.)

This course takes the student beyond the traditional two or three teambuilding meetings that may occur with a large project to demonstrate that we must change that concept into one with more depth and the potential for greater endurance and performance: team development.

We see team building as an activity that begins with the project team member and flows outward dealing with their role on the project, their relationship with other team members, and their work in support of the project.

Our proposed approach for team development begins before the first team member arrives on the project. It starts by defining measurable performance expectations regarding technical and non-technical skills for each function. Then creates a system whereby the project team members are able to self-monitor their performance allowing them opportunities for professional and self-development that are not so evident in a traditional team-building environment.

The ultimate goal with this course is a project that is delivered on time, on budget, meets all of the client’s expectations, and *team members can’t wait to work together again on the next project!*

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants in this course will learn to:

1. List at least three prerequisites for a successful large project team development process
2. Identify the significant few critical job performance tasks of each project function
3. Develop a system of performance assessment for team members within a project's matrix organization
4. Identify critical shortcomings in the traditional view of the four stages of team development
5. Speed the early *forming* of a large project team
6. Reduce the potential of *storming* on a large project team
7. Expand the potential of broader *norming* on a large project team
8. Increase the level of *performing* on a large project team
9. Apply the dynamics of a large parent organization to the project team
10. Increase the team member's job satisfaction and on-going project loyalty
11. Increase the likelihood the project team members will want to work together again on the next project
12. Focus on the desired team development outcomes instead of a specific agenda
13. Offer suggestions to self-important project team members in a way to get their agreement and cooperation
14. Explain the need for a systematic approach to team development
15. Explain why the expectation of high performance is not always tied to compensation
16. Focus attention on the *people who do the work* instead of the work people do on a project.
17. Plan and lead the development of a large project team
18. List the order of employee loyalties on a project team to derive maximum productivity

19. Develop the best large project team from the resources available from the guidelines in the course
20. Explain and apply the advantage of focusing more on client expectations than the process of getting there
21. Apply the concept of “you cannot do things the way you always have and expect different results” to the development of a large project team
22. Explain and apply the value of a systematic process for large project team development
23. Explain the rationale for including a project team development specialist as part of the staffing for a pending large project
24. Plan and implement a strategy to obtain commitment for a project team development strategy from the principals of a large project
25. List and implement the eight essentials for a high performance project team

## SOME BACKGROUND

**fa·cil·i·ta·tor** [ fə sɪlli təytər ] (plural **fa·cil·i·ta·tors**) noun

**1. Somebody enabling something to happen:** somebody who aids or assists in a process, especially by encouraging people to find their own solutions to problems or tasks

**2. Meeting organizer:** somebody who organizes and provides the services for a meeting, seminar, or other event

**Team build·ing** noun

**Activities intended to encourage teamwork:** activities designed to encourage employees to work cooperatively

Encarta® World English Dictionary [North American Edition] © & (P) 2003 Microsoft Corporation.

**“Somebody who aids or assists in a process”** is how the dictionary defines a facilitator while team building is “activities intended to encourage teamwork”.

*“Just keep us from killing each other long enough so we can get this production line upgrade completed”* is how a project manager defined team building for me several years ago when he asked if I would be a team building facilitator on his project at a pulp and paper mill in North Carolina.

I was the Manager of Employee Training and Development at a large engineering and construction firm in the early 1990s and the team building movement was just beginning to gain momentum (at least as far as we and our clients were concerned.) It was my job as T&D manager to design or procure professional training for our staff of engineers, project managers, and related construction support personnel as well as organize and conduct many project related meetings.

*“But what, specifically, do you want me to do as a team building facilitator? Just make it happen (whatever ‘it’ is) or do you expect some kind of measurable outcomes?”* was my attempt at getting some clarification in his expectations.

*“I don’t care what you do or how you do it. It can be as simple as beer and barbeque, play some golf, or have a meeting: I don’t care! But I do know that we are wasting too much time protecting turf, pointing fingers, and doing rework. The client is beginning to hammer me about the schedule slipping and budget overruns!”* was all the direction and explanation I got.



*“By the way,” he added, “whatever you do has to happen on the project site in three weeks to get all this straightened out. It will be the client, his PM, the two major equipment vendors, all the project department heads, and me. I’m counting on you!”*

Suddenly, I had to learn how to be a “Project Teambuilding Facilitator” within twenty-one days on a problem-infested project with a major client and did not have a clue about what was expected.

*“And, Dick” he added with a chuckle before ending the telephone call, “have a nice day”.*

Mercifully, I do not recall too many details of that first team building adventure but I do recall telling my wife afterward that it was like working the high wire without a net. Part of it was very scary. Yet, there was also something addictive about the feeling you get as you stand in front of all of these assertive, take-charge, get-it-done personalities and guide them along a process of discovery to a cooperative point they may not have found alone. It is pure magic!

Apparently, I did OK because many other design/build projects came along after that asking for team building facilitation. They were for various clients in the chemical industry, more pulp and paper, a steel mill or two and even with NASA during their short-lived Advanced Solid Rocket Motor (ASRM) project.

The memories of that first experience stayed with me as I found myself recalling how nice it would have been to have some kind of practical handbook to help me avoid some of the traps into which I stepped during my trail-and-error learning process.

There were plenty of scholarly tomes on organizational theory and group dynamics heavy with philosophy but none that I found with nuts-and-bolts ideas, tips, and examples to help me *design and execute* (to use a phrase I picked up from the engineering department) a project team building program.

But now there is and you are reading it. I hope you find it useful.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard L. Grimes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

President and Owner of  
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Birmingham, AL  
February 2013

## PREREQUISITES FOR TEAM *DEVELOPMENT* FACILITATION

Although the previous section talked about team building, this handbook attempts to make the case that we must move beyond that concept into one with more depth and the potential for greater endurance and performance: team *development*.

We see team *building* as an activity that begins with the project team member and flows outward dealing with their role on the project, their relationship with other team members, and their work in support of the project.

Our proposed approach for team *development* begins before the first team member arrives on the project. It starts by defining measurable performance expectations regarding technical and non-technical skills for each function. Then creates a system whereby the project team members are able to self-monitor their performance allowing them opportunities for professional and self-development that are not so evident in a traditional team-building environment. (We will talk more about all of this later!)

Since there is no formal course (of which I am aware) leading to a *Project Team Development Facilitator* designation, I am writing this with a focus on someone with teaching experience at an adult level such as university, college, or corporate training department. These people also possess another qualification I consider critical: *an ability to think quickly on their feet in front of a group*.

Since projects have so much focus on measurement as practiced by project managers, engineers, and accountants, it would add to the facilitator's credibility if they could demonstrate some proficiency with performance measurements, too.

One way to do this would be by joining the International Society for Performance Improvement ([www.ispi.org](http://www.ispi.org)) and qualifying for a designation as a *Certified Performance Technologist* (CPT). ISPI is addressing a need to establish a standard of excellence in the training industry that helps separate those who can create and deliver performance with measurable results from those who attempt pass off feel good, warm-and-fuzzy end-of-course "smile sheets" as training evaluation.

Finally, this model "team developer" that I envision does not take themselves too seriously (pomposity is a guaranteed killer in a project team development setting) but does take the success of the project very seriously.

It is much easier to adjust to the flow of a large project if you remain serious about delivering the PM's expectations but loose-and-easy in your demeanor. This helps your interaction with the team members: the same group whose support can make your life on the project very successful or very miserable.

Other than these few traits, I think the field is wide open *to become all you can be*. (Thanks to the US Army's old recruiting slogan for that.)

## WHY WRITE A HANDBOOK LIKE THIS?

I am writing this for three reasons.

The first is my desire to offer project owners, managers, and facilitators a more efficient and effective way to develop a project team because the traditional process of team development leaves a lot to be desired.

**The traditional process of team development leaves a lot to be desired.**

“What do you mean? Are you suggesting the Project Management Institute’s PMBOK (Project Management Body of Knowledge) is wrong?”

Not necessarily wrong but I think there has been too much focus for too long on the *work that team members do* instead of the *team members who do the work*. This is not just an exercise in semantics but a fundamental change in the way of doing projects.

Here is an excerpt from a current PM training manual:

*“There are stages to team development and you should be able to determine the current stage and how to get to the highest stage. If you are unable to make the determination, you should call in a facilitator.*

*A facilitator is for assessment of team dynamics or stage of team development. They should also be able to give suggestions on how to get to the next level(s).*

*The stages of team development are: **forming** (very little if any work is being accomplished); **storming** (very little if any work is being accomplished); **norming** (first time significant work is accomplished); and **performing** (highest stage and work happens efficiently.)”*



Apparently, the author’s perception of a facilitator is like calling in a SWAT team if a crowd gets out of control.

The revised approach, which I offer, is built on a fundamental of behavioral study that leads us to approach situations differently: **“You cannot do things the way you always have and expect different results.”** If project managers want to speed the process of team development so they become

productive much quicker and subsequent conflict is reduced, they (PMs) must find a facilitator who can do that *and be willing to consider team development instead of team building*.

Then, their facilitator can be more than just the SWAT team and actually create this “dream team”. To achieve that, project managers will have to do a few things differently before starting their search for the facilitator-developer.

Here are at least four things that must be done differently:

- The way they view the facilitation process as *applied to the whole life of the project*, not just when problems occur
- The way they look for a facilitator
- The way they define their expectations of them
- The way they structure the facilitator’s relationship to the project.

As I said earlier in this section, the sooner the PM profession considers that a project is an organizational microcosm focused on ***people doing work*** instead of ***work that people do***, the sooner it will become evident that a specialist in organizational development (the future team development facilitator) should be a member of the team from the beginning, not just on-call in case a riot breaks out.

If we take enough time during project initiation to look at the people first and set the foundation for effective interaction between them, the work will almost take care of itself.

Why will it almost take care of itself? Because the people you hire to staff the job are very good at what they do. All they need from the project *and its leadership* is an environment that encourages them to do it!

But if all of our focus is on the work while the people who perform it are an afterthought, it is no wonder that we have a development stage called “storming”! The very fact we name it is an admission that work, *not the people who perform it*, is uppermost in our minds.



Additionally, specifying these four stages and saying “very little, if any, work is being accomplished” is admitting we build this period of “forming, storming, and norming” into our project schedules even though we do not expect to get much work done.

Wouldn't it be much easier to do things from the beginning *that prevent riots* instead of having the SWAT team stand by because we assume, sooner-or-later, we will need it?

The second reason for this guidebook is repeated studies of employee retention, performance (work quality and quantity), job satisfaction, and on-going loyalty all show employee commitment occurs in this order:

1. *To their leader*
2. *To their team*
3. *To their organization.*

**Studies have shown that employees stay with (or leave) their leader, not their employer.**

We cannot think about team development until each member of a project's management team is willing to become a *project leader* demonstrated by his or her actions, not just by their job title. Once they consent to act as leaders, the facilitator can work with them to develop an environment that fosters teamwork. As the bonds of teamwork strengthen, employee commitment to the goals of the project becomes stronger.

Finally, there is a third reason. As the costs of projects continually rise, so do the expectations of the owners and their project managers regarding schedule, promises, and results.

**Team development is a systematic, methodical process, not an event.**

Attempting to develop team development facilitation skills on a project with a trial-and-error, learn-as-you-go approach can be very expensive from a project budget standpoint as well as your blossoming career plans.

However, if you will take some time going over this handbook before your next project opportunity arrives, it will save a great deal of wear-and-tear on your nerves, your hide, and your reputation.

This material will be easy to learn if you realize that team development facilitation is more of an art than a science. If you can understand the "why" of what is presented, you can figure out the "how" that best suits your personality and the nature of your projects.

Think of this handbook like your Driver's Education class in high school. The intent of Driver's Ed was to teach you enough so you could go out into the world and gain driving experience safely without harming yourself or others. The instructor did not take you down all the roads you would ever



travel nor simulate all of the situations you would ever encounter.

The question that designers of a Driver's Ed curriculum must answer is, *"What's the least the students need to know so they won't be hurt while learning to drive and can gain experience safely?"*

This book is designed around that same question: **"What's the least you need to know about team development facilitation so you won't be hurt while learning to do it and can gain experience safely?"**

**"What's the least you need to know about team development facilitation so you won't be hurt while learning to do it and can gain experience safely?"**

The answer starts with Chapter 1. After that, we will look at the ways and means you may help the project *management* team transform into a project *leadership* team. There is the guidance you will need to create an effective project team and tools to use in developing it. We will talk about it from the viewpoint of a project manager and what's-in-it-for-him/her by having you as part of their project team.

If you would like to learn a little more about project management but do not want to read a technical book using words, phrases, concepts, and acronyms that you will never use, try reading James P. Lewis' *Project Planning, Scheduling, & Control (third edition)*[2001] [www.lewisinstitute.com](http://www.lewisinstitute.com). He is very informative and has an easy reading style that makes it a pleasure to read his material.

Another great source of project management information is the Center for Business Practices (CBP) at [www.cbponline.com](http://www.cbponline.com). The CBP is a knowledge center that captures, organizes, and transfers business practice knowledge to project stakeholders to help them excel in today's rapidly changing business world. Its *Best Practices Advisor* is a free, bi-monthly e-mail newsletter that will provide you with succinct tips and pointers to practices to help you better manage your projects and your business processes.

The ultimate source, however, of project management knowledge is the Project Management Institute ([www.pmi.org](http://www.pmi.org)). Go to their website for all you will ever want to know about the art and science of project management.

Dick Grimes, CPT

Birmingham, Alabama

2013

## “SEMPER GUMBY”



Do you remember the cartoon character, *Gumby*? He was the flexible rubber guy that could be bent into so many different shapes and directions without damage.

A good team development facilitator must be “always flexible” (‘Semper Gumby’) like that, too, because the scope of the desired results may change as the project (and even the meeting planning the project’s team development!) evolves. Also, the more the PM or project principals see that you *can* do, the more they will *want* you to do.

The more that you can adjust “on the fly” only increases your value to the project. The greater your value to the project means the greater your income potential and the chances for more work on future projects.

An easy way to be “Gumby-like” is to *focus more on the desired outcomes that the client is expecting than the process of how to get there*.

For example, if the desired outcome of a team development session is a project Code of Conduct, then you can still be confident of delivering that product even if your expected time allotment was changed from 6 hours to 2 and the meeting location from an elaborate, near-site hotel conference room to an on-site break room in the administration building complete with folding chairs and card tables.

If you had focused more on following a detailed and elaborate process that would have needed the full six hours and plenty of conference room space for the activities than you did on achieving the outcome, you would have been in trouble because you were inflexible.

As we said, “Semper Gumby!”



## WIIFM?

Another trait that seems to work well for many facilitators is a desire to help the audience discover the WIIFM ('what's-in-it-for-me?') value in any concept.

Try to never come across as telling them something outright because it sounds like lecturing. Remember, the personalities you encounter on a project are not there because they are shy and lack self-confidence. They are not usually anxious to have anyone (especially a non-engineer or technical specialist like they are) try to tell them anything.



But if you ask, “How could doing it this way help you”, it sounds like you are trying to help them find something beneficial.

As they explain how doing what you suggested could help them, you get what you wanted (their understanding and possible agreement on an issue) and they get the satisfaction of explaining their reasoning to you. You are happy and they are happy: what more could you ask for? Do you see what's-in-it-for-you to use this kind of approach in facilitation?

This is one of the great features of team development facilitation from a WIIFM standpoint: *they convince themselves of the value of your idea as they are explaining it back to you!* They will do your work for you if you will just make it easy for them to do so! (Can you understand why team development facilitation beats doing “real work” anytime?)

This approach of helping them help themselves is reflected in one of the cornerstones of our company, [www.outsourcetraining.biz](http://www.outsourcetraining.biz), “Give me a fish, you feed me today. Teach me to fish, you feed me for life.” (We do not claim that saying originated with us.)

As a team development facilitator, you are *teaching* them the benefits of doing things the new way you suggest instead of like they always have. (Fortunately, it is because of those old habits that they need you!)

Which brings us to another of our company's cornerstones: “You cannot do things the way you always have and expect different results”.

Your clients may understand this intellectually but will have trouble putting it into practice. We present the examples in this book with questions you can ask your audience to help them understand they can get what they desire *by trying to do things a different way than they have before*.

Once again, they will do a good job subconsciously of convincing themselves of the value of your idea while they are explaining their answer if you present your ideas in a WIIFM format.

## THE NEED FOR A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Regardless of how well defined a project's scope may be in terms of product expectations, budgeting issues, and scheduling plans, there will always be an element that cannot be fully predetermined: *it is the way the people who staff the project get along with each other.*



The issue is not about their competence to function as engineers, accountants, safety experts or whatever their professional skills may be but *whether they can work well together as a team.*

For example, in my early days of working around projects before 3-D CAD became more common (maybe as far back as 1990), I remember hearing structural engineers discussing interferences within a building where cable trays in their drawings may run through actual ventilation ducts.

Their solution was usually, “*We’ll get them as close as we can and then let the constructors in the field fix it.*” This sort of “*silos thinking*” where one vertically structured project group took care of their specialty and did not talk with other groups caused a lot of project friction.

Naturally, the constructors verbally blasted the designers who caused them extra work and delays because they had to stop and fix something the other group had not warned them about. (This is an example of the “*storming*” phase of traditional projects as defined by the PMBOK.)

The process that we explain in this book will help you address the issues of what’s-in-it-for-them (the project groups) to work with each other and what’s-in-it-for-the-PM to let you show them how.

We will also talk about the basic conditions that must be present for people to *want* to do a good job and what’s-in-it-for-the-PM to support your efforts to provide those considerations. (Although the PM may expect the staff will do their best job, “*That’s what we pay them for!*” does not mean they will want to. We will cover this difference later, too.)

We will put all of these ideas into a project team development facilitation plan that could be used as a model on almost any project you may encounter.

We say, “Almost any” because the extent of its use (if at all) is your choice, not ours. We will promise you, though; the projects on which you use it will make you look very, very good (assuming the PM supports your efforts.) The part you will like best about this plan is that it is easily scalable up or down for projects of nearly any size.

Finally, there are suggested responses to a hypothetical interview with a project management team who are looking for a facilitator for their project. The questions are based on what they *should be asking* and on problems associated with matrix organizations like projects as described in project management training manuals.



