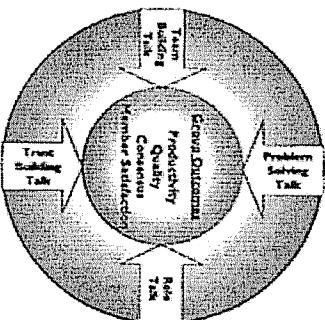


# PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

## Making The Most Of Your Teams

By Matt Arnold,



Group communication bull's-eye model, based on the work of authors John Cragan and David Wright.

### Group Communication

comes of the bull's-eye are not mutually exclusive.

The outcomes of group communication are best viewed as polarities to manage and to keep in balance. The benefits of dedication to productivity, for example, don't necessarily have to come at the cost of quality, consensus or member satisfaction. However, these outcomes need to be balanced and managed to reap maximum results from each of the four outcomes. Sometimes a concession must be made to quality or consensus for the sake of

*Continued on page 27*

**DECLASSIFIED**  
— MAY 2005 —

the rise in... according... conducted for... express Incentive... by Savitz Research... Dallas... the 1999 study surveyed 860 randomly selected incentive purchase decision makers nationwide. About 47 percent of respondents said their current incentive or reward program budgets increased over the previous year. Half expected another increase for 2000 and 25 percent of respondents who don't currently use incentives said they probably or definitely will over the next two years.

### Feeling Cheated

More than half the U.S. workforce feels cheated by employers, says workplace scholar and attorney Stephen Pollan, author of *Turning No Into Yes*.

Pollan's survey of 1,015 adults reveals that adult Americans feel cheated because they're not paid comparable wages to others in their industry; 25 percent; they receive inadequate vacation time, 16 percent; they receive inadequate or no retirement savings, 16 percent; and they're not paid for overtime worked, 15 percent.

Pollan says these and other workplace problems can be overcome by taking these steps.

1. Determine what is really the problem.
2. Tackle one problem at a time.
3. Focus on facts, not feelings.
4. Become an expert.
5. Create an atmosphere of trust.
6. Turn no into yes.

## Ever-Changing Electronics Remain Strong Motivators

By Barry C. Hana  
Incentive Concepts

### Incentive Merchandise

Electronic technology has moved at such a rapid pace that homes across America now boast not just one reliable color television, but as many as three or four of varying size screens. Not one radio, but one in every room. Not one stereo system, but several—especially if teenagers inhabit the house. Not one on/off switch and tuner, but a palm-sized music center

that commands four independent input sources throughout the home, patio and pool. Thanks to space-age miniaturization, no more big, bulky, ugly speakers, but cube speakers, which fit nicely in the open palm of your hand.

### Popular Rewards

Dan Craig of Keystone Incentives in Norton, Mass., summarizes why he thinks electronics are so popular for rewards and recognition.

"It's really quite simple," says Craig. "First, electronics fit all demographics—young, old, male, female; all income levels.

"Second, electronics is a broad field with numerous offerings such as stereos, components, radios, televisions, CDs, DVDs in all shapes, sizes

*Continued on page 22*



Electronic products like this home theater system by Bose appeal to a wide variety of employees.

## Will Incentives Exist In The 21<sup>st</sup> Century?

By Wendy Moffatt

Corporations have been using incentive programs for decades to reward their best workers, but will such programs retain their popularity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Several factors are prompting this analysis.

### Travel Incentives

**Workplace Changes**  
Traditional workplace structures are giving way to accommodate new business realities, such as telecommuting, smaller office staffs and merger and acquisition frenzy.

Will incentive programs work

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Jill Harrington, Society of Incentives & Travel Extracare • Paul Shoridan, CBase Inc. • Thomas Davenport, Towers Perrin • Donna Towle, Continental Airlines  
• Ian Percy, Ian Percy Corp. • Stephen Maselko, Marston International Inc. • Julie Acciaro, Honda Incentives

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### Making The Most ...

*Continued from page 19*

productivity.

How do group members hit the bull's-eye and realize the benefits of the four outcomes? They talk.

Four types of group talk drive the desired outcomes represented in the bull's-eye. They are team-building talk, trust-building talk, role talk and problem-solving talk. Each type of talk should be viewed as equal on the bull's-eye. If you don't pay enough attention to one or more of the types of talk, you will drift off target and not realize the full potential of the group outcomes.

Looking at each type of talk that needs to be accounted for in group settings, we can start with team-building talk. This type of communication focuses on developing group norms, group traditions or a "we-ness" to the group. Team-building talk raises the group's collective consciousness and begins to produce group motivation, group identification and team pride.

Trust-building talk reduces uncertainty among group members. There are stages of self-disclosure and self-monitoring that occur. When you're first in a group, you don't tell the other members everything about yourself. Instead you begin with safe information such as your basic demographics. When team members divulge too much information too quickly, they risk eroding the cohesiveness of the group. Effective work groups are able to balance task talk and social talk, which is the ability to get things done and have fun doing it.

Role talk is the communication surrounding roles and responsibilities of the group. It's important for group members to have role flexibility and to avoid role ruts. It's been said that ideal groups are leaderless. It's worth noting that this is not leadership-less; rather, it simply means that the role of leader rotates in a way that is harmonious in reaching the four outcomes.

Cragan, professor of group communication at Illinois State University, says there are five major group roles that need to be accounted for in effective problem-solving teams—task leader, social-emotional leader, tension-releaser, central negative and information provider.

The task leader drives the completions of necessary duties and is the captain of the team. The social-emotional leader is the nurturer of the group and also typically serves as the lieutenant to the task leader.

The tension-releaser is the one who knows the appropriate level of humor for that particular group and keeps things from getting too serious. The central negative is the devil's advocate of the group and makes sure the group doesn't come to consensus too

quickly or suffer from "groupthink." The information provider is the subject matter expert for the task at hand and provides the appropriate information for the group to make high-quality decisions.

Problem-solving talk is the communication that focuses on how to step through meetings and other problem-solving tasks. This type of talk should be an agreed upon structure, developed at times when the group is not

emotional or frustrated.

For groups to realize the desired benefits of collaboration and teamwork, they must make sure they're balancing the four types of group talk. In turn, these types of talk will help to balance and leverage the desired outcomes of productivity, quality, consensus and member satisfaction.

By keeping group talk in balance, a group can stay on target and hit the bull's-eye of group communication.

significantly improving the performance of employees in any corporation. ♦

*Matt Arnold is a senior consultant and communication specialist for*



*Matt Arnold*

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