



Corporate Team Building Everyone Can Do

BY BETH ERICKSON, PH.D.

Here are ten tips for team members who want to be team builders:

- 1. Remember the Golden Rule.** Express respect for everyone.
- 2. Catch others doing things right, rather than noticing their mistakes.** Express your appreciation on the spot.
- 3. Celebrate your own and others' successes.** These eventually will lead to achieving the team's goals.
- 4. Accept compliments from others by simply saying, "Thank you."**
- 5. Even if a task is routinely expected, express appreciation and gratitude anyway.** This will motivate people to continue to do their best.
- 6. Accept your mistakes.** Don't dwell on them.
- 7. Keep up your morale by learning the art of positive thinking.**
- 8. Increase trust in the organization by being trustworthy yourself.** Keep people's confidences.
- 9. Practice relaxation.**
- 10. Remember that looking for the good in others is a form of enlightened self-interest.** You will enjoy coming to work more than you would without this perspective.

Dr. Beth Erickson is founder and CEO of Erickson Consulting International. She is an executive coach, business consultant, and professional speaker. For more information: 1-888-546-1580.

PURPOSE: The Game of Champion Organizations

What every organization needs to achieve enduring success is "purpose." So Nikos Mourkogiannis demonstrates in his best-selling book *Purpose: The Starting Point of Great Companies*. As the world-renowned thought leader explains, "Let others play with 'strategy' and 'tactics.' Purpose is the game of champion organizations, enabling leaders to inspire and lead their organizations to greatness."

Unlike a company's mission, its purpose is a call for action that leaders use to stimulate people to act consistently and decisively, innovating and building high-quality relationships. And companies with purpose—that stand for something—also have lasting competitive advantage.

Successful companies, Nikos told us, define purpose in one of four ways:

Discovery. This type of purpose, he said, involves a love of the new and innovative, and it animates many technological businesses.

Seeking the new, he adds, does not mean that we are constantly changing course. "Because we have chosen the course we have embarked on freely, we are committed to pursue that course consistently."

Excellence. In operational terms, excellence constitutes goodness, which would mean, for instance, excellent businesses prefer to turn away customers than compromise their quality standards.



Heroism. This type of purpose translates into achievement, whether it is Henry Ford's motor company or Bill Gates' Microsoft. The adjective here is "effective."

Altruism. This purpose could take the form of personal service beyond that normally expected, delivering products at affordable prices, or using technology and ideas to improve lives.

According to Nikos, some companies change purpose simultaneously with the change in leader. Some leaders carry the same purpose from one business to the next, like Steve Jobs who, said *Purpose* author, was "the living symbol of excellence at Apple, NeXt, Pixar, and Apple again."

How would you define your organization's purpose? If your organization is on the cutting edge, then the company's purpose is likely discovery. If you have the best products and services in design and much more, then the company is likely excellent. Likewise, if you have a system that sets up continuing improvement teams.

Your company is heroic if it dominates its market niche. Your company is altruistic if every effort is made to make customers happy. Also, employees are treated with respect and given all they need to please customers. If you see no clear pattern, then it may be time to pick up a copy of *Purpose* and work with your top team to identify your company's purpose.

Road Rules for Brand Management in the Modern Media Era

BY VICTORIA GRANTHAM

The media landscape is evolving at warp speed. Social media networks, video sites, blogs, vlogs, podcasts, and virtual worlds have all exploded onto the scene, transforming the relationship between producer and consumer. Consumers are now architects of ads, news, products - even their own celebrity. According to a new report by eMarketer, 64 million Web users created content online last year, and by 2011 that number will shoot up to 95 million. To stay connected to your customers, you must be awake and alert to these rapid shifts, or risk running your business off the road.

Marketing, once a one-sided outbound communication, is now a dialogue involving full participation of the customer. Word of mouth, as old as the grapevine itself, is suddenly a fresh concept in the context of user-generated content. We're no longer sitting in our offices dreaming up and churning out campaigns, products, and tag lines. Instead, we're finding ourselves face to face with our customers. This exposure terrifies some. Others embrace it as a prime opportunity. No matter which camp you fall into, you need to recognize this reality.

Step Away from the Glass

Step back and listen to customers to get an objective point of view and work from there. Smart executives recognize the golden learning opportunity that burgeoning user-generated content provides.

Be Authentic

Once you've identified the real story, you need to anchor it with specifics and tell it truthfully. Inspire customers to spread your message, but don't pay them to do so. If you earn a reputation for honest, straightforward communications, when (not if) a misstep occurs, you'll be able to tap into the goodwill you've built and recover quickly. When a problem arises, rapid disclosure is key.

Know What's Out and What's In

Not long ago, PR professionals would talk about establishing thought leader-

ship and positioning clients as industry experts. While these objectives are still relevant, they reflect a top-down, inside-looking-out approach. Think about it: *Time Magazine's* Person of the Year is "You."