## A PREVIEW OF WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO

Before we go any farther in this handbook, you should know that we are going ask to you consider a long-term approach to project team development facilitation.

Instead of being a resource that drops in on occasion to lead team meetings and plan golf outings, we will make the argument that **you – as a project team developer - should be an integral part of the project’s leadership team from the beginning and a critical resource for organizational development guidance for the life of this project for three critical reasons:**

1. Your plan can help team members hasten through the traditional “forming” stage (when “little if any work is being accomplished”)
2. It can help them reduce the time spent in the “storming” phase - if not avoid it entirely (when “little if any work is being accomplished”).
3. It starts the long-term development of the project core team from this project through many more in the future.

What do you think would be the career benefits for a project manager who could carry from one project to the next a core group who kept evolving into a more cohesive and synergistic team? And whom do you think that PM would want beside him or her as a facilitator on those future projects? (We are back to the WIIFM aspect again.)

“What do you think would be the career benefits for a project manager who could carry from one project to the next a core group who kept **evolving into a more cohesive and synergistic team?**”

*“Wait a minute”, you say, “Isn’t organizational development something that large, permanent companies deal with? This project is a temporary matrix organization with team members assigned from their permanent companies just for the duration of this project. Our client is expecting deliverables in eighteen months! How can you talk about organizational development?”*

Consider this for a moment: if a project can “borrow” staffing from large, permanent organizations, why can’t they also borrow some of their organizational characteristics?

The project's lifespan may not be the most important factor here. That 18-month duration is only meaningful if you meet all of the client's expectations.

If you have not met them after 18 months, you have three choices:

1. Stop at that point, go no farther because the 18-month clock has expired, and ask for payment?
2. Keep working until you achieve the outcome the client wanted while each side's lawyers start negotiating the inevitable penalties you will incur?
3. Beg forgiveness while punishing the guilty?

Unless you are 100% certain that your project will meet the entire client's expectations *and they would be willing to hire you again*, there is reason to consider this organizational development strategy.

"The strategy" asks you to weigh the benefit of taking enough time *before the project* starts to lay the groundwork for creating a self-directed, highly motivated work team that spends minimal time in the *forming* stage; jumps to the *norming* stage and quickly gets to the *performing* level.

Contrast this with the time spent *after* it starts going through the *storming* phase doing rework, untangling confusion, and dealing with the inevitable problems that arise when work groups do not work with each other as a team.

The potential return on investment can be tremendous. What could a project team like that do for a client's perception of the project's success, the project manager's reputation, and also yours?

If the client were well satisfied with the project's outcome, wouldn't the current project team have the best chance of getting any follow-up work for that same client?

If you as facilitator can help the PM make it easy for the client to invite the team back for the next project, everyone wins! The client, the team, the PM and you all win!



Another benefit to users of this handbook is the knowledge and tools we discuss here work well in a permanent organization, too, in case you have any non-project clients that want to be known as “an employer of choice” (to use one of the current buzz phrases in the world of human resource development).

There is no guarantee this strategy will give your project the maximum payoff possible the first time you use it. Like any other skill, it takes practice to get better at it. Even brain surgeons talk about the number of years they have been “in practice” doing their specialty.

We will guarantee, however, the more you use it and compile measurement documentation to show your next client, each application gets easier. This is especially true if core team members stay together from one project to the next because they will have experienced first-hand how it made their project lives easier. They will become your biggest advocates and act as mentors for new members.

## GETTING PROJECT PRINCIPLES' BUY-IN TO THIS APPROACH

After you finish this handbook, you will think, *“This is great stuff! But how can I get a project manager who is used to the traditional way of doing projects to consider doing something different like this?”*

You can practice your WIIFM technique by asking the PM these three questions:

1. “If there were a way to create an environment on your next project where all client expectations and promises were met and *every team member couldn't wait to work with that whole team again on the next project*, do you think that would have any value for the project principles?”

(We will assume the PM's interest was piqued and he or she wanted to hear more.)

2. “And, if you could exchange all of the time the team will probably spend in doing rework and dealing with friction between groups after this project starts by spending a little more time before it starts, would that be a good trade?”

(They should be hooked by this time.)

3. “If so, then all you have to do is consider a different way of handling the people side of projects to get the benefits I just described. Here is how you can get them. ”

Now share with him or her what you have learned from this handbook. (After your successful project, please tell us what worked and what did not so we can keep future versions of this as relevant as possible. The email address is [dick@outsourcetraining.biz](mailto:dick@outsourcetraining.biz). We will mention your contribution in the next book and send a free, updated copy to you for your help.)

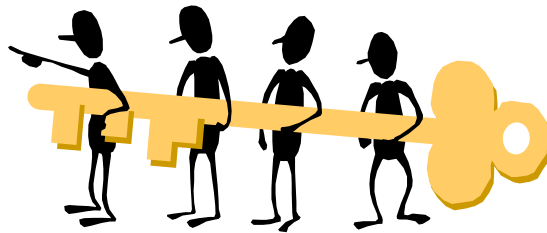


## EIGHT ESSENTIALS FOR A HIGH PERFORMANCE PROJECT TEAM

Project team development, as we use it here, is the *process of personal, professional, and organizational development that occurs with the team over the life of the project.*

The team members gain confidence in themselves and each other. Reliability, trust, and cooperation are present in everyday work; they are not elusive dreams we hope to find in the next project.

Project management becomes project *leadership* and the entire workforce becomes a cohesive team. Obviously, this is much more than a one-time pep rally, ropes course in the woods, or a golf outing after which the project members are expected to work and play well together forever.



In order to create and sustain an on-going process so this development of a highly engaged, motivated, and performing project team can occur, we first will have to understand what people require in their work environments so that optimal team development has a chance to happen.

Here are eight basic essentials:

- 1. Sharing Behavioral Values**
- 2. Sharing a Common Purpose For Existence**
- 3. Having a Process to set Measurable Performance Goals**
- 4. Having a Chance to Work Toward Those Goals**
- 5. Getting Periodic Feedback On Goal Progress**
- 6. Receiving Help and Guidance When Needed**
- 7. Rewarding Success with Pay Or Praise**
- 8. Receiving Help With Professional And Personal Growth**

We will expand these and try to convince you they are critical to have yet easy to create *with the support of executive project management*. We will also help you develop a strategy to obtain that vital support from the project owners and senior executives.

## ESSENTIAL #1 - SHARING BEHAVIORAL VALUES

### DEVELOPING A PROJECT CODE OF CONDUCT

The Marines use “Semper Fi (delis)” (‘Always Faithful’) as a promise that they will not let each other down. The Ten Commandments guide Christians on their behavior. Even Colonel Sanders’ “We do chicken right!” was a type of value statement that helped KFC workers and customers share similar expectations of chicken.

A very effective way to do this is in a meeting with the project principles, project department heads, and some ‘high-potential’ project employees before the project starts bringing aboard the rest of the staff.

Here is how you can present it to your audience.

YOUR QUESTION	DESIRED ANSWERS (Keep Probing Until You Get Something Similar To These)
<p><b><i>“Do you think a code of conduct has value for an organization?</i></b></p> <p><b><i>For example, what value does the code of conduct called The 10 Commandments have for the organization called ‘Christianity’?”</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>“It defines their expectations of each other. It gives them guidance for action where there are no specific rules and regulations”.</i></b> (And if there were such policy and procedure manuals, they would be so thick that no one would read them!)</p>

#### Question 1

An example would be, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”. Many volumes could be written about fairness in dealing with other people in thousands of situations. (Lawyers call them case law.)

Instead, that simple line of “Do unto others...” allows us to fit our definition of fairness to our situation instead of searching through some policy manual.

Please let us clarify something before we go farther. This code of shared values is not intended to replace the compliance regulations required by government agencies; specifications and procedures required by insurance companies; or the policies from the Human Resources or Safety departments on the project. **It is intended to identify and publicize the *unspoken expectations* that we all have of each other on a project.**

Unfortunately, even though these are traditionally unspoken, we still expect coworkers to be aware of them and comply with them. Then we get upset when they do not.

YOUR QUESTION	DESIRED ANSWERS
<b><i>“Do you think our project qualifies as an ‘organization’?”</i></b>	<i>You should get agreement quickly on this!</i>

Question 2

YOUR QUESTION	DESIRED ANSWERS (Keep Probing Until You Get Something Similar To These)
<b><i>“Do you think we could avoid some potential friction among team members if we could identify and publish a Code of Conduct for our project? If so, what kind of behaviors would we want in our Code?”</i></b>	See below. Put them on a flipchart page so you can post them in the meeting for reference.

Question 3

You may get many suggestions with this question but they will probably distill down into thoughts like these:

1. ***Be reliable.*** *Get to work on time (or early); meet your promised deadlines (or earlier); and follow through on your promises to team members whether project related or personal.*
2. ***Share knowledge*** *if possible and ask for help when needed.*
3. ***Smile and be as friendly as you can.*** *We are all in this together.*

4. **Consider your behavior as seen through the eyes of your peers.** *If they were asked, “What is it like to work with you, what would you want them to say?” Then be sure your actions would make it easy for them to make those comments about you.*
5. **Trust is historic.** *Team members have to learn they can trust you.*

Some limitations you should consider while developing this code is the temptation for some to be ‘preachy’, too lengthy, or too much like specific rules that already exist somewhere else on the project.



Try to discourage this as much as you can because short, concise, and easy-to-remember statements are more likely to be used by the workforce. But, if they insist that is what they want, then give it to them because *it is their project and they are agreeing (by arguing their points) they are willing to live by them.* (This is all you were after, anyway!)

An additional benefit of having a project Code of Conduct is it helps the leaders at various levels within the project with employee performance issues. If this were the code in use on our current project, a supervisor or manager (we generically call them ‘leaders’) could point to the “Be reliable” and “Trust is Historic” statements and ask (not TELL) the employee what they are teaching teammates about their reliability by being late to work again.



This is a very subtle yet powerful tool for performance management. The smart leader never says, “You broke a project rule by being late!” because the tardy worker may view the project as some vague, Big Brother sort of presence inflicting a myriad of rules on him.

But teammates are not vague: they are very specific people with names and faces. “Letting our teammates down” has a much bigger impact on people than does breaking one of Big Brother’s innumerable rules.

The Code of Conduct concept helps the employees self-manage their behavior without the intervention of their leaders. This tool helps to shift part of the management role as “cop” to the employee who now becomes self-regulated.

## TESTING THE VALUE OF YOUR PROJECT'S CODE OF CONDUCT

We will assume you have been successful in leading the project team in the creation of their Code of Conduct. Here is how you can show them its value.

Ask them to think about the best project they have ever worked on in the past. Or, if some do not have much project experience, ask them to think about the best work team or sports team they were ever a part of. It can be full-time, part time, or volunteer. It can be with their current employer or a previous one. Collect their responses so they can all see them on a chart like this on the board or easel paper. These represent typical responses.

Traits of the best team I was ever a part of...	The impact of those traits on me...	The impact those traits had on my work...
#1 No one was finished until we all were. If someone finished early, we helped someone else.	I kept learning more about the work so I could "show off" by getting finished first. It increased my value to the job and department.	I could do many different jobs so I got a lot of OT. Also, it showed my boss the potential I had and he gave me some more, difficult work (I loved it!)
#2 Everyone pulled his or her own weight. We did not tolerate "slackers".	I wanted to be at least as good as the guy next to me. I did not want my friends to think of me as a slacker.	High production and quality. I had very little rework because that would make me look bad.
#3 There were clear expectations about what the company wanted from us. We knew what we were expected to do. There was very little oversight by the bosses.	It gave me confidence because the boss knew I knew what was expected. I kept my quality and quantity of work high so she would not bother me.	I looked forward to coming to work because it was doing something I could take a lot of pride in.  It also showed her how little supervision I needed.
#4 When someone figured out how to do something faster or better, they were expected to show at least one other person. That way, we all got smarter.	It made me want to learn more so I could be a teacher, not a "learner".	It was not long before my job roles expanded because I had shown I could do a lot. My increased value to the company helped me get promoted.

Using that chart as your reference, refer back to the code of conduct your group generated back on page 27 and ask them this question:

YOUR QUESTION	DESIRED ANSWERS
"How many of the items we mentioned in our Code of Conduct (gesture to it) would have been applicable in this composite "best team" setting you have described?"	(There is no set answer here other than the probability that some of the items they listed today were part of the best team they were ever a part of. This is because our desire for cooperation, reliability, and looking out for each other is part of our fundamental nature. We just need to be reminded of it sometimes.)

Question 4

You are working toward a connection between the *potentially great memories* they can have from this project and their fond memories of great projects in the past. Be sure to tell them this can be just as great a project, too, if they will focus on that code of conduct in everything they do on this project and help new team members learn it, also.

If you can establish a code of conduct that gets published, posted prominently throughout the project, and referenced frequently from senior project leadership downward through the ranks, the team will be well on its way to a great project experience.

Naturally, they will have you to thank for it!

## DEVELOPING PROJECT LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES

A variation of the project code of conduct that applies to all employees is the **Principles of Project Leadership** that applies only to those in leadership positions. Please notice these are not “management principles” because we want to make a clear distinction here.

We consider leaders as *people who will take us places we may not be willing to go on our own* while managers “manager” conditions today without taking us forward.



Project success depends on strong *leadership*, not *manager-ship*.

It may be very useful, depending on the amount of time you have available, to meet with the leaders as a separate group to develop these principles.

Start by asking them:

YOUR QUESTION	DESIRED ANSWERS
“Are there any actual differences between leaders and managers or is it just a matter of semantics?”	(You will get several ideas that you should chart as a reference for later in this session.)

Question 5

Typical answers you get will be something like this. List a few for each category.

LEADERS	MANAGERS
1. They help groups get to places they may not have gone to on their own.	1. Do a good job of “maintaining” but do not move you ahead.
2. Visionaries looking to the future.	2. They protect the “status quo”.
3. You lead people; you manage things.	3. Managers follow rules – leaders follow dreams.

Then ask something like this, *“Which of those categories, leaders or managers, do we need to make this the best possible project we’ve ever done?”* Obviously, they will say LEADERS because everyone wants to be associated with a successful project and they want to see themselves in the most positive light.

Now ask, *“What advantage is there for you if we developed some Project Leadership Principles to remind us how to deal with our subordinates?”* (There is that WIIFM again!) Just listen to their answers as they lead themselves to the development of the Project Principles of Leadership.

You can develop the Project Principles of Leadership by brainstorming with this group. Try to collect from 6-10 that they can agree on. Fewer than six may not cover all of the key issues they want to consider and more than 10 starts becoming a bulky list that few will use.

Please look at page 33 as a sample of Leadership Principles put together by the operations division of a large bank that I worked with to create a leadership culture.



### PROJECT LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES (SAMPLE)

(Name of) Project Principles of Leadership

1. **THIS PROJECT EXISTS TO (fill in using “everyday” phrasing typical line employees –who do most of the work-, would understand and follow).** Any decision that you make must support and advance that purpose.
2. **TRUST IS HISTORIC.** Your people must learn they can trust you. Every action you take must advance their education about you.
3. **WELCOME PROBLEMS THAT YOUR EMPLOYEES BRING TO YOU BECAUSE THEY PROVIDE YOU WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE YOUR WISDOM AND PATIENCE.** This also helps to show them you do not attack the messenger with bad news, you attack the problem! Review # 2 above.
4. **IF YOU HELP YOUR EMPLOYEES UNDERSTAND THE “WHY”, THEY CAN FIGURE OUT THE “HOW”.** Do not insult them by always telling them how to do it. Also, they may discover a better way to do something!
5. **WHEN YOUR EMPLOYEES GET WHAT THEY WANT, YOU WILL GET WHAT YOU WANT.** The more you talk with them about their job, children, pets, hopes, dreams, concerns, and fears, the better your chances of knowing what they want.
6. **GIVE ALL THE CREDIT YOU CAN TO YOUR EMPLOYEES WHEN THEY DO WELL – TAKE ALL THE BLAME WHEN THEY DO NOT.** Then quietly find out what led your employees to the wrong results and then change whatever you found so it does not lead to problems again. However, do not attack your employees!
7. **PEOPLE LEARN BY DOING – YOU MUST ALLOW YOUR PEOPLE TO FAIL AS WELL AS SUCCEED.** You still reserve the right to step in and not allow anything to diminish the Operations Division’s reason for existence. See #1 above.

8. **DECIDE WHAT YOU THINK IS MOSTLY RIGHT AND GET STARTED. YOU CAN IMPROVE IT ALONG THE WAY.** A project environment requires decisions and actions. Delaying a decision until you are certain it will work may cause a greater problem. Use #1 above to help you decide which of your options is closer to being right. NOTE: This does apply to safety issues.
9. **TALK TO EVERY DIRECT REPORT EVERY DAY.** See #5 above.
10. **YOUR PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY AS A (name of) PROJECT LEADER IS TO DEVELOP YOUR REPLACEMENT.** You can never be promoted if there is no one to replace you!

## ESSENTIAL #2 - SHARING A COMMON PURPOSE FOR EXISTENCE

The “common purpose for existence is the mission statement of the company, the project, or the group.

“Remember the Alamo!” was a very effective mission statement for early Texans. Many people debate about what a “mission statement” is, what it should sound like, and elements it should contain.



We will not waste time here trying to resolve that issue. Instead, as team development facilitators, we will look at a mission statement from a different perspective regardless of the wording of a statement for a particular project.

The client and PM have probably already put together a mission statement that proclaims the purpose of the project. If it is like many, it contains references to specific products (such as “high-grade steel”) plus grand and far-reaching phrases about “world class”, “enhancing shareholder value”, and things like that.

While it reassures the stockholders, key project champions, and other movers and shakers associated with the project that the team is mindful of their expectations, it probably *has very little meaning for Jane or Joe Blue Collar who does 90% of the physical work on the project.*

Please understand that we are not suggesting a grand mission statement has no value. It certainly does but *not necessarily with the project team members who do most of the physical labor.* You must consider the audience.

If the team is working on a construction site on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan in January, how concerned will they be about the perceptions of shareholders they have never met regarding their world-class expectations of the project: probably very little.



