

Team Assessments *By Kristin Arnold*

Effective teams achieve their goals while using a smooth process while building cooperative relationships.

All three conditions are necessary for effective teamwork. If the team gets along and fails to achieve its objective, or if the team accomplishes the goal, but members end up despising each other, the team has not been as effective as possible.

There are lots and lots of formal and informal team assessment tools that you can purchase "off the shelf" to measure team effectiveness. In the event you decide to use one of these instruments, follow these steps to maximize the experience:

Know Why. It seems obvious, but why are you assessing the team's work? Team assessments are meant to be used as constructive feedback to the team to reinforce what is working well and to provide insight on areas for improvement. It should not be used as a performance management tool.



Know What is Important. Clarify the behaviors valued by the organization and the team. You may find a difference between what they currently value and what they *should* value. This discussion can get really interesting. In the meantime, you will validate why the organization thinks teamwork is important.

Select an Instrument, based on importance, ease of use, type of data generated, and cost. Or, if you are adventurous, cobble your own assessment taking from the "best of the best."

Keep in mind that questionnaires are the most common sources of information. They keep the measurement process relatively objective and produce quantifiable and repeatable data.

Prepare. Consider how the assessment will be distributed, how it will be returned, how to guard against breach of anonymity, and who will process the information. *(continued on page 2)*

Toys in Meetings! *By Christopher M. Avery, Ph.D.*

Toys are becoming very cool to bring into business meetings these days. Why? Because toys provide important benefits to participants and to the business they're conducting. You can reap some of those benefits too, by learning how to use and introduce toys appropriately. Toys:

Access Creativity. No matter how old we are, toys put us in a more youthful and playful frame of mind that benefits problem solving and creativity.

Diffuse Anxiety. It's far better to get "beaned" by a nerf ball by the person who's budget you're attacking than for both of you to sit there ignoring your hostility. You're more likely to get the truth out and deal with it.

Provide Mental Breaks. Meetings can be draining because of the periods of sustained concentration. A squeeze ball or a slinky can provide a much-needed break for the conscious mind while the subconscious continues to flow with the meeting.

Engage the Whole Person. Business conversations are typically very "left-brained." But creative solutions require using the whole brain and the whole person. Toys release the whole person behind the heady *(continued on pg 2)*

In this issue . . .

Team Activities:
Cliché Bingo

About QPC Inc.

Our Team Toys

From the Bookshelf:
Personal Coaching for Results

Marker Pens

Fantasyland Castle



Time To Move On...

Some teams just don't want to die. At one time, they may have been a high performing team - doing great work with great people. But now...it may be time to move on.

You're Done. Your team has accomplished the mission.

No Customer. You don't have a customer for your product.

Below Critical Mass. The team doesn't have the right people or expertise has not been replaced.

Just Can't Do It. Your team cannot do their job without a specific resource.

No Champion. No one in management is "championing" the team's efforts.

Enough Already. The team is tired, burned out, and just needs to move on.

Check out www.qpcteam.com/columns/die.shtml for more on this topic.

“Experiment with the number and type of toys to see what gets the best results in your meetings. Whatever you choose, remember two things. First, the purpose of the toys is to enhance the quality of the meeting, not to take over the meeting with play. They should be put away if the meeting becomes non-productive. Second, don't let your play become a distraction to others in adjoining rooms or offices.”

Christopher M. Avery, PhD

▶ Assessment (cont'd from p.1)

There are several software programs that will allow you to do these types of assessments on-line and will compile and summarize the data. Be sensitive to how the team will receive the news that they are going to be assessed. It could be perceived negatively.

Complete the Assessment. Give the team members the instrument as well as a written cover letter that includes why the assessment is being done, instructions, the deadline for returning the assessment, and a meeting date to present the results and next steps.

Collect and Summarize the Data. Have more than one member of the team involved; otherwise, others might feel the collector (especially if it is the team leader) could misinterpret or misuse the data. Organize the information into a format that presents the results concisely and visually.