Be Interesting

As Andy Sernovitz, a marketing guru and former CEO of the Word of Mouth Marketing Association, said, "If you want someone to talk about you, you have to give them something to say. It's like stone soup: everyone throws something in and the message gets richer and richer." Home in on what's different about your product or service. Buck conventional wisdom and you'll have a better shot at standing out and sparking a conversation among your customers.

Make It Easy

This generation of multitasking and blackberry-using addicts demands an easily digestible message. If it's interesting, but not well-packaged, it's a missed opportunity.

Loosen the Reins, But Don't Drop Them

Many marketers are afraid that if they relinquish their brand to their customers, terrible things will happen. First, whether you're launching a product or rolling out a service, you have to give up some control. Second, you can facilitate co-creation in a managed way. For example, the marketers behind the Broadway

hit *Spring Awakening* appealed to their audience by offering them a chance to go on stage when they texted a message to a code. Everyone who sent the text got a *Spring Awakening* ring tone and wallpaper. Winners got a coveted reward—a chance to create something with the actors—and the show reinforced its brand and provided tools for fans to spread the word.

Pick and Choose

The fact that an initiative taps user-generated content doesn't mean that it's a good idea, or that it's right for your brand. Witness the fallout from *Bud.TV*, a spectacularly expensive effort that generated spectacularly negative word of mouth. Similarly, some companies venturing into the much buzzed about virtual world *Second Life* have had a taste of this themselves. For instance, Nissan's online marketers had to clean up the mess when a helicopter crashed into one of the car maker's buildings, starting a fire that left several avatars dead. It was certainly not the tragedy an incident like that would be in real life, but not an image enhancer either.

Look Ahead

Today people are creating ads, contributing to campaigns, and providing their input on products because it is novel and gives them a voice, but we're moving past the early romance stage. Peek around the corner and you'll see the novelty beginning to dwindle. People will continue to create content online, but they'll eventually become more selective with their efforts. To keep the customer engagement vehicle on course, executives, marketers, and entrepreneurs will need to up the ante in terms of creativity and incentives.

Victoria Grantham has a dozen years' experience counseling recognized brands, including Absolut, Consumer Reports, Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions, Weight Watchers, and Meredith Publishing. She is the managing director of Rose Communications, a strategic public relations firm that helps clients manage their brands and share their stories. For more information: vgrantham@rosecomm.com or visit www.rosecomm.com

Building the Bottom Line with Experiential Marketing

BY MIMI ALMEIDA

You've heard about ROI (Return on Investment) and ROO (Return on Objective), but what about ROE (Return on Experience)? Experiential marketing focuses on highly unique, interactive and memorable experiences that result in increased retention rates, repeat purchases, and higher levels of brand involvement. This is Return on Experience.

An experiential marketing event should not be confused with a publicity stunt, however. Organizations should have a clear set of business objectives and ask themselves the following questions:

1. What is the objective of the event?

Experiential events involve numerous players, including internal management, sponsors, press, and consumers. They can play out over extended periods of time, take place in nontraditional venues, and present countless opportunities and



challenges along the way. Working from a big picture keeps everyone on target.

2. What is the benefit to the consumer of this event? Experiential campaigns should provide participants with individual experiences while putting them in touch with other brand advocates. The objective is to create a “community of promoters.”

3. How will the program extend the brand experience? Every aspect must enhance the interaction the consumer

has with the brand. Your program must also be flexible enough to accommodate the unexpected.

4. Who will serve as Brand Advocate during development and delivery?

Decide who will be the internal champion for your brand, who will handle budgeting and purchasing, and who will balance the creative and the financial. Every touch point must be on target for the brand.

5. How will success be measured?

Establish measures at the beginning and evaluate them throughout the process. Decide upfront whether success should be measured in quality of leads, overall experience, quality of participants, press coverage, industry ratings, etc.

Mimi Almeida is president of San Francisco-based R/A Performance Group (www.raevents.com) which designs branded experiential programs and events for corporations.

Westerners Advised to Tread with Care in China

China boasts a wealth of opportunities for investors who know the common mistakes that Westerners make in navigating the Chinese business scene. Ted Revis, a founder and president of The Norelli Group and a long-term veteran of facilitating trade with China, warns U.S. leaders:

Negotiate contracts the Chinese way. While most Western businesses address immediate or short-term goals, the Chinese typically plan for the long-term. Chinese corporate executives relish vague statements that can be negotiated as you progress through the cumbersome bureaucracy that is one of the world's oldest and most-entrenched.

Understand the indirect and ambiguous. Because the Chinese emphasize honor and abhor losing face, they will neglect to say they do not understand something. Negative answers are often avoided because they are believed to cause disharmony and are considered rude. They also dislike confronting prob-

lems and prefer to maneuver around an issue so that it can be addressed in committee at a later time.

