

# WHITE PAPER

STAMATS



## ***BUILDING THE SENIOR TEAM: MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICES***

The most important responsibility of today's college or university president is to build an effective senior team.<sup>1</sup>

This White Paper will debunk the "president-as-hero" myth and shift the attention to "president as team builder." In doing so, it will address such key issues as vision, trust-building, and loyalty.

While this paper is directed at presidents, the "tools" apply to deans and department leaders as well.

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### **EFFECTIVE TEAMS ARE RARE**

For more than 25 years I have served on teams, occasionally led teams and, as part of my work at Stamats, worked as a consultant to help clients build senior teams.

During the course of my career, I have wondered, as I suspect many of you have as well, why truly effective teams in higher education are so rare. I have thought about this question for more than 20 years, during which time I have tracked down articles, read books, scoured the Web, and posed the same question to hundreds of administrators and faculty.

After all this pondering, I have teased out three reasons why I think effective teams are so rare. First, many college and university leaders mistakenly believe that it is their job to build the institution. These leaders have fallen for the president-as-hero myth. They wrongly believe that it is up to them to do everything that is truly important.

The second reason is that these leaders likely never served on a truly effective team. As such, they may not understand

why team building is worth the effort.

From their perspective, team building will just distract them from the larger mission of building the institution. Any desire to build a team gets lost in the day-to-day.

The third reason why so few leaders build their senior teams is the most tragic; I believe that they do not have a vision for their institution that is grand enough to require the buy-in of an exceptional senior team. These leaders seem willing to settle, as Jim Collins notes, for pretty good when great might be right over the horizon.

By now you have likely figured out that this paper is about building the senior team. Of course, I know that most readers are not on senior teams and might be tempted to skip these pages. Before you do, consider this: while my focus will be on building the senior team, the basic rules and insights apply to any work group that wants to increase their effectiveness. So if you are on a marketing team, a retention team, or even a team that will organize your upcoming 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, there is fodder for you as well.

*<sup>1</sup>This article is adapted from four columns for University Business that ran in late 2005 and early 2006.*

## THE KEY DECISION

There is no deep mystery about building an effective team, no hidden ritual, nor secret handshake. It does not depend on having a cadre of administrative and staff stars. There are lots of stars that never shine. It is not just about an inspiring vision. Many visions are little more than hallucinations, seen by only one or two and ignored by everyone else. It is not about lofty goals. Goals, by themselves, cannot move a heart.

Of course, talent, vision, and goals are important, but they are not enough. The key to building an effective team rests on the simple decision of how you and your peers will decide to work together. Will your group continue as a collection of people with differing goals and agendas who just happen to share a common table, or will you set aside those individual aspirations and motivations and decide to truly function as one?

Believe me, the decision is that simple, but it's also that hard. The decision to work together is not natural. In fact, it will likely fly in the face of your desire for individuality, control, and territory. You will have to unlearn years of bad organizational habits—bad habits that have never served our institutions well.

Some people will be threatened by the decision and fall by the wayside. A few may take a wait-and-see attitude with a belief that they can simply watch from the sidelines as this initiative, like others that came before it, stalls and fades. Some in your group may try to sabotage your efforts. Others, however, will embrace the decision as the right one. They may not fully

comprehend what they are in for, but they intuitively sense that it is the right decision.

And as you progress in team building, there will be less “me” and more “we.” Greg Carroll, vice president for marketing & public relations at Furman University, says that the team, over time, has to imagine lowering all those comfortable individual silos that dot the institutional landscape. “The view,” he says, “is better without them.”

Andrew Benton, president of Pepperdine University, says that it is the rare administrator who wants to be on that kind of team. “One of the things I look for when I hire a colleague is someone who will work to make herself or himself invaluable to the team and who possesses the priceless ability to inspire the confidence of others.”