Interpret the Data. Have the team meet to agree on the team's strengths and opportunities for improvement. Spend some time savoring and celebrating the team's strengths. Then objectively look at how the team can get even better.

Create a Plan. Develop a plan to improve the team's work with specific action items including who is going to do what and by when. Agree on how the team will follow up on its commitments.

Identify Next Steps. Consider the first assessment to be a “baseline” of the team's work. Agree to check the team's progress periodically to see if the team is becoming more effective. Agree on how often the team will be assessed. Set a goal for where you would like to see the team next time!

**Call QPC Inc. to assess
your team's effectiveness
(800) 589.4733**

▶ Toys (cont'd from p.1)

intellect.

Are Memorable. Toys provide opportunities for unforgettable experiences in meetings, usually of a humorous nature!

Are Fun. Who wants to hang around in meetings that aren't?

Here are some toys to start with that are easy to find, low cost, and don't take up much room in a bag or case. Many of these toys are given away now at trade shows and conventions.:

Tactile, stress-relieving toys to play with and pass around such as gel-filled squeeze balls, process putty™ or a Slinky.

Balls for tossing or throwing in fun, amusement, mock disgust or anger! These include Nerf balls, Koosh balls, bean bags for juggling and fabric discs for tossing.

Honking horns, clickers, whistles, and other noise makers for providing timely feedback - either positive or negative. These are especially useful for celebrations, or to manage difficult participants in meetings.

Introduce toys whenever any of the qualities listed at the beginning of this guide are desired, AND, you won't violate any organizational norms or taboos about professionalism or the sanctity of certain meetings or spaces.

If it's your meeting, you can introduce toys anytime. If you're not in charge of the meeting but are a member, try just showing up with a couple of small squeeze balls or similar items. Handle one yourself and place the other on the table within reach of another at the meeting. See what happens. If you find out that someone objects, then you can easily make them disappear. Most likely, everyone will appreciate them. Then, you can bring a few more toys to the next meeting!

*Reprinted with permission. Copyright ©
1997-1999 3M. All Rights Reserved.
www.3m.com/
readingroom/*

*meetingnetwork/
meetingguide*

A newsletter designed to facilitate discussion and share tips and techniques to help your teams to be extraordinary.

Spring 2000

Vol. 5 No. 3

**Kristin J. Arnold, CPCM
Editor**



**Quality Process
Consultants, Inc.**

48 West Queens Way
Hampton, Virginia 23669
Phone (800)589-4733
(757)728-0191

Fax (757)728-0192

e-mail: karnold@qpcteam.com
<http://www.qpcteam.com>

The Extraordinary Team is a quarterly publication distributed to clients, friends and partners of Quality Process Consultants, Inc. Articles are welcome and encouraged. We sincerely would like to know what you are doing.

Quality Process Consultants, Inc. helps your teams to be extraordinary. We specialize in team facilitation services, training and seminars, keynotes and speeches, team implementation consulting and coaching and unique team products.

*Strategic Planning
Strategic Partnerships
Collaborative Problem Solving
Process Improvement
Technology and Teams
Team Building*

©2000 Quality Process Consultants, Inc. All rights reserved. Duplication and reprints are okay, as long as you credit the source. Thanks!
Printed on recycled paper.



"I had only been in the meeting for five minutes when I yelled BINGO."
 "My attention span at meetings has improved dramatically."
 "Meetings will never be the same after my first outright win."
 "The atmosphere was tense as we listened intently for the elusive 5th word."
Testimonials for Cliché BINGO

extraordinary team

What's New at QPC Inc.

I am so thankful spring is finally here. I do so enjoy the mild weather, flowers blooming and everything turning green again. Business is blooming as well with McKechnie Vehicle Components, T. Rowe Price, Canon Virginia, Virginia's Center for Innovative Technology, as well as several assisted living facilities and nursing homes scattered throughout the nation.

Within the last quarter, my assistant Melissa and I had the opportunity to call each of you. Thanks so much for your vote of confidence and desire to continue receiving our newsletter.