Visualize the long term in light of the short term. The Chinese emphasize slow, methodical and well-thought out actions. This characteristic requires Westerners to move from their customary fast-paced, methodical and sequential business practices to a slower process that can move forward only after both parties have taken time to get to know each other well.

Respect Eastern business traditions and intricacies. Simple hand motions, poor posture, touching, and direct eye contact are just a few of the mannerisms that can put a Westerner in poor standing with a Chinese counterpart. Westerners are well advised to emphasize the group's greater good and the human elements of business, which are essential to China's single-minded and highly disciplined business culture.

Avoid joint ventures. Investing

in Chinese companies and following traditional investment approaches through the formation of joint ventures is loaded with danger. The laws mandating joint ventures have relaxed a good deal in the last 10 years, and only select areas related to national security, communications and energy require joint ventures today.

Reverse authority and order.

Understanding the Chinese and the way they conduct business goes back to the profound impact Confucius had on their culture and the emphasis placed on obedience and order. Chinese businessmen enter a room in the order of their rank and they expect counterparts to do the same, allowing both groups to immediately understand each others' hierarchy. Only a leader speaks during meetings, and the Chinese expect that the opposing delegation also will have only one speaker—a condition that most individualistic Westerners find difficult to follow.



Here's what you'll find on the
AMA Members-only Website www.amamember.org

MANAGEMENT

The High Cost of the Bad Boss. Tales of bullying, psychopathic, or just plain incompetent bosses are all too common, and can even become the stuff of corporate legend. But no organization can afford the tremendous losses bad bosses generate.

LEADERSHIP

Leading Change, One Move at a Time. Successful leaders approach business like a game of chess: they formulate a general plan for the future, but focus on what's happening right now. And they possess the capacity to roll with changing circumstances.

SMALL BUSINESS

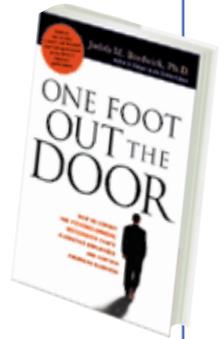
Employees Should Mind their Own Business. Are you plagued by an endless parade of employees eager to snitch on each other? Time to implement an "MYOB" policy, making it clear that employee behavior is the business of management, not other employees.

HR/TRAINING

2008 Training & Development Forecast. Investment in employee training and career development is now the fastest-growing HR area, according to a new survey. The biggest challenges for employers? Attracting, retaining, and engaging employees.

Book of the Month:

One Foot Out the Door: How to Combat the Psychological Recession That's Alienating Employees and Hurting American Business by Judith M. Bardwick, Ph.D. (AMACOM, 2007). Whatever happened to employee loyalty? It appears to have gone the way of the gold watch. Bardwick outlines practical strategies to improve overall performance by increasing employee satisfaction and retention.



AMA Conferences/Special Events Calendar

NOV. 14, WEBCAST • Mastering the Art of Working for Multiple Bosses. Administrative professionals who have multiple bosses with different agendas, priorities, styles, and expectations cope with, stress, and an inability to work effectively. This Webcast outlines specific techniques for juggling priorities, personalities, and projects to handle the pressure without going crazy!

NOV. 28, WEBCAST • Effective Training: Implementing the Four Levels. Measuring how your training accomplishes its stated goals is an obvious challenge. Training managers need practical step-by-step instructions on how the four levels of program evaluation can link the value of learning to business results. During this Webcast, Donald

Kirkpatrick, Ph.D., and James Kirkpatrick, Ph.D., will explain the key principles of conducting effective training and offer insights on evaluation methods for each of the four levels.

NOV. 29, SAN FRANCISCO • Training Top 125 RoadShow. The Training Top 125 RoadShow features a selection of leaders from *Training* magazine's annual Top 125 ranking of companies with dedicated employer-sponsored workforce training and development departments. Training Top 125 RoadShow examines best practices at these training organizations in areas including leadership development, technology, globalization, corporate universities, and evaluation, among others. This must-attend event will bring together the best

of the best in half-day symposia, complete with networking opportunities.

DEC. 5, WEBCAST • How to Build a High-Performance Organization. This Webcast presents the results of the latest AMA/Institute for Corporate Productivity global survey focusing on the specific factors that high-performing organizations consider to be critical to their success. These factors are both internal and external to the organization and include global competition; workforce skills and talent; customer approaches; strategy; business processes; and leadership approaches. Join us for this informative hour and learn about the important building blocks that leading organizations use to build and maintain their success.

115128

Executive Matters
Member Newsletter
 November 2007 Issue

1601 Broadway
 New York, NY 10019-7420



Nonprofit
 U.S. Postage
PAID
 American Management
 Association International