## QUALITIES OF TODAY'S LEADER

The decision to build the senior team is made first by the leader. But while the leader made the initial decision, the decision must be quickly seconded by enough senior administrators who sense the possibilities that a team has to offer. If the decision is not seconded, it will die. Before they will second the decision, however, the senior administrators first will take the measure of the leader, and in doing so, they want to see a handful of very special qualities.

### ***Have a strong moral compass.***

The leader must be worthy. A team will not follow a leader whom they do not trust or admire. The team needs to sense that the leader has a moral

center and is committed to both them and the institution. The team does not expect perfection in their leader, but they do expect honesty and integrity, and they cherish a leader who is approachable.

### ***Have a vision.***

The leader must have an initial vision for what he or she and the team are trying to accomplish. This vision must be compelling enough and have such gravity that it is able to overcome the attraction that team members have for their individual goals and agendas. People will not abandon habits and silos without a sense that something great is in the offing.

### ***Take action.***

The leader must demonstrate a bias toward action. While these leaders do understand the importance of discussion and decision-making, they don't confuse talking about something with doing something. Effective leaders value good decisions, but their heart is in implementation. They want to get things done.

### ***Appreciate uniqueness.***

The leader must value the unique abilities of the other members of the team and create an environment that recognizes individuals on the team as well. One administrator with whom I spoke, and who wished to remain anonymous, says one indicator of an ineffective team is the “sameness” of the members. He goes on, “When I walk into a meeting and see people who think, act, and look like the leader, I know I am sitting with an ineffective team. The leader has not selected and hired team members; he or she has purchased replacement parts.”

Says Benton, of Pepperdine, “I try to choose members of the team who will approach a problem from a variety of different angles. In doing so, I hope to surround a challenge with as many different perspectives as possible.”

Steve Varvis, director of business and civic relations at Fresno Pacific University, remembers a team where uniqueness was valued: “Our team had been wildly successful. We did more with less than perhaps any other group I have ever known. In my judgment, it was the eccentric giftedness of the team members that fueled this achievement. The individual members of the team were engaged and were drawing on each other’s unique insights and backgrounds. When each of those voices was heard—through meetings, impromptu discussions, long weekends together working with experts from the outside, and at times of commiseration or celebration—the team became balanced, rounded, moderate, and judicious.

“The team members have gone their own way over the years. But when we meet together, or see each other on the street, or when we visit each other across town or across the campus, for a few seconds we know we are with a trusted, accomplished, and gifted friend.”

### ***Work hard.***

Leaders must demonstrate a willingness to work for those who work for them. In other words, the leader must do everything within his or her power to make sure the individuals on the team, and the team as a whole, succeed. Leaders must run interference, settle disputes,

assure the flow of resources, and occasionally take an arrow for the team.

Steve Sample, in *Contrarian Leadership*, quotes George Clements, who said, “The leader should spend a small amount of his/her time hiring the senior team, evaluating them, exhorting them, setting their compensation, praising them, kicking their butts and, when necessary, firing them. When you add all of that up, it should come to about 10 percent of the leader’s time. The remaining 90 percent of the leader’s time should be spent doing everything he/she can to help the senior team succeed.”

If the leader cannot make a commitment to the team, there is little likelihood that the team will make a commitment to him or her, or to each other.

### ***Access resources carefully.***

The leader must never commit the team to a goal or an activity without determining whether or not sufficient resources are available. The time, talent, and treasure that are available must be consistent with the goals to be accomplished.

Of course, there are never enough resources, but there is a big difference between a leader who continually asks his or her team to be wise stewards of their resources and a leader who simply will not recognize the futility of unfunded mandates. It is the insensitive leader who doesn’t understand that goals without resources are a form of bondage.

### ***Appreciate achievements.***

The leader must value and reward performance. Talented people value goals and are comfortable having their progress toward those goals measured. At the same time, members of the team who do not, or cannot, perform must be removed from the team. Of course, the effective leader understands that people who contribute at high levels, who consistently meet and exceed their goals, and who set aside individual ambitions must be rewarded.

