



THE EXTRAORDINARY TEAM

PLEASE ROUTE TO

Tips and techniques to improve
the way your teams work.

Collaborative Technology

By JR Holt

Have you ever used collaborative technology or electronic meeting support? It's the use networked laptop computers to create a "chatroom" in which to conduct the meeting. These laptops are linked together so that everyone can type in comments and ideas in the computers simultaneously. All of the comments appear on each participants' screen and are projected on a screen in front of the room.

There are some obvious advantages to conducting a meeting this way:

The first advantage is that everyone can "talk" at once. Everyone can key in their comments at the same time and the computer collects them all in lightning speed. This is a definite advantage because participants don't have to wait for someone else to finish their verbal comment before they speak.



Introverts don't have to worry about being shy. Their voice is just as "loud" as the other meeting attendees.

It's also lightening quick. In approximately fifteen seconds, it can produce the statistics of a fifteen person vote including standard deviation, mean, mode, high, low, Kendall's

Coefficient and Z-Value (the deviation of the individuals vote from the mean of the group).

Collaborative technology not only collects your ideas quickly, but it also allows the team to sort and prioritize

their ideas, and to select from several options easily.

There is an automatic team memory because all the information is keyed into the computers. You don't have carry flipcharts home and wonder what "mgt rpt req" meant. All you have to do is

(continued on page 2)

In this issue...

What's New

Team Activities:
Testing for Consensus

From the Bookshelf:
Barbara Glanz's
Care Packages for the
Workplace



Decision-Making

Decision making is effective when the team uses many methods to reach a conclusion.

Consensus is often touted as the best way to make decisions in a team environment - and it is in many cases - but the team shouldn't get stuck using just one method.

They use other appropriate methods, depending on the time available, the amount of commitment and resources required:

Command or expert decision where the leader or the expert makes a quick decision.

Majority vote.

Minority control where the loudest voice wins.

Command decision with input - either individually or as a team.

Consensus where everyone can not only live with the decision, but support it upon

Shared Roles Speed Meetings Along

The next time you go to your team meeting, take a few moments to observe the team roles and functions. In all teams, someone is leading, taking notes, keeping on-track and on time, as well as participating in the meeting. Watch closely who is doing each function.

The team leader may be working very hard at *all* of these functions -- not only leading the meeting, but keeping notes on a yellow legal pad, steering the agenda and the timetable, and answering their own questions without a whole lot of participation.

Conversely, you may see many team members performing some basic team roles:

•**Leader** sets guidelines, helps to establish goals and leads specific parts of the meeting.

•**Recorder** keeps the visual memory of the team, capturing the nuggets of information so that all can see and follow the team's

(continued on page 2)

TEAM

"If you have not tried collaborative technology, I recommend it highly. If you are a devotee, I hail you as a fellow technologist and encourage you to once again appreciate the glory of anonymity."

JR Holt
JRH Associates

TEAM

A newsletter designed to facilitate discussion and share tips and techniques to improve the way your teams work.

Fall 1996
Vol. 2 No.1

Kristin J. Arnold
Editor



Quality
Process Consultants,
Inc.

18 Jayne Lee Drive
Hampton, Virginia 23664-1545
Phone (800)589-4733 or (757)850-4879

Fax (757)851-5410
e-mail: QPCinc@aol.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 you determine the goals and strategies to improve the way you and your teams do business. We specialize in facilitation services, training and unique facilitation products.

Strategic Planning
Strategic Partnerships
Collaborative Problem Solving
Process Improvement
Process Reengineering
Team Building

©1996 Quality Process Consultants, Inc.
All rights reserved. Duplication and reprints are okay, as long as you credit the source. Thanks!

Printed on recycled paper.



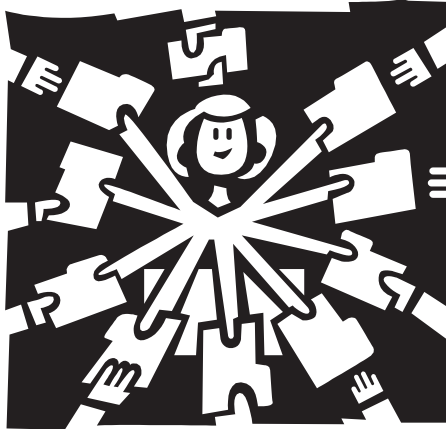
Shared Roles (cont'd)

progress. At the minimum, the recorder captures key subjects and main points raised, decisions made and items that the group has agreed to raise again later.

