

► The Fred Factor *By Mark Sanborn*

The first time I met a “Fred” was just after I purchased what I called a “new old house.” Located in a beautiful, tree-lined area of Denver called Washington Park, the house had been built in 1928. A first-time homeowner, I’d only been living there for a few days when I heard a knock on my front door. I opened it and saw a mailman standing there.

“Good morning, Mr. Sanborn!” he exclaimed cheerfully. “My name is Fred and I’m your postal carrier. I just stopped by to introduce myself, welcome you to the neighborhood and find out a little bit about you and what you do for a living.” Of medium height and build with a small mustache, Fred was an ordinary-looking fellow. But, while his physical appearance didn’t convey anything out of the ordinary, his sincerity and warmth were noticeable immediately.

I was taken back. I’d been receiving mail for most of my life, but I had never received anything like this kind of an introduction from my postal carrier. But it did impress me as a nice touch.

I replied, “I’m a professional speaker. I don’t have a real job.”

“If you’re a professional speaker, you must travel a lot,” said Fred.

“Yes, I do. I travel anywhere from 160 to 200 days a year.”

Nodding, Fred went on. “If you just give me a copy of your schedule, I’ll hold your mail and bundle it. I’ll only deliver it on the days that you are at home to receive it.”

This was amazing! But, as I told Fred, that was probably not necessary. “Why not just leave the mail in the box on the side of the house?” I suggested. “Then I’ll pick it up when I came back into town.”

Fred explained, “Mr. Sanborn, burglars often watch for mail building up in a box. That tells them that you’re out of town. You might become the victim of a break-in.”

Fred was more worried about my mail than I was! But after all, I realized, he was the postal professional.

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Team Trust

Trust is critical to team success. Someone who doesn’t trust you will act more negatively and cautiously toward you. This creates a barrier that can impede or even derail teamwork. They will spend unproductive time and energy to protect themselves.

Ask yourself, “Why would my team mate mistrust me?” Can this mistrust be overcome?

An atmosphere of trust can be built in several ways:

Past Performance. Do you have a reputation for doing what you say you will do? Do you follow through on your commitments?

Flexibility demonstrates a willingness to be open and receptive to meet the needs of others. Be flexible and willing to explore options.

Disclosure. Teamwork requires a willingness to risk open, direct communication. Take the chance that your team mate will not take advantage of your frankness.

Ask “What would I need to do to build enough trust for us to continue? How can I demonstrate my good faith?”

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► Shaping Into a Team Player *By Charlene White*

Many times I find team leaders frustrated when they have people on a team whom they label “non-team players.” I call them “independent players.”

Team Players

- ◆ Have a cooperative spirit
- ◆ Work toward common goals
- ◆ Are honest
- ◆ Are competent
- ◆ Anticipate needs
- ◆ Take action
- ◆ Volunteer
- ◆ Desire to learn
- ◆ Participate in training
- ◆ Are role models for others
- ◆ Proactively solve problems
- ◆ Follow the rules

Independent Players

- ◆ Are late for work frequently
- ◆ Leave promptly at the end of the day without offering to help others
- ◆ Frequently complain
- ◆ Do not participate in staff meetings
- ◆ Are resistant to cross training
- ◆ Resist participating in team events
- ◆ Seem distracted
- ◆ Do not perform tasks to the best of their ability
- ◆ Prefer the

status quo
(cont’d on p. 4)

“Inspired by Fred the Postman and countless other Freds I’ve met... I put together The Fred Factor. It contains the simple yet profound lessons all the Freds taught me. Anyone can do them. Everyone should. By learning how to be a Fred it’s possible to do extraordinary work. And that means being an extraordinary person as well—something we all want to be.”

Mark Sanborn

The Fred Factor (cont’d)

He continued, “Here’s what I suggest. I can put mail in your box as long as the lid closes. Whatever doesn’t fit in the box, I’ll put between the screen door and the front door. Nobody can see it there. And if that area becomes too full of mail, I’ll just hold the rest of it for you until you come back.”

At this point I started to wonder: does this guy really work for the U.S. Postal Service? Still, Fred’s suggestions sounded like a terrific plan to me, so I said “okay.”

Two weeks later I returned home from a trip. As I put the key in my front door lock, I noticed that my doormat was missing. I was puzzled; I doubted that anyone was actually stealing doormats in Denver. I looked around on my front porch and I found my doormat in the corner.

It was covering something.

Here’s what happened: While I was gone, UPS misdelivered a package sent to me. The box was left on somebody else’s porch five doors down. Lucky for me, Fred the Postman was on the job. Noticing my box on the wrong porch, he picked it up, carried it down to my house and put it out of view. He also attached a note explaining what had happened, and then tried to make it less noticeable by placing the doormat over it. Not only was Fred delivering the mail, he was picking up slack for UPS!

