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The summertime is behind us and you can feel a shift in the air. It's a bit cooler, the days are shorter, and we're more focused on what matters - at work and in our lives. Now is a good time to set your goals for the upcoming quarter. Where do you want to be? What do you want that is different than what you have today? And what will it take for you to get there? Three valuable questions to ask yourself and your team.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy the new format and frequency of this newsletter. And don't hesitate to call or email if you have a question or just want to bounce an idea around!

Kristin

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#### HOW TO GAIN COMMITTED NOT JUST COMPLIANT TEAM MEMBERS

Tell a team what you want them to do, you'll get compliance. Ask a team for help, and you'll get commitment.

Sure, it's easier to tell people what to do rather than ask for their opinions. However, if you share those opinions in a collaborative way, your decision can be implemented safely, effectively and efficiently.

While it might be quicker to gain compliance in the short run, it actually takes longer to execute because people will drag their feet, question your commands and perhaps even sabotage your plan. All of these add time to your project and affect the quality of the implementation.

When you take the time up front to ask for help building on your ideas, team members are now part of the process. They can see their contributions (I call them fingerprints) on the final product. And that which we help create, we are much more likely to follow through to completion.

It's as simple as asking for people's contributions along the way:

- What's the problem to be solved or opportunity we should leverage?
- What's causing or impacting this?

- What are some possible solutions?
- How should we implement this idea successfully?

Just make sure that you haven't already made up your mind.

I was meeting with an executive many years ago to facilitate a strategic planning session. He wanted to have his team develop the "vision" and the strategic plan to achieve that vision. The more he talked, I realized that he had already had his vision of a hard trail ride going to XXXX complete with bandanas and BBQ for dinner. Nice metaphor, eh?

I had to ask, "Are you willing to change your mind if the team has a different vision?" He paused, and said, "Honestly, no." He then quickly added, "But I want to hear their opinion and get their commitment."

I explained that this is like a bait and switch. You build up the team to think they have a say in crafting the vision, but then you really won't do anything with their contributions.

If you're not willing to budge from your idea, then don't open it up to the team. It's okay, there are some decisions that should be made at the executive level! Not everything has to be done by group consensus!

Instead, tell them your position and WHY it is the path forward. Then ask the team HOW they can implement the idea. With the "bandana executive," he told the team his vision and why it was so important, answered questions for clarification and then asked for the team's help in developing the plan to get there. Ultimately, he got compliance for both the vision and the plan.

Are your teams committed or compliant to the work that they do?

## **MAKE MEETINGS MORE MOTIVATING WITH A TEAM HUDDLE**

Have you ever noticed that at the beginning of each football game the players and the coach put their heads together and have a motivational huddle, bringing solidarity to the group and a positive kick off to the game? This happens in hockey, football, soccer and almost every game played.

Most times they form a circle, giving the message that we are all in this together. Other times it takes place in a locker room and resembles a classroom style. That is when the captain needs to separate from the group and be a more directive, especially if they are experiencing a crisis.

The reasons sport teams huddle are to strategize, share, prioritize, motivate, celebrate, and to recognize selected members. It is usually led by the team captain, or in football by the quarterback. Doesn't that sound like something that might also work for your organization?

The objective of a huddle is to improve internal communications. Morning huddles should happen at the start of every work day and should last no more the 10 to 15 minutes (maximum). Some companies with whom I have worked start them at odd times like 8:43 or 7:17am.

I'm a big fan of team huddles where you bring everyone on your team together (face-to-face and/or virtually) to quickly touch base. When I started my career at IBM, every morning at a designated time, we would hear a business update by the President, or the department manager.

Then every employee would shout out one important thing they are going to accomplish

that day. But remember, this is not their day's to-do list – that is different. Finally, (yup sounds silly) we would stand beside our desks and sing the company song, ending by wishing each other a successful day.

Today many (successful) corporations still do them. These include; Lowe's (who also does a company chant), Google, Microsoft, etc.

At our local transit company, Mike Cassidy meets with all drivers around 6:00 am. They share road stories from yesterday, events from today's Guardian, and what they might expect on the roads that day.

At the Delta Prince Edward, each department has their own 10-15 minute team session facilitated by the manager. Afterwards the GM, James Tingley, conducts one with the leadership team.

For managers, here are some tips that will ensure a successful start to the day:

- Be an example: Arrive at least 10 minutes earlier.
- Be prepared: Make notes from the previous session and review your observations.
- Be punctual: Start at the designated time regardless of who might be missing.
- Stand up: This is not nap time. At a Microsoft office where I worked actually had no chairs in any of their meeting rooms.
- Be encouraging: Have members rotate responsibility for bringing thoughts for the day.
- Be productive: Charts, schedules, accounts and business numbers must be prepared and reviewed on a daily basis, prior to the huddle.
- Be fair: Everyone gets an opportunity to speak.
- Be diligent: Start and finish on time.

In general, most company meetings suck. So, instead of eliminating them, make them fun, interactive, and relevant. Try it, you will be strengthening the team culture and staff will leave more inspired. If huddles didn't work, why would most successful sports team engage in them?

