

Tips and techniques to improve
the way your teams work.

Bridging the Generations

By Kristin Arnold

Often characterized as being lazy, arrogant, unreliable, and cynical, Generation X is considered to be anything BUT team-oriented. Or so thought Hank Karp and Danilo Sirias, professors in the Department of Management and Marketing at Christopher Newport University in Newport News, Virginia. They conducted a pilot study of 398 people from six organizations across the country and concluded that Generation X is significantly *more* team oriented than the Baby Boomers!

How could this be? How can Xers, who are known to be extremely independent and prefer to work on a task alone,

value team work? Karp and Sirias suggest that Xer's are looking for "valuable teams which support the individual" rather the Boomer's mantra that "the team is an entity greater than the sum of its parts." Rather than being a "melting pot," teams of the

Generation



future will look more like a "salad bowl," where each individual makes the best contribution to the team effort.

As a Baby Boomer on the cusp of Generation X, I believe teamwork is evolving to a higher and more challenging standard. For an Xer, a high performing team is composed of strong, diverse individuals, focused on delivering results, who create flexible linkages to work as an entire team, in

isolation or in different configurations depending on the task. They are looking for authentic team synergy rather than conformance to group norms.

The good news is Boomers and Xers actually have a common approach to teamwork. However, as more Xers enter the workplace, Boomers will have to learn how to value individual diversity, manage conflict, motivate individuals and delegate tasks *much more* effectively. Karp and Sirias recommend the following strategies as you bring

Videoconferencing Tips

What works well for successful face-to-face meetings is even more important when you use video and audio technology to link people in different locations. First and foremost, have a crisp, simple agenda and make sure everyone has access to any important information before the meeting begins. Arrive at your desktop or the videoconferencing room a few minutes early and familiarize yourself with the controls, the monitor and camera placement. Depending on the type of system you are using, identify one person as the "controller" who can adjust your camera position and focus, monitor screens, volume etc.

At the beginning of the call, have each person check in with their name and location. Be patient as other site(s) gets used to their controls! Also, get a sense for inevitable time delays. Technology will soon allow instantaneous video stream, but depending on your system, there may be a few seconds time delay between sites.

(Cont'd on page 2)

Agree on the meeting purpose, agenda and timeframes. Unless you have

In this issue . . .

Team Activities: QTIP

Face the Music

From the Bookshelf:
Team Talk

About QPC Inc.



Kinds of Teams

Teams come in all different shapes and sizes:

Direction can come from management or from within the team itself. In a controlled team, management selects the assignment, defines the process and closely monitors the activities. A guided team receives tasks and suggested methods from management and a self-directed team selects their own assignments and methods.

Membership. An intact team is generally formed by people from the same department or division. A cross-functional team is formed by people from different departments, divisions, or levels from within the company. A customer-supplier team expands the membership to other players upstream or downstream of the team's product or service.

Participation can be either mandatory or voluntary.

Duration. Temporary teams are formed to handle specific projects. Once finished, the team disbands. A permanent team has continuing responsibility for an area or situation.

Location can be in the same place or dispersed to several locations.

TEAM

“A team composed of strong, differentiated individuals, as required by Xers urge for individuality, has a higher probability for task effectiveness than does one composed of people who are constantly trying to achieve a similar view and value system.”

Dan Sirias and Hank Karp

▶ Generation X *(cont'd)*

Generation Xers onto your team:
(Continued on page 2)

Identify strengths and interests of team members before integrating them into an effective and cohesive work unit.

Encourage individual identity. Today's teams tend to focus on the group identity as the primary means of recognizing the individual members. Make a greater effort to recognize individual strengths, contributions and achievements.

Integrate perspectives. Boomers see their primary individual role is to support the team while the Xers see the team's primary function is to support individual efforts and relationships. Both perspectives must be discussed and valued.

Coach and provide personal support with individual members. Karp and Sirias theorize the majority of Xers had two parents working during their formative

years. To make up for this lack of attention, Xers have a need for closer personalized contact with those above them.

Focus on results. Xers, as a group, appear to be much more pragmatic. They will forge linkages to work on task subsections individually and then bring the results to the team. Team issues will be dealt with more easily when cast within the context of achieving team objectives.

Work should be motivating. Xers are not going to be motivated by appeals to the greater good, loyalty to the organization, or allusions to the “Big Picture.” Motivation comes from within and has to do with the intrinsic nature of the team's work.

