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Championship Teams Don't Waste Time

By Tom Sheives, PhD

Championship teams, whether on the field of play or in project management teams, don't waste time. A championship football team will carefully use time outs and passes to the sidelines to stop the clock at crucial moments. The team members seem to perform these functions like clockwork as a well-rehearsed squad. There is no individual variance, just team alignment behind a common goal. The same is true with project teams who perform at championship levels. The team moves in synchrony toward a common team goal. This level of high performance only occurs when there is a sound basis of team trust.

Like the foundation of a skyscraper, the foundation of a championship team is built on a solid and wide base of team trust. Without that foundational strength, the team falters under stress. A championship project management team should have an atmosphere where team members are being exposed to individual strengths and weaknesses. Trusting team members will seek help among other team members to ensure championship team performance. Members act for the good of the team's outcome and know how to leverage the strengths of the team to shore up team weaknesses.

Championship teams find that taking a reliable personality assessment that yields both individual scores and team scores is helpful in laying a common foundation for communication and for building trust. Many team effectiveness exercises are available through workshops and are most effective when the team attends the workshop together.

To some, these exercises may seem like a waste of time in a demanding project cycle. The opposite is true. Championship project management teams know that the building of trust among team members is a vital foundational strength. Without it, the inevitable stress will crack the weak spots in the team and will result in increased conflict and in wasted time.

As all project managers know, there is just no time to waste in a demanding project schedule. Start actively building your team's foundation of trust and your team will be well on its way to championship performance.

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