Consider rewording the mission statement for project team members into a “working version”. It specifies the client’s desired measurable outcomes and says something about our teamwork together.

It may look like this with appropriate numbers filled in for X and Y: *“Our mission statement is that we will start producing X tons of steel per day at Y quality by (date) and **be eager to start working together again as a team on the next project.**”*

There are many advantages of a simplified working mission statement with a reference to team performance:

- It is easy to remember why we are here.
- It helps us remember this can be a *positive memorable experience* for each team member if we follow the project’s Code of Conduct daily.
- It guides decision-making at lower, yet critical levels. A lot of rework and wasted time could be avoided if the lowest level of workers shared a common understanding of the project’s purposes *and used that in decision making.*

For example, any decision that a team member may be facing can be simplified by using the mission statement: *“IF DOING TASK A helps us get closer to producing X tons of steel per day at Y quality by (date) and eager to start working together again as a team on the next project THAN BY DOING TASK B, WE SHOULD DO A. IF IT DOESN’T SERVE THE WORKING MISSION STATEMENT, DON’T DO IT.”*

Do you see how closely that matches the same sentiment as Leadership Principle #1? A blue-collar worker could not go very far wrong if they used their judgment and common sense to balance their potential actions against the mission of the project.

***If we trust our employees’ skills, experience, and knowledge enough to have hired them, should we not allow them to use the judgment we assume they have?*** (Or at least long enough until they show us they cannot be trusted.

When that happens, they should leave the project. This concept of allowing the lowest level workers some latitude in decision-making also goes a long way to development morale. We will talk more about this later.)



If this assertion that we can, and should, trust employees with some measure of decision-making create concern among the senior management of the project, then ask them to think about the ratio of leadership to workers on the project.

Also, think about how much time the leaders (prime contractors and sub-contractors) would spend watching *every employee* do their work if they felt employees could not be trusted and had to be watched every minute.

It is evident there must be some common guidelines for decision-making presented in terms the least sophisticated among the workers can understand. A simply phrased, easily understood statement could guide actions when there is no leader to ask.

(Remember the Marines' "Semper Fi!" Semper Fi (delis) *Always Faithful* - could there possibly be a simpler, yet more powerful guideline for personal action *once it is explained to every recruit?*)



## ESSENTIAL #3 – HAVING A PROCESS TO SET MEASURABLE PERFORMANCE GOALS

This helped you know in high school whether you would be on the honor roll or your parents would ground you when the report cards came out.

Setting personal and measurable goals is a cornerstone of creating a high performance project team with high morale. There is an easy way that we can accomplish this on a project but, before we do, there are deeper background issues that we must understand first.

You must help the project leaders understand how much they influence their employees' behavior without realizing it.

Here is a way to do that. Make this statement and ask them to write their answers. Assure them you will not ask anyone to share theirs with the group.

YOUR QUESTION
<i>"Why do you think anyone would want to work for you? Write down the two or three reasons you can think of."</i>

Question 6

Let them think about their replies for a minute or two.



Here is why you are asking this question: *if the leader does not know why someone would want to work for him or her, how can they expect their employees to know?*

This could be a reason why they may be having some difficulty with their subordinates.

Then put up a sheet of flipchart paper and give them this assignment.

YOUR STATEMENT	PROBABLE ANSWERS
<p>“Complete this sentence, “Life on this project would be great if our employees will only...”</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learn to think for themselves</li> <li>2. Show up for work</li> <li>3. Get here on time</li> <li>4. Show some initiative</li> <li>5. Etc., etc. (you get the idea)</li> </ol>

Hang that sheet where they can see it, get another sheet of chart paper, and put this three-column form on it. Once again, you ask them to complete the sentences. (You should get answers similar to the samples included to help clarify the intent of this exercise.)

When The Best Boss I Ever Had Did This...	...It Had This Impact On Me...	...And It Had This Impact On My Work.
Told me what she wanted in clear and measurable terms and left me alone to do it.	I worked with much more confidence because I knew exactly what she expected. I did not have to worry by hoping I was doing it right.	I accomplished more because I knew exactly what was expected. I did not waste time asking if it were right or doing rework.
Showed me he trusted me.	I did my best to please him.	I was the top performer in my department.
Helped me learn from my mistakes.	It gave me confidence to try new things without fearing I would get in trouble.	I discovered ways to do my job faster while maintaining the same quality.
Supported me through some trying times in my personal life.	I would have then, and still would now, do anything I could to help her.	I was a model employee because that is how I could thank her for supporting me.

By now, maybe you can see how this is shaping up.

1. You forced them to reflect on why anyone would want to work for them.
2. Then you made it easy to complain about all the negative traits they expect from employees and posted it where they can see it.
3. Finally, you asked them to think about the best boss they ever had, the impact on them (as an employee) and the impact on their work. You gave them a chance to relive some very pleasant memories.

You now have them primed and ready for one of life's "AH HAH!" moments. One of those times when sudden insight blasts through their consciousness and the proverbial lights come on in their brains.



Ask this question while pointing to the first chart (*"Life would be great if my employees would only..."*) and the one you just completed:

YOUR QUESTION	THEIR PROBABLE COLLECTIVE ANSWER
"If your boss' treatment led to this impact on you and your work performance (gesture to the 'Best Boss' chart), what do you think keeps these employees (gesture to the 'Life would be great' chart) from working like that?"	They can only answer, "How their bosses, <u>who are US</u> , treat them on this project!"

**Question 7**

Your next leading question is...

YOUR QUESTION	THEIR PROBABLE COLLECTIVE ANSWER
"Do you think a project full of employees like this (gesturing to the 'Best Boss Impact on our Work' column) would be nice to have on <u>this</u> project?"	A unanimous, "YES!!"

**Question 8**



Then say...

YOUR STATEMENT	THEIR PROBABLE COLLECTIVE ANSWER
"Then we need to create a structure on this project that will help their leaders, who are you and your subordinates, be for these employees what your best bosses were for you. That's what we will do next."	"Great! How soon can we start?"

You can wrap this segment up by telling them that studies have shown employees choose to stay with (or leave) **their leaders**, *not their employers*. Point to their chart on the wall ("Best Boss") and ask them if that would have been the case with them and their best bosses. You are virtually assured of another unanimous, "Yes!"

## REALITY CHECK

We realize you may not have the time to go through all of this with the leaders before the project starts. You will have to teach them as much as you can in the time allotted. This handbook gives you the whole scope of what they should be told in a perfect world; you will have to decide on a project-by-project basis what is the least they need to know about the project to get started safely.

## DEVELOPING INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS

Earlier, we suggested that a successful project was more than just meeting the client's expectations. *It also means that we would want to work together as a team again.* With that definition in mind, an individual's work on a project must be more than their



technical achievements.

The success of their project work depends, largely, on their morale. Their morale determines if they feel motivated to work toward the high side of the performance range or at the “least-I-can-do-to-get-by” level.

Every participant on the project team has two sides of their performance that we must consider. There is the *technical side* (an engineer, draftsman, computer support person, accountant, dragline operator, etc.) and the *teamwork side* (how well you work with everyone else on the team regardless of technical skill.)

The performance of the whole person (the technical + teamwork skills) is what determines how well we can work with them on this project and whether we would ever want to work with them again on another one.

We begin creating our teamwork structure by understanding the components of motivation.

## THE COMPONENTS OF MOTIVATION

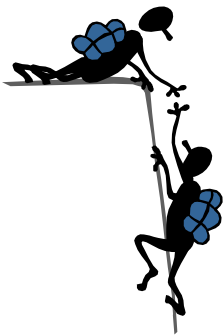
These are the basic requirements needed within a project's (or organization's) work performance structure to create an environment where motivated employees can develop. We will expand each of these in turn.

1. **Tell me what you expect of me** in measurable terms (quality, quantity, time) that reduce the risk of my confusion.



2. **Give me a chance to perform** (and learn from my mistakes, too.)

3. **Let me know how I am doing as I go along...** (Remember the report cards you got in school every 6-9 weeks? You did not have to wait until the end of the year to learn if you had passed or failed the grade.)



4. **Give me help and guidance** when I need it.

**Reward me** with pay or praise when I succeed.



## ESSENTIAL #4 – HAVING A CHANCE TO WORK TOWARD OUR GOALS

The nature of our species is to achieve by setting goals just beyond our reach and working toward them. Before we go farther along this path, we must stop and address the basic premise of creating a high-performance project team that we assume in writing this handbook.

It is our contention that the time and effort spent in developing a performance scoring and feedback system before the project starts so employees can self-monitor their progress to personal project goals is worth every minute we spend.

Besides, *it only needs to be done one time thoroughly on the first project where you use it.* Afterwards, on subsequent projects, you only have to make minor adjustments to accommodate any special needs because the nature of the technical positions does not change that much.

An accountant on your tenth project will still be doing 95% of the tasks they did on your first project: only in a different place.

It makes no difference if the project's duration is six weeks, six months, or six years: *the effort spent up-front is more than repaid by the time we save by not having to deal with poor performance issues and interpersonal conflict among team members.*



Some may argue that a project team is a temporary matrix organization assembled for a specific purpose, and that team members do not really belong to anyone on-site but rather to their section heads back in the 'home office.'

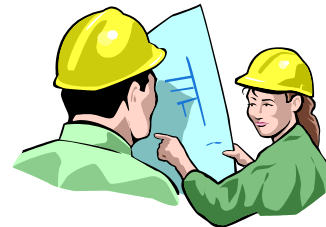
Their home office department manager actually does the annual performance assessment but does not witness the team member's daily performance directly: it is typically *indirectly* via copies of reports or telephone conversations with the on-site supervisor.

Bad news, of course, is communicated immediately (*"Get this person off my project and send someone who knows what they are doing!"*) and performance feedback is clear and to the point (*"You're fired! Pack up and vacate your office!"*).

However, news of day-to-day work that is exemplary sometimes and average other times is almost never reported because of the assumption, “Well, that’s what you’re paid to do!” The project team member takes ‘no news as good news’ and continues on hoping they are doing the right things right in the way that delights the client and PM.

*“Even though the way we have historically conducted project performance assessments isn’t as good as I would like it”* a veteran PM said when I first proposed this approach to him in the mid-1990s”, *we just do not have the time before a project starts to do it.”* (Does that mean there is not time to do it right before the project begins but there IS time to go through the **forming** and **storming** phases while productivity waits after it starts?)

For example, let us look at the project engineer. How can she tell where her technical performance rates in the eyes of her leader? How will she know if the team perceives her as a valuable asset or an irritation to be endured while on the project?



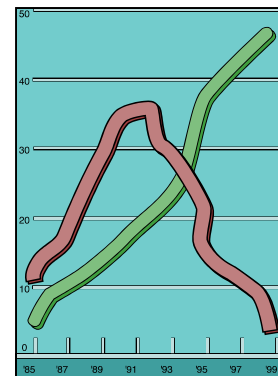
We will start with the technical performance. Many times, people on projects *infer* they are doing a good job simply because the boss is not yelling at them since there is no performance feedback system available that allows them to self-monitor.

Think back to the report card example. If the engineer had a project “report card” process to use in monitoring her personal performance (not the project as a whole), she would know how she is doing and not have to wait to see if the boss is happy or not.

*“They are professionals and should know what a good job looks like”* the PM argues back to you. *“I don’t have time to tell them where their performance would rate on a good-better-best scale! They are paid very well to do their best. Why should they expect me to hold their hands?”*

You can counter this argument by reversing the situation and asking, *“How do you as PM determine how well you are doing on the project in the eyes of your client? Does it mean the client is entirely satisfied with your performance simply because they are not yelling at you?”*

Their response will probably reference the scope and schedule. “If we are within scope, budget, and schedule, the client is happy. When the client is happy, I’m happy!”



*“Would there be any value,” you ask, “if there were a way you could spot a trend in their satisfaction level? For example, if their satisfaction with you were starting to decline, would you want to know it in enough time so you could correct it or just wait until it gets so bad they start yelling at you?”*

99.9% of all PMs with career plans beyond this project will say, “Yes, it would be nice to spot a declining trend before it’s too late”.

Once they agree to that, they have also agreed (whether they realize it or not) it would be nice for project employees to become aware of trends before it is too late. Their point of view that “team members are well paid and should always do their best job” does not mean it will always happen. But it can!

You will see how to create a method to spot a performance trend (whether improving or declining) that will help any project team member. If it sounds like too much work before the project even starts and the PM is hesitant, ask him or her to consider this: *“We do not start development of a paper mill without a blueprint of what it is supposed to look like. So why would we start development of a project without the team members knowing what they are supposed to act like?”* The PM’s argument does not make a lot of sense, does it?

“So how do I counter the arguments of project veterans who tell me they have never done it that way because they are too busy *doing the project?*” you may ask.

Try asking them in return, “What impact on your career would there be if you could manage a project where:

- There was minimal friction between team members
- Each member performed near the higher end of his or her potential
- Team members were highly self-regulating concerning performance and behavior requiring very little input from their supervisors
- You met all the client’s expectations
- *And the project team wanted to work together on another one as soon as possible?”*



That kind of a project *can happen* if the tools in this handbook are followed and used as much as possible.

**CAUTION HERE:** did you notice that we did not guarantee that *would happen*?



That is because reality tells us that no amount of training or learning has any value without the opportunity to apply and reinforce it. As a project team development facilitator, you can only offer the potential within this system to the project principles. It is up to them to decide how much they will allow and support.

Please resist the temptation to *guarantee these results* because you can never be 100% certain that you will always have the project principles' total support all of the time: especially in times of crisis. As project facilitator, you can only *influence* behavior from the project team. The project principles can *demand* it.

We do make one guarantee, though; if the lessons in this book are not used at least a little, your projects now are as good as they will ever be!

## BUILDING THE PROJECT PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

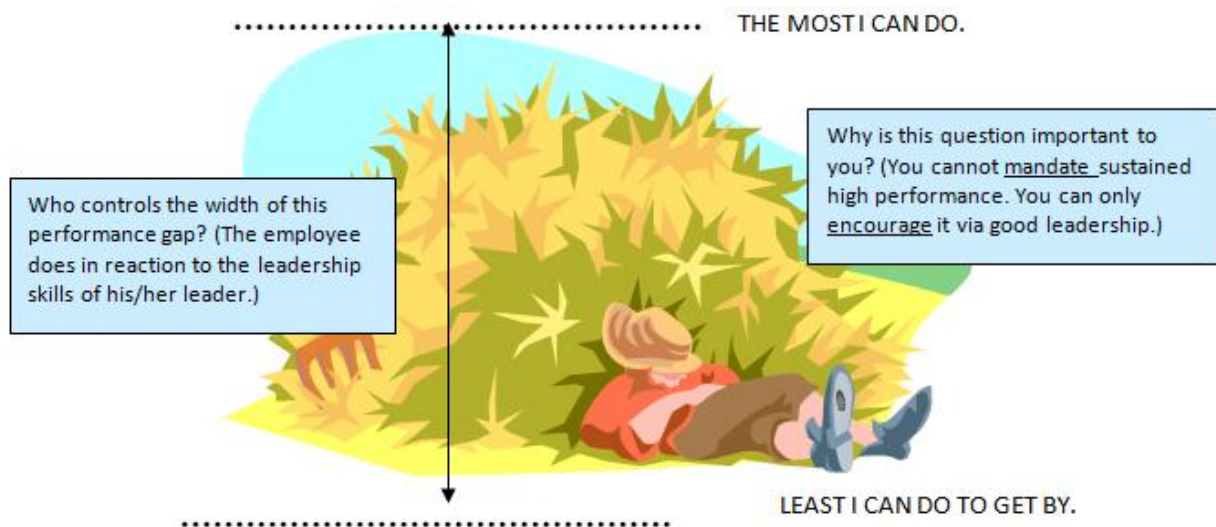


Now that you have reminded them of the impact they have on their employees as leaders, you can start developing the framework for the project's employee performance measurement system. Once again, we will use a format that has been successful and you can modify it as needed for your style and current project.

**TABLE DISCUSSION:** "When you were in school, did you know the *least you could do to get by* and not get in trouble at home? How did you discover this?" (Encourage a little discussion and ask some for answers.)



**WHO DETERMINED WHETHER YOU DID THE LEAST OR THE MOST YOU COULD DO?** (Answer: The student, YOU, did! There was probably a lot of encouragement and expectation from your parents but you actually did the work and determined how much effort you would put into it.)



**Why are these questions important to you?**

They are important because we must create a project environment where each employee will *want* to do more than 'the least they can do to get by.'



**\*Question:** “What is the difference in performance contribution between a top-performer and a below average performer at the same pay-grade?”

**Answer:** (100%+)

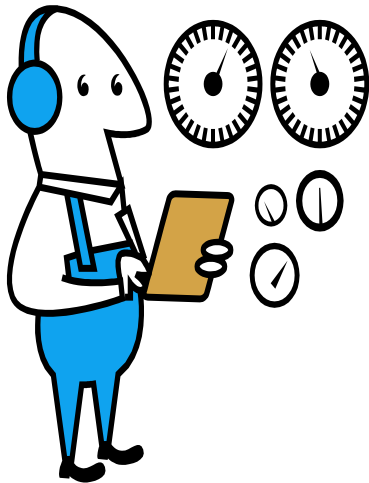
**Question:** “What is the difference in pay?”

**Answer:** (Only between 5-10%)

-\*1998 American Compensation Association “Attracting and Retaining Critical Talent Conference”  
A survey of 2,000 managers.

**Question:** What does this data (above) mean to a project team?

**Answer:** This means there must be something other than money influencing how much they perform.



**QUESTION:** If people were paid 10% more, would they provide 10% more productivity?

**ANSWER:** Probably not over time.

**QUESTION:** What, if not more money, will encourage them to more productivity?

**ANSWER:** We will look at this next.

## MEASURABLE EXPECTATIONS

We will start development of the team member performance report card using a numerical

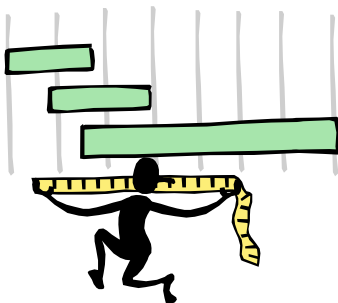
**1.0 –5.0 scale** where:

1. = “Poorest behavior – you will soon be off the project” (The “F” in school)
2. = Something like, “less than the least we expect but still salvageable” (The “D”)
3. = “The least you can do and stay out of trouble” (The “C”)
4. = “Better than most but still room to grow” (The “B”)
5. = “The best we could expect” (The “A”)

(You can devise any scale you wish as long as it provides a range of responses from one extreme to the other.)