I successfully applied for candidacy as a "Certified Speaking Professional." CSP is the highest earned designation presented by the National Speakers Association. It recognizes commitment to ongoing education, proven speaking experience and ethical behavior. There are only 300 CSPs in the entire country, and in two years (God willing...), I will have completed this rigorous certification.

I also had the honor of being recognized in Dolan's Virginia Business Observer as one of "Hampton Road's Rising Star: Forty Under Forty." The timing on this was perfect, since I'll be forty years old this year—but who's counting?

I am also fast and furiously working on two new books: *Virtual Teams* and *Team Energizers*. If you have created a team activity which is uniquely yours, I'd love to include it in *Team Energizers* — an anthology of "practical team activities!" - just like the one below!

Hope your spring blooms well and I look forward to working with you.
 Kristin

Our Team Toys

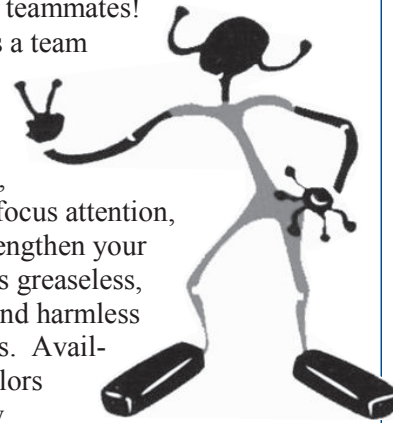
QPC Inc. has several unique "toys" to help your teams stay focused and have fun:

Our newest product is the "Bender Family," Joe Bender, Wendy Bender, Fender Bender (the dog) and Mind Bender (the cat). For the fishing and golfing enthusiasts, Joe Bender now comes as "Fishin' Joe" and "Golfing Joe" Bender!

Benders™ are poseable magnetic wire figures that stimulate creativity and induce a great deal of laughter among your teammates!

Process Putty™ is a team energizer. Use it in meetings and training to facilitate whole brain thinking, stimulate creativity, focus attention, relieve stress and strengthen your grip. Process Putty is greaseless, odorless, non-toxic and harmless to paper and desktops. Available in 4 different colors and strengths, yellow (soft), green (firm), red (strong), and blue (tough).

Order your Benders and Process Putty today at www.qpcteam.com or at 800.589.4733.



Practical Team Activities: Cliché BINGO

Cliché BINGO

To inject some laughter and keep the team's attention.

Time - 2 minutes of explanation
 Nr. of Participants—Any

- ◆ Prepared Bingo Cards
- ◆ Optional: M&Ms®, Skittles® (or other game pieces)

Create a "bingo card" for each team member. Fill each box with a team cliché such as:

- ◆ Slippery Slide
- ◆ Low Hanging Fruit
- ◆ Benchmark
- ◆ Paradigm Shift
- ◆ Think Outside the Box
- ◆ The Big Picture
- ◆ Value Added
- ◆ Bottom Line
- ◆ Go the Extra Mile
- ◆ Synergy
- ◆ Stretch the Envelope
- ◆ Empower Employees
- ◆ Win-Win
- ◆ Customer-Driven
- ◆ At the End of the Day
- ◆ Put This One to Bed
- ◆ Game Plan
- ◆ Total Quality
- ◆ Results-Driven
- ◆ Movers and Shakers
- ◆ Hardball
- ◆ Mindset

- ◆ Turn the Corner
 - ◆ 24/7
 - ◆ Out of the Loop
- Feel free to add your own clichés or borrow some from Dilbert!

At the beginning of the meeting, hand out the Cliché BINGO cards. Ask the team members to check off the words as they are used in the team meeting. When someone checks off five words in a row—horizontal, vertical or diagonal—yell out "BINGO!"

You can also add a bit of sugar to the mix with some M&Ms® or Skittles® to help the team mark off their words!

Adapted from
 The Facilitator newsletter
www.TheFacilitator.com

"I've identified a number of key principles in the growth process that I've used to take me from poverty to affluence, from doubt and confusion to confidence, from a struggle for survival to an exciting, fulfilling life."

