

Exploring Leadership

TEAMWORK: PROJECT PLANNING

Teamwork is more than a group of people coming 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 STARTERS:

- Discuss: "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail" -Benjamin Franklin
- What does it take to make a good plan?

Teamwork is the interaction of the members and how they use their skills to offset and support each other. Identifying the skills and assets each member brings allows you to plan and assign the most effective roles each person can play. Project planning incorporates your teams' knowledge and skills to create a shared vision.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Communicate effectively to plan a project.
- Develop a "shared vision" or goal as part of a project plan.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

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

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

Break the participants into teams of 3-5. Provide the following instructions with a 5 min. time limit:

- Build the tallest tower with provided supplies that will hold up a tennis ball at the top.
- Teams may only use two types of structural materials and two types of fasteners.

FACILITATION TIPS:

- Observe how the teams interact with each other. Are some team dynamics more effective than others?
- What building approaches work and what do not?
- You may choose to award the winning team with incentives.

- Measure the height of each tower with the ball on top.
- Following the first attempt, see "Reflect" section.
- Set the old tower aside. If they want to use pieces from the old tower, it must be completely disassembled.
- Take 5 minutes to discuss what to improve, what each team built, what roles you will play, order of build, etc.

Repeat, but this time teams have 4 min. to build the tallest tower holding a larger ball. Measure, then reflect on activity.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

After first attempt:

- What worked? What didn't?
- Did you have a leader? How did you choose him/her?
- Did everyone do everything, or did you assign tasks?

After second attempt:

- What changed from the first attempt?
- Were you more successful the second time? If so, how? If not, why?
- What were the main elements of your plan that helped you to be more successful?

APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

The best team projects are results of a planned, structured procedure.

- How can you apply what you've learned to your planning efforts for future events/activities?
- What were the critical elements of your Project Planning?
- Compare those to the following list designed for professional programs:
 - **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 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.

CONCLUSION:

Team planning can be one of the more powerful tools a leader can utilize. There are countless examples of highly skilled individuals and/or teams who have lost to those less skilled. A youth council can make a broader impact by utilizing the power of teamwork.

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