

Exploring Leadership

PLANNING & ORGANIZATION: PROJECT PLANNING

Teamwork is more than a group of people that come together to accomplish a task. Consider a game of pick-up basketball where a group of random people come together and play. They may do well, but the more time they spend together the better they become. This is because they learn about each other and from each other.

CONVERSATION STARTER:

- Quote: "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail."
Who has seen this take place? What does it take to make a good plan? Brainstorm and post ideas where all can see.

It is the interaction of the team members and how they use their skills to offset and support each other. It is their communication and personal dynamics (ball hog vs playmaker with assists) that leads to success. Learning to be an effective team is a powerful leadership tool!

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Learn that effective communication can be critical for success.
- Understand the importance of developing a "Shared vision" or goal.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Structure: copy paper (which can be folded or rolled into tubes), straws, toothpicks or skewers.
- Fasteners: two feet of masking tape, gum drops, marshmallows, brads, binder clips, rubber bands.
- Candy

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

The execution of a successful program most often (if not, always) requires planning as well as teamwork. This activity will help participants develop both. Break participants into teams of 3-5.

- Teams will have five minutes to build the tallest tower that will hold this ball at the top (hold a tennis ball up). Teams may only use two structural types of materials and two types of fasteners. Go!
- Measure the height of each tower with ball on the top.
- Following the first attempt, reflect on the activity (see Reflect 1). Now provide the following instructions:
 - Set the old tower aside and take two minutes and talk about how you want to improve what you built.
 - This time you have four minutes to build the tallest tower that will hold this ball. (If you want to make it more difficult this time, use a larger ball).

FACILITATION TIPS:

- You may reward each team with candy once they successfully complete a structure.
- Observe how the teams interact with each other: What are they doing that works and what doesn't?
- Be ready to facilitate a discussion about this.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Reflect 1 - Following first tower attempt:

- What worked? What didn't?
- Did you have a leader? How did you choose them?
- What roles did you have? Did everyone do everything or did you assign out tasks?

Reflect 2 - Following second tower attempt:

- What changed from the first attempt?
- Were you more successful the second time? Why?
- What made the difference?
- What were the main elements of your plan that helped you be more successful? Write this on a board or visible surface.

APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- Were you able to build a tower that held the ball without planning (first tower)?
- How can you apply what you have learned here to your planning efforts for future events/activities?
- What were the critical elements of your planning process?
- Compare your group process to the professional program development list (Appendix).



CONCLUSION:

Fostering teamwork is a powerful leadership skill. There are countless examples of highly skilled individuals on teams that have been beaten by less skilled groups because of the synergistic power of their teamwork. See Appendix for a list of elements needed to successfully run a professional program.

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REFERENCES

- <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-needs-to-be-in-a-project-plan-1669741>
- <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/project-planning-4161724>



APPENDIX:

Professional program development includes these elements:

- **Initiation:** project team formation, shared vision or common goal
- **Planning:** project scope (who, what, when, where), identifying what needs to be done, delegate roles, assessing risk, identifying resource requirements, finalizing the schedule, and preparing for the actual work
- **Execution:** performing the actual work required by the project definition and scope
- **Monitor and control:** the actual management, reporting, and control of the resources and budgets during the execution phase
- **Project completion:** project delivery, assessment of lessons learned

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