

SIXTH NATHALIE BARR LECTURE



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Beyond Certification . . . Meeting the Challenges of the '90s through Teamwork

THE CLIMATE OF CHANGE

When I was awarded the Nathalie Barr Lectureship by the American Society of Hand Therapist in 1990, I thought I would share with the audience a history of hand therapy certification—a scrapbook of what certification has meant to me. But as I thought more about it, I realized that what certification really means to me has to do with the people I have known, the experiences that have enriched me, and the pride that I hear in the voice of a newly certified hand therapist who tells me that it means on a personal level to be certified. I also realized that hand therapy certification is the product of a team and it represents

what can be accomplished by people working together towards a common goal.

As I thought more about teamwork, I realized that reviewing the accomplishments of the certification team would be a tribute to the past but would not speak to what is most interesting to me in my own life. Now that certification is a reality, what does the future hold? What changes are going to occur?

The Chinese use two symbols to represent change: the first means “danger” and the second means “opportunity.” The lesson for us is to be aware of potential dangers in change while taking advantage of new opportunities that are created by change.

The value of change is in the eyes of the beholder. The economic climate of the '90s can be summarized by the word “downsizing.” If you are the CEO of a major corporation, downsizing may mean that your company will operate more efficiently; however, if you are a line worker, it may mean that your job will be eliminated. What are the potential

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effects of current economic realities on hand therapy? We are being squeezed on all sides by insurance systems; we must compete with new clinics and corporate health systems for patient referrals. Hospitals are cutting professional benefits and limiting personnel growth. How will the profession of hand therapy continue to grow and remain profitable? How will the changes in hand therapy influence the future of the American Society of Hand Therapists? How can we achieve more with less and maintain quality? The only answer is through teamwork.

Teamwork . . .

From the time that we are small children, we learn about teamwork and team behavior. Often our first and most consistent exposure to teamwork is through sports. Playing soccer and little league baseball, in their ideal forms, teaches children about cooperation and working together for the good of the team. Team sports teach kids (and sometimes parents) how to be good winners as well as good losers. Learning how to cope with being the last-picked prepares us for future disappointments and is said to build character. We learn that not everyone can be a star. Knute Rockne said that the secret of teamwork is "to work less as individuals and more as a team. As a coach, I play not my eleven best, but my best eleven."¹ Coach John Wooden observed that "the main ingredient of stardom is the rest of the team."¹

But the comparison of team sports to real life has its limitations because being part of an athletic team is different from being part of a team in real life. In sports, the game is played for a specific period of time, according to clearly defined rules, with the score displayed for all to see. In real life, we are members of many different teams and we all bring with us our own expectations, experiences, and personality characteristics and, worst of all, our own sets of internal rules, known only to ourselves. Then, to make matters even more complicated, we all have our own methods of keeping score! Teamwork doesn't just happen—teams must be built and coached.

A team is a group of people coming together to accomplish goals that are greater than those that any of them could accomplish alone. Alexander Graham Bell observed that "great discoveries and achievements invariably involve the cooperation of many minds."¹ Dr. Robert Schuller has said, "I've learned an important thing about living. I can do anything I think I can—but I can't do anything alone."¹

We are members of many teams—in our families, in hand therapy with physicians and the patients we treat, in the community through groups we belong to, and as members of professional organizations. We belong, join, and work with people constantly. I believe that we can all use the principles of teamwork to work smarter and more effectively in almost all areas of our lives.

THE VALUE OF TEAMWORK

In the ages of hunters and gatherers, everyone was part of a team. Mark Sanborn, in his tape series, *Team Building*,² observed that for thousands of years small groups of 9 to 12 people worked together for a common goal; each individual had a job based on his or her ability. If you had good eyesight, you became the spotter; if you were a fast runner, you chased the game. The payoff was not a title or a position—it was the tangible benefits of food, clothing, and shelter. All jobs were equal and results were more important than rank or status. The industrial revolution changed that. Suddenly people were working in groups of hundreds or thousands. The organizational hierarchy interfered with the ability to communicate directly. The linkage between the job a worker did and the results the company enjoyed was lost. Today's trend towards downsizing is, in part, a return to working in smaller groups.

Corporate America is changing, following principles that were developed by an American, Dr. W. Edwards Deming, in the 1950s. Dr Deming's methods were applied in Japan to assist that country in its economic recovery following World War II. At that time, products made in Japan were synonymous with poor quality. Today, we see the effect of Dr. Deming's philosophy through the consistently high quality and low price of Japanese products ranging from automobiles to compact discs. American corporations are beginning to realize that workers know more about their jobs than anyone else does. Managers have learned that employee commitment and cooperation increase when the employees are involved in the decision making process. Teamwork pays. The potential economic and social benefits of this new way of thinking are significant. The U.S. Army, in 1986, began to assign soldiers in groups to units that stayed together throughout their tours of duty rather than changing units several times. They found that soldiers who were part of a stable group were "more productive, more reliable and took more responsibility for the overall success of the operation."² I think that we saw a dramatic representation of this during the recent Middle East War.