You can change the wording to fit your situation and even reverse the order where one is the best and five the worst. (Although you can create a wider range of scores, 1-7 or 1-10 for example, you really do not gain that much and many using the system may be tempted to parse values too closely trying for unreasonable detail.)

It is very critical when defining performance to include measurables regarding *quality* (“How many errors can I make?”); *quantity* (“How many units to produce.”), and *time* (“How long do I have to produce what you expect?”) For simplicity, we refer to them as QQT.



Every employee position in the project should have his or her performance expectations defined using a measurable range of performance so the leader and the employee can each share the same understanding about the level of performance.

Nothing kills an employee's morale faster than thinking they have done an outstanding job and having their leader say, "It's an *adequate* effort".

"What??!!" the PM says, "You expect me to define every position on this project with performance scales? When do you expect me to manage the project?"

Of course, we do not expect the PM to define every position with a performance scale. *But what you can expect (if they want a project to run as smoothly as possible) is the PM works with his or her direct reports (and you for guidance) in defining the performance scales the PM expects from them.*



Then you should expect the PM to insist his or her direct reports sit down with theirs (and you for guidance) to develop the performance ranges for the next level down the food chain. This continues rolling downhill until it is finished.

*The beauty of this concept is you only have to do it one time this thoroughly.* Leaders can take the job descriptions from this project directly to the next one with minor changes because the *nature of the technical work does not change radically from one project to the next.* An accountant on this project will still be an accountant on the next one. The basic expectations of an accountant do not change! All that may be needed are slight adjustments in the performance definitions to fit the new project's requirements.

Use the report card system from school once again to help them understand this is a one-time effort with minor adjustments in the future. Ask them, *“Did your science teacher in high school have to come up with a whole new grading system every year as new students came in or did he just carry over the one from last year?”* The correct answer is self-evident.

Here is an example of **quality**, **quantity**, and **time** components used to establish guidelines for project leaders when submitting required reports regardless of their department assignment.

A project team member's expectations may be expressed like this on a 1-5 scale where five is most desirable and one is least desirable. A 3.0 score is considered “the least acceptable”:

***“Any project team leaders’ performance assessment scale for submitting a project report is:***

- *Accurate, following format, and submitted >1 day early = 5.0*

(“Accurate” and “following format” are the quality components; > 1 day early is the time component. The quantity component is implied as “all reports”.)

- *Accurate, following format, and submitted 1 day early = 4.0*
- *Accurate, following format and on time = 3.0*

- *Accurate, following format and less than 1 day late = 2.0*
- *Any combination of errors, not following format, and late any amount = 1.0*

Suppose a project leader had a category called “*Submitting Project Reports*” on his or her performance assessment for the duration of this project. Further, we will say she set a goal of scoring a 4.0 for this assessment period in that category.

All she has to do now is:

- Make sure her data is accurate
- Follow the prescribed report format (the quality component)
- Keep track of when she turns in her reports in relation to the deadlines (the time component)
- Do this with every report she turns in (the quantity component).

If she will do that, she will not have to ask her leader in their quarterly performance assessment meeting, “How did I do with getting my reports in on time?” because she will already know!

Also, **AND THIS IS A KEY VALUE OF THIS PROCESS**, if the client requires a performance report card system like this, the employee can stay focused on job performance even if the PM is replaced and not have to worry about playing politics with the new one!

## ESSENTIAL #5 – GETTING FEEDBACK ON PROGRESS TOWARD GOALS

This feedback can come from a peer, our leaders, a subordinate, or from some non-human reporting mechanism such as a weekly sales report, the odometer in our car, or the bathroom scales.



## DEVELOPING A TECHNICAL SKILLS PERFORMANCE MATRIX

We can use the project's job descriptions to develop the technical skills performance-scoring matrix. Some descriptions are more detailed than others. Work with the PM (or some project authority) to divide them into columns of things they "must do" and things they "should do if they get the time" if you find lengthy job descriptions.

You can also adapt the Pareto Rule as a guideline here: *select the 20% of tasks that account for 80% of their activity*. It is that 20% of tasks that we will put into the matrix.

There are four essential steps in creating an effective performance matrix system:

1. *Identify the few tasks that account for most of their activity.* (The 'significant few' instead of the 'trivial many'.)
2. *Devise a method for evaluating the performance levels in these tasks. The evaluation must contain the elements of **quality**, **quantity**, and **time** within each performance level where meaningful.*
3. *There must be a means of continuous performance feedback so the employee always knows how they are doing in relation to the goals set for this performance assessment period.*
4. *There must be periodic review periods that allow the team member to adjust performance or short-term goals (in cooperation with his or her leader) to increase the probability of achieving their long-term goals.*

This is easier than it sounds if we keep the report card process from grade school in mind.

Think back to the beginning of any school year: it probably went something like this.

- The teacher gave you a preview of the course, probably handed out textbooks, and described her grading system for each performance period (the four nine-week periods of study after which you received your report card.) The final grade for the whole year was just an average of the four nine-week report scores.
- She told you there would be “pop quizzes”, weekly tests on the material covered that week, a book report, the mid-term test; and the final test. You would also receive a grade on class participation and conduct. (This is Step 1: *“Identify the few tasks that account for most of their activity”*.)
- The tests were graded objectively on a scale of 100 points while class participation and conduct was more subjective with usually a “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” rating.
- An “A” was an average of 90-100; a “B” was 80-89; a “C” was 70-79; a “D” was 60-69; and anything below a 60 was failing. (This is Step 2: *“Devise a method for evaluating the performance levels in these tasks”* step.)
- She would try very hard to get your class work back within a few days of turning them in so you could keep track of your progress.



This allowed us to self-regulate our performance during each semester whether we wanted to make the honor roll or just keep our grades high enough that our parents did not ground us.

- You always knew how you were doing in school. (Step #3. *“There must be a means of continuous performance feedback so the employee always knows how they are doing in relation to the goals set for this performance assessment period.”*)
- You did not wait until the last day to learn whether you passed for that year because you had tracked your grades all year and received periodic report cards.



- You decided after each report card came out whether to change your behavior (and actually study!) or continue as you were doing. (Step 4. *There must be periodic review periods that allows the team member to adjust performance or short-term goals (in cooperation with his or her leader) to increase the probability of achieving their long-term goals.*)

Do you think the teachers had problems figuring grades or lost a lot of sleep over the “fairness” of their evaluations when it came time to issue report cards?

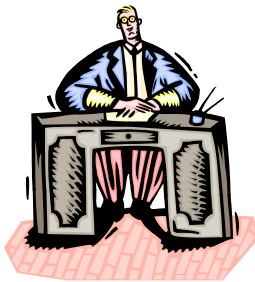
**NO, NOT AT ALL! IT IS SIMPLE MATH and STUDENTS CANNOT DISPUTE IT!** (Ask any competent high school teacher and hear it first-hand.)

Team members can have this same kind of self-monitoring environment *that takes a big load off the shoulders of project management* with a little preparation and support by the project’s leadership before the project starts.



## ADVANTAGES OF THE “REPORT CARD” MODEL

A WIIFM for the project leadership, whether on-site or back in the home office, is that it reduces a lot of their workload and anxiety as annual performance reviews come due.



All they have to do is average the “semester grades” like the teachers do and you have the year’s average. The employees will be just as aware of their likely scores at year-end on the project as they were at year-end back in high school.

Here is another advantage of this process. In traditional settings where employees get annual reviews (if they are lucky) from their supervisor, *what happens if their supervisor leaves the department after ten months of observing the employee?*

In most cases, the employee feels like they have lost 10 months of good performance because their supervisor probably did not document their on-going performance.

Now the new supervisor must spend another period “learning” them and the employee feels like they are starting over. It is very easy to become frustrated in a situation like this and frustration quickly kills morale and motivation.

But, if the project leaders are conducting brief quarterly (or whatever time frame fits the project needs and gives the employee frequent feedback) performance assessment meetings with their employees like their teachers did at semester end via the report cards, the employee is no more hurt from a documented performance standpoint on the job than is a high school student if their teacher left in mid-year.



The project leader can send a copy of the periodic performance assessment back to the employee’s home organization for review by their permanent (as opposed to temporary on the project) manager. This allows their permanent manager to give the employee a fair assessment of their work even though they did not witness it first-hand on the project!

The employee is satisfied because he or she is working toward specific, measurable goals; getting frequent feedback on their progress in achieving them; meets periodically with their project supervisor for additional feedback or goal adjustment; *and the nature of the project’s matrix organization is not having a negative impact on their morale!*

## PROFESSIONAL SKILLS PERFORMANCE SAMPLE

Here is a sample of a project Information Technology Department team member's performance criterion that contains specific, descriptive, and measurable expectations for what they are paid to do on the project.

<u>PROJECT role:</u> IT Dept. SYSTEMS SUPPORT Technician	
Professional Skills Category: <u>On Call Responsiveness</u>	
<p>This is based on problems being resolved within the established time frames set by the Project On-Call Policy, barring any obstacles from problems dialing in; the availability of the network or other circumstances outside of the control of the person responding to the problem</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Expectations should be evaluated based on the individual's job description and special considerations may need to be made for employees that are assigned applications that they do not support on a daily basis; such as groups that have combined on-call personnel for multiple applications or when an employee transfers to another application.</p>	
Score	Expectations: Ability to resolve problems on your own and within the established time frame set by the On-Call Policy
5	<b>Exceed</b> - You are able to resolve problems on your own and all problems resolved within the established time frames.
4	<b>Consistently</b> – Team member is able to resolve problems on your own. However, some assistance is needed from other team members on difficult or complex problems. All problems are resolved within the established time frames. (Note: The IT manager from the permanent organization, the PM for this project, the team member, and the <u>facilitator work together before the project starts</u> to agree on the definition of "consistently" and "occasionally" that will be used.)
3	<b>Occasionally</b> - Team member needs assistance to resolve unfamiliar problems. Can resolve most problems on your own; most all problems are resolved within the established time frames.
2	<b>Needs to improve</b> - Team member needs assistance from other team members to resolve problems that are not complex.
1	<b>Needs to develop</b> - Team member needs assistance from other team members to resolve most problems; problems are not resolved within the established time frames.

**PROJECT role:** IT Dept. SYSTEMS SUPPORT Technician**Professional Skills Category:** **Problem Resolution**

Expectations should be evaluated based on the individuals job description and special considerations may need to be made for new employees or employees that are assigned applications that they do not support on a daily basis; such as when an employee transfers to another application.

<b>5</b>	<b>Exceeds</b> - Problems are fixed the first time; solutions do not cause additional or new problems; no other project unit, application or system performance impact.
<b>4</b>	<b>Consistently</b> - Problems are fixed the first time; solutions do not cause additional or new problems; no other project unit, application or system performance impact.
<b>3</b>	<b>Occasionally</b> - Problems are not fixed the first time; solutions did not cause additional or new problems; minor project unit, application or system performance impact.
<b>2</b>	<b>Needs to improve</b> - Problems are not fixed the first time or solutions have caused additional problems; other project unit, application, or system performance has had impact.
<b>1</b>	<b>Needs to develop</b> - Problems are not fixed the first time or solutions have caused additional problems; other project unit, application, or system performance has had frequent impact.

**Professional Skills Category:** **Application Knowledge**

<b>5</b>	<b>Possesses a vast amount of knowledge</b> of the application (technical and business) including the application interfaces; able to answer user questions quickly and accurately; provides technical advice and assistance to IT and project unit staff; has a complete understanding of the system  (Note: The IT manager from the permanent organization, the PM for this project, the team member, and the <u>facilitator work together before the project starts</u> to agree on the definition of “vast amount” that will be used.)
<b>4</b>	<b>Possesses good working knowledge</b> of the application (technical and business) including the application interfaces; able to answer user questions quickly and accurately; provides technical advice and assistance to IT and project unit staff; has a complete understanding of the system
<b>3</b>	<b>Possesses general</b> knowledge of the application; able to answer user questions accurately within a reasonable time frame; provides assistance to IT and project unit staff; has a good understanding of the system.
<b>2</b>	<b>Needs to improve;</b> lacking a good understanding of the application and its interfaces; unable to assist IT or project unit staff within reasonable time frames. Additional training is required.
<b>1</b>	<b>Needs to develop;</b> lacking knowledge of the application and its interfaces; unable to support the application including minor problems without assistance.

A survey like this can be expanded to include several other technical skills traits as decided by the IT manager from the permanent organization, the Project Manager, the employee, and other project unit managers. (Since the IT technician's customers are all those departments, their managers should have some input on their expectations.)

The IT department manager on the project can use this as a survey to send out to "clients" of IT on the project to solicit feedback on the technician's performance over each period of observation.

The survey sent to customers can use the same wording of the top rating (the 5) and include a range of agreement responses.

#### Project IT Department Customer Service Survey

IT Systems Support Technician: Grant Elder Your score = \_\_\_\_\_

Today's date \_\_\_\_\_

Please help us determine the customer service level we provide to you by completing this survey and returning it via interoffice mail to **Logan MacKenzie: Project IT Dept by June 1<sup>st</sup>.**

Indicate the extent of your agreement with this statement based on the service this technician has provided to you. Please feel free to add any additional comments on the back you think are justified.

***"Possesses a vast amount of knowledge of the application (technical and business) including the application interfaces; able to answer user questions quickly and accurately; provides technical advice and assistance to IT and project unit staff; seems to have a complete understanding of the system."***

1 = Agree Strongly 2-4=Agree Somewhat 5-6=Agree 7-9=Disagree Somewhat 10=Disagree Strongly

Did you add comments on the back of this? Yes No

Brief performance feedback meetings can be very effective and take as little as 10 minutes using these five questions that put the emphasis for performance management *on the employee*, not the supervisor:

1. **“What were your goals for this past observation period?”** The supervisor and employee should both know but asking the employee to review them reinforces the employee’s ownership of them. (This presumes the employee and supervisor *worked together* to set them at the beginning of the performance period. This process does not work if the supervisor sets the goals and hands them to the employee because there is no sense of ownership by the employee.)
2. **“How did you do?”** The supervisor implies he or she expects the employee to track their own performance and be aware of how they are doing in relation to their goals.
3. **“How do you account for the difference between outcome and goals?”** This question is appropriate whether the employee fell below the short-term goals, met them, or surpassed them. The supervisor is asking the employee to reflect on their behaviors that led to success or failure.
4. **“What are your plans for the next period?”** The employee is asked to look ahead and reflect on maintaining good behavior that led to positive results or modify negative behavior that led to missing their goals. Once again, performance management is squarely on the employee’s shoulders.

## GATHERING CREDIBLE SOFT SKILL DATA MEASUREMENTS

“That technique looks easy for *hard data* such as project reports that require accuracy, a particular format, and timeliness”, you think, “but what about the *soft skill* data dealing with rating how well a team member gets along others? Isn’t that still a lot of ‘touchy-feely, warm-and-fuzzy’ talk?”

We are using the term “soft skills” to mean non-technical skills such as teamwork, customer service, oral and written communications. The aspects of the job that are very important, common to all, but not tied to a specific profession like those we call “hard skills”.

For example, a computer programmer needs technical (“hard”) skills to write code but also requires good “soft” skills to get along with everyone else on the project.

We agree that it does deal with the softer and more ‘feelings’ sort of topics but that does not mean we cannot measure it and hold project team members accountable for our expectations. Before we start discussing how to do it, think about this:



*“Do you think companies that conduct customer surveys find any value in them?”*

*“What a no-brainer! Of course they do! If not, they would not do them.”*

Our turn again: *“Can you describe what a typical customer survey would contain?”*

*“Not a problem”, you reply, “I have even taken one of them.*

Usually they ask you to rate the product’s usefulness, price, convenience, or something else about it on a scale that ranges from very unfavorable to very favorable. They also give you a way to say ‘I do not know’ if you don’t have an opinion.” We all know how to use them.

If we agree that opinion polls are valuable in the world of marketing and public policy, would they also be useful in the world of evaluating individual team member performance on a project?

Our view is they would! The question now becomes, *“How would we do it?”*

The next section describes a way that has worked very well for the author in the past for large numbers of employees within five separate operations units of a large commercial bank. (We contend that workers, whether they are working on a steel mill renovation, designing a new software program, or designing a new work flow process for a \$50 billion bank, share the same five characteristics needed for motivation that we talked about on page 43.)

Have you heard the management axiom that states, **“What gets measured gets done?”**

We will put emphasis on selected critical behavior by measuring it in the process.

## CREATING OUR PROJECT'S "SOFT SKILLS" MEASUREMENT PROCESS

These five basic steps will get you started. After you have tried this process on projects of your own, you may find improvements that will make it even easier for you. (If you do, please share them with us so we can include them in the next issue of this book. We will include your name and send a copy of the book to you. Send them to us at [dick@outsourcetraining.biz](mailto:dick@outsourcetraining.biz).)

1. **Select the 3-5 types of "soft" behavior that you want emphasized to make this a successful project where employees will want to work with each other again.** (The range of 3-5 behaviors reflects the Pareto Rule again of selecting the few behaviors who account for most of the desired behavior you want to see.)
2. **Design an instrument to help you collect the data you want.**
3. **Determine performance levels that you expect to see.**
4. **Collect the data**
5. **Devise a method of providing feedback from the data collected that will reinforce desired behavior and change undesired behavior.** (This feedback must be accessible to the employee.)

Here is how we can construct a simple, yet very powerful, and effective process.

**Select the 3-5 types of "soft" behavior that you want emphasized to make this a successful project where employees will want to work with each other again.**

Try starting your search for appropriate behaviors you want to emphasize with the project's Code of Conduct. We discussed that back on page 27. There is a 95% probability that you already have identified nearly everything you think is important.

