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## A Captain's Guide to Action & Team Success

# 5 Traits of a Cheer Captain

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# 5 Traits a Coach Thinks a Cheer Captain Needs

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# 5 Traits Your Teammates Thinks a Captain Needs

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# **CAPTAINS – Great Leaders Bring Out the Best**

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## **WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?**

- Leadership is action
- Leaders lead by example
- Leaders focus on things that need to be done and do them
- Leaders do not shy away from challenges or responsibility
- Leaders go the extra mile for their team, doing more than expected
- Leaders take chances and take action

## **WHY HAVE CAPTAINS?**

Teams with strong leadership have a decided advantage

All it takes is one person who is committed, focused and on a mission to spark an entire team into believing in themselves.

## **UNDERSTANDING YOUR ROLE AS CAPTAIN**

Leadership is not a position that someone gives you; it is ultimately a privilege that you must earn and maintain.

### **COACHES EXPECTATIONS**

- Lead drills
- Set mental and emotional tone of the team
- Keep coaches informed about team issues
- Provide input on team decisions
- Provide encouragement to struggling teammates
- Minimize and manage conflict
- Plan team activities and develop team chemistry
- Be loyal to the coaches and support their decisions

### **TEAMMATES EXPECTATIONS**

- Be spokesperson for the team
- Be fair
- Be a good listener
- Keep it confidential

### **UNDERSTANDING WHAT PREVENTS YOU FROM BECOMING A GOOD LEADER**

- Insecurity
- Fear of rejection
- Fear of failure
- Not being prepared
- Moodiness and drama
- Lack of motivation
- Criticism
- Stubbornness
- Proudful

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### **L** EAD BY EXAMPLE & LISTEN TO OTHERS

- Be first to serve and last to be served
- Be first to arrive at practice and last to leave
- Create a climate of privilege to serve
- Never let your own ego get in the way
- Be first to lead by example and last to violate team standards
- Be an example of attitude
- Be intelligent enough to listen and develop the ability to work and learn.
- Have faith in the people you are working with, don't let your teammates down and always put the team ahead of yourself.
- Maintain integrity and your sense of humor
- Be an example of poise
- Be an example of a teachable spirit
- Be an example of excellence
- Be an example of initiative
- Be respectful of teammates, coaches, and officials
- Be a leader by understanding that often teammates need someone to talk to.
- Listen for understanding
- Listen; do not judge
- Listen; do not offer advise unless asked
- Listen; keep information **confidential**
- Listen; do not take sides

## List 2 Ways You Will Lead & Listen That Will Help Your Team

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2.

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## **E**NCOURAGE OTHERS & ESTABLISH, MAINTAIN & ENFORCE THE STANDARDS

- Be the first to encourage and the last to be discouraged
- Be a confident-builder
- Bring out the best in others
- Develop a relationship with each team player. Get to know them and their personalities
- Assess each player for a better understanding on how to motivate her/him.
- Remind them of their strengths
- Give them permission to make mistakes. Explain that they are learning.
- Encourage by being mentally tough – leaders who want their teams to be mentally tough must be mentally tough themselves. They must be willing to accept and deal with challenges, to look at mistakes as learning tools. Do not let your spirit be broken.
- Encourage by being motivated yourself – Walk into practice excited and ready to go
- Encourage by keeping things in perspective – Learn to only worry about things that are in your control (your attitude, effort, preparation)
- Encourage by being positive – Teams move toward positive behavior. Stay away from the cynical attitude and self-pity.
- Learn to take the negative and turn it into a positive.
- Help teammates accept their role
- