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FROM BUD HANEY'S DESK The Secret to Building Great Teams

Earlier this month the San Francisco Giants won the 2010 World Series. Yes, it was a tough loss for Profiles' home state team, the Texas Rangers. But for all of the excitement, headlines, rhetoric, and hype that accompany such an event, the story line that stuck with me – and which the announcers and commentators remarked on continuously – was how the core lineup of the team had changed from the beginning of the season to the final playoff game.

While sports analogies can be cliché and tiresome, sometimes they just fit. And like it or not, we can all learn something about ourselves as individuals and as part of a team, and even how to manage a team:

- **Stats/assessments:** Watch any sporting event and you'll be dazzled (and probably overwhelmed) by statistics mentioned by the commentators and shown on screen. The mountains of data aren't limited to batting average and a pitcher's ball-to-strike ratio, but also how players perform on grass vs. turf and in day vs. night games; how batters perform against left- or right-handed pitchers; and my personal favorite, whether a pitcher is likely to throw pitches that batters hit on the ground or in the air.

These numbers aren't just for show; managers make decisions based on these statistics, which are compiled each day of every season. Imagine if business managers knew their employees as well as coaches know professional athletes. Assessing your employees and teams as a baseline and then over a period time can provide tremendous insight and help managers make more informed decisions about whom to "play" in which position on your team.

- **Managing the team:** Any sporting season begins with the starting lineup – the players a coach feels give the team the best chance to win. But throughout the course of the game and the season, pinch hitters are substituted; middle-inning relief pitchers are specialists who are often brought in the game to face just one batter; and sometimes the stars need a rest. In extreme cases, injuries or lack of performance dictate player moves.

How do you manage your teams? How did you choose which employees to fill which team roles? Are you only using your star performers, or are you giving younger, less experienced staff a chance to learn and develop? How often do you revisit the makeup of the team, its performance, and goals?

- **Volatile players:** *Prima donnas* exist in every group, and they really stand out in professional sports. These are the star players with loads of talent, yet quickly fall from grace, are often traded, and sometimes just fired from the team because they're not team players. Think of baseball's Manny Ramirez, football's Randy Moss, and basketball's Allen Iverson.

Don't assume that the best people are the right people for your team. They might be superior individual performers who regularly meet and exceed their own personal targets, but do they help or drain the team? Of course this needs to be

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handled delicately in a business context, but sometimes you need to cut your best performer from the team and let someone better-suited fill the role.

- **Inspirational coaching:** Most fans know that a manager is allowed two trips to the pitcher's mound during a game, and it usually results in replacing the pitcher with another from the bullpen. One of the most dramatic scenes from the playoffs occurred when Philadelphia Phillies manager Charlie Manuel visited ace pitcher Roy Halladay on the mound late in one game. Halladay had done well but appeared fatigued and inconsistent. The coach slowly walked to the mound, talked to his ace, and then surprised everyone by walking back to the dugout. In that moment the home team fans roared their approval, a reenergized pitcher finished the job, and the coach looked brilliant.

Leading a team isn't just about criticism and reactive feedback. The best leaders inspire

everyone, from the star players to the journeyman bench players to the rookies who represent your future. Some managers excel at giving praise and avoid the discomfort of criticism, while for others, it's the reverse.

Giving both positive and negative feedback on a regular basis results in trusting relationships between coaches and players and the best opportunity for success.

Sincerely,



Bud Haney, President
Profiles International



FEATURE ARTICLE



"The whole is greater than the sum of the parts." Everyone's heard that expression. And we're all familiar with what it means:

An effective team can accomplish more as a whole than its individual members can accomplish on their own.

The key word here is *effective*. Building an effective, high-performing team requires more than simply throwing a group of outstanding individuals into a room and telling them they can't come out until they have a solution. Maintaining an effective team requires planning, communication, and decision-making beginning with a focus on these important steps:

- Assess individual members' strengths and weaknesses
- Build support for the team and its mission
- Establish the conditions for team effectiveness
- Agree on the team's goals

Manage these four steps well and you're on the road to building a championship team.

Based on our work with many of America's Most Productive Companies, we've identified seven major roadblocks to building and managing high-performing teams. We've seen excellent managers drop the team-building ball, and we've seen other managers exceed expectations by doing team building right.

You can create and manage a high-performing team by avoiding these seven team-building blunders:

1. Failure to build support for the team with the right people at the right levels
2. Failure to establish conditions for team effectiveness
3. Failure to establish a meaningful performance goal
4. The absence of a decision-making process
5. Failure to establish appropriate norms
6. Weak communication channels
7. Insensitivity to diversity



"Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results." --**Andrew Carnegie**



CASE STUDY: Team Selling Increases Performance

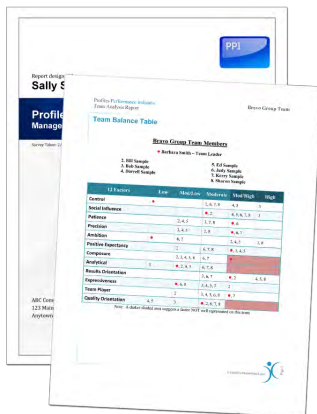
Even in organizations that celebrate 25-year employment anniversaries and boast an average employee tenure of 10 years, the malaise of turnover can fester and threaten productivity.

Through its collaborations with Profiles International, a successful credit union organization discovered that one of the most effective ways to treat workforce ailments is to know the strengths of its players on **every team**. **"We like to follow the wisdom of author Jim Collins, who best described the need to put the right people on the bus, in the right seats on the bus, and point the bus in the right direction,"** a human resources business partner responsible for recruitment and coaching said.

As one example of pointing the bus in the right direction, company leaders used assessments to reduce adjusted attrition of employees—adjusted attrition does not count people who leave for reasons such as caring for family or returning to school—from 12.5 percent to four percent from 2008 to 2009.

The credit union organization continues to examine both new job candidates and teams throughout its 450-person workforce in a climate where demands of the business and worker expectations are always changing.

FEATURE PRODUCTS—Profiles Performance Indicator's Team Analysis Report



The ability of a team to work effectively is greatly influenced by the individual characteristics of the team members and their synergy. While a team can adjust to accommodate some issues, the fewer adjustments necessary, the more efficiently the team will function. Furthermore, the more data available to help you understand the characteristics of the team members, the more

focused the management of the team.

The Profiles Performance Indicator has a Team Analysis Report to guide the team leader to a better understanding of the team and its members. There are three sections of the report, each with specific functions:

- **Team Balance Table** – this offers a visual map of where the team members score on 12 important characteristics and clearly identifies gaps within the team. This information serves as a guide in either altering the membership of the team to ensure that all characteristics are represented, or

simply highlights areas where the team manager will need to be particularly vigilant to insure team success.

- **Overall Team Balance** – two critical things are impacted by the overall balance of the team: team cohesiveness and productivity. An understanding of the team balance greatly influences the ease and efficiency of team management.
- **Behavioral Factors** – the Behavioral Factors of the team members provide information on who they are and how they will behave. Because a team is made up of people, understanding their combined behavior is essential to the success of the team.

Talk to your Strategic Account Manager to know more about this report.



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