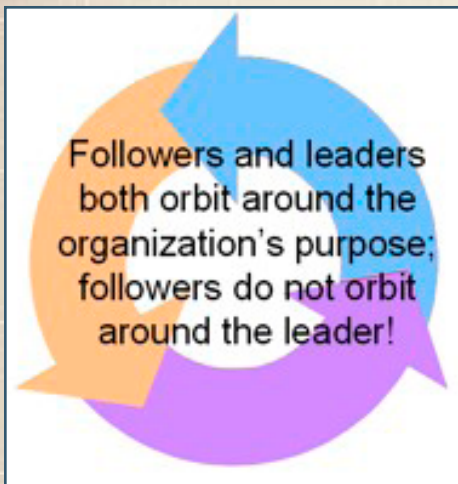
### ***Always on.***

Effective leaders remember that they are always on stage. Everything they say and do is scrutinized for clues not only by the team, but by the rest of the campus as well. While effective leaders can relax, they can never forget. Everyone is watching.

If a critical mass of these qualities is not present in the leader, the other members of the group will not step forward and participate in team building. From their perspective, it is just not worth the risk. But if a worthy leader is in place, and the senior administrators, who sit around the table, can get a glimpse of a compelling vision, they are in for a wonderful ride.

## **QUALITIES OF TODAY’S EFFECTIVE TEAM**

Just as today’s leader must have a handful of essential qualities and characteristics, so too must the members of the team. The first, of course, is the desire, like the leader, to orbit a worthy vision.



### ***Orbit a truly worthy vision.***

Without vision, people and organizations perish, and in today's sometimes cynical organizations, visions are even more important. Burt Nanus, in *Visionary Leadership*, defines vision as "a realistic, credible, attractive future for your organization." He notes that there is no more powerful engine driving an organization toward long-range success than an attractive, worthwhile, and achievable vision of the future that is widely shared. Karl Albrecht uses the metaphor "the northbound train" to describe how important vision is to an organization and says that the image of a northbound train conveys an unwavering commitment to a particular direction.

As noted earlier, the leader is responsible for the initial vision that helps guide the formation of the initial team. Yet it is up to the team to refine that vision so they all engage, understand their role in achieving the vision, and know what their individual and collective futures will look like once the vision is achieved.

If the team members cannot see how the vision will impact them then, either the vision is not appropriate or the person should not be on the team. Visions galvanize, empower, and excite the team, its members, and the larger organization.

Margaret Drugovich, vice president of admission and financial aid at Ohio Wesleyan University, says, "Some people say that 'vision' is overemphasized as key to organizational success. I think this criticism about where vision fits in the hierarchy of leadership skills misses the point. Every member of the organization needs to know at what point on the horizon s/he should be aiming if they are going to maximize organizational effectiveness. In an ideal world, every resource decision should be made after answering the question, 'How does this get us closer to our goal?'"

David Sallee, president of William Jewell College, notes, "The more I talk to people at all levels of the organization, the more I am convinced of the need for and value of organizational clarity. Any amount of fuzziness in vision and goals will create an inordinate drag on the system."

My favorite vision does not come from a college or university. It comes from a black minister who died a generation ago. The first words of his vision still provide hope and direction. Some 44 years ago, Martin Luther King, Jr., told a transfixed crowd on the Mall in Washington, D.C., that he had a dream.

***Focus on fewer, more important goals.*** Goals are essential; however, too many goals can crush a team's spirit. If you

are dealing with more than four or five major goals, you are more likely wallowing than striving. At the end of the day, when the lights are down low, the team must ask itself:

- How do we define institutional success?
- What will it take for us to be successful?

These questions will spawn four or five truly significant goals that capture the imagination of the team members. The goals must be obvious and relate directly to your vision. They must be strategic, and they must be clear... and vague.

Clear goals offer essential direction. They are the essential "what." But good goals also must be vague on the "how" so the members of the senior team have latitude on how the goal will be accomplished. It is this latitude that allows team members to draw from their unique strengths and experiences. Over time, this is what will keep them engaged.