•**Facilitator** guides the team process - helping the team understand the issues, reach agreements and plan next steps. The facilitator keeps the meeting on the topic and focused by opening and closing discussions, managing participation, providing process tools and techniques, checking for decisions and intervening when necessary.

•**Timekeeper** keeps time as established in the agenda and ensures that the meeting does not run overtime on any particular subject. The timekeeper provides warnings when time is running out.

•**Team members** contribute to the team, share their knowledge and expertise, participate in all meetings and discussions, and carry out their assignments between meetings.



In an extraordinary team, members freely volunteer and often informally assume these basic team roles to ensure effective team functioning. The sharing of these roles and functions encourages team involvement and participation.

If you see only one or two people taking care of all the team functions, you may want to introduce this concept of sharing team roles. Suggest that different team members volunteer for each of the roles. Be clear about the definitions of each role and then conduct your team meeting.

At the end of the meeting, take a few minutes to check the process. Ask "Did the roles help the team?" and "what could we do differently?" Reinforce what went well, and improve on the "do differentlies" at the next team meeting.

Reprinted from The Daily Press, Oct 10, 1996

Collaborative Technology (cont'd)

click on "File" and then "Reports" and viola! A complete printout of what was discussed and agreed upon.

The most important advantage is the anonymity. When you see a comment on the screen in the front of the room, no one knows who it came from. All they know is that there is a comment on the screen in front of the room and the team has to deal with it. No one has to fear retribution, punishment or exposure.

This anonymity creates a completely different atmosphere in the meeting. Attendees can say what they want the way they want and see how their comment is received without having to reveal themselves. They can vote the way they really feel without worrying about their boss seeing them raise their hand for the "wrong" option. Controversial comments can be discussed on their merits. By using collaborative technology, items that you would not normally hear can be expressed fully, quickly and without fingerpointing.

"I keep each copy of my *Facilitator Forum* (now called *The Extraordinary Team*). It's full of great ideas that I can use in my workplace."

Pat Ardler
AT&T Capital

THE EXTRAORDINARY

TEAM

What's New at QPC Inc.

I can't believe we are already in autumn, where the leaves are turning glorious shades of orange, red, yellow and brown. I typically take this time to reflect on the past year and plan for the new year.

QPC Inc. has been publishing the **Facilitator Forum** for a year now! After much thought and debate, we decided to change the newsletter name to **The Extraordinary Team** in keeping with the "team theme."

Your response over the past year has been incredible and I really appreciate your support - in the form of articles and feedback. I am delighted to hear that many of you save your issues!

I'll be happy to send you a custom file folder to hold all those back issues. You never know...they could be collector items...not! Just give us a call at 800.589.4733.

By the way, if you don't call me, I'll

be calling you. We have just invested in a new database and we are currently updating all our information. I'd like to find out what you've been up to, see what your interests are, if you want to continue receiving this newsletter, and of course, if you want a spiffy folder.

I have a new audiocassette tape or compact disc entitled "The Extraordinary Team." It provides a brief overview of teams, teamwork and facilitation. I use this a way of introducing myself to potential clients and people who want to know more about who I am and what I do. If you would like a free copy, just give me a call!

I also have a featured column called "Teamwork" in the Business Section of the **Daily Press**. Look for it on Thursdays - every other week.

Many of the articles are similar to what you see in the **The Extraordinary**



Team, focusing around effective teams and meetings. I try to alternate the column format with questions and answers (like Dear Abby), so if you have any questions, please let me know.

Have a great autumn and I look forward to talking with you.

Kristin

New Area Code

Phone: 757.850.4879

Fax: 757.851.5410

Practical Team Activities: Testing for Consensus

Testing for Consensus

To allow the team to see what they think of a decision, without actually agreeing on the final outcome. A "Straw Poll."

Time - 10 minutes

Any Number of Participants
Materials Required:

- A flipchart with "5L" scale
- One Post-it® flag for each participant

When aiming for consensus, take a "straw poll" of the team's energy and commitment to a specific outcome using this fun and simple tool.

First, ensure a complete understanding of what you are taking the straw poll on. Clarify any lingering

questions the team may have.

Then have each person take one Post-It Flag.

Draw the following "5L" scale on the flipchart:

LOATHE LAMENT LIVE LIKE
LOVE

Walk through the definitions of each "L" and ask each participant to silently vote on what they think of the solution.

Describe the "5Ls":

"You loathe it or hate it.

You will lament it and moan about it in the parking lot.

You can live with it.

You like it.