If your Code of Conduct does not seem to fit here, you may not fully understand what we are trying to do with the Code. The Code of Conduct is our project community's way of telling each other and any newcomers that we value these behaviors and should practice them constantly. The measurement



process that we are working on now will be a way to determine how well each team member is practicing that Code. **Remember, what gets measured gets done.**

We will use the sample Code of Conduct here to show you how it works.

1. *Be reliable. Get to work on time (or early); meet your promised deadlines (or early); and follow through on your promises to team members whether project or personal.*
2. *Share knowledge if possible and ask for help when needed.*
3. *Smile and be as friendly as you can. We are all in this together.*
4. *Consider your behavior as seen through the eyes of your peers. If they were asked, “What is it like to work with [you], what would you want them to say?” Then be sure your actions would make it easy for them to make those comments about you.*
5. *Trust is historic. Team members have to learn they can trust you.*

**Here is a word of warning about what we are proposing.** This is the construction of a performance survey given to all members within a department or work group. They score it *anonymously*. It is no different than customer service surveys that many of us have completed at one time or another.

However, the fact that it is a new application of an old idea may scare some people. Remember, *we cannot do things the way we always have and expect different results*. If we want to measure the soft skills, we will have to do it in a way that is different from how we measure hard data.

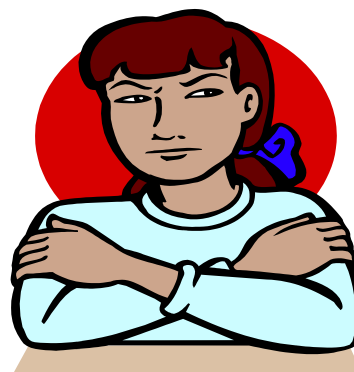
Here are some of the questions you may encounter when proposing that team members score their coworkers on “teamwork”.

THEIR QUESTION OR CONCERN	YOUR SUGGESTED REPLY
Why should we score each other's performance? Is that not the department supervisor's (or manager's) job?	<p>(We have used all of them and know they work if the group is willing to listen.)</p> <p>That would be true <u>only if</u> the supervisor (or manager) spent as much time with all of the team members as you do. However, the nature of their job requires that they be out of the department attending meetings or other project-related activities a lot of the time.</p> <p>The only source of accurate and consistent observation of team member performance is by the team members, themselves.</p>
What would keep some people from ganging up on another one and giving them bad scores? (Continued)	<p>Here are some good reasons.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We can either throw out the highest and lowest score like they do in the Olympics or we can require an explanation <i>of specific</i> examples for scores at either end of the spectrum. That will decrease some of the extremes.</li> <li>2. This is not a high school popularity contest. Project team members want to be treated like adults. Here is an opportunity to have that happen. You can approach this survey as a game and treat each other like kids or take it seriously and treat each other as adults. You can reward the good team members with well-deserved good scores. Likewise, you can give the slackers their rewards, too.</li> <li>3. Sometimes people complain that coworkers slack off when the boss is not around but put on a good show when she returns. This way, someone is always observing the slackers.</li> <li>4. If the department supervisor (or manager) gets promoted or otherwise leaves the project, the team members may feel all of their earlier good performance is wasted because the new supervisor won't know anything about them. A scoring system like this accurately documents their behavior in an on-going process regardless of how many supervisors come through.</li> <li>5. This is only measuring <i>teamwork</i>. The supervisor still measures work quality, productivity, tardiness, and absenteeism.</li> </ol>
I do not want anyone to know how I rated someone.	<p>The surveys are anonymous. After you fill it out, fold it and drop it into the interoffice mail to your supervisor. They are only interested in the scores, not who specifically said what.</p>
There are only two of us in this part of the department. If I fill one out, it will be evident to him what I said.	<p>Our process requires a minimum of five replies per person before we score it. This way, we do not make someone uneasy if there are too few doing the surveys.</p> <p>We just roll that group's survey upward into the next larger group until we can get five replies on each tem member.</p>

THEIR QUESTION OR CONCERN	YOUR SUGGESTED REPLY
<p>If we do this anonymously, someone can score himself or herself artificially high.</p> <p>Is that fair?</p>	<p>(We have used all of them and know they work if the group is willing to listen.)</p> <p>Instead of considering whether it is fair or not, look ahead to the outcome. If they score themselves artificially high, that <i>only increases our expectations of them</i>.</p> <p>If they score themselves too low, that hurts them, too. As you can see, there really is no advantage for someone to score himself or herself artificially high or low.</p>

After some thought and discussion, the groups nearly always (95-99%) agree it is worth trying. After trying it, they love it.

(There is still that 1-5% who does not like it but do not have a better idea. We compare them to people in the community that eagerly complain about the elected officials but also admit they did not vote.)



## DESIGNING THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

We will assume the project Code of Conduct identifies the behaviors that we desire as part of our team. (We will show you how to create a measurable process for any kind of soft skills after this section.)

Here is the first listing in our Code of Conduct:

***Be reliable. Get to work on time (or early); meet your promised deadlines (or early); and follow through on your promises to team members whether project or personal.***

As we look at this desired behavior, we see that it also contains some objectively measurable activities (getting to work on time and meeting deadlines). These are probably included in the position's "core performance elements" that we have generically defined as the least you can do you get by.

Obviously, attendance and tardiness are issues that management must deal with and are easily measurable. We will not include these aspects of "be reliable" in our survey because the manager is already tracking it as a function of management's responsibility.

The question of "following through on promises" cannot be measured traditionally because we do not usually have a specific number of promises that must be made and kept as part of our official job description. This topic deals with relationships within the team. So, we will include the 'promises' portion of the statement on this survey and leave the 'getting to work on time' and 'meeting deadlines' to be scored in the more objective part of the performance assessment.

We can use the same performance range that we see in customer surveys to score this. Here is how it could look.

Please rate your teammate on your observations of them over the past 90 days in relation to these behaviors.					
1. <b><i>"Be reliable. Follow through on your promises to team members whether project related or personal".</i></b>					
I never see this.	I do not see much of this.	I usually see this.	I frequently see this.	I always see this.	I have "No Opinion".
1.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	N/O

Team Performance Evaluation 1

The more technically minded members of your project may still feel this is too subjective. They may ask, “How do you define ‘frequently’ in the 4.0 rating? Is that 3 times a week, ten times a month, or what?”

This is one reason why a range of 1-5 works well. It is enough to provide both extremes, plus “No Opinion”, without the temptation to get so lost in definitions with many multiple breakdowns that we lose sight of the purpose.

In this case, there is no reason to spend time defining a precise standard for ‘frequently’. There is no extra value added to the process by defining this. We can trust the wisdom of our teammates here to distinguish between the various levels.

An example that satisfies nearly everyone that wants to create more definitions and rules than necessary centers around that favorite board game from childhood, Monopoly.



As kids in our neighborhood, we always agreed that any payments made for property or luxury taxes would get piled into the middle of the board. Then when someone was lucky enough to land on “Free Parking”, they collected all the money in the middle!

It was great! We all understood the ‘rules’ of this and agreed to follow them. There were never any fights about who deserved it. However, there is no provision for this in the ‘official’ rules of Monopoly that came with the game. It was just something that we adapted for our version of the game. As long as everyone understood it and was satisfied, it worked.

**Since it was our game with our rules, no one was harmed.**

This can also apply to your project. Since there are no “official rules” of how to score a survey about keeping promises on a project, *whatever we agree on, as a group, becomes the rules!* Why make it more complicated than it needs to be?)

The next element from our Code of Conduct is *share knowledge if possible and asks for help when needed*. Before we just put the whole statement into our survey, we must stop and ask ourselves, “What is the specific behavior we want to encourage by measuring it?” (Remember, what gets measured gets done.)

Do we want to encourage the sharing of knowledge and asking for help: sharing of knowledge only; asking for help only; or both? At first glance, it may seem a little confusing but let us go further ahead and assume we have received some scores back.

Jane, the accounting clerk, has received high scores in sharing knowledge *and* asking for help. High scores for sharing knowledge are good because that is how our project, as a whole, becomes a learning

organization. But what do we do about asking for help? Does a high score mean she asks for help a lot? If so, does that imply she is in over her head in the job and needs a lot of help? This may send a confusing message to team members.

We can resolve this by going back to the intent of the original Code of Conduct. The intent of including “asks for help when needed” is to encourage people to admit when they do not know and *avoid making a mistake* by getting help and to encourage others to give help when asked.



However, we do not gain much from a performance standpoint if we try to measure the amount of times people ask for help. Suppose Jane’s teammate, Carol, never asks for help because she is so competent. Should she get a low score and be penalized for her knowledge because she never asks for help: certainly not.

It becomes clear that the portion of the statement that makes sense to include, score, *and encourage* is **shares knowledge**.

Our survey now looks like this

Please rate your teammate on your observations of them over the past 90 days in relation to these behaviors.					
1. “Be reliable. Follow through on your promises to team members whether project related or personal”.					
I never see this.	I do not see much of this.	I usually see this.	I frequently see this.	I always see this.	I have “No Opinion”.
1.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	N/O
2. Shares Knowledge.					
I never see this.	I do not see much of this.	I usually see this.	I frequently see this.	I always see this.	I have “No Opinion”.
1.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	N/O

Team Performance Evaluation 2

We continue development the Team Performance Evaluation by adding the next part of the Code of Conduct: *smile and be as friendly as you can. We are all in this together.*

This is easy to add because there is no question it is behavior we want to encourage. A high or low score would relate directly to the amount of smiling they do. This is very different from the ambiguity we had with the previous statement about “asking for help”.

Please rate your teammate on your observations of them over the past 90 days in relation to these behaviors.					
<b>1. “Be reliable. Follow through on your promises to team members whether project related or personal”.</b>					
I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.
1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
<b>2. Shares Knowledge.</b>					
I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.
1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
<b>3. Smiles and is friendly.</b>					
I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.
1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0

Team Performance Evaluation 3

There is still an opportunity for discussion even with what seems to be a simple statement, “Smiles and is friendly.”

The author was asked once while doing an exercise like this, *“What if the person is not really friendly in their heart? They are just acting like they are to get a good grade from their teammates. How should we score that?”*

“Did you ever see one of the early James Bond movies with Sean Connery?” was the reply. “Do you think he *really was a British spy licensed to kill* or was it just a great acting job that made you think so while you were in the theater?”

“A great acting job,” he admitted.

“So then, if you teammate is only acting like he is friendly while at work with you but may not be that way in real life, do you really care what he is like away from work?” (The point was made.)

The next addition will take a little consideration, again, like we did with the second item. The statement from the Code is *“Consider your behavior as seen through the eyes of your peers. If they were asked, “What is it like to work with you, what would you want them to say?” Then be sure your actions would make it easy for them to make those comments about you.”*

The *intent* of this statement is to encourage team members to interact with each other so their team members like working with them. Obviously, this statement needs to be rephrased to capture the intent of the Code. Although many different wordings can carry the same message, we will use this, *“It is a pleasure to work with this team member.”*

We also have to adjust the scoring range wording slightly to accommodate this.

Please rate your teammate on your observations of them over the past 90 days in relation to these behaviors.					
<b>1. “Be reliable. Follow through on your promises to team members whether project related or personal”.</b>					
I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.
1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
<b>2. Shares Knowledge.</b>					
I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.
1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
<b>3. Smiles and is friendly.</b>					
I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.
1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
<b>4. It is a pleasure to work with this team member.</b>					
I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.
1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0

Team Performance Evaluation 4



The last category deals with the very important issue of *trust*. The Code of Conduct words it like this:  
*Trust is historic. Team members have to learn they can trust you.*

The concept of trust is so important we can use the performance evaluation to expand on it to increase our expectations of team members. We have added it as #5 on our performance evaluation's list of desired behaviors.

Please rate your teammate on your observations of them over the past 90 days in relation to these behaviors.					
<b>1. "Be reliable. Follow through on your promises to team members whether project related or personal".</b>					
I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.
1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
<b>2. Shares Knowledge.</b>					
I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.
1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
<b>3. Smiles and is friendly.</b>					
I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.
1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
<b>4. It is a pleasure to work with this team member.</b>					
I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.	I never see this.
1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
<b>5. I can trust this individual to keep promises, confidentialities, and to not "kill the messenger" if I bring a problem needing some help.</b>					
I disagree very much.	I disagree somewhat.	I agree.	I agree somewhat.	I agree very strongly.	I have "No Opinion".
1.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	N/O

Team Performance Evaluation 5

Now we have a useful tool that accomplishes some very important things regarding our project team's interaction with each other:

1. **We have placed very clear emphasis on behavior that we want to see.** This keeps us from having to write a long list of "Thou Shall Not..." items. The strength of a simple behavior code like the Ten Commandments is that if people will focus just doing these ten things *consistently*, we would not have to worry about the many things we *should not* do.

We forget that long lists of things people *should not do* does not automatically tell them *what they should do*. But, if you tell employees what you want them to do, catch them doing it, and then praise them for doing it, there is a virtual certainty they will keep doing it so you will continue praising them.

2. **We have created a peer pressure environment to manage behavior that takes a big part of the load off the department manager.** Self-regulated employees are happier because we are treating them like the adults they are. Also, they may be able to fool a supervisor who comes and goes into thinking they are carrying their full work load but they cannot fool their peers who are always there with them.
3. **We have reinforced the teamwork concept because we know our peers' opinions of our performance carry a lot of weight regarding our overall performance assessment.** We will work just as hard to please them as we do to please the boss.

## DESIGNING THE TEAM'S SURVEY

What is the easiest way to put this evaluation into a survey instrument that makes it easy for the department manager to score? You want something that requires the least amount of paper yet collects the maximum data in one place.

A layout like this has worked for me. Assume you have 10 employees in your department. We put the scoring section at the top of this evaluation. (Notice there is not a place for the scorer's name.)

Please rate each using the ranges below on your observations of them over the past 90 days.											
Name>	Grant	Logan	Murphy	Cindy	Dave	Gerald	Mary	Bob	Darrel	Jo	Carol
Trait #1											
Trait #2											
Trait #3											
Trait #4											
Trait #5											
<b>Trait #1. Be reliable. Follow through on your promises to team members whether project related or personal.</b>											
I never see this.	I do not see much of this.		I usually see this.		I frequently see this.		I always see this.		I have "No Opinion".		
1.0	2.0		3.0		4.0		5.0		N/O		
<b>Trait #2. Shares Knowledge.</b>											
I never see this.	I do not see much of this.		I usually see this.		I frequently see this.		I always see this.		I have "No Opinion".		
1.0	2.0		3.0		4.0		5.0		N/O		
<b>Trait #3. Smiles and is friendly.</b>											
I never see this.	I do not see much of this.		I usually see this.		I frequently see this.		I always see this.		I have "No Opinion".		
1.0	2.0		3.0		4.0		5.0		N/O		
<b>Trait #4. It is a pleasure to work with this team member.</b>											
I disagree very much.	I disagree somewhat.		I agree.		I agree somewhat.		I agree very strongly.		I have "No Opinion".		
1.0	2.0		3.0		4.0		5.0		N/O		
<b>Trait #5. I can trust this individual to keep promises, confidentiality, and to not "kill the messenger" if I bring a problem needing some help.</b>											
I disagree very much.	I disagree somewhat.		I agree.		I agree somewhat.		I agree very strongly.		I have "No Opinion".		
1.0	2.0		3.0		4.0		5.0		N/O		

Team Performance Evaluation 6

## MANAGING PERFORMANCE WITH THE TEAM WORK SURVEY

We will move ahead about a week and assume you have given the department this performance evaluation. They have scored it confidentially and you have averaged each member's score for each question on a spreadsheet.

Here are the results of our hypothetical department.

Please rate each using the ranges below on your observations of them over the past 90 days.											
<i>Name&gt;</i>	Grant	Logan	Murphy	Cindy	Dave	Gerald	Mary	Bob	Darrel	Jo	Carol
Trait #1	4.2	4.5	3.6	4.8	2.9	3.4	4.1	4.7	3.7	3.2	4.5
Trait #2	4.8	4.3	4.2	2.7	3.7	3.4	4.0	4.3	3.9	3.8	4.1
Trait #3	4.9	4.6	4.3	4.2	3.1	2.7	4.4	4.5	4.2	4.6	3.9
Trait #4	4.8	4.7	5.0	3.7	3.8	3.0	4.6	4.8	4.6	4.2	4.7
Trait #5	4.3	4.2	3.9	4.3	4.7	3.6	3.9	4.1	4.5	4.7	5.0
<b>Average</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.4</b>

Team Performance Evaluation 7

You can easily see how much team members can learn about their performance as seen by their peers. All the department manager has to do now is give each employee a confidential copy of his or her scores and ask, "What do you think of the results?"

We will talk about Dave as our example. If the project standard for "the least you can do" in any performance category is a 3.0, what message should he get about how teammates view him in relation to trait #1? All his manager needs to say is, "Everyone on this project must maintain a minimum of 3.0 in every performance category. What *do you plan to do about* trait #1?"

He can go into denial and say, "Everyone is against me" but with his other scores above minimum, it is hard to believe that. Or even if they were all low, everyone may be against him but it probably stems from his behavior. Once again, the cause and effect are his sole responsibility.

The only thing he can do is reflect on his behavior and decide what he wants to do differently the next observation period to get better scores. Since the trait was, *“Be reliable. Follow through on your promises to team members whether project related or personal”*, the behavioral fix is self-evident.

Conversely, team members with strong scores know what they need to do to keep up the high scores. The team member can use this to self-manage their behavior while the department manager knows that everyone is focusing on displaying the five desirable traits as often as they can.

As we said before, if we get them focused on what we want them to do, we need not worry about the lists of what *not* to do.

## USING THE REPORT CARD MODEL ON INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE

We can apply the report card model very easily on every member of a project team regardless of whether their task expectation is a “hard skill” such as a specific work product or “soft skill” like getting along with fellow project team members.

Any project team member’s expectations may be expressed like this on a 1-5 scale where five is most desirable and one is least desirable. A 3.0 score is considered “the least acceptable”. This generic example can apply to any position whether professional or craft, full-time or part-time.