Says Varvis from Fresno Pacific, "Leaders who tell the team 'how' to get it done almost always get it wrong. The leaders are not close enough to the actual work to know how to get it done. This has two negative effects. First, it demoralizes the team because it conveys a lack of respect for their experience, knowledge, and effort. Second, it tells those middle managers and staff that the senior team is not really a team.

### ***Take the time to build trust.***

Trust is the oxygen of the team. Without trust, the team, like most anaerobic organisms, dies. In almost

all cases, it is a mistake to assume that trust automatically exists in a team environment. The savvy leader knows that trust must be built and that it will take time.

Sallee of William Jewell College says, "Trust may be the most important quality of a good team. The leader must trust and be trustworthy, and the players must trust each other, both individually and as a group. There are several kinds of relationships involved: leader and each individual on the team, leader and the team as a whole, each member and each other member, and the team relationship. Each needs to be strong. I have come to believe that a key foundation for trust is vulnerability. If one erects barriers and cannot be vulnerable, it will be hard for others to trust that person. I am also coming to believe more and more in the role of candor in these relationships. I am not interested in 'brutal honesty' but rather in candor that allows full discussion of issues and concerns."

John Roush, president of Centre College, observes, "Truth must come first in leadership. Without truth, there is no trust, and without trust, leadership is impossible."

Drugovich believes that technology can sometimes get in the way of trust. She says, "A truncated message on a Blackberry will never be a meaningful substitute for face-to-face communication when it comes to building trust. Like receiving a postcard when you hoped for a long, juicy letter, e-communications cannot satisfy the need for constructing the connective tissue that binds

organizational members together."

Building trust takes time, often a long time. In fact, there is a direct relationship between how much time a team spends together and the level of trust felt on the team. There are no shortcuts here. As leaders and team members, you must be willing to take the time.

While spending time together is an important ingredient in building trust, it is not the only ingredient. There are a number of things that the leader can do to help instill trust. For example, a leader must:

- Be trustworthy.
- Insist on clear, important, consistent goals.
- Be open, fair, and willing to listen (a trait that must be shared by all team members).
- Be decisive.
- Support all team members.
- Give credit.
- Respect the opinions of others.
- Empower team members to act.

Understanding the importance of trust is not a new insight. What is new is an understanding of how trust is further developed by three critical issues: first, the roles and norms of the team; second, how the team communicates; and third, how the team is rewarded.

All groups develop norms that govern how the members interact with one another. This is especially important for truly effective teams. In fact, these teams often formalize this code into

a written document that explicitly spells out team behavior. These codes address such issues as the need for team members to be present for meetings, to actively participate in discussion, to keep team confidences, and to appreciate how decisions will be made. These codes also commit members—and their teams—to cooperate and collaborate with one another. Carroll reminds us, "The sign of a truly effective team is one whose written norms are internalized and become part and parcel of the culture, the nature of governance, and leadership."

Most of us believe we are pretty good communicators. Our peers, however, might say we are not. Communicating well is tough. Not because we are inept or don't know how, but because we just don't take the time. Because trust depends so much on how well we communicate, solid interpersonal skills are essential. Understanding of how to listen, when to speak, how to assure input from all members without domination by a few, and how to attack an idea without attacking the idea giver is essential. Without a commitment to effective communication, trust will wither.

Carroll, expanding on a theme introduced by Drugovich, says, "Many leaders and managers today rely on e-mail as a communication tool in which the nuances of voice and tone are lost. This can cause problems. While the majority of my team contacts are e-mail contacts, I seldom rely on electronic communications when discussing critical issues. For those issues, I want face-to-face dialogue."

Effective teams also have an effective reward system. For trust to take root, the leader must make sure that the reward system is tied to both individual and group goals. The leader must make sure that these goals stress cooperation rather than competition. Finally, the goals and rewards of one team member must not conflict with the goals and rewards of another. Even as I write these words, I am visiting a school where the VP for enrollment is rewarded for getting the class, while the VP for finance is rewarded for reducing the discount rate. At this institution, these two goals conflict.