Reward team AND individual contribution. The current practice is to reward the team as a whole, rather than single out any one individual on the team. However, Xers are much more tuned in to “what's in it for me” (WIIFM). Test out

▶ Videoconferencing Tips *(cont'd)*

exclusive control over your system, videoconferences always start and end precisely on time. You can't afford to run overtime...or else the system will shut down!

The more locations you have on line, the greater the potential for domination by a few people or meeting breakdown. Agree on meeting ground rules to manage the participation. For example, ask the participants to state their name and location each time they speak. The moderator may serve as a “gatekeeper” to ensure everyone has the opportunity to participate or to manage the airtime when multiple people start talking. When making a key decision, ask for each participant to “weigh in” on their opinion.

Recognize that some participants may be connected without the benefits of video – or one way video where they can see you but you can't see them (or vice versa). Pay attention to your ground rules so you don't forget these “out of sight, out of mind” participants!

Ground rules become more important as the number of locations go up. The split screen windows get smaller, the number of people get bigger and airtime becomes much more precious.

A few other tips: Don't assume the other sites can't see you. Most of the time, their display is wider than what you see. When speaking, look at the camera (not the monitor). You may not be able to pick up on the participants' non-verbals, so pay close attention to what they say and how they say it. Be careful what you say. You are “broadcasting” information which, like a cellular phone, can be intercepted. So don't give away the company secrets!

TEAM

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

Winter 1999
Vol. 4 No.2

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"I copied several articles for my Mom. She's 92 and hosts a weekly meeting of the Friendship Club. These folks aren't used to "sharing," and many of them have never really talked openly about their feelings. So Mom looks for exercises and excuses to help everyone get involved, get them laughing and get them to know one another - and perhaps themselves - better. She has used nearly all your icebreakers...the ball of yarn was a great success!"

Virginia Nicols, *The Marketing Machine*

What's New at QPC Inc.

For the last several months, I have been working closely with the Hampton Roads Partnership to develop segments of a regional strategic plan among the technology and tourism communities. Involving over 150 stakeholders, the teams are identifying the critical issues facing the region and making substantive recommendations. Very exciting stuff!

In the meantime, I have FINALLY updated our website. Really. Take a look - you'll see a new look and lots of new features. All my articles from the Daily Press are now online as well as this newsletter! Stand by for the streaming video clips which highlight my speaking abilities!

I have also started a segment of my business devoted toward speaking to

larger groups about teams and teamwork. Some of my clients asked me to keynote their conferences and/or give a seminar at their conferences or conventions, so I decided to add "speaking" to my product line. Not a casual decision, by any stretch, this has been in my strategic plan for three years. I am finally in the position to be able to deliver a quality product that I can tailor to each individual engagement.

I am also writing a book and *need your help!* Please see page 4....

Although it seems such a long time ago, Rich, the kids and I went to California at Christmastime to see my 94 year old grandmother, mom and dad, sister and brothers. Just another reminder about how precious our families are and to savor our

Check out our new and improved website

<http://www.qpcteam.com>



Seminars

Advanced Facilitation Skills March 9-10, 1999 Hampton, Virginia

As seasoned facilitators, you have seen the team's synergy work...and you are hungry to learn more.

Come join Kristin Arnold and Jeff Anthony, two master facilitators, who will take you through an exhilarating two days - specifically designed with YOU in mind.

The agenda will be tailored to meet your specific needs - including new facilitation tools, techniques, discussions, activities, great sharing, learning and networking.

Each participant will have the opportunity to facilitate a real team session (not a "fake" role play) as well as receive vital feedback to improve your skills back at the workplace.

For more information, call Kristin at 800.589.4733.

Practical Team Activities: QTIP

QTIP

To provide a quick reminder that "they" aren't out to get us.

Time - 5 minutes

No. of Participants: Your team
Materials Required:

- ◆ A Q-TIP® for each team member
- ◆ Optional: QTIP poster printed

As your team walks in, hand them a Q-TIP® or place one at each seat. You'll see a few raised eyebrows and hear a few comments about the QTIP. Just nod your head knowingly and smile until you are ready for your "icebreaker."

Pick up your QTIP and ask if anyone knows what "this" is and what it does.

You'll hear the standard responses e.g. "to clean your ears." Challenge the team to be more creative...and enjoy the responses!

After all have had a turn, suggest their QTIP is a reminder to "Quit Taking It Personally." (don't worry, some will "get it" immediately...others will need some prompting!)