For our sample project, we will assume our team leaders decided before the project began staffing there were some basic requirements they expected regarding project reports. This requirement would apply to all positions where reports were generated.

### ***“Project team leaders’ performance assessment scale for submitting a project report is:***

- *Accurate, following format, and submitted >1 day early = 5.0*
- *Accurate, following format, and submitted 1 day early = 4.0*
- *Accurate, following format and on time = 3.0*
- *Accurate, following format and less than 1 day late = 2.0*

#### Performance Example 1

The measurement requirements are all here:

- “Accurate” and “following format” reflects *quality* in terms of errors present and expected style of the report
- “Quantity” is not present as an explicit amount but rather implied. The implication is *all reports, regardless of how many there are*, follow the requirements shown here.
- “On time, early or late” reflects the *time* requirement.

Grading the performance is simple if there is some means to date-and-time stamp receipt of the report on the bosses' desk. The date-and-time stamp objectively indicates when it was received. If the information is not accurate, the boss will send it back for correction and make a brief note in the employee's file. (Another easy way to track errors on reports is to make a copy of the page with the error and drop it into the employee's personnel file. When the boss has a monthly or quarterly performance review meeting with the employee, he or she simply pulls out the file and counts the "good news" and "bad news" documentation. It would be impossible for the employee to argue about an inaccurate performance review if the facts were on the desk in front of them.)

## MEASURING OTHER “SOFT” SKILLS

This method of measuring a soft skill like “team work” can be used for any other topic by following a simple model like this.

1. **Select the soft-skill topic that you want to measure.**
2. **Meet with the people who will be measured and ask for some behavioral traits they associate with it.**
3. **Identify a range of measurements from the most positive to the most negative and include an option for “No Opinion” so someone will not have to force an answer if they just do not know.**
4. **Put it into a survey instrument and collect the data.**
5. **Give each participant personal feedback so they can self-monitor their future behavior.**

We will show you how to do this by using the familiar but vague term “professional” as in; “You must make this presentation look very *professional* because the client will be there.”

1. **Select the soft-skill topic that you want to measure.**

The soft skill topic will be “making *professional* presentations”.

2. **Meet with the people who will be measured and ask for some behavioral traits they associate with it.**

We will ask the people who will make the presentations to describe traits they associate with professional-looking presentations they have seen in the past.



We may hear traits like this:

1. *They were always done in PowerPoint.*
2. *The slides were not too “wordy” and easy to read.*
3. *The slide colors contrasted well for easy reading.*
4. *The presenter wore a business suit (male or female)*
5. *They started on time.*
6. *They knew the topic well and answered questions easily.*
7. *And so on.....*

We can choose to use all of these, some of these, or none of these and ask for more ideas. Regardless of which we select, we have been able to identify what our audience considers critical elements of a *professional* presentation. It does not matter if another group would consider the same ones or if they are the “right” traits. As long as our group is willing to be measured against them, then they are they “right” traits. (Remember the Monopoly game example? This is the same principle.)

**3. Identify a range of measurements from the most positive to the most negative and include an option for “No Opinion” so someone will not have to force an answer if they just do not know.**

We will use all of the traits because there are some that will impact how we score the performances. We will discuss the traits first and create a sample evaluation tool afterward.

- The first trait is **“They are always done in PowerPoint”**.

If we want to measure using a range of scores, how can we measure this first trait? The answer cannot be given in a range of scores because this is an “either/or” situation: it is either PowerPoint or it is not.

We have one of two options here. We can throw the trait out and say, “They must all be PowerPoint, so there is no reason to include it”, or we can say they can get “extra points” if it is PowerPoint. (This means we do not require it but we really prefer that it be.)

- **“The slides were not too ‘wordy’ and easy to read.”**

The viewer’s opinion of what constitutes “wordy” or “easy to read” here is acceptable to us. No extra value is added to the instrument if we attempt to define ‘wordy’ as a specific number of words or what constitutes “easy to read”. Also, we do not need both words in the evaluation because they are mutually exclusive. If something is too wordy, it probably will not be easy to read.

Remember, we are only attempting to get a sense of magnitude here: it is not a precise measurement like we would expect in an engineering situation.

- **“The slide colors contrasted well for easy reading.”**

This is the same rationale as above. No value is gained by trying to explain color values. Also, the contrasting colors will have an impact on its ease of reading. This category may be rolled into the one above.

- **“The presenter wore a business suit (male or female).”**

This can either be a “yes” or “no” like the PowerPoint example above and you can lose points by not wearing a suit. The alternative is to modify it so that we encourage presenters to appear “business like” and wear a sport coat: feature a “business casual” look; or decide what they wear does not really matter and discard it altogether.

- **“They started on time.”**

If starting on time is a very important trait to your group, you must first be sure that everyone uses a common reference for time. Everyone in the audience can see the clock on the wall in the auditorium: it is a good common reference. But, if you ask everyone in the group to look at their wristwatches and tell you the time **right now**, you may get as many different answers as there are people in the group.

Another consideration is whether you will penalize them for equipment failure. If their portable PC does not have enough charge to work, is it their fault? If a bulb blows out on an overhead projector they are using for transparencies and there is not a spare, does it count against them?

Since you expect them to start on time, you can deduct points for every minute they start late.

A better question about time may be, “Did they *waste* time in their presentation?” Nothing is worse than sitting through a presentation that seems to drag on after you have grasped their message.

- **They knew the topic well and answered questions easily.**

This trait can easily be scored on a graduated scale.

#### **4. Put it into a survey instrument and collect the data.**

Some of the traits have been modified to demonstrate options discussed in the text. You can also help the audience understand the scoring options by adding explanations across the range. This allows voter discretion but still allows a meaningful measure.

Please rate the presenter using the ranges below.		
<b>Trait #1</b> We prefer the presentation is in PowerPoint. If it is in PowerPoint, add 10 points to your score. If not, do not add points. +10 Bonus points for PowerPoint: Yes No		
<b>Trait #2.</b> The slides or transparencies were easy to read.		
Very hard to read. Text intensive, small font, and/or poor contrast in text color and background.	There was some variation in text size, there were bulleted items, and the text contrasted with the background.	It was very easy to read. Good mixture of text and pictures, bulleted items, animation (PowerPoint), and colors.
0-2 points (Your score = ____)	3 – 6 points (Your score = ____)	7-10 points (Your score = ____)
<b>Trait #3.</b> The presenter was dressed appropriately for this audience.		
The presenter was dressed too casually for a presentation before this kind of audience.	The presenter was dressed better than casual but the appearance and fit of the outfit was somewhat distracting.	The presenter was dressed appropriately for a presentation to this group.
0-2 points (Your score = ____)	3 – 6 points (Your score = ____)	7-10 points (Your score = ____)
<b>Trait #4.</b> The presenter made good use of their time.		
The presentation took longer than was needed to convey the message.	The presentation moved along adequately but not briskly.	The presentation was well focused, the message was clear, and did not waste any time.
0-2 points (Your score = ____)	3 – 6 points (Your score = ____)	7-10 points (Your score = ____)
<b>Trait #5.</b> The presenter knew the topic well and answered questions easily.		
The presenter was not able to answer all questions without using a reference or just could not answer some.	The presenter was able to answer all questions but did not elaborate to increase audience understanding.	The presenter was able to answer all questions and provide examples that clarified each reply much more.
0-2 points (Your score = ____)	3 – 6 points (Your score = ____)	7-10 points (Your score = ____)
<b>Total score for the presentation =</b>		

## ESSENTIAL #6 – RECEIVING HELP AND GUIDANCE WHEN NEEDED

What kind of help and guidance can a facilitator offer to a project: especially if the nature of the project is completely foreign to their background?

They probably cannot offer much from a direct technical standpoint.

After all, if I do not have an engineering background, I may not be very helpful to a project heavily built around engineering tasks. But the beauty of being a facilitator in this position is that *no one expects you to offer much help and guidance to the technical staff on technical questions* so anything you can add to the amount of help available to them from any source can only make you look better!

Here is how you can do it. Remember, the definition we are using of a facilitator is, ***“someone who aids or assists in a process”***.

You can *aid and assist in the process* of providing help and guidance when needed by helping the project in at least two ways:

- Develop the structure for a mentoring program within the project
- Develop a process for the project to become a *learning* organization.

Yes, we know, this is another radical suggestion when the conventional focus of any project is to get the product delivered to the client on time and under budget! It is not a training ground for project rookies *at least from the conventional standpoint*.

But, if you can help the PM take a longer view of a project team core group developing over *several projects*, then this concept makes sense.

## DEVELOPING A PROJECT MENTORING PROGRAM

Here are some basics for developing a mentoring program on a project. (We offer basics in deference to Leadership Principle #4 on page 33.)

1. **Work with the senior project leaders to determine the *traits* a mentor should have.** (We are back to defining “soft skills” again like we did on page 80.) You should expect to hear traits like *patience, a willingness to teach, being a recognized expert in the field, etc.* A hint here is one of the guidelines used by Southwest Airlines (“Nuts! Southwest Airlines’ Crazy Recipe for Business and personal Success” 1996) that says, “**Hire for attitude, train for skill**”.

They emphasize that an attitude of service, helpfulness, and kindness is inborn: you can teach skills. Your priorities, then, for mentor selection should first be their *attitude* of wanting to share knowledge and help others learn instead of technical skills being of paramount importance. A technical genius that cannot get along with anyone will do much more harm than good as a mentor.)

2. **Decide how you will pair mentors with protégés.** There are several ways you can approach this since there is no best way for all situations. Once again, we will refer back to the Leadership Principle #8: *Decide what you think is mostly right and get started. You can correct along the way*” on page 34.

You can:

- Create a formal or informal program. Formal programs feature regularly scheduled meetings with specific formats. Informal scheduling may be regular meetings but not on specific times and dates. Additionally, informal mentoring may not have a specific format beyond the mentor asking, “Why do you think this did or did not work? What would you have done differently and why?”
- Ask volunteers to play each role of mentor or protégé and assure the team there are no negative connotations associated with anyone not wanting to participate.

- Make a project decision that participants with less than X years experience will be matched with mentors with more than Y years experience or allow individual decisions to participate by announcing there are experienced members willing to act as mentors to anyone who wants to learn from their experience.

**3. Regardless of the approach, department leaders:**

- Should not have their feelings hurt if their employees ask someone outside of their department to act as a mentor for them.
- Ask participants in the program, whether acting as a mentor or protégé, during periodic performance review meetings (Review Essential #5 on page 54) what they are learning about their profession, the team, and themselves because of the experience.
- Remember, this is a *developmental activity* and requires some introspection and thinking. The department leader can do a lot to help the employee reflect on this.

## HELPING THE PROJECT BECOME A “LEARNING ORGANIZATION”

Another way that a facilitator can be a valuable asset to a project’s need for Help and Guidance is to help it become a learning organization. This is not intended to be a recap of Peter Senge’s Five Disciplines (1990) but rather the words to describe the broad concept of learning from our mistakes or the experience of others.

A mentor of mine once defined progress to me as, *“Don’t waste your life remaking my mistakes, Dick. Instead, learn from the mistakes I made and go out and make some new ones of you own. That’s how we humans get smarter.”*

Your project can get smarter, too, from the most senior executive to the most junior new member if you can help the project principles see the WIIFM of making the process of learning an integral part of how you do projects.

Project learning, just as quality management, cannot be viewed as something we will do after we finish with the real work. I recall back in the early 1990s when the TQM (Total Quality Management) movement began picking up momentum at the engineering firm I mentioned in the introduction. For the longest time, it seemed like many viewed “quality focus” as a necessary evil that would be addressed only after the “real” work was finished. Fortunately, the quality mindset became a part of how we did work, and not an option that was there if the client wanted to pay extra for it.



Project learning can be as simple as meeting on a regular basis to look at the “good news” and “bad news” events since the last meeting and look at the events that led to them. That principle of “you can’t do things the way you always have and expect different results” applies here but from a different perspective. We must start with the outcome that is either good news or bad news and *then go back upstream to consider the events that led to it.*

If something worked out successfully, we should look at “why” with as much detail as possible so we can make sure it happens again! Draw a flow chart or a fishbone diagram to visually describe the sequence of events and the human dynamics within them. Ask the decision makers along the path how they reached the decisions they did that led to this chain of successful events. We spend a lot of time on



some projects looking at “lessons learned” which are usually things that went wrong. We can learn a lot from analyzing the things that went right, too.

[I suggested this concept, that we spend as much time analyzing why things went right as we did on why things went wrong, once to a PM who indignantly replied, “*They are supposed to go right! Why waste time reviewing it?*” My answer was, “*Did they go right as a result of planning or just dumb luck?*” “*Planning of course!*” was his first response and then he added with a smile, “*...usually*”.)

When things go wrong because of a project member’s actions, *do you realize there is a 90% chance that the source of the problem can be found in systems controlled by management and only a 10% chance it was the employee’s fault?* W. Edwards Deming proclaimed this in the early days of the Quality Movement.

Here is a breakdown of the questions leaders can ask themselves before attacking the employee they are ready to blame for making the error:

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF		QUESTIONS TO ASK THE EMPLOYEE	YOUR NEXT STEP
1.	Were my expectations clear?	What was your understanding of what you were supposed to do?	If they knew the expectations, go to the next step. If not, <u>you are the source of the problem</u> . Explain them to the employee.
2.	Were their resources adequate?	Did you have everything you needed to do the job?	If “Yes”, go to the next step. If not, give them what they need.
3.	Do they get current feedback to tell them if they are performing to expectations?	How do you know how well you are doing while you are doing it? (This is why you have a gas gauge on your car’s dashboard. How else could you get <u>current feedback</u> on the fuel level?)	If they do have an adequate feedback process, go to the next step. If not, find a way to provide it.
4.	Does the desired performance seem punishing to them?	These two are not quite as straightforward as the other. An example for step #4 is, “If this person finishes their work early, what is their reward?” If the answer is, “We give them some work from the slower employees.” Obviously, you are punishing the desired behavior of finishing early. Conversely, in #5, if the reward for a slow employee is his extra work is given to a faster employee, he will never stop being slow. In either case, you must rectify the situation before moving on.	
5.	Are we somehow rewarding poor performance?		
6.	Are there any consequences if they do not follow the	What is the penalty for not doing what we require?	If there is no penalty, you must provide one. If this is not the problem, move on to the next step.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF		QUESTIONS TO ASK THE EMPLOYEE	YOUR NEXT STEP
	rules?		
7.	Can the task be made any easier?	Can the task be made any easier?	If so, change it. If not, move on.
8.	Are there any other obstacles keeping them from doing what you expect?	Are there any other obstacles keeping you from doing what we expect?	If so, remove the obstacles, if not, move to the next step.
9.	Is this a genuine skill deficiency or have they done it before but are just out of practice?	Have you ever done this task before?	Give them training if they have never done it or a chance to practice if they have. If they can do it but just do not, go to the next step.
10.	Do they have the willingness to change to do things the way you want them to?	Do you have the willingness to change to do things the way we want you to?	If “yes”, work with them to change. If “no”, terminate them from the project!

The first nine steps were about issues controlled by management. **Only the shaded last one, the willingness to conform to project expectations, was solely in control of the employee.** This is why we can say that 90% of the reasons employees do not do as expected have their roots in systems controlled by management.

Another very useful tool for helping team members identify obstacles to their maximum performance is using a simple questionnaire on a regular basis. (A good time to use this would be during a quarterly performance review meeting with team members by department leaders.)

The leader can ask these questions either on a survey that each employee signs and turns in or during a face-to-face meeting.

1. What do you think are the top three priorities you have today?
2. Is there any part of your assignment that you wish were clarified more to help you work more confidently?
3. Is there any part of your job that you are not sure why you are doing it or why it is needed?
4. Is there anything I do that makes it difficult to do your job and you wish I would stop doing?
5. Is there anything I do that is very effective for you and you want me to continue doing?
6. Is there anything I am not doing that could be helpful for you and you wish I would start doing?

This is the rationale for asking these questions.

1. Question 1 in the box above. This is not a trick question trying to trap the employee into saying the wrong thing. Please, take a moment before asking the employee this to say something like, “I want to make sure that I have done my job in communicating clearly to you the current priorities regarding your work. As you know, this project is a dynamic situation and I want to be sure I am keeping you informed. Now, what do you think are the top three priorities you have as of now?”
2. Confusion about their expectations encourages people to work more slowly so, in case they are doing something wrong, they do not have as much to fix. Clarification of expectations allows them to work confidently and faster with greater quality.
3. Viktor Frankl, a survivor of the Holocaust, wrote a book called *Man’s Search for Meaning*, wherein he describes an essential part of man’s nature being the desire to have a purpose for his life and the work in his life. Many times, people described as “clock watchers without motivation” are those who are merely busy for the purpose of collecting a paycheck instead of productive for the purpose of personal growth.

Back on page 33, we suggested devising a list of Leadership Principles for the project's management. One of them is "If you help them understand the 'why', they can figure out the 'how'. This question addresses that very important consideration.

4 – 6. The "Start – Stop – Continue" format is very effective in collecting any relevant information without restriction. By asking, "Is there anything I should start, stop, or continue doing..." offers the team member an open invitation to talk. The extent and quality of the response, however, is directly related to the amount of trust the leader has built with the employee. (Do you remember, "Trust is Historic" from the Leadership Principles on page 33?)

## ESSENTIAL #7 – REWARDING SUCCESS WITH PAY OR PRAISE

Ask a project manager this question, “Why would someone want to do their best job on this project?” and you will automatically get an answer like, “Because that’s what we pay them for!”

But look a little farther into the question when we ask about their *best job*. The PM’s answer implies that the paycheck guarantees their best work because it is an obligation of employment. Is that what we really get or is it more like the performance gap diagram in Essential #4 (page 48) where the employee controls the *range of performance* from the least I can do to get by to the best I can do?

Unless we are paying incentives for performance above minimum, the employee usually earns the same amount whether they do an outstanding job or just enough to stay on the payroll. How then, can we encourage them to work toward the higher level of the performance gap than remain tied to the lower?

One simple, and very effective, way to do this is by *just asking them*. Not by phrasing it as, “What would it take to get the most out of you?” but with a little more subtlety.