This is a true win-win situation: the employer benefits because of increased commitment on the part of the employee. Employees win because the increase in self-esteem that comes with being taken seriously helps them to build towards reaching their own potentials. Companies who have adopted a team approach have been able to decrease production time while at the same time increasing quality. In today's economy, increasing production while maintaining or increasing quality is the name of the game. In every industry, service to the customer counts. I'll talk a little later about quality improvement, but right now I want to talk in more detail about teams because even though we may all be members of teams, we tend to give little thought to what a team really is and what it needs to survive and thrive.

WHAT IS A TEAM?

Mark Sanborn defines a team as "a highly communicative group of people with different background skills and abilities with a common purpose, working together to achieve clearly identified goals."² Napoleon Hill further described teamwork as the "Master Mind Principle: Two or more people actively engaged in the pursuit of a definite purpose with a positive mental attitude, constitute an unbeatable force."¹

Rudyard Kipling said it another way:

Now this is the law of the jungle . . .
the law runneth forward and back;
the strength of the pack is the wolf,
and the strength of the wolf is the pack.¹

CHARACTERISTICS OF WORK GROUPS AND TEAMS

Table 1 lists the differences between work groups and teams. Teams thrive on challenge and not on competition between team members. The team develops its goals and works together to achieve them. The members of the team think of new ways to approach old problems. They talk, communicate, and depend on one another. They see how what they do has an effect on the total operation of the company or organization. They enjoy what they do and they want to get on with doing it. They tend not to procrastinate because they are anxious to achieve their goals. Work groups have the opposite characteristics.

SYNERGY

Teamwork creates synergy. Synergy simply means that two people working together can produce more than the sum of what the two could produce alone. Or put another way, the sum of the whole is greater than its parts. You've all seen examples of that in brainstorming, where the group comes up with creative ideas that seem to flow one from another. How often have you been stumped by a problem until you

TABLE 1. The Characteristics of Work Groups versus Teams*

Work Group	Team
Internal competition	External competition
Personal agenda	Team agenda
Staid and stodgy	Innovative
Autocratic	Participative
Kick-starters	Self-starters
No linkage	Linkage
Very independent or overly dependent	Interdependent
Tolerate what they do for a living	Enjoyment of job and co-workers
No sense of urgency	Strong sense of urgency
Avoid risk	Thrive on challenge

*Adapted from *Team Management*, seminar presented by CareerTrack, Boulder, Colorado, 1991. Used with permission.

talked to another person about it and the solution seemed clear during the conversation?

SIX KEY STEPS TO TEAM BUILDING²

Select Good Team Members

Hiring the right person is the greatest skill a manager can have because good people do good work. H. Ross Perot says that when he is building a team, "I always search first for people who love to win. If I can't find any of those, I look for people who hate to lose."¹ In the *One Minute Manager*, Blanchard and Johnson observed that "Everyone is a potential winner. Some people are disguised as losers. Don't let their appearance fool you."³ Mark Sanborn suggests that the acid test for selecting a team member is to ask about past achievements.² The achievements are not as important as how they are conveyed. The key work here is "we" because team accomplishments are never achieved alone. When choosing members of your team, look for people who have had successful team experiences.

Establish an Environment of Continuous Growth

The only difference between you and your competitors is people. Establish a climate where each team member has responsibility, authority, and accountability. Throughout his career, Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant had a sign hanging in his locker room that read: "Cause something to happen."¹ Train your team and managers. The Japanese companies believe that "Total quality begins with education and ends with education."¹ Provide resources for learning and educational opportunities through books, tapes, and continuing education.

Create Cooperation

For mutual gain, there must be a shared sense of purpose. This requires a mission, values, and goals. The mission of your team should be consistent with the mission of the larger organization, whether it is a company or a professional association. For instance, each committee of an association should have a clearly defined mission or purpose. The activities of the committee should always be consistent with the values of the organization. Only then can goals be written. The mission and values of the company guide the expectations and goals of the team. Defining the mission and values allows an organization to operate successfully with very few policies and procedures. As long as the actions of the team members are congruent with the values system, the rules are unnecessary. According to Buck Rodgers, of IBM, "The world is advancing and that means that an organization must be willing to change and improve. The only sacred cow in an organization is its principles."¹

Goals are a plan for completing acts. They should

include what needs to be done, when it should be completed, how well it needs to be done (quality), how much is needed (quantity), and for whom. If these factors are included, the responsibility, authority, and accountability will be clear. Annual goals should be written and should include one or two goals that can be accomplished in a short period of time to keep people motivated.