His actions really struck me. It is easy to find and point out what’s “wrong” with quality, customer service and business in general. Finding examples of what’s “right,” or even praiseworthy, is much harder. Yet here was Fred, a gold-plated example of what personalized service looked like and a role model for anyone who wanted to make a difference.

Because of Fred’s example I started sharing my experiences with him in speeches and seminars I presented across the country. Audiences were enthralled and inspired.

Back home, I shared with Fred how his work was inspiring others. I told him about a discouraged employee who had been receiving no recognition from her employers. She wrote to tell me that Fred’s example inspired her to “keep on keeping on” and doing the right thing, regardless of recognition or reward.

As for myself, I wanted to thank Fred more formally for his exceptional service. When Christmas rolled around, I left a small gift in the mailbox for him. The next day, when the mail was delivered, I found an unusual letter in my box. The envelope had a stamp on it, but the stamp wasn’t canceled. That’s when I noticed the return address. It was from Fred the Postman.

Fred knew it was illegal to put a letter that wasn’t posted in the box. Even though he personally carried it from his house to mine, he still stamped it to keep it legal.

The letter said, “Dear Mr. Sanborn, Thank you for remembering me at Christmas . . . I am flattered you talk about me in your speeches and seminars. I hope I can continue to provide exceptional service. Sincerely, Fred the Postman.”

Over the next ten years, I received consistently remarkable service from Fred. I could always tell the days when he wasn’t working my street just by the way the mail was jammed in my box. When Fred was on the job it was always neatly bundled.

To this day, I can’t tell you what motivated Fred. I know he didn’t get paid more for his extraordinary work. I doubt he received any special recognition from his employer (if he did, I never heard about it). I know he wasn’t privy to any exceptional training or incentive programs.

One thing I do know: Fred, and the way he did his job, is a perfect metaphor for anyone who wants to achieve and excel in the 21st century.

For more information on the four “Fred Principles,” check out Mark’s  website at

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

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Quality Process Consultants, Inc.

helps your teams to be extraordinary.

Team Facilitation
Team Training
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Unique Team Products



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"It's amazing what you can learn when five to seven people are sitting around a table. You really find out what you're doing...or not doing."

LuAnn Rockelman, Criminal Investigation Bureau Project Team Member
Missouri Department of Revenue

extraordinary team

What's New at QPC Inc.

Whew! We've been busy right up to the holidays and we're happy for the peace the new year brings....

And with the new year, Michelle Reagan has joined our growing team as our new Project Coordinator. Michelle, Neicy and I are cooking up lots of surprises for 2001!

I just published my second book, *Email Basics: Practical Tips for Team Success* (see page 4). So far, the response has been phenomenal—and I have all of you to thank for your input into this pocket book. I am also proud to announce my contribution to Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer's *2001 Annual on Training and Consulting*. Two of my practical team activities, "When Shall We Meet Again" and "Decisions, Decisions" were included in this collection of useful materials for HRD professionals.

In addition, I was on the "faculty" of the National Speakers Association Facilitation Skills Lab in Phoenix, AZ in December. Sharing the program with **Bob Pike**, Creative Training Techniques and **Randy Pennington**, Pennington Performance Group was truly an honor. And in the august audience of professional speakers was **Ed Scannell** (of Games Trainers Play fame) and **Mark Sanborn** (see page 1), among others. I was so impressed with the group's interaction and eagerness to learn about facilitation.

When I started this business eight years ago (has it been that long?), "facilitation" was not a well-known skill. And now there are national seminars on Facilitation Skills! We've come a long way in this business and I have all of you to thank for a wonderful eight years. Let's make 2001 even better!

Kristin

An Extraordinary Team

Congratulations to the Criminal Investigation Bureau Project Team Missouri Department of Revenue

Among eight keen challengers, the Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) project team won a \$200 check to the Committee to Aid State Employees as well as a walnut and marble plaque to present to the Department of Revenue (DOR).

The CIB team consisted of seven volunteers within the DOR from all over the State of Missouri. They met once a week for four months to identify opportunities and to recommend improvements without additional funds nor staff.

By actively listening to their key customers (internal end-users and county prosecutors) and considering every single idea, the team was able to integrate customer insights into a redesigned referral process for felony violations. The end result is in an increase in the number of referrals to discover tax, drivers license and motor vehicle fraud as well as an increase in successful prosecutions of felony activities.

The added benefit was an opening of communications between the heretofore "secretive" CIB and their key customers. Not only did customer satisfaction increase (timeliness, ease of use, certainty), cycle time decrease, but the team significantly improved the overall image of CIB within DOR.

The team attributes its success to the team's openness and willingness to explore "a multitude of ideas without blowing anything off," the sponsor's initial clarification of the goal and then "getting out of the way," customer involvement in the process, and having a great facilitator to keep the team

Practical Team Activities: Face the Facts *Inspired by Brother Richard*

Face the Facts

To let virtual team members to get to know each other.