Lou Tice

Personal Coaching for Results

extraordinary team

From the Bookshelf

By Ray Kniphuisen



Do you want to bring out the best in people? In yourself? Did you ever wonder why some people seem to be able to take on any task, achieve (seemingly) insurmountable goals, grow at an exponential rate, and cultivate those around them? As a Leadership & Professional Development Instructor at Northeast Utilities, I am constantly on the look out for new concepts, ideas or tools that will help people reach "the next level."

Lou Tice, in his book, *Personal Coaching For Results: How to Mentor and Inspire Others to Amazing Growth* (ISBN 0-7852-6945-2), shares some basic concepts that most highly successful people already do naturally, and that can easily be learned and used by you.

His book offers a host of great ideas on personal growth, personal mastery and mentoring others. The first part of the book focuses on personal growth; the second focuses on helping others become their best (mentor) as well as being a good "mentee." Lou takes some basic, familiar concepts that we have all heard over the years, and brings them together in a way that makes sense – and in a way that I can use. The tools are all about developing your own self esteem & self efficacy (causative power), and then, those around you.

The growth process Lou describes is: regularly self examine (to), gain insights. Change (or raise) your expectations and change your self-image or self concept. Set clear goals and use the "I x V = R" (Imagination times Visualization with feeling & emotion becomes Reality) process to create your desired results.

In an effort to live a balanced life, I have found this book to be extremely beneficial. *Personal Coaching for Results* is easy to read, a challenge to implement, and well worth the price of admission.

Fantasyland Castle

By Dakota Livesay

When the architects set up the construction timetable for the original Disneyland in Anaheim, CA, they scheduled the Fantasyland Castle to be the last building built. Even though the architects and contractors showed logistical and financial advantages to the contrary, Walt Disney demanded that Fantasyland Castle be the first building constructed. He said, "I want everyone working on the project to see that castle all day and every day, so they don't forget what it is we're trying to do here."

Sometimes we get busy taking care of our daily problems and concerns, and lose the vision we have for our life. When that happens the decisions we make in dealing with these daily problems and concerns may not help us build our life's vision. It's essential that we're constantly looking at our castle to make sure even the smallest decision goes along with "what we're trying to do here."

Reprinted with permission © 2000 Dakota@RavenHeart.com

Marker Pens

By Kristin Arnold

Fortune Magazine recently posed one of their all-time "Great Questions of Our Age: Do whiteboard markers cause brain damage?" The short answer is "no... unless they are purposely mis-used over a long time." Hmm... so an occasional whiff of your fruit-scented *Mr. Sketch* marker is okay (one of my favorite team activity is to guess the scent of the turquoise marker!); however, routine huffing or snorting markers during your meeting breaks will send you to the Employee Assistance Counselor!

It seems intuitively obvious to use a whiteboard marker on whiteboards, transparency markers on transparencies and watercolor markers on flipcharts. Often, we just grab any old marker and begin to draw. Be careful when using permanent markers on flipcharts; they tend to bleed through the paper and leave nasty marks on your boss's new wallpaper.

When you use the wrong marker, it's generally not a problem unless you use a permanent marker on a whiteboard. Quickly grab a dry erase marker and draw all over the permanent marker boo-boo. (This will lift off most of the permanent ink.) Then take your whiteboard cleaner and wash the board. If you still have some remaining tough spots, use rubbing alcohol or an all purpose remover such as *Oops!* (available at any hardware store).

Many of us come home with marker stains all over our hands. Try *Skin So Soft*, hydrogen peroxide or rubbing alcohol to remove those unsightly stains.

Inevitably, one of these markers will have a brush with your new shirt or favorite pants. Before you donate them to charity, try using an ink remover such as *Amodex*, (www.worldpen.com/access/amodex.html). Other treatments include using rubbing alcohol or non-flammable dry cleaning solutions (such as *Dryel*) for permanent marker stains; *Resolve Carpet Cleaner* (pump spray formula) for whiteboard marker stains; and pre-wash treatments such as *Shout* for water-based markers.

Whatever you do, don't put your clothes out to dry until all the ink is gone. Once your clothes are dry, you'll be seeing that ink stain for a long time!