A project top-down flowchart⁴ (Fig. 1) helps people to stay focused. It limits the amount of information and helps team members to narrow their thinking to the essential steps required for completing a process. A more detailed account of the specific steps can be developed from the top-down chart. Use of a planning tool such as this ensures that the steps will proceed in an orderly manner, preventing the frustration of a good idea that never gets completed. Accountability for completing the steps should also be built in.

Communicate with Understanding

Structure information to move most efficiently so that information goes to those who need it, when they need it, in the form they can use it. Information can take many forms:

- An active exchange of ideas through brainstorming and group interaction.
- Team meetings with specific agendas and time frames.
- Team newsletters that focus on accomplishments.
- Feedback that focuses on performance and behaviors rather than personality.

The goal of feedback is to improve performance. Managers should determine the right time for feedback and the most effective form. Team members are usually interested in improving performance. After all, we rarely wake up in the morning and say to ourselves, "Today I am going to do a really bad job." Managers need to coach team members to do their

best. Reggie Jackson said, "A great manager has a knack for making players think they're better than they are. And once you learn how good you really are, you never settle for playing less than your best."¹

A common principle of management is that "what gets measured gets done." A corollary to that is that "what gets measured becomes the focus of employees." Therefore, be careful what is emphasized both in performance reviews and day-to-day interactions.

Motivate Your Team

People perform well if they have the ability to do the job, they know what the job is, and they have been taught how to do it. People may also need to know why they are being asked to do a task or project. However, contribution should not be an option. People should be expected to perform according to minimum performance standards. If they are not, use the process of diagnosis, discussion, coaching, and agreement on behavior and feedback. If this process does not work, remove them from the team.

An important aspect of motivation is recognition. Mary Ann Allison suggests that you "Hire the best. Pay them fairly. Communicate frequently. Provide challenges and rewards. Believe in them. Get out of their way – they'll knock your socks off."¹

Pay should be linked to performance. But keep in mind that pay is not the primary motivator for most people² (Table 2). Providing more of what motivates individuals, whether in the workplace or in volunteer associations, will help to increase motivation. Find out what motivates the people with whom you work.

Motivation increases when team members participate in the decision making process. Vince Pfaff suggests, "To promote cooperation, remember: People tend to resist that which is forced upon them. People tend to support that which they help to create."¹

Managers must be willing to support the team members and the team's activities to higher corporate

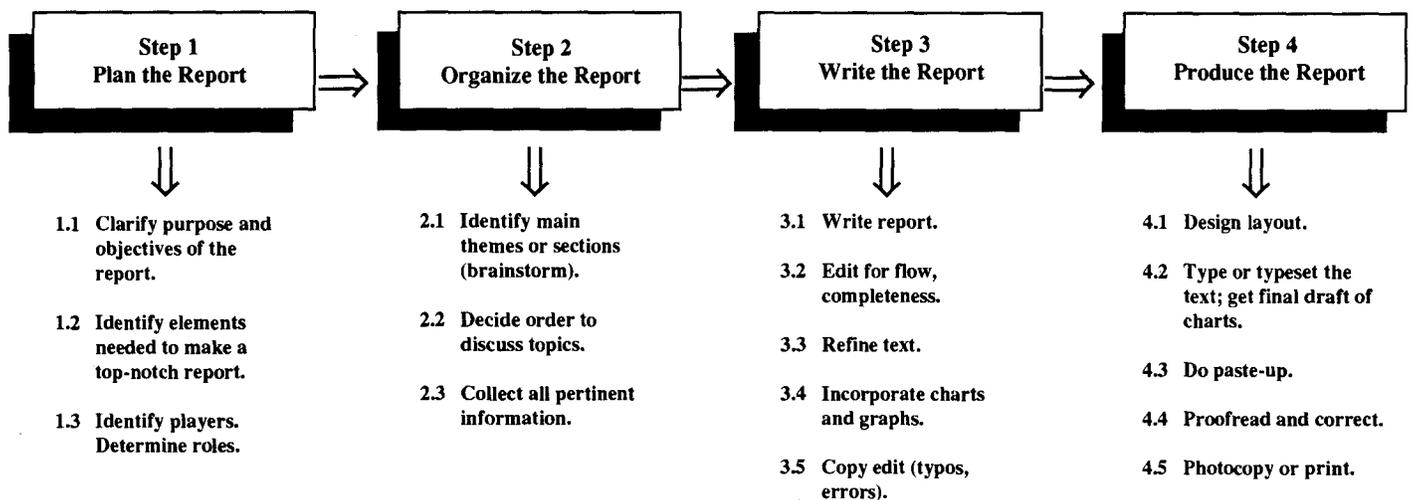


FIGURE 1. A top-down flow chart helps to keep members of the group focused. (Adapted from Scholtes PR, Joiner BL, Braswell B, et al: *The team handbook*. Madison, WI: Joiner and Associates, 1988. Used with permission.)