**“What are the three or four things I can give you that would have the greatest value to you?”**

Before you cynically answer for some nameless employee, ask yourself that question and put your replies here:



The few things that my leader could give me that would have the most value are...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Look back at them and circle each one that involves a budgetary consideration such as cash incentives, gift certificates, and the like.

But, if you are like nearly every other person I have ever asked to do this, you may have as many as two budgetary items listed but will have several non-budgetary items like these:

Give me...

- Clear directions and a chance to perform
- Trust
- Respect
- An opportunity to grow and learn new things
- A chance to learn from my mistakes and share my knowledge with someone else.
- Work that has meaning to me, not just to you.
- A feeling that you value me on your project or in your department.
- The benefit of a doubt when things do not always go right.

Do you realize what a powerful gift the employee has given his leader if the leader is smart enough to ask that simple question? It is as if the employee has said, “Here, boss, are the buttons for you to push to get the most out of me. They won’t cost you anything but you’ll reap tremendous payoffs!”

Another cornerstone of our company that we discovered in one of Zig Ziglar’s many writings ([www.zigziglar.com](http://www.zigziglar.com)) is: *“When your employees get what they want, you’ll get what you want”*. Some of the most profound statements are also the simplest.

The employees are saying, “Boss, you will get what you want from us (high performance, low absenteeism, teamwork, etc.) when we get what we want from you (just look at their lists).” Since these “gifts” to the employees are not budgetary items, how can a PM that wants to be successful *not do it*?

## CASH INCENTIVES FOR EVERYONE ON THE PROJECT

Cash incentives are nothing new to projects. It is common for there to be incentive packages available to senior members to bring the project in significantly early, or below budget, or some measurement that is important to the client.

*What about some kind of incentives for the line staff who are doing the work? Maybe they are not in the same proportion as going to senior management because there are so many more at the line level but why not? Here is a way that can happen and still stay within budget.*

The idea of cash incentives can be focused on teamwork instead of only on individual contributions by considering the idea of “what’s-in-it-for-all-of-us.”

Suppose a project-end party were planned if the project came in on time, under budget, and all of the expectations of the client were met.

The extent of the party could be controlled by the employees’ performance (if performance standards were published), which contained not only work measurements but also scores on teamwork surveys. The departments with the highest scores would have the most contributed in their name to the project end celebration.

Here is how it could work.

*Suppose our project has ten different departments or distinct work groups in it. The length of the project is scheduled for 12 months. We will have quarterly reviews so department managers can review employee performance progress in relation to their personal goals as well as project progress for their department. This means there will be forty review events (ten departments each doing a quarterly review.)*

*The PM offers to contribute \$100 to the project end party’s budget on behalf of the department with the highest project and teamwork scores each quarter. He or she will contribute \$75 for the second place department and \$50 for the third place department.*

*The running totals are posted conspicuously and the departments compete to see who will be the biggest contributor to the whole project’s party by virtue of their scores. Since the departments must*

*all work with each other, their scores on the teamwork survey will depend on how well they provided the service the other departments needed from them. Also, since the departments are scoring each other, it would be difficult to “rig” the scores in favor of any particular department at the expense of the others. This would give all of the departments a common interest, a means to get feedback on their progress by having the scores posted, plus “bragging rights” to the department who contributed most to the party by virtue of their outstanding teamwork and project contribution as measured in the surveys.*

*There are no real losers in this because everyone comes to the party and each department, over the course of the year, will have had a chance to review their performance on the last quarter and work together to bring it up for the next. The small departments have just as fair a chance at being a contributor, as do the larger ones.*

*If the idea of a large year-end party does not sit favorably with the client or project principles, the same competition idea can be used to raise money for a charity nearby. This still allows a competitive spirit plus builds a lot of local goodwill for the project.*



## ESSENTIAL #8 – RECEIVING HELP WITH PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL GROWTH

We will confine our discussion about professional and personal growth to the context of it occurring within a project team setting. Although correspondence or online courses, for example, are excellent opportunities for professional and personal development, we will focus on developmental opportunities that can occur within the project community.

### TEAM LEADERS

A team leader program can be very effective in developing future leaders for the project or just helping line employees get a new perspective about the project, their current behavior, and encouragement for self-development.



The team leader concept we will use here is not a formal position that one person holds but rather a rotating opportunity (such as monthly) that allows employees a low risk opportunity to broaden their job, their responsibilities, and their career horizons.

The responsibilities of a team leader can vary with the department and the nature of the project. Using a generic situation as an example, the team leader can be the person that conducts the new hire orientation in the department for that month; is responsible for leading one or two department meetings; collecting report information that is passed up to the PM, or any tasks in addition to their normal job that does not involved the traditional management responsibilities of scheduling, disciplining, approving overtime, etc.

If the department manager will use the section in this handbook on measuring soft skills (Essential #5 on page 54), a survey can be developed that every department member fills out after the incumbent team leader finishes their tour or duty and the next one takes over. The survey should include some “stop-start-continue” suggestions plus a chance for scores on helpfulness, patience, creativity, or any other topics the department feels are important traits for a team leader.

Hard feelings may be generated if each team member is required to participate. However, if you can get one or two volunteers to get it started and give them some public praise after a good meeting they conducted, the others may see that it is not as hard as they thought. It will not be long before they will want to reconsider their initial reluctance to participate and have their names added to the rotation.

This can be an especially useful activity if you present the WIIFM as a chance for personal development and for the boss to see what all you can do beyond your current job assignment. Creation of a departmental code of conduct before starting this program will make it run very easily.

## RELATIONSHIP LEARNING

No one will contest the fact that team members must learn how to get along with each other to make this project work. No one doubts their *technical* skills: otherwise, why would they be on the project?

The problems come when we deal with *social* skills. Many people for many reasons have never developed skills in getting along with others. By the time people are old enough to gain education and technical skills, thus becoming project eligible, they are firmly set in their ways and beliefs and difficult to change. It can be done because we are not asking them *to become* something else but only learn how to become *more effective*.



We will not ask introverts that prefer working alone on a technical problem to become gregarious and organize the company picnic. Nor will we ask the socially minded who organize every birthday party to work alone without human contact.

We are only expecting them to *understand* something that may be new for them. We want them to look at themselves, identify, and acknowledge their traits and behaviors and consider those of their teammates, too. Then, if we can acknowledge that others have unique traits and behaviors, we can learn to adapt our behavior – *at least temporarily* - while we deal with them. **We want them to ask teammates, “What is it like to be you?”**



For example, if you know the person in Department A who needs a report from you is the kind who looks at things objectively, black-and-white-no-shades-of-gray, and focuses on details, the reports you send to her will be straight-forward, have bulleted items, with no time wasted on “what if” questions.

The person in Department B, however, is more of a visionary dealing in potential more than “what is” and your reports to him may have fewer details and more “word pictures” and broadly described options.

You, *as an individual have not changed*, but your method of dealing with teammates has changed **because it makes your life easier!** These two different individuals are more likely to accept and use your

work rather than return it for changes into a format most useful to them. If you can reduce your amount of rework when dealing with others by simply adjusting your behavior *temporarily*, your job becomes much easier! Why make it harder than it needs to be?

There are many useful tools on the market to help project team members identify their own traits and behaviors while discovering the strengths and weaknesses of the personality types of the other team members.

Here are some tools and websites to consider

- **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, FIRO-B** (CCP, Inc. - formerly Consulting Psychologists Press)  
<http://www.cpp-db.com/>
- **DiSC** <http://www.sandboxmanagement.com/disc.cfm>
- **Predictive Index (PI)** <http://www.piworldwide.com/> (Available only to companies – not individual consultants.)

We do not endorse one to the exclusion of the others. We have used them all and found them effective in helping team members gain more insight into their own behavior and that of others.

## VIDEO AND GAME LEARNING

Many excellent training videos and game activities can provide a powerful learning message when the audience is broken into small groups afterward to discuss the event's message and how it can be applied on the project.

### VIDEO LEARNING

Additionally, previous problems can be analyzed in comparison to these videos with questions asked about what could have been done differently the next time we face this issue.

You can find a vendor offering these for rent or sale these by doing an Internet search by video title.

1. *Joel Barker's The New Business of Paradigms* helps us realize that new ideas and ways of doing things are always waiting to challenge our current beliefs and those who are open to possibilities will survive while those who do not will suffer.

A powerful example is the paradigm once held by the Swiss watch industry that watches must have mainsprings, jeweled movements, and finely machined moving parts. They believed this so strongly that when one of their very own introduced a radical concept, the quartz movement, with an electronic mechanism they refused to consider its possibilities and did not bother to patent the idea. Then Seiko saw the prototype at a watch convention and the Swiss watch industry collapsed.

What opportunities for improvement do we miss on projects simply because they may not fit our paradigm of what project work *is supposed to look like*?

2. *The Abilene Paradox* (CRM films) is a humorous but very insightful video that shows us what we do everyday when we go along with something we really do not want to and the dangers involved. This will help any team members who may not be as strong willed as their leaders but who have valuable information to contribute. Likewise, it reminds the strong leaders to be careful about getting everyone's genuine agreement and that they are not just trying to "get along by going along".

Team members will learn:

- The consequences of mismanaged agreement
  - Strategies for better, more open communication
  - How taking risks can foster group dialogue
  - How to work towards consensual group decision-making.
- 
3. *Teamwork in Crisis: The Miracle of Flight 232* (CRM films) This is a real life account of United Airlines Flight 232 that crash landed in Sioux City, Iowa but had nearly 100 survivors because of cockpit teamwork in crisis. The actions of this flight crew were the beginning of cockpit crisis management training for airlines throughout the world. A project team can learn how to work together in the event of a crisis that is not covered in the procedure manuals.
  
  4. *Groupthink* (CRM films) This 22 minute video uses real-life examples such as the Challenger Disaster, the Bay of Pigs Invasion, and the Cuban Missile Crisis to demonstrate the dangers in group decision making when not all are heard and powerful authority figures inadvertently influence member action against their better judgment.

## GAME LEARNING

There are many group games available from bookstores or training sources. Survivor-type games where team members work together to prioritize lists of survival necessities are useful and popular on projects to convey the message that “none of us is as smart as all of us”. These games are available in training books available from The American Society of Training and Development ([www.astd.org](http://www.astd.org)) or via a search on your Internet browser for “team development games”.

One game that has worked very well for me on projects is “Win as Much as You Can”. I encountered it in the early 1990s on a project and do not know the origin so I cannot give proper credit to its designer. What I do know is that it is easy to set up, operate, learn to present, and carries a powerful message.

**The Intent:** The creation of a competitive, cutthroat situation within a group who publicly professes the virtues of cooperation and team work. This game very quickly points out how vendors, clients, contractors, and other groups within a project can quickly establish a “fortress mentality” and lay siege to the enemy (anyone else on the project) if there is not a constant desire and opportunity to communicate clearly between groups, seek clarification of questions, and make sure everyone understands the *overall* mission of the whole project, not just one isolated group.

**The Equipment:**

- Four cards, approximately 6” x 9”, with an “X” written on one side and a “Y” on the other. (I have cut two manila folders in half to make cards and it worked very well.)
- A flipchart score sheet or white erasable board that shows the 10 rounds (or five if you’re pressed for time) as shown on the diagram later in this section.

**The Setup:** Break the whole group (you will need at least 12 people) into four equal teams. Get them set sit together but as far from the other teams as possible and still be in the room. (I put one group in each corner.) Tell them to come up with a team name that emphasizes an attitude of “confidence, assertiveness, take-no-prisoners, etc”.

You have already started to create a sense of competition and aggression in their minds by splitting them into small groups, keeping them away from each other, and encouraging these very aggressive names.

**Getting Started** The rules are on the sheet that you hand out (“Win As Much ” diagram). At first, no one will understand what you want him or her to do. Tell them the “0” round is for practice and for each group to decide whether they want to display an “X” or a “Y” when you call for it.

You will call for it by asking, “Has each group decided whether to show an “X” or a “Y”? Eventually, they will all say, “Ready” but they will not really be sure what they are doing. Tell them on your count of three they are supposed to hold up their vote (“X” or “Y”) and keep it up while you record the scores on the board.

The scoring pattern is shown on the Win as Much diagram. If all four teams show an “X”, each team would lose \$1.00 (Just pretend money, not real cash!). They win or lose depending on how the group pattern came out. The game strategy will instantly become evident after you post this first round of scores.

Eventually someone will ask, “What does “Win as Much as You” can mean? Is it “you” as the whole group or ‘you’ as a subgroup?”

**Be sure you do not answer this question because it is the basis of the game.**

Answer this question by saying, “I have already explained the rules to it. It is Win as Much as You Can. I cannot be any clearer than that.”

Separating the groups, telling them they cannot confer with each other (see the rules on the top of the sheet you give to players), and constantly reminding them the name of the game is Win As Much As You Can reinforces the fortress mentality when you do not clarify who “You” is. Since you do not tell them it



means the whole group, they will assume you mean their isolated small group and work hard to defeat all of the others.

After two or three rounds, one team will start to emerge in the lead. If I am playing a five round game (and five is all it takes to convey the message of the game. Ten rounds start to drag on the teams that are losing.) , I add “incentives” in the third and fifth rounds. I set it up by pointing to the inevitable disparity in the scores and saying, “You know, it looks like you need some help with these scores. I want to help you. Please select one person from your group to act as your representative to the other groups. Come out of the room with me and let’s meet in the hall.”

Outside of the room, you tell the four representatives to agree together on how they want to vote. Then they go back and tell their teams what they have decided and try to get their teams to go along with it. Usually, they will agree that each team should vote “Y” because that means each team wins \$1.00.

While they are deciding that, you go back into the room and tell the big group that you really want to help them ‘Win As Much As You Can’ so you are going to increase the payoff of the next round by a factor of 5. Although the representatives in the hall may have agreed to vote one way, as soon as they come back in and their teams tell them the payoff is now five times bigger, hallway agreements seem to dissolve. Suddenly greed takes over. When you call for the vote, you will see looks of shock, surprise, and maybe slight anger when teams discover the others tried to double-cross them by not voting what they agreed in the hall.

As soon as that happens, you will know they are hooked and the game will succeed. You can play a few more rounds without a multiplier and then do it again using the same story as before. Ask them to send a different representative out of the room to meet with the others. While they are out there, tell the remaining members that you really want them to be successful and, therefore, are going to increase the payoff on the next round by a factor of ten.

You can imagine how this ends up after five or ten rounds. There will be one big winner, maybe two middle scores, and one big loser. Add the totals of each team *and the net score of the whole group*. Typically, the whole group ends up with a negative amount even though one or two teams may have had positive individual scores.

Debrief the game like this:

- **Why did one team end up with more than the others?** (You will hear responses like, “They couldn’t be trusted”, “They put themselves above the rest”, etc. There will be much acrimony regardless of the final score as long as there is a clear higher score than the others.)
- **Why do you think this happened?** (“We couldn’t trust them”, etc. **Listen to hear if anyone say, “We never knew who ‘You’ were when you said ‘Win As Much As You Can.’”**) The reasons it broke down (there is a 99.9% chance it did and everyone is at each other’s proverbial throats) are:
  1. You never defined who “You” were. Was it the group as a whole or the individual teams? Since you did not clarify it for them, they *assumed the definition* and went from there.
  2. You broke them into separate groups, told them not to talk with each other, said they could only communicate through you (the “Centralized Authority”), created a competitive situation by the name of the game [*Win as Much as You Can* implies if one group wins, another group loses], and forced them to select aggressive team names to feed the aggression.
- **How is this applicable to a project?** On a construction project, for example, it is not unknown for one group of constructors to hoist a piece of equipment like a generator high in the air so another group can not use it even though the first group isn’t using it.

One department in a business may work independently regardless of the impact on another group such as the designers I described in the beginning of this handbook saying they would let the constructors in the field fix any interferences they designed in.

The different branch offices of a business may work against each other if there is a competitive activity that is not well defined.

Also, the night shift *within a department* may work against the day shift if they do not think they share a common purpose.

## THE SCOREBOARD

ROUND	TEAM 1 NAME	TEAM 2 NAME	TEAM 3 NAME	TEAM 4 NAME
Practice				
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
Total				

## Win a\$ Much a\$ you can!

The mission is to "Win as Much as You Can". You are to keep that in mind.

There are 3 key rules:

- You are not to confer with other members of your class unless you are given specific permission to do so. This prohibition applies to non verbal as well as verbal communication.
- Each partnership must agree upon a single choice for each round.
- You are to insure that the other members of your class do not know your partnership's choice until you are instructed to reveal it.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** For ten successive rounds, you and your partners will choose either an "X" or a "Y". Each round's payoff depends on the pattern of choices made in your class.

### PAYOFF SCHEDULE

**4 Xs: Lose \$1.00 each**

**3 Xs: Win \$1.00 each  
1 Y: Lose \$3.00**

**1 X: Win \$3.00 each  
3 Ys: Lose \$1.00**

**4 Ys: Win \$1.00 each**

**2 Xs: Win \$2.00 each  
2 Ys: Lose \$2.00**

Round	Your Choice	The Class' Choice Pattern	Your Payoff	Your Balance
1	X Y	___ X ___ Y		
2	X Y	___ X ___ Y		
3	X Y	___ X ___ Y		
4	X Y	___ X ___ Y		
5	X Y	___ X ___ Y		
6	X Y	___ X ___ Y		
7	X Y	___ X ___ Y		
8	X Y	___ X ___ Y		
9	X Y	___ X ___ Y		
10	X Y	___ X ___ Y		

"Win As Much as You Can" Handout

## OTHER PROJECT TEAM DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES


### THE PROJECT TEAM'S "WHO'S WHO?"

"Get your program! You can't tell the players without a program!"

Walk into any professional sports event and there are vendors out front selling programs that list the players' pictures, statistics, and other useful (?) information about them.

