



Winning one for the Gipper

by Chanon Collins

The legend of George Gip and the Notre Dame football team holds fast as a shining tribute to team spirit. It is refreshing to witness the devotion and enthusiasm present in teams today. Take, for example, any high school football team. The members of the team are undying in their stamina and dedication to a common goal. The goal is most likely a winning season, but there are underlying destinations also. Teams with true, cohesive spirits forge their success by collective efforts and support. As the old adage goes – “There is no I in t-e-a-m.”

Developing a team spirit does not mean erasing individualism. After all, it is the collective talents of the team members that propel them to success. The question is – how does one create team spirit? Coaches would offer many tactics such as drill and practice, undying dedication and devotion, and the impending sense of doom associated with failure. These are strong motivational factors, but they are not suited to all team situations.

Building spirit in teams in the business workplace require diverse tactics. It takes more than selecting employees, forming a team, and assigning projects. Ken Blanchard, author of **The One Minute Manager Builds High Performance Teams**, has examined the intricacies of these types of teams.

Blanchard found many commonalities among these teams: all team members were confident, enthusiastic, and committed to success, each member of the team encouraged others toward hard work and demonstrated entertainment in the workplace, all teams held a strong sense of pride and satisfaction with their work and other team members, a sense of trust and esprit de corps was present in every team, and the strongest point of each team was the emotional ties formed among the members.

These teams sound almost Utopian in design. What workplace would not succeed with these teams in place? With the realization of every dream comes reality. The reality in building team spirit rests in building the team. As you begin to create teams and build team spirit, you must consider the purpose of the team. Everyone must be dedicated to

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working toward the same goal and they must know exactly what that goal is – communication is essential in every aspect of team building.

Once the team has been established and goals recognized, the team is in charge. There is no point in creating a team if they are not empowered for action. Handholding may be necessary in the infancy stages of certain projects, but the point of having a team is so that each member will build on the skills and knowledge of the others to reach the goal. Teams must have open lines of communication and practice flexibility in all activities.

Once the project has been completed or the goal has been reached, recognition is in order. Much like the celebrations after a winning game, teams in the business arena must receive recognition for a job well done. It is human nature to desire a sense of value and accomplishment – without these moments of celebration, team spirit will turn to negative hardships and nothing spreads more quickly than dissension.

As you begin to build your team, remember that “pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work.” – Aristotle

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