There is another issue. For trust to occur, team members must realize that their first responsibility is to the senior team and not to the departments or divisions they lead. I know this sounds contrarian, but think about it a minute: the academic VP who more clearly identifies with her faculty will seldom view team goals as more important than her own. This divided loyalty has the potential for great conflict. It will take a great team vision, and a high degree of trust, for the VP to subordinate her goals for those of the team.

#### **Value conflict.**

Many leaders mistakenly believe that conflict among team members is bad. Actually, conflict is one of the best indicators that you have a healthy team.

Conflict means that:

- team members trust each other enough to disagree;
- all ideas are valued and aired;
- ideas are aggressively debated; and

- decisions, once made, are adhered to with a passion.

"If you are at that stage where conflict is acceptable, then you are at the stage where the best idea wins. No matter who brings it up, no matter whose area is impacted, the best idea on the table wins. Sometimes you may not have the best idea. If you and others, including the president, can accept that, then you've embraced the positive affects of conflict," says Carroll.

While conflict is essential, it is only allowed while the team is debating and only within the confines of the meeting room. Once the issue is aired and decided, the conflict ends. If everyone has a chance to air their opinion and possibly influence the decision, then everyone on the team must commit to using the resources at their disposal to support that decision.

This support is not a passive "OK," but an active, "I am committed to this decision and its execution." If a team member does not commit to a decision made by the team, then he or she will signal that lack of commitment to his or her team and that team will signal that lack of commitment on down the organizational chart. Here's the takeaway, and it's a harsh one: if a team member cannot support a decision made by the team, then that member must leave the team.

Sample writes, "At USC, the five senior vice presidents who report directly to me...comprise the core of my inner circle of advisers. Each of these persons is free to say, and willing to say, 'Steve, your proposed approach to this situation is just plain wrong!'

We frequently have no-holds-barred discussions among two or more of us. But all of the senior vice presidents understand that once a decision is made, we will carry out that decision as a team."

#### **Collaborate.**

Members of senior teams are generally highly talented and opinionated. They are leaders of their respective departments and divisions. They are used to running things. And their first inclination, likely, is not to collaborate. This lack of collaboration is one reason why so many teams are marginalized and seldom achieve greatness.

Interestingly, some presidents (note that I am not calling them leaders) actually create an environment that stresses competition among members of the senior team. Decisions are made, and unmade. Resources are not equitably distributed. Power is given and then taken away. It is no surprise, then, that nothing significant happens.

Let's be blunt: there is no such thing as friendly competition. At any level, competition is toxic and it undermines trust. Colleagues become competitors and, eventually, opponents who withhold information and resources from one another. Rather than cooperation, they seek advantage.

Effective teams collaborate, and this collaboration will only occur when there is a high degree of trust, when the norms are followed, and when ideas and perspectives are vented so everyone understands the rationale for the decision that is made.

Collaborators are practically family; they share rather than hoard, relying

on one another's experience and expertise to support team outcomes and advance individual goals. If you think you are already a collaborator, ask yourself the critical question: Have you ever volunteered resources from your area (people or a portion of your budget) to help another member who is in a crunch?

As we will see in a few minutes, it is not enough that VPs work together. This collaboration must extend down through the middle managers and beyond.

### ***Able to decide.***

A seasoned president once told me that pretty good decisions enacted are actually really great decisions. Her insight is the rallying cry for effective teams who treasure pretty good decisions made in a timely fashion. Rather than striving and delaying for perfect, they understand the value of just deciding, with the best information at hand, so they can focus on execution. Their interest in getting beyond the decision, however, should not be considered impulsive. Remember, these pretty good decisions occur only after a thoughtful, even aggressive vetting of the issues by the senior team.