Why not develop a similar concept for a project team? Better yet, let me rephrase that to, *"Would there be any value in having at your desk a project "players" program or reference that contained everyone's picture, some work-related data about them, and possibly even some personal information like hobbies, favorite sports teams, etc.?"*

A page in your project's program (or "Who's Who") may look like this:

	<b>Name</b>	Dick Grimes
	<b>Job</b>	Team Development Facilitator
	<b>Dept:</b>	Administration
	<b>Phone</b>	123-456-7890
	<b>E-mail</b>	Dick@outsourcetrainingonline.com
	<b>Social Style</b>	Creator
<b>Hobbies</b>		Sailing, fix-it projects around the house
<b>Favorite Teams</b>		Miami Hurricanes, University of Alabama (as long as they aren't playing Miami)
<b>"Count on me to be..."</b>		Patient, good listener, creative
<b>"I need from you..."</b>		Reliability, honesty, willingness to be unconventional

Here is the value of these entries. (There can be many more as the project team members move from one project to the next and gain experience with this concept.)

1. **Topics: Name to E-mail** - These entries are self-evident. It is important to know how to contact the people on your project.
2. **Topic: “Social Style”** – This is hypothetical behavioral trait knowledge taught from materials obtained through the websites listed on page 100.

The project team members would learn what their social style is from a pre-project class led by the facilitator. This is what project members would learn about a group the material called “Creators”.

*“Creators are often perceived as enthusiastic, inspiring, and emotional. They are seen as people who feel comfortable taking the social initiative, spending time engaging in friendly conversation before moving on to the task, and relying on feelings to help make decisions. They tend to be easily excitable and ready to share insights and dreams. These phrases often describe Creators:*

- i. Often excitable, fun-loving, and talkative*
- ii. Seems to like an audience; applause or recognition may be a cherished reward*
- iii. Appear to be risk-takers, competitive, and spirited*
- iv. Often futuristic, creative, and inspirational*
- v. Seem able to excite and motivate others*
- vi. Tend to be enthusiastic and ambitious*
- vii. Like to share dreams*
- viii. May stimulate creative exchange of ideas*

*When dealing with Creators, be aware of this information:*

When they feel pressured...	<i>They attack</i>
They measure personal value by...	<i>Earning recognition</i>
They need to do this for personal growth...	<i>Learn to check details</i>
Gain their cooperation by letting them save...	<i>Effort</i>
For best results, they need a work climate that...	<i>Inspires them to their goals</i>
To gain the most if spending time with them, be...	<i>Stimulating</i>
To gain their support of you, you must support their...	<i>Dreams and intuitions</i>
They see most benefit from answers that define...	<i>Who</i>
If you want them to make a decision, give them...	<i>Testimony and incentives</i>
Their specialty in an organization is...	<i>They are “energizing”</i>

A team member who has never met this person but who has taken the “Social Styles” class before the project would now have a very good idea of what I am like, how to approach me with needs or questions, how to enlist my support for their ideas, etc. Clearly, an approach like this is much superior to the traditional trial-and-error method so many project people use when getting to know their project team members. This can reduce (if not eliminate) the “storming” phase of a project (page 12).

- 3. Topics: Hobbies to “I need from you...”** These topics simply allow us to provide more information about ourselves as *human beings*, not just our job title. This creates more opportunity and desire to network with someone from another department if I know something about them as individuals.

For example, suppose our project is relatively large and in a remote area. If I saw another Miami Hurricanes fan listed in the “Project’s Who’s Who”, this gives me an opportunity to make a new friend. But if we did not have a Project Who’s Who (or something like it), my tendency would be to stay insulated within my little group and not fraternize with any outside of my group. This isolationism is the same mentality that sets up the “Win as Much as You Can” scenario so easily. The same isolationism that is found on so many projects that



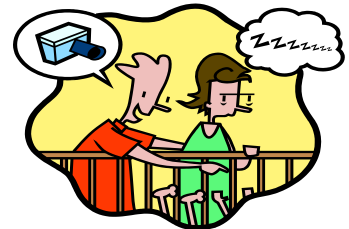
only focus on the scope of this project's mission but never add the phrase to the end of a mission statement: *"And we cannot wait to work with each other again on the next project!"*

All it takes is an inexpensive digital camera that can download to a PC, any word processing software, and a copy machine to make the Project Who's Who.

## **MONTHLY PROJECT MEETINGS AND DEPARTMENTAL PRESENTATIONS**

Monthly project meetings at which departments rotate making a presentation about their needs from other departments; what other departments can expect from them; "who's who", or any number of topics that give department members a chance to do some public speaking and the rest of the project to get to know them.

This monthly meeting does not have to be long but should focus on topics of general interest (community service activities, interdepartmental sports teams, or project social activities) instead of only the project. Allowing departments to plan their segment of this meeting and encouraging skits based on work-related themes allow team members to have some fun together, share good news ("Fred in Accounting is a brand new Daddy!"), milestones ("Debbie in Admin just had a birthday!"), progress on goals ("We are 2 weeks ahead of the schedule and 9% under budget!"), and announce upcoming events ("We need some volunteers to help with the Special Olympics this weekend.") can do a lot to build and maintain a cohesive project team who will work well together during periods of adversity.



## **CREATE A PROJECT WEBSITE**

A project website can be a very strong employee information and development tool. Authoring software makes it very easy to create a website for the duration of the project. The site can include project statistics (that are not confidential), information updates, birthdays, pictures, etc. and is very useful for helping the families of project teams get a better understanding about the project – especially if it is in a remote location.

Each department can send their information to the project Webmaster who can upload it. This gives each department a means of recognition, an opportunity for creativity for the department members submitting the material, and strengthens a feeling of connection to the project.

Part of the website could also act as an online Project Who's Who.

## ODDS AND ENDS

Here are some other topics that should be considered when facilitating project team development that did not fit anywhere else in this handbook.

### CONDUCT A *PRE-PROJECT* AUTOPSY

As strange as this may sound, this is actually a great way to discover potential hidden problems that may not have been considered regardless of all the planning you have done. Also, it gives the shy members of your team a chance to contribute without feeling “put on the spot.”

Many times, project problems result from organizational cultural problems that are invisible to team members instead of the sins of commission and omission that we try to address in project checklists.

This is how you can do it. At some point when you have the entire team assembled (or as many as you will have available) *before you actually begin the project*, ask them to imagine that the project *has failed!* Then tell them to list as many reasons as they can without discussion that may have contributed to that failure.

After all have done that, go around the room asking for each to give one reason. The other members are not allowed to comment while you write it on a flipchart. Go around the room until their lists are exhausted. Then use this information as additional precautionary planning before you start.

“Invisible” organizational issues may be things like:

- “If we go through our normal ‘decision-by-committee process’, we’ll never meet a deadline!” (You’ll have to find a way to streamline the decision making process.)
- “After the CEO retired, energy for the project kind of died.” (If the project is sponsored by a key executive that may leave soon, is there a plan to continue if they leave?)
- “There was never a plan for bringing new members up-to-speed before leaving them alone to do their work so we spent so much resources on rework that we eventually went over budget.” (Is there a plan to build some ‘bench strength’ in critical areas to make a seamless transition if we have to bring them in?)

## PLANNING YOUR ACTIVITIES

I touched on this briefly earlier in this handbook but wanted to make sure it receives separate attention because it is so critical. “What does he expect me to do?” was the biggest and scariest question I faced when I began working with project PMs putting together team development activities.

At some point, I realized that I needed to get a clear definition of a successful outcome from my client (the PM) and work backwards from there.

*“What do you want to walk away with after the team development activities?” or “What do you want team members to know or be able to do as a result of this?”* are two simple questions that can help clarify what you need. If those two questions still do not help the PM articulate what he or she wants from your efforts, ask this, *“What will you have to get from me so that you are willing to approve my invoice for services?”* (Putting payment into the picture always helps clarify thinking.)

Many times, the PM may have a general impression of what he or she expects from their facilitator but may not have actually tried to define it. It is useful to remember this line from “Through the Looking Glass: Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland,” *“When you do not know where you are going, any road will take you there.”* If you or the PM cannot agree on a definition of a successful outcome for your work *before you do it*, how will you ever achieve success or get paid?

## THE LEAST YOU SHOULD DO FOR TEAM DEVELOPMENT

“How much should you do from a team development standpoint if the project is relatively short (less than six months)?”

Short projects are typical for many project managers but I do not think that is the question we should ask. Instead, I think a better question is, *“How confident are we that our team will work well together, even if only six months, in the event of absolute crisis, still deliver the project expectations to our client, want to work together as a team again, and that the client would want to keep working with us on their next project?”*

If you frame the question as a long term view of development strong relations within the team and with the client, instead of the length of the project, the obvious answer is, “The least you can do for team development is *whatever it takes to still deliver the project expectations to our client, have team members that want to work together as a team again, and that the client would want to keep working with us on their next project!*”

The test of teamwork is not when things are running smoothly but when we are facing disaster. If we can count on each other during times of trial, and still accomplish the mission, then we know we have a strong team.

So, then, using the rephrased question as a guideline, I recommend you invest at least three days before the project (of any length) starts to do these activities. My experience taught me that this is the *least you can do to have the best chance* of development a cohesive work team for a project regardless of the length. (If this is a construction project and the PM or project principles balk at the idea, ask them if they would consider doing this project without including “site preparation” in the schedule. Suggest to them “team preparation” is just as important.)

#### DAY 1

- **Teach the selected social skills course** (Four hours) Investing at least a half-day teaching the project members about working styles, identifying their personal style, posting the styles of all the team members, and helping them understand how to adapt their own styles when dealing with the others will go a long way to prevent friction between members.
- Show the **Abilene Paradox** and **Groupthink** videos (2 hours combined). Then spend time after each discussing how these situations occur on projects, the dangers present when they do, and the clues to look for that will keep us from making these mistakes on this project.
- Develop a project **Code of Conduct** (2 hour maximum). This will give them a common value system for behavior toward each other. You can shorten the time this takes in a meeting by explaining to them the value of the concept, then asking them to think about it and send them in to you for collection. You can send the combined list back out to everyone and ask

each to select the five or six they would be willing to follow on this project. Combine the results into the project Code of Conduct and present it at the next meeting.

- Develop the **Principles of Leadership** with the project leaders in a separate meeting. You can use the same technique of data collection described above with the Code of Conduct. The fact that you have a common Principles of Leadership is much more important than how you develop it. The only warning here is that you do not want the project leaders to think it is a list of orders from the PM disguised as Leadership Principles.

## DAY 2

- Spend a day helping them understand the benefits to them of implementing the material covered in **Essentials #4 (Having a Chance to Work Toward Those Goals) & #5 (Getting Feedback on Progress Toward Goals)**. Regardless of how short a project may be, the people actually doing the work must have these essentials in place (the elements of motivation from Essential #3) if you expect to have a cohesive and effective work team:
  - Measurable goals including short-term ones that lead to the longer-term goals
  - A clear understanding of what is expected of them
  - A feedback process to help them self-monitor their progress
  - Help and guidance from the leader when needed
  - Some kind of pay or praise when they meet those goals.

DAY 3

- Spend the morning teaching them the value of measuring “soft skills” and how to develop a survey instrument they can use in their departments and with other project ‘clients’ that use their services.
- Spend the afternoon at the local golf course doing a team-wide “best ball scramble”. Although different geographical regions may use different words for this, it is still an opportunity to learn the value in teamwork regardless if everyone on the project plays golf or none of them does. Work with the golf pro at your local course to help arrange this.

Here are typical organizational rules.

1. Mix the team into groups of four. Be sure to mix males and females; golfers and non-golfers; young and old; athletic and couch potato as much as possible on each team.
2. Teams alternate shots on each hole but retain the same sequence through all of the holes. For example, they may want the person with the best golf ability to tee off on every hole to get the ball as far down the fairway as possible. They may want the person with the least experience *be allowed to throw the ball* and go last while the second and third shots go to the remaining two players. If it takes more than the efforts of all four to get the ball into the cup, then #1 is up again.
3. The team with the lowest score at the end wins the prize with additional prizes for second and third; most unusual stance, or any other fun category so that every team wins something.

You will be surprised how good the scores can be with this. It is a lot of fun and points out that every team member is valuable when given the chance. You should make that point when giving out the awards at the end. This is especially true of the non-golfer who can throw (or toss) the ball closer to the cup.

## PREPARING FOR YOUR NEXT PROJECT INTERVIEW

The information in this handbook has no real value unless you can get hired to use it on a project. Here are some questions that the project management team may ask you in an interview with suggested answers using material from this handbook.

(Once again, if you have questions and answers that can strengthen this process for others, please tell me so I can keep future versions of this as relevant as possible. My email address is dick@outsourcetraining.biz. I will mention your contribution in the next book and send a free copy to you for your help.)

### MANAGEMENT TEAM QUESTION:

*“How, specifically, would you design a team development process for the duration of our project that would make team members want to work together on another project as soon as possible?”*

### YOUR REPLY:

1. Develop an individual performance measurement system that allows team members to monitor their individual progress on achieving project and personal goals similar to the report cards we had in grade school.

This can continue across subsequent projects virtually intact because the technicians assigned to a project use their same skills on every project. Since the skills are constant (and improving, we hope), the way to measure their performance should not change much, either. (Remember, teachers in grade school do not revise their entire grading system for next year’s new group of students because the subject matter is the same!) Pages 38, 41, 43, 44, 48, 54, 62, 64, 68, 75, 76, 78, 80

2. Develop a project code of conduct (page 25)
3. Develop project leadership principles (page 31)



4. Devise an *easily understood, remembered, and personally applicable* common purpose for existence (page 35)
5. Develop a mentoring program that can continue onward as protégés being mentored on this project can become mentors on the next. (Page 86)
6. Develop a process where the individual team members who do higher quantities of work can earn tangible incentives for high performance. (Page 93)
7. Devise a process to encourage team member professional and personal growth. (Page 97)
8. Develop some morale development opportunities. (Page 110)
9. Encourage monthly project meetings where departments can do presentations in addition to discussing project business (page 113)

**MANAGEMENT TEAM QUESTION:** (These next questions are built around issues mentioned in project management training guides as concerns associated with matrix organizations. The suggested answers follow each part)

*“How could you help us prevent (or reduce the impact of) these disadvantages associated with a typical project matrix organization?”*

- *Team members with little or no project focus* (pages 26 to 38)
- *Team members with decreased motivation and innovation* (Essentials 1 through 8)
- *Dual reporting* (You may have to work backwards from the project initiation phase on this one. If you can convince the team member’s permanent manager back in the home organization of the benefits of the report card system, then that same process can *come with the team member* into the project. That way, the team member is actually reporting to his own goals, instead of the department manager at home and the local project manager. *This works only as long as the department manager at home and the local PM agree on the team member’s goals while assigned to the project.*)
- *Performance monitoring and controlling* (Essential #5 on page 54)

- *Lacking goal alignment with management*” (Lack of goal alignment with management is another way of saying “decreased motivation and innovation” that we discussed earlier in this section).

#### **MANAGEMENT TEAM QUESTION**

*“How would you help us develop a value system within the project team that guides how we work with each other?”*

If you are able to do the things we describe earlier under the first question, “How, specifically, would you design a team development process for the duration of our project that would make team members want to work together on another project as soon as possible”, then the value system would be built into it.

It is precisely that we share values, including the right to different opinions as long as we stay focused on the success of the project, is what encourages us to work together again in the future.

#### **MANAGEMENT TEAM QUESTION**

*“How would you help us shorten (if not eliminate entirely) the typical development cycle of a team through the stages of forming, storming, norming, and quickly get to the performing stage”?*

- Start with gaining project management’s support for creating an organizational development framework on this project that allows you to do the developmental activities described in the first question.
- Spend time as early in the project initiation phase as possible to do some relationship learning (page 99) and video and game learning (page 101).

## **MANAGEMENT TEAM QUESTION**

*“How could you help us avoid or overcome these typical communication barriers on a project?”*

- *Education levels*
- *Perceived social status*
- *Attitudes*
- *Different values*
- *Work pressure* (When goals are clearly defined and measurable, the amount of work pressure does not change but the *kind* of pressure does. Think about a book report that you had due back in school. If you had never done one for this teacher before and did not know what he or she expected, you had a lot of stress hoping you were doing it right and still anxious after you turned it in. The emotional pressure did not go away because you did not have clearly understood expectations.

But, once you knew what was expected, your stress and pressure level went down because you did not waste time trying to guess what was wanted. And, after you turned it in, you forgot about it and pressure evaporated.)

Defining goals for work performance and relationships between team members goes a long way to reducing work pressure.)

- *Conflicting priorities*
- *Interdepartmental friction and strife”*

## **YOUR REPLY:**

“People with a project performance measurement system in place with defined goals for work performance and relationships between team members who are led, not managed, toward achievement encounter minimal, if any, problems with these issues.”

MANAGEMENT TEAM QUESTIONS

*“What products would you deliver from a project “kick-off” meeting? (Generally, anything that will help the team achieve the project’s desired goals.) This meeting may take two or three days. As a minimum, I would expect:*

- a. A project code of conduct*
- b. The Project’s Leadership Principles*
- c. A simply-worded statement of common purpose for existence*
- d. A draft of the performance scoring matrix for specific job tasks as well as the “soft skill” topics*
- e. Each attendee knows their “social style” (page 99)*
- f. Each attendee’s page draft for the project’s “Who’s Who?” (Page 110)*
- g. An outline of what the project wants on the project website”.*

*2. What would the agenda contain?*

- a. Breakout activities to develop parts a-d and g above*
- b. A lesson on social styles that teaches participants to determine theirs*
- c. Time to complete each attendee’s page for “Who’s Who?”*
- d. The Group Think and Road to Abilene videos (page 101)*

*3. Who would you suggest attend? (All project principles, all department or section leaders, and key department members who are already on-site.)*

*4. How long should it run? (Until all of those tasks are accomplished.)*

## SUMMARY

I said in the beginning of this handbook that team development facilitation is an art, not a science. That should be evident to you by now.

Please consider the material I have outlined here, as the least you need to know to get started. As your experience increases, you will add new activities, modify these that I have described, and invent things that no one has considered yet. That is the beauty of doing this: it is truly “a work in progress”.

Finally, consider helping us make the art of team development facilitation better by sharing your experiences, lessons learned, and ideas for improvement that you may have. Send your comments, criticisms, and great ideas to me via this website.

As I promised earlier, I will be sure to mention your name as the source in the next book and send a free copy of the revised edition to you.

Thanks for reading this and remember, **“SEMPER GUMBY!”**