My question for managers this week: "Are you behaving like the quarterback of an engaged team, or a dictator who barks orders to get compliance when sending people off to have a productive day?"

## **ADD A LITTLE PIZZAZZ TO YOUR NEXT PANEL PROGRAM**

Popular television shows are great venues to look for ways to spice up your next panel program. It can be something as simple as riffing an idea from a game show (see my post on [The Newlywed Game](#)), mimicking a well-known talk show or doing a takeoff on a news commentary.

So how do you take a lesson from TV and add a little pizzazz into your panel program?

**Step 1.** Identify a program that you think your audience will identify with AND has the right blend of interaction. Some examples I've seen:

- David Letterman
- The Ellen Degeneres Show
- Crossfire
- Real Time with Bill Maher
- Inside the Actor's Studio

- So You Think You Can Dance?
- American Idol

**Step 2.** Brainstorm all the different elements of the program: the format, the staging, the guests, the conversational style, the interactions with the guests and audience.

Let's take the David Letterman show as an example. He's got several "bits" in his show:

- Monologue
- Top Ten list
- Unusual guests
- Stupid Pet Tricks
- Stupid Human Tricks
- Viewer Mail
- Supermarket Finds
- Dumb Ads
- Small Town News
- Ask Mr. Melman
- Dave's Record Collection
- "The Guy"

And he does it behind a wooden desk with one guest coming out at a time. He's wearing a suit with some spectacles and there is a band playing between breaks.

**Step 3.** Brainstorm all the potential ways you could infuse that same kind of look and feel into the program. Don't worry about if they are any good at this stage, either! Just have fun with a few folks on the program committee and brainstorm the possibilities! For example:

- The moderator can come out and do a monologue like Dave, wearing a similar suit and glasses.
- The moderator can do a top ten list about the topic – and make it funny but also applicable
- Who might be an "unusual" guest? One that is on the periphery of the topic but still applicable/add value to the conversation? Or, can we have someone portray a luminary in the topic that we couldn't possibly afford to come to our meeting?
- Etc.

**Step 4.** Now go through your list from Step 3 and see if any might have some real-world potential. (This is entirely up to you, the moderator and the program team. You can even get the panelists involved if they have already been selected!)

**Step 5.** Think of a clever title that includes part of the show's name, but also the title of the organization, the topic, the meeting theme or other significant words. For example, a sales conference mimicked The Ellen Degeneres Show and called the program "The Sellin' Degeneres Show." I am often asked to moderate the deconstruction of a mainstage presentation at the professional speakers' associations and I call it "Inside the Speaker's Studio."

**Step 6.** Have fun putting this together! Not only will you have fun, but the audience will too!

## **FROM THE BOOKSHELF: The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying up**

My husband, Joe, and I are fairly neat or “tidy” people. We don’t have a cluttered house. Just take a look at our kitchen countertops (they are free and clean of coffee machines, spatula buckets or other kitchen kitsch). The pantry is organized and labeled. Our clothes are always hung up in the closet where they belong. Hey, and I’m a POP-Start (frequent shopper) at The Container Store!

So when I heard about *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing* by Marie Kondo, from my girlfriend, I was intrigued with the main premise of the book: Keep what “sparks joy” and get rid of the rest. Although I consider myself to be pretty organized, we still have way too much “stuff.” I have been feeling itchy for a spring cleaning, so the timing was perfect - even though we are heading into the fall!

There’s something inherently simple and soothing to gather up ALL of the items within a specific category of “stuff” from ALL over the house (clothing, utensils, paper, books, memorabilia). You pick up each item and ask yourself, “Does this bring me joy?” If it does, keep it. If it doesn’t, thank it for serving you (never thought of that!) and then trash, consign, or give it away.

The author provides a fairly simple process to lighten the load, and I found several new ideas on how to store the remaining beloved items. So even a neat-freak like me found some novel ideas – which is pretty impressive! And, I feel so much happier now that I have jettisoned the flotsam within my closets and cabinets.

While I think the overall process still applies, I have only two things I would have liked to see in the book: 1) A few more specifics in the organizing the kitchen, office, bathrooms, and garage and 2) I found that it’s a lot more fun and easier to decide if you grab a few girlfriends to help move “stuff” into a central location, make decisions, and then store the remaining items. It would have been nice to have a small discussion about how to involve the family and/or friends in the process.

It is well worth reading. I suggest you read it from cover to cover in one sitting and then re-read it to create your game plan as to what you will tackle first, second, third, etc. Then go forth and tidy your house, office, and life!

## **UPCOMING WEBINAR**

### **10 Life Hacks to an Amazing Presentation**

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Life-hacking refers to any trick, shortcut, skill, or novelty method that increases productivity and efficiency. In this webinar, award-winning author of the book *Boring to Bravo*, Kristin Arnold shares her shortcuts to preparing for an extraordinary presentation.

If you ever give a presentation, then this webinar is for you!

Register here today at [www.ExtraordinaryTeam.com/webinar-series/](http://www.ExtraordinaryTeam.com/webinar-series/).

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