

# PARALLEL LEADERS

## O29: RICH BIRCH EFFECTIVE TEAM HUDDLES

You may be familiar with the concept of team huddles in football. Pre-play meetings where leaders and teams gather to discuss strategy and define plays. However, the idea of a huddle is wider than sports teams like football. High-performing surgery teams, astronauts on the International Space Station, and other groups also conduct pre-activity huddles. These professionals understand the importance of aligning their team members, setting clear objectives, and reinforcing the purpose of their work.

When working with volunteers, we sometimes underestimate the value of huddles or fail to optimize them effectively. Crafting an impactful pre-meeting experience before teams engage in their respective tasks can yield exponential results in subsequent activities!

### SIX ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL HUDDLES

#### 1. Was it fun?

Fun is an essential element that holds relationships together, even in serious endeavours such as church and non-profit work. While the mission and impact of these organizations carry eternal consequences, it's essential to create an atmosphere where people can experience joy and laughter.

Remember, fun doesn't have to be extravagant or elaborate; even small gestures can significantly impact team morale and engagement. By prioritizing fun in your huddles, you create an environment where individuals feel valued, connected, and excited about their involvement.

#### 2. Was it no more than 10 minutes?

While the time frame may vary depending on the organization, huddles should be concise and focused. Setting a specific time limit encourages team members to prioritize the most important topics and avoid getting sidetracked by unrelated issues. It helps create a sense of urgency and keeps the huddle on track, allowing

everyone to address key updates, challenges, and action items quickly. This time constraint also respects the busy schedules of team members, acknowledging that their time is valuable and that the huddle is meant to be a brief but impactful gathering.

Ultimately, by adhering to a 10-minute duration, huddles maximize productivity, minimize disruptions, and ensure everyone can stay informed and engaged without excessive time commitments.

### **3. Was it inspiring?**

Effective huddles go beyond simply conveying information and tasks; they create an environment that fosters a deep understanding of the impact and significance of each team member's work. When individuals feel that their work matters and makes a difference and understand how it directly contributes to the overall success of the team or organization, they are more likely to approach their tasks with enthusiasm and a sense of ownership.

Inspiring commitment within huddles involves sharing information, highlighting achievements, recognizing individual contributions, and fostering a supportive and encouraging team culture.

### **4. Was it helpful?**

To be influential at the church, solve people's problems. In huddles, focus on helping people instead of just going through a checklist. Anticipate their needs and provide practical solutions. Continuously share helpful tips and reminders to make people successful in their roles.

By identifying and discussing potential obstacles or concerns before embarking on an activity, teams can anticipate and address issues early on, preventing them from escalating into bigger problems down the line. This practice allows team members to share their insights, experiences, and concerns openly, fostering a culture of foresight and preparedness within the organization and enhancing its overall effectiveness.

### **5. Does everyone feel connected?**

Building relationships within a team is essential for fostering a sense of community and improving collaboration. Just like surgeons introduce everyone in the operating room or astronauts discuss their roles, leaders should create opportunities for meaningful connections among team members. When team members feel connected and valued, they are more engaged, motivated, and committed to the team's goals. By prioritizing relationship-building, leaders create a strong, cohesive,

high-performing team to achieve better outcomes together.

## 6. Did we pray?

When praying in front of a diverse audience, we often consider framing prayers in a way that acknowledges the presence of those who may not know Jesus. In small groups or teams, most people have some awareness of Jesus, providing an opportunity for deeper and meaningful prayers. Avoid treating prayer as a routine or a way to end a meeting. Instead, take the time to slow down, connect with God, and pray sincerely. Pray for guests, each other, and rotate through praying for different individuals.

Use huddles as a moment to recognize the privilege of serving and to seek God's transformation in our work.

Huddles are a powerful tool to align their teams and optimize their activities. By incorporating elements of fun, efficiency, relationship-building, clarity, problem-solving, and inspiration, leaders can ensure that their huddles are successful and contribute to the overall effectiveness of their organizations.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS + ACTION STEPS

- 1 Which of the 6 elements are you going to begin implementing in your team huddles right away? Brainstorm some ideas to enhance their portion. For example: Was it helpful? Ask yourself, "What are the things that make someone successful in my area that I implicitly know that I need to make explicit, even if it's just reminding people?"
- 2 What potential challenges or barriers may arise when implementing huddles within your team or organization, and brainstorm strategies to overcome them.

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