TABLE 2. Work Motivators*

1. Interesting work
2. Tactful disciplining
3. Appreciation
4. Money
5. Job security
6. Promotion
7. Working conditions
8. Being an "insider"
9. Loyalty from company
10. Sympathy for problems

*A national survey performed in 1989 was designed to assess what motivates workers. Managers were surprised that money wasn't number one. (Adapted from *Team Management*, seminar presented by CareerTrack, Boulder, Colorado, 1991. Used with permission.)

levels. Standing up for the good of the team gives a team leader greater credibility with the team members. MassMutual has a saying, "Nothing binds us one to the other like a promise kept. Nothing divides us like a promise broken."¹

Celebrate the Team's Accomplishments

Tom Peters suggests that not only should you *measure* what you want to see more of, but you should also *celebrate* what you want to see more of. Work should be fun and people should feel a sense of accomplishment for their achievements. Celebrations can be spontaneous or planned. Annual events as well as special events help the team to know their efforts are appreciated. If you are in charge of the celebration, remember that enthusiasm is contagious. You can start an epidemic.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership is an important aspect of the success of a team. Dr. Deming stated that "The aim of leadership should be to help people and machines and gadgets to do a better job."⁴ Mark Sanborn adds, "A leader helps others achieve their own goals and objectives better and quicker than they can achieve them on their own."²

While there are charismatic leaders, it is more true that leaders are made and not born. Leaders need to groom others to take their place. Booker T. Washington said that "There are two ways of exerting one's strength—one is pushing down, the other is pulling up."¹ Leaders need to have highly developed interpersonal skills especially in the area of communication. Wilfred Peterson feels that "The best leaders are very often the best listeners. They have an open mind. They are not interested in having their own way but in finding the best way."¹ Leaders should recognize the needs of the team members, including the need for a sense of community (the need to belong), the need for individual attention, and the need for support. Leaders need to model ideal team behavior, set high expectations, and coach their team members. They also need to be willing

and able to deal with problem team members to maintain the morale of the contributing members.

Paul "Bear" Bryant is well known as one of the best college football coaches of all time. His description of leadership is a lesson to all of us. He said, "I'm just an Arkansas plowhand, but I've learned to get a team beating with one heart: If anything goes bad, I did it. If anything goes semi-good, we did it. If anything goes real good, they did it."¹ Choose your leaders carefully. Know who will be managing your team. And when you are the leader, remember "Bear" Bryant.

TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Team management has been used to increase product quality for 40 years in Japan and more recently in the United States. For many years, we heard about quality assurance in the medical profession. As Patti Mullins mentioned in her Presidential Address, the current health care system has not been effective in keeping the wolves away from the door. Governmental regulation and more layers of bureaucracy threaten the medical community. Today, the new phrases that you will hear to describe the goals of hospitals and clinics are Total Quality Management and continuous quality improvement. In larger hospitals, such as UC San Diego, Total Quality Management is already being implemented. But even those of us in small, private clinics can adopt a total quality approach.

What is the difference between Total Quality Management and traditional quality assurance programs? Quality assurance is based upon the concepts of management by results, which is rooted in numerical goals. Numerical goals pay little attention to processes and systems in establishing arbitrary standards. Workers may pay more attention to numbers and short-term goals than to the overall objective of service to the customer. This can cause internal conflicts between departments, and a fear of management. In fact, fear is the prime motivator in management by results.

The alternative, Total Quality Management, emphasizes results by working on methods and processes. Excellence is built into every aspect of the system. Through the use of a scientific approach, each process is carefully analyzed, problems are identified, and the root causes of the problem are determined. In a hospital, this would mean that each department, from housekeeping to surgery, would adopt an attitude of quality. Managers are in partnership with the work force. Both sides have the knowledge to keep the organization in touch with the customer and provide quality service. This builds mutual respect and trust between workers and management and eliminates the "we versus they" attitude that is so prevalent.