Any Number of Participants Materials Required

- ◆ Camera
- ◆ Bulletin Board (real or virtual)
- ◆ Ballots
- ◆ Prize

board titled "Face the Facts."

One day, Brother Richard went around the nursing center and took pictures of different team members on the Sherbrooke Village team. He then asked for three unknown or little known facts about themselves.

Brother Richard then took all the pictures and posted them on one side of the hallway bulletin board.

He edited the "facts" for grammar and any obvious identifying characteristics. He then wrote the three facts on an index card

and assigned a letter to each card. He posted the cards on the other side of the board, making sure the facts were NOT in the same order as the pictures!

The team had one month to match the correct facts to the pictures through a "ballot" given to Brother Richard.

Sherbrooke Village gave \$100 to the first place, \$75 to the second place and \$50 to the third place winner.

This is a great activity for teams who work different shifts (like Sherbrooke does) or for teams who work "virtually" in different locations. Ra-

I was working with one of my clients, Alexian Brothers Sherbrooke Village in St. Louis, and discovered a team bulletin

“Every team needs a leader. If the leader “coaches” the team, it creates team players. If the leader “dominates” team members, it creates a high fear level where people are scared to perform on their own.”

Charlene White, *Progressive Concepts*

extraordinary team

From the Bookshelf



Email Basics: Practical Tips to Improve Team Communication is finally here! Hot off the press, it's full of tips to enable your electronic mail (email) to be read and understood. Learn how to manage your inbox using the “DRAFS” method, and 130 other tips to help you communicate effectively through email. Complete with an acronym and emoticon (smiley) dictionary, it's a “must have” next to your computer. Here are a few tips you'll find in this compact treasure book:

- ◆ Put requests for information, deadlines and meeting dates in the beginning of your message. Then give the details, explanations and reasons for your request.
- ◆ Multiple issues to cover? Write multiple messages. Focus on one subject per message to make it easier for your teammates to respond to each issue and file the information when done.
- ◆ Before you hit the Send button, ask yourself if you would mind having this email published in the company newsletter or local newspaper. If the answer is yes, don't send it.
- ◆ Quit fiddling with email throughout the day. Control your email; don't let it control you!

Shaping Into a Team Player *(continued from page 1)*

Consequences shape behaviors. If you want to shape someone into being a team player, you must make them face consequences when they display non-team playing behavior. For example, the independent player may walk in late on a regular basis. They think, “I have so much to do in the morning and I can never predict the traffic. I try my best, but I just can't get there on time all the time. I don't know what they expect me to do.”

As you can see in this self-talk, it is “I” versus “they.” The team players thinks, “I know we have a morning huddle at 7:45 AM. That means I need to be in the car and on the road no later than 7:15 to be there on time.” A team player thinks in terms of “we.” An independent player thinks in terms of “I.” By the way, there is no “I” in TEAM!

If an independent player faces no consequences, the behavior will not change. Regular evaluations and ongoing feedback are essential to shifting someone from an independent player to a team player. For example, give specific feedback to the independent player being habitually late:

“Luanne, here is a copy of your timesheet for the last month. I have highlighted the days that you were late for work. Out of 16 working days, you were late 8 times. A 50% tardiness record is not acceptable. As a member of this team, everyone must adhere to certain guidelines. Being here at the agreed starting time is one of them. What are you willing to do to meet this expectation in the future?” (Note: make sure that your expectations for job performance are appropriately outlined in your office manual or team ground rules. It makes it much easier to address non-team behaviors when they arise).

In addition to consequences, there are several other

ways to shape people into being a team player.

Training. At least two hours per month should be spent in training sessions as a team. Ongoing training is essential. Could you imagine a football team going on the field with no training sessions? It would be chaotic. New employees and existing staff need structured training on an on-going basis. Staff needs to understand why things are done a certain way.

Recognition. Without recognition, you never reach top performance. Some offices have implemented awards such as “Star Performer” and “Pat On The Back” awards. Money, certificates, gifts, written notes and verbal feedback are all needed to create a motivating atmosphere.

Positive Peer Pressure. If an independent player joins a group of team players, they will probably not fit in right away. Quite often they isolate themselves by eating alone, being silent at staff meetings and not participating in office social outings. Positive peer pressure from other team members can sometimes help turn the independent players' attitudes around. Other team members should be encouraged to include the independent player in all of their activities even if they initially get resistance. Unfortunately, some people have no desire to be a part of a team. In this case, it is best that they find a job where they are not expected to interact. Everyone will be much happier.

Maturity. Quite often we hire very young people who are new to the work force. It is essential to teach them what being a team player entails. Do not assume they know. It is the coach's responsibility to bring them along through honest feedback and setting standards or ground