Some presidents believe that if they are ultimately responsible for a decision, then they must be the ones to make it. Let me give you three reasons why this is a mistake. First, if the team is not involved in the decisions that are made, they will quit participating in the discussions that led to those decisions and errors in judgment will more likely occur. Second, if the team is not involved in the decision, they will not

feel responsible for any activities that flow from the decision. Third, because team members grow when they make and are held accountable for tough decisions, the institution loses an opportunity to help individual team members grow in their abilities.

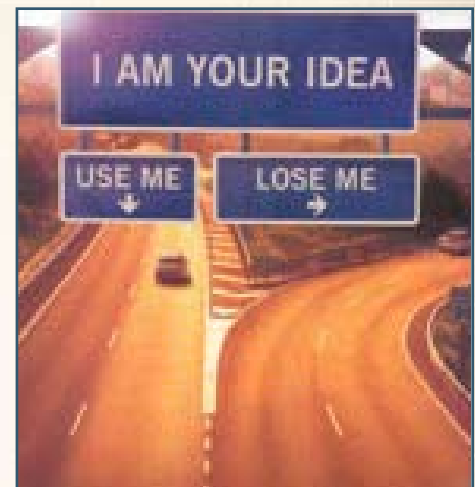
Effective leaders will not duck the decisions that only they, as presidents, must make. But neither will they usurp decisions made by the team or by individuals on the team if the decision only affects their functional areas. Says Roush, "You can get sideswiped and sometimes surprised by the decisions of others on the team, but if you have good people, you must let them do their work. You will never move forward without investing in capable people with authority. Good leaders develop a capacity for and come to understand the wisdom of handing off authority."

The seasoned president who gave me advice on decision making had another insight. She said that presidents and teams should focus on the "what" and the "why," and that individual VPs, as they lead their teams, should focus on the "how." Good advice.

### ***Teams execute.***

"It's not how many ideas you have, it's how many you make happen." That's the tag for a former ad campaign for the consulting firm Accenture. The ads in the campaign all followed a similar theme:

- I am your idea. One day you'll look for me and I'll be gone.
- I am your idea. Competitors may be closer than you think (words in a car's rearview mirror).



- I am your idea. I won't stay hot forever (features a cup of steaming coffee).
- I am your idea. Drive me (imprinted on a golf ball).
- I am your idea. How far do you want to go (highway sign)?

Accenture's ads were all about execution.

Some time ago I worked with some people from the Sloan School at MIT. During the course of reviewing their marketing materials, I noticed a fascinating quote from a graduate student. When asked to summarize what he had learned while completing his degree at the business school, the student replied:

Think Daringly.  
Execute Steadily.

On my desk, where I can see it, and in my briefcase when I travel, is a three-ring notebook that contains a list of my primary goals broken down by quarter. At the bottom of the list is a note to myself that says, "If I did not work on one or more of these things today, it was likely a waste."

John Maher, a consultant friend of mine, has a similar sign on his desk. It says, "I have two oars in the water. One is labeled drive. The other is labeled focus. I need to pull on both oars at the same time or I will go in circles."

Recently, while cleaning out some old files, I ran across an article from the September-October 1986 *Harvard Business Review*. Written by Amar Bhide, it was titled, "Hustle as Strategy." Bhide writes, "Strategy, its high-church theologians insist, is about outflanking competitors with big plays....[However] it is questionable whether this proposition is sustainable....While they preach strategic planning, competitive strategy, and competitive advantage, they overlook the record of a surprisingly large number of very successful companies that vigorously practice a different religion. These companies don't have long-term strategic plans with an obsessive preoccupation on rivalry. They concentrate on operating details and doing things well. Hustle is their style and their strategy. They move fast, and they get it right."

There is an old African proverb:

Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up.

It knows it must run faster than the fastest lion or it will be killed.

Every morning in Africa, a lion wakes up.

It knows it must outrun the slowest gazelle or it will starve to death.

It doesn't matter whether you are a lion or a gazelle.

When the sun comes up, you better start running.