There are 8 principles of Total Quality Management that distinguish this approach from previous approaches⁴:

Customer focus. The organization's goal is to meet and exceed customer needs. This recognizes external customers (those who use our services) and internal customers (coworkers who depend upon us).

Obsession with quality. Quality is relentlessly pursued through efficient and effective service to the customer.

Recognizing the structure in work. The structure of work is studied and analyzed to find where improvements can be made. An example is an analysis of the scheduling process used in the clinic to find problem areas so that a solution may enhance the system. Too often, solutions add complexity by creating a new problem while fixing the old problem.

Freedom through control. By controlling the processes used, team members have more freedom to make individual decisions and rely less on rules and regulations.

Unity of purpose. All the activities are congruent with the mission and values of the organization, creating a unity of purpose. There is a sense that what affects one, affects all.

Looking for faults in systems. Dr. Joseph M. Juran proposed a theory in the 1950s that 85% of an organization's failures are the fault of management-controlled systems and that workers can control fewer than 15% of the problems. The new focus is on constant improvement of every system with no blame on individuals.

Teamwork. A quality approach fosters teamwork and partnerships within an organization.

Continued education and training. A quality approach recognizes that everyone is constantly learning. Management encourages workers to elevate their professional expertise.

"Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives."¹

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE MEMBERS OF MY TEAMS

I would like to thank the members of some of the teams that have contributed to my success. Without them, I wouldn't be standing here today . . .

To my family, John, Elizabeth, and David Kasch, who put up with all of this and love me anyhow . . .

To my friend and mentor, Richard L. Petzoldt, MD, who taught me so much and gave so freely . . .

To the staff, past and present, of the Hand Rehabilitation Center of Sacramento, who support me, challenge me, and give me the opportunity to prac-

tice my leadership skills and to the doctors and patients whom I have had the privilege of working with there . . .

To the American Society of Hand Therapists for honoring me with the Nathalie Barr Lectureship and for giving me so many opportunities to grow professionally and personally . . .

To Nathalie Barr for her inspiration and friendship—though we have never met, I feel a kinship to Nathalie. She was unable to attend this meeting, but she asked me to share these thoughts with you: "40 years ago a physiotherapist and I talked with Guy Pulvertaft about the treatment of tendon sutures and transplants. This was the first indication I had of such meticulous surgery. 40 years on it is a very different scenario. What strides both nationally and internationally have taken place during those years. My very best wishes and congratulations to you all, and to those who have contributed so much."

To the Hand Therapy Certification Commission for their energy, enthusiasm, and support. Through years of working together, they have become very special to me . . .

To Kaye Hatch for her dedication and commitment to hand therapy certification that goes far beyond a mere job; and to her husband Kirk for letting us have her at all hours of the day and night.

In my life, I have experienced excellence. I am proud to have been a part of the history of hand therapy. Each time I have attempted a new venture, I have felt that I was doing something that I wasn't quite prepared to do. Along the way, I have learned more than I could ever give back.

So my final thank you is to all the newly certified hand therapists, to whom I dedicate this lecture, for understanding that excellence can be attained if you . . .

- Care more than others think is wise
- Risk more than others think is safe
- Dream more than others think is practical
- Expect more than others think is possible

Congratulations to each of you and thank you for believing.

Acknowledgements

Many of the team management concepts included in this presentation were adapted from CareerTrack's seminar on team management and from the CareerTrack tape series entitled *Team Building*. While direct quotations were identified in the text, the author acknowledges that many of the ideas were also gleaned from this seminar and tape and thanks CareerTrack for granting permission to use this material.

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RELATED READING

If the reader is interested in reading more about project team management, leadership, and other contemporary management issues, the author suggests the following:

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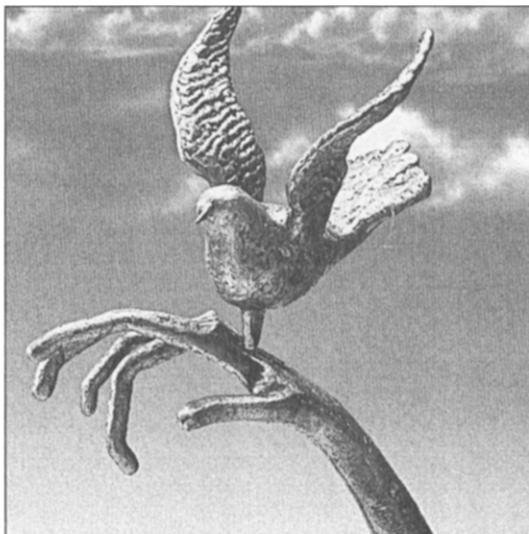
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