

TEAM CHALLENGE SOLUTIONS

Here are possible solutions to the team challenges featured in the lead story.

1. It's time for the team to sit Hal down and explain the first rule of successful teamwork—no slacking! If they don't do something to correct his behavior, other team members will end up doing Hal's work as well as their own, and things will only get worse. If Hal can't cut it, the team should talk to their supervisor and ask for someone else who can.
2. The members of this team want their team to succeed. But if they don't coordinate their efforts better, they're going to create more complaints than they resolve. One solution is to take a few minutes at the end of each meeting to review decisions, assignments, etc., and make sure everybody knows their role. If questions arise between meetings, they should be handled with a quick meeting.
3. Team members need to discuss Steve's dominance calmly, objectively, and professionally in a group meeting. The team leader also needs to talk with Steve. The leader could say something similar to what Michael Jordan's coach told him in his freshman year at UNC, "Michael, if you can't pass, you can't play." In short, the team needs to show Steve how to be a team player.



"I've been thinking...have we tried WD-40?"

EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

Consolidated Support Services April 2010

Team Challenge

You decide what these teams should do

Successful teams know how to face challenges and solve problems together. Here are three situations in which teams faced challenges. Your challenge is to decide in each case what the team should do to solve its problem.

1. Five people in the custodial department are teamed up and assigned the task of implementing a new floor maintenance procedure. At their first meeting they decide they need additional equipment and supplies, so members are assigned responsibility for gathering information on what they need. When they meet again, all but Hal Erwin have done their assignment. He says he didn't have time but will do it for the next meeting. At that meeting, Erwin's information is sloppy and incomplete. It's clear he isn't pulling his weight. **What should the team do?**

2. The stocking team is asked to try a new stocking method and how to handle damaged merchandise. The team meets on a monthly basis to review complaints and to decide how to avoid future problems. The problem is that in between meetings team members are making independent decisions and acting on them without informing teammates. In fact, on a few occasions, one member's action conflicts with another member's solution. This team is tripping all over itself. **What should they do?**

3. An interdepartmental team is formed to improve communications between departments. The team gets off to a good start when the company adopts several of its suggestions and communications immediately improve. The problem is that Steve Korf is dominating the team. He does more than his share of talking at team meetings, puts down suggestions made by teammates, and takes sole credit for team achievements. Team morale is sinking fast. **What should this team do?**

After writing down your own ideas for how each team can solve its problems, see the sidebar at left for other solutions to these team challenges.

news & notes

STRESS ON THE JOB: SOURCES AND SYMPTOMS

Stress results from lack of control. When you feel in control—even of a challenging situation—you don't feel stressed. Stress on the job comes from tasks over which you have little or no control. For example:

- Workload
- Deadlines
- Other people (including co-workers, supervisors, and customers) who make demands or with whom you have conflicts
- Work-related problems
- Pressure to perform and meet goals

People with a strong need to feel in control suffer more from stress than those who can go with the flow and let things go. If you're the former type of person, you need to be extra careful about stress on the job.

Pay attention to stress warning signs, such as:

- Headaches
- Sleep disturbances
- Upset stomach
- Difficulty concentrating
- Short temper
- Job dissatisfaction
- Low morale

April is **Stress Awareness Month**. Use it as a reminder to be aware of what stresses you and what your symptoms are. Also remember that stress is nothing to take lightly. If it goes on long enough, it can make you sick.

Take steps to manage your stress so that you'll be focused and functioning, which is what you need to be to work safely and effectively.



Save Energy and \$\$\$ *Environmental protection begins at home*

The focus of **Earth Day** every April is on protecting earth's environment. But you can also save money by taking certain steps to protect the environment.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), you can reduce your energy consumption by up to 30 percent and cut your utility bills by looking for the ENERGY STAR® label next time you buy a new appliance for your home. ENERGY STAR is a government-backed program helping businesses and individuals protect the environment through superior energy efficiency. You can find the label on refrigerators, washing machines, dishwashers, heating and cooling equipment, televisions, and many other products.

EPA also points out that the average house is responsible for more air pollution and carbon dioxide emissions than the average car. A high-efficiency refrigerator reduces carbon dioxide emissions by 450 pounds a year. A washing machine that uses water and energy efficiently will reduce emissions by 440 pounds a year.

Simple actions can make a big difference, says EPA. If just 1 in 10 homes used ENERGY STAR-qualified appliances, the change would equal the planting of 1.7 million new acres of trees.

Workplace Ethics

How to tell if you are dealing with a question of ethics

How do you know if you're facing an ethical problem on the job? Here are some common signs:

- **Discomfort.** If a situation makes you uncomfortable, there may be an ethical issue involved.
- **Guilt.** If you're feeling guilty, you probably did something wrong—or are thinking about doing something you know is wrong. Don't deny this feeling. Explore it and act accordingly.
- **Stress.** Feeling a lot of pressure or losing sleep over something can both signal that you're putting off making a difficult, but necessary, ethical choice. Take a closer look.
- **Anger.** If you're feeling pressured to make a decision with which you don't feel comfortable, you may be angry at whoever is pressuring you.
- **Embarrassment.** Would you be embarrassed to tell your supervisor, co-workers, friends, or family about what you're doing or thinking of doing? If so, there's a good chance that it is unethical. Don't do it. Why risk the respect of these important people in your life?
- **Fear.** If you're afraid of getting caught for what you're doing or thinking about doing, then it's pretty clear that you're doing something you should not be doing. Heed this warning sign and stop before it's too late