You really

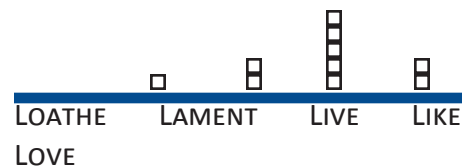
Ask the

love it."

participants to

place their post-it flags on the item, so that they are building a bar chart.

After all have placed their flags on the flipchart, step back and evaluate.



See if the team agrees there is consensus. Consensus is that all votes are at least a "live with" or better.

In the event there are votes that are "loathe," "lament," or just a few "live with," ask the team why someone voted that way. Be careful not to pick on a specific person, but get the team's feedback on why there isn't consensus.

“My hope is that my spirit and the spirits of so many others who have contributed to this book will transfuse and inspire your spirit to reach out to others in a new and caring way despite the circumstances which surround you.”

Barbara Glanz
Care Packages for the Workplace
McGraw-Hill, 1996



From the Bookshelf

If you want to create a different, more positive work environment, Barbara Glanz's book **Care Packages for the Workplace: Dozens of Little Things You Can Do to Regenerate Spirit at Work** is perfect. With the many creative ideas gathered from work environments all over the world, Barbara shares new and caring ways you can reach out and help others be their best.

Barbara gives you a new understanding that you **can** make a difference. She provides real-life, specific “how-to” ideas that anyone can apply on the job to make a difference.

CARE stands for **C**reative **C**ommunication, **A**tmosphere and **A**ppreciation for all, **R**espect and **R**eason for being, and **E**mpathy and **E**nthusiasm - all the things we need more of in organizations today.

For each of these elements, Barbara sets the context. She gives us a core idea and then translates that idea into action -- giving specific, actual examples of how one person made a difference and how that affected the larger organization. She also provides some tips on implementation to ensure your success. For example:

Add a Personal Signature to Your Work

The Idea:

This is a wonderful challenge for us all — what we can do to differentiate ourselves from all the other people who do the same work we do? In these days of career changing and layoffs, it becomes essential, I believe, that we strive to find a way to stand out from the crowd, to be special.

The Idea in Action:

- ✍ A nurse leaves a handwritten card by the bedside of her patients with a note introducing herself and assuring them of her care and understanding.
- ✍ A United Airlines pilot, after he gets things under control in the cockpit, goes to the computer and randomly selects the names of several passengers. He then handwrites short notes to them, thanking them for their business. When the flight attendant delivers them, it is a delightful surprise for all!
- ✍ An auto mechanic puts his card in every car he repairs. It reads, “This car cared for by (his name).”
- ✍ A vendor who owned a hot dog stand always asked the customer's name. His personal signature was to write their name in mustard on the hot dog!
- ✍ One of the most touching examples of adding a personal signature is what I call “The Johnny Story.”

About three weeks after I had spoken to 3,000 employees of a large supermarket chain, my phone rang late one afternoon. The person on the line told me that his name was Johnny and that he was a bagger in one of the stores. He also told me that he was a Down's Syndrome person. He said, “Barbara, I liked what you said!” Then he went on to tell me how when he'd gone home that night, he asked his Dad to teach him to use the computer.

He said they set it up in three columns, and each night now when he goes home, he finds a “thought for the day.” He said when he can't find one he likes, he “thinks one up!” Then he types it into the computer, prints them, cuts them out, and signs his name on the back of each one. The next day as

The Johnny Story (cont'd)

he bags customer's groceries, “with flourish” **he puts a thought for the day in each person's groceries he bags**, adding his own personal signature in a heartwarming, fun, and creative way.

One month later the manager of the store called me. He said, “Barbara, you won't believe what happened today. When I went out on the floor this morning, the line at Johnny's checkout was *three times longer* than any other line!” He said, “I went ballistic, yelling, ‘Get more lanes open! Get more people out here,’ but the customers said, ‘No no! We *want* to be in Johnny's lane — we want the thought for the day!’”

He said one woman even came up and told him, “I only used to shop once a week, and now I come in every time I go by because I want the thought for the day!” (Imagine what that does to the bottom line.) He ended by saying, “Who do you think is the **most important person** in our whole store?” Johnny, of course!

Tips for Implementation:

It never ceases to amaze me whenever I tell this beautiful story how little it takes to regenerate the spirit in the workplace. Johnny took what many of us might consider to be a not very important job and he made it important by adding his own personal signature. My challenge and yours — *if young Johnny can do it, there is no reason why each one of us can't do it, too*. Imagine the new spirits of self-esteem, commitment, and fun that could permeate our places of work if we each, like Johnny, found a way to add a special, unique touch to our job!

Reprinted with permission from
Barbara Glanz Communications Inc.
708.246.8594