



Small Business Monthly

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Compete to Survive. Cooperate to Thrive.

Whether You Have Few Employees or Many, You Need to Win Together.

BY LAURIE GRIFFITH

There is no certain agreement about the true costs of employee turnover. But there is no disagreement that turnover is expensive and disruptive to a company. When an employee leaves, an organization has the predictable costs of advertising, recruiting and screening to find a replacement. More difficult to measure are the intangible costs, such as lost productivity, overall employee morale, employee training, and the distraction and burden placed on other staff. To avoid these costs and to retain talented individuals, organizations should strive to create a workplace where diverse individuals can work together cooperatively. How does a company achieve this goal?

EnTeam has a unique approach to helping companies create a cooperative environment for their employees. They create games, but they've changed the objectives. Traditionally, most of the games we play have clear winners and losers. What would happen if we changed the rules and measured cooperation by keeping score of cooperation between teams? Teams win or lose depending on whether they can increase their score together. The opponent is not the other team. The opponent is the problem: time, distance, fear or some other variable. When asked why EnTeam chose this approach, Ted Wohlfarth, executive director, explains, "We compete to survive, but we collaborate to thrive." Like a family, members of an organization have better collective results when they work together to accomplish a goal instead of competing against one another. They win or lose together depending on their ability to help each other succeed. Success is improving performance together.

Wohlfarth spent the first half of his career teaching economics, studying commercial real estate markets and coaching his children's sports teams. He realized that most games create the impression that the only way to win is for someone to lose. This recognition led Wohlfarth to invent games that keep score a new way – based on economic game theory to keep score of cooperative performance.

In 1990 Wohlfarth developed a method to score cooperation between volleyball teams. The idea was for both teams to keep the ball in the air for two minutes.

In 1995 he founded EnTeam to bring games that measure cooperation both on the athletic field and in the classroom to children in his St. Louis community. He found that the games

he developed for schoolchildren were beneficial to business organizations as well.

EnTeam activities create win-win relationships, foster efficient teamwork and strengthen productive relationships. The EnTeam scoring process enables people to measure their skills in cooperation and the pace at which their cooperative performance is improving.

- Quantify cooperative performance by using EnTeam scoring.
- Prepare new employees to integrate faster, perform better and stay longer.
- Increase productivity by building on each other's strengths and offsetting weaknesses.
- Reduce mistakes by finding solutions rather than faults.
- Foster confidence and enthusiasm by making work more collaborative.

Companies can use EnTeam activities to engage employees in examining how well they are working with others. A person who feels he/she is a valuable member of the team is more likely to stick around.

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Join us for our next Sharp and On Point Speaker Series on Tuesday, May 24, from 7:30 to 9 a.m. at the Lodge Des Peres. Wohlfarth and his team from EnTeam will be leading us in a game or two to demonstrate the win-win strategy. To reserve your seat, visit www.LopataFlegel.com.



Laurie Griffith is a principal at Lopata, Flegel & Co. Accountants and Management Consultants. The Sharp & On Point Business Advisory Speaker Series is a free event at the Lodge Des Peres sponsored by Lopata. Learn business strategies you can immediately put in place to point your business in the right direction. For more information, visit www.SharpAndOnPoint.com.