One of the military leaders involved in the rebuilding of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina is Lt. Gen. Russel Honoré. During a meeting, he said to a slow-moving subordinate, "You're looking at your calendar, and I'm looking at my watch."

Execute.

Now.

#### ***Hold each other accountable.***

Effective teams don't have slackers. While not everyone may have the same ability, they should have the same level of commitment.

Over time, however, it will become apparent that a team member is not applying himself or herself. What happens next will indicate whether or not you have a truly effective team.

If you ignore the underperforming member, your team is not effective. If the leader steps forward and deals with the underperforming team member, you are not effective. But if

the other team members step up and begin to diagnose the problem, then your team is effective. If the lagging team member is overwhelmed, the team might lend resources or re-task, or they might suggest that this member be given a lighter load while they deal with a particular issue or challenge. This peer-to-peer intervention is the sign of a truly effective team.

Sometimes the person who is not performing is simply not committed to the goal or activity that the team agreed to. If this is the case, he or she must be removed from the team.

#### ***Manage the middle.***

Effective senior teams understand how important it is to manage the mid-ranks of administrators and staff. To do so, three things must happen. First, the senior team must make sure that the middle managers in their departments and divisions work cooperatively, share resources, and support the middle managers in other divisions. This will require constant oversight and intervention to help undo years of silo-based behaviors.

Second, the senior team must manage their gatekeepers. The secretaries of team members must understand how important it is to cooperate with their peers across the institution. Secretaries often assume the cloak of their bosses and can, occasionally, act imperially. All of us have seen secretaries and administrative assistants intentionally or unintentionally derail or delay projects that have been decided upon at the highest echelons of the institution. Effective senior teams will not tolerate this behavior.

Third, you must identify those middle managers who might someday be members of the senior team or even the team leader. You must be their mentor, someone who helps advance their career by giving them special opportunities and resources. One of the most accomplished VPs for advancement in the country started 27 years ago at that institution as a secretary. Talent is all around. Take the time to grow it.

### ***Measure progress.***

Effective senior teams, like their sports counterparts, keep score. They know that measuring progress is essential to their success for a number of reasons.

1. It increases accountability.
2. It evidences a commitment to stewardship.
3. It is a means through which you can show results to a sometimes doubting campus community.
4. It is an opportunity to check your course and retool where necessary.
5. Measurement is a critical element in an effective reward system.

### ***Reward right.***

The rationale for rewarding effective teams and team members is simple. If a senior team contributes at a high level to the success of an organization, if they endure the mantle of responsibility and accountability, if they often overlook individual goals for the greater good, then they deserve to be well rewarded. If they are not, if they receive the same COLA as other administrators and staff, if their

contributions are overlooked, they will eventually ask, "Why bother?"

I don't believe that effective teams are motivated solely by dollars. But increasingly, dollars are one way that team members keep score. Maslow aside, effective team members need to know they are appreciated. This is especially true for in-demand senior administrators who have lots of options. Leaders seeking to develop and sustain an effective team need to acknowledge this reality.

While dollars matter, other forms of reward matter as well. A talented senior team member who wants to return to graduate school could be rewarded with a flexible schedule. A nearly burned-out team member might relish a sabbatical even though sabbaticals are not formally awarded to administrators. Another might find reward in an expansion of her duties. Another in having his duties reduced. Many different types of rewards are available, but it takes a caring leader to identify the rewards that matter most to his or her team and its members.

A couple of final thoughts about rewards: First, the leader of the team must be willing to absorb the criticism that will come from people—faculty, staff, administrators, even trustees and community residents—who are jealous of the reward system the leader has put in place. As long as the reward system focuses on truly stellar performance, the volume of arrows will, over time, diminish. The key is to make sure that only truly stellar performance is rewarded.

Second, as noted earlier, the reward system for one individual on the senior team cannot conflict with the reward system of either the larger team or other individuals on the team. Remember, competition is toxic.