With QTIP in hand, ask the team what "Quit Taking It Personally" means to them.

You may want to hand out the QTIP poster:

"The stock market didn't crash on 10/19/97 to ruin someone's birthday, it just happened. The IRS isn't out to get you...it's out to get all of us. Most of us have a knack for personalizing events that are beyond our control, even traffic!

However, every thought and action we take has a chemical response. And frequent negative feelings have definite, potentially serious side effects. The solution: QTIP "Quit Taking It Personally!"

Inspired by Linda Thompson,
Henrico County Schools

TEAM



From the Bookshelf

How about a book that is *soon to be* on your bookshelf? That's right, I am in the throes of writing a book about teams. Currently titled: *Teamtalk: Hit and Run Tactics for Team Success*, it will feature quick team tips on the left side of the page. The right side of the page will have a complementary story or anecdote about the tip.

I need your help! I would like to hear your stories or anecdotes about your team work. So please, give me a call and let me know what works, what helped, and what didn't! For example, on the left side, we have the "tactic":

Hang your Flipcharts on a Wall

You are preparing to facilitate a team of ten people. With trusty easel in hand, you walk into the room - and wonder if you have the right place. It's a little tight - even Superman would be uncomfortable. What to do?

Leave the easel outside and tape the flipchart paper on the wall!

Take your easel pad and place a piece of tape on each of the bottom outside edges. Lift up the sheet of easel paper. On the second sheet, place a piece of tape on each of the bottom edge, just inside of where you placed the tape on the top sheet. Continue to place the tape so the sheets can come down one at a time. Tape five sheets for one stack of paper.

Take all five sheets in hand and rip the sheets off, all at one time. As a stack, tape neatly to the wall. Now you have an easel on a wall!

Tape up several stacks of paper, depending on how much wall space you have. Or have extra stacks ready to go up if you need them.

(Of course, there will be a really cool pen and ink drawing of what we're talking about).

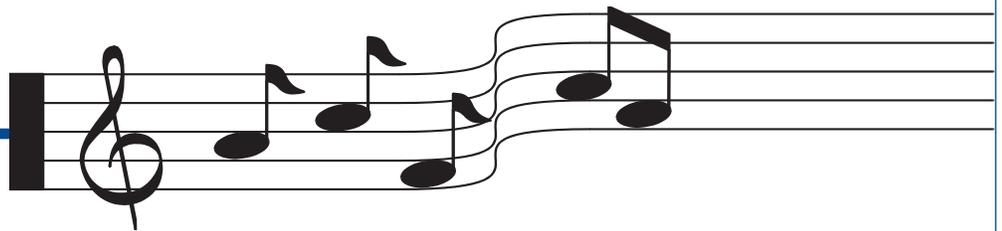
The right side will have stories about how this idea has benefited your team. So if you have a tip, a story or anecdote, please let me know! Other items include:

- ◆ Establish and Review Ground Rules
- ◆ Break the Ice
- ◆ Record the Team's Ideas
- ◆ Aim for Consensus
- ◆ Know Thy Mission
- ◆ Set Team Goals
- ◆ E-mail Etiquette
- ◆ Avoid Team-Mania

I think you get the idea.... I'd love to hear from you, write up your story and reference your name. Here's your big chance to be famous! Thanks for helping!

Kristin Arnold

Face the Music



Many years ago, a man wanted to play in the Imperial Orchestra, but he couldn't play a note. Since he was a person of great wealth and influence, however, he demanded to be allowed to join the orchestra so that he could perform in front of the king.

The conductor agreed to let him sit in the second row of the orchestra. Even though he couldn't read music, he was given a flute, and when a concert would begin, he would raise his instrument, pucker his lips, and move his fingers. He went through all the motions of playing, but he never made a sound.

This deception went on for two years. Then one day a new conductor took over the Imperial Orchestra. He told the orchestra that he wanted to personally audition all the players to see how well they could play. The audition would weed out all those who weren't able to meet his standards, and he would dismiss them from the orchestra.

One by one the players performed in his presence. Frantic with worry when it was his turn, the phony flutist pretended to be sick. The doctor who was ordered to examine him, however, declared that he was perfectly well. The conductor insisted that the man appear and demonstrate his skill.

Shamefacedly, the man had to confess that he was a fake.
Found on the internet: <http://www.gospelcom.net/gf/>

That was the day he had to "face the music."
dw/dwtogo/dw-08-31-98.html