

PURPOSE: CREATIVITY; EXPERIENCING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE  
TIMING OF PLANNING IN LEADERSHIP AND OWNERSHIP DYNAMICS

#### Goals

I. To demonstrate necessity for goal setting prior  
to resource expenditure.

II. To demonstrate that defining a purpose is not  
enough, that planning is necessary for goal achievement.

III. To demonstrate importance of a leader in group  
activities.

IV. To demonstrate how ownership affects group  
behavior.

V. To demonstrate how opportunities presented chaos  
(the absence of patterns) can evoke reflexive behavior  
(advanced use).

#### Group Size

Any size can be accommodated; 5-10 is ideal.

Large groups can be subdivided.

#### Time Required

Five to ten minutes, depending on number of  
iterations.

## Materials

Large writing surface such as blackboard or easel.

Markers or chalk.

Stop watch or timer.

## Physical Setting

Room large enough to allow groups to be separated by at least 10 feet, the greater the dispersion, the better.

## Process

1. Divide group into teams of manageable size, if necessary.

2. Ask team(s) to group around writing surface(s).

3. Give groups the following vision:

"Today is a day in which your creative energies will be totally unleashed. You have but one purpose: to create. Feel your creative energy! Let it flow against this challenge. I want each member of the team to make a mark on this easel (or blackboard). Once you have done so, tell me, as a group, what you have created. Now we are short of time so you only have 1 minute to do this as a group. I know you are up to this challenge! Let's have fun! Are you ready? Yes? Go!"

4. Observe teams making a mark. Ideally, the team will decide on an object. Very few of them will do so. Most will immediately make a mark independent of other team members. This is preferable, hence the time pressure.

5. Verify that everyone has contributed a mark. If not, instruct non-participants to do so.

6. Give each group one or two minutes to determine what the group has made once everyone has contributed a mark.

7. Once a group has reported what it has made, challenge the product and re-define the product for the group. For example, If the group says it has made a depiction of a house, tell them it is an aerial view of a garden or it is a birthday cake. It does not matter what you come up with. The object is to make create frustration and futility.

8. Repeat steps 4-7 until you see people quitting. They will either express this overtly or passive aggressively through mutterings or body language.

9. Process the exercise. You will normally see one of two approaches: either a group will execute a plan or it will not. Most groups who start with a plan will be most resistive to re-direction. Even groups who start

with a plan will become resistive. Bring closure with the following questions:

- Leadership. Who made the first mark? Why and why did he/she make that particular mark? How did this affect the rest of the group?

- Purpose and planning and resource expenditure. Was the purpose clear? Why did the group(s) act in a reflexive way to opportunity? What was missing that could have provided clarity (answer: a plan)? How could a plan have made the group more productive? Was this costly in terms of resource expenditure? How could planning have made our expenditure of resources more efficient and/or effective?

- Ownership. Why did the group members get increasingly hostile with each iteration of change? What does this tell us about ownership? At what point in a project can a leader most effectively affect the outcome (answer: the beginning)?

- Chaos. If we define chaos as the absence of patterns, can you see that the blank page/board is chaos? Accepting this as chaos, what does our actions today tell us about

how people will most likely respond to chaos if they are not given the benefits of goals and plans? Is such chaos an opportunity or a challenge? How can we make sure chaos is an opportunity?

In summary, ask the group if they can see how this exercise represents daily activity, i.e. that without adequate plans or goals, people with simply "make a mark". This should cause "a-ha's" and good discussion.

Variations.

I. You can be very hostile in re-direction to bring out how aggressive leadership behaviors can disenfranchise people.

II. To bring out discussion on leadership, select and leader and brief only him/her. Direct re-direction to him/her. This can underscore importance of communication.

III. Appoint a leader but still give instructions publicly. Communicate only with him/her. This enhances discussion on how having information affects the group's reaction to the leader.

References.

None.

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Handouts

None.

Figures

None.