### ***Celebrate success.***

Campus celebrations are not a new idea. When a fundraising goal is reached, or a new facility is opened, galas are held. What I am proposing here is a different kind of celebration. It is a celebration among teammates that something important has transpired. When a team, or an individual on the team, overcomes long odds or turns a double into a home run, the team members need to take the time to acknowledge the event. It is this acknowledgement by peers that is a major source of fuel for effective team members.

## **CONCLUSION**

Michael Ferrari, the former president of Texas Christian University, once told me that it is hard to imagine how a college or university can thrive in today's competitive and changing environment without the shared enthusiasm, energy, and passions of leaders and their followers. He concluded by saying that inspired people working together will be the architects of the great universities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Ferrari understood the value of the team.

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## AN ESSENTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

There are a lot of great books and articles on leadership, teams, and team-building. Here are a handful of my favorites:

- Beckwith: *Selling the Invisible*
- Bennis: *Organizing Genius*
- Bhide: "Hustle as Strategy" (*Harvard Business Review*)
- Bossidy: *Execution*
- Buckingham: *First, Break All the Rules*
- Collins: *Good to Great*
- Covey: *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*
- Gladwell: *Blink*
- Harvey: *The Abilene Paradox*
- Katzenbach: *The Wisdom of Teams*
- Kouzes and Posner: *The Leadership Challenge*
- Kouzes and Posner: *Credibility: How Leaders Gain and Lose It, Why People Demand It*
- Kotter: *Leading Change*
- Lencioni: *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*
- Nanus: *Visionary Leadership*
- Parker: *Dysfunctional Teams: Working with Allies, Enemies, and Other Strangers*
- Robbins: *The New Why Teams Don't Work*
- Sample: *The Contrarian's Guide to Leadership*



## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dr. Robert A. Sevier is senior vice president, strategy at Stamats, Inc. With nearly 50 years of experience in the higher education marketplace, Stamats is one of America's most experienced higher education research, planning, creative, marketing communication, and consulting companies.

Each year, Sevier directs more than 100 research studies and helps nearly a dozen colleges with their integrated marketing, brand marketing, and strategic plans. He has written more than 85 articles for *CASE Currents*, *The Journal of College Admissions*, *Trusteeship*, *Communication World*, *Admission Strategist*, *College and University Journal*, and other publications. Beyond his writing, he has conducted more than 500 seminars, workshops, and presentations for the AAU, CASE, NAICU, NACAC, ACT, AACRAO, CIC, CCCU, NACCAP, AMA, NCMPR, College Board, and others. In addition to his U.S. clients, Sevier also works with clients in Canada, the UK, Mexico, Poland, and Trinidad. His writing has been reproduced extensively in ERIC, and he writes a regular column on marketing for *University Business* magazine.

In 1998, Sevier authored *Integrated Marketing for Colleges, Universities, and Schools*. Published by CASE, it was the most comprehensive book on educational marketing available. In 1999, he co-edited another book for CASE, *Integrated Marketing Communication*. His third book, *Strategic Planning in Higher Education: Theory and Practice*, also for CASE, was published late fall 2000. In 2001, Sevier published *Thinking Outside the Box: Some (fairly) Radical Thoughts on How Colleges and Universities Should Think, Act, and Communicate in a Very Busy Marketplace*, and in 2002 he published *Building a Brand That Matters*. His latest book, *An Integrated Marketing Workbook for Colleges and Universities: A Step-By-Step Planning Guide*, was published in October 2003.

Prior to Stamats, Sevier worked at the Oregon Health & Science University in Portland and Denison University in Ohio. Sevier also taught at Mount Vernon Nazarene College and The Ohio State University.

Sevier earned a Ph.D. from The Ohio State University in 1986 in policy analysis and higher education administration. His dissertation, titled *Freshmen at Competitive Liberal Arts Colleges: A Survey of Factors Influencing Institutional Choice*, involved a nationwide study of how college-bound high school students choose a college. He also holds an M.S. degree in journalism/public relations from the University of Oregon (1979).

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