

Team Missions in Action

By Nick Arnette

When your team has a goal or mission in mind, you're off and running. At this point, everyone should know what to do and why they're doing it. If you're the team leader, be sure to reiterate the task at hand, so you're all on the same page. If you're going to be a team, act like one.

I once participated in an organized scavenger hunt that was designed to bring people together. We were split into two teams. Whichever team solved the riddles, collected the required items, and made it back to base first was the winner.

The two teams happened to collect the last item at the same time; the only task left was to go back to base. We were both waiting for a cab. I had an idea. I said, "Why don't we all win and just catch the Gold Line [a Los Angeles public rail service] back to base? That way, we'd save money, and we could all return together as two teams uniting as one."

The leader of the other team thought it was a great idea. Just then, a cab pulled up. One of my team members got in, and everyone followed. I did not want to leave the other team behind since we had an agreement. But someone on my team said, "Get in, hurry." I reluctantly hopped in and sheepishly apologized to the other team as we drove away.

We probably had the slowest cab driver in Los Angeles. He drove more slowly than any cab driver I've ever seen. We hit almost every traffic light.

Unknown to us, a driver of a nearby sightseeing van saw what had happened. He pulled up to the other team and said, "I saw your friends leave you behind. Do you want a ride?" When we finally got back, the other team was getting out of the van and was first to reach the checkpoint. They had a better and faster driver. □ I was glad we lost. We deserved to. We didn't communicate as a team. I learned a few valuable lessons about teamwork from it:

- * **Integrity is of the utmost importance when working as a team.** If you agree as a team to do something, do it. Don't get caught up in the excitement of a situation and have a momentary failure. Think about how an errant decision—by even one team member who is off task—can affect the entire mission.
- * **Resist the temptation to compete with other team members.** There is a time and a place to be competitive, but people on your team are not your competition. □
- * **Make every effort to create win/win situations.** For instance, I could have told the other team that we'd wait for them when we returned to base, and we'd all walk in together. If I had said that, I'm sure they would have done the same thing for us.

Now, after this discussion, I think we have a new definition for teamwork: “A group of people working together to accomplish a common purpose or goal, in which all members are held mutually accountable for their contributions.”

Individual commitment to a group effort— that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.

Vince Lombardi

Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.

Henry Ford

The preceding article is an excerpt from *Me, We and Glee: How to have a great attitude, work as a team and keep your sense of humor*, by Nick Arnette. Known as *The Feel Good Funny Guy*, Arnette is a popular keynote speaker at business meetings throughout the United States and Canada. You can contact Nick Arnette at www.NickArnette.com, email: nick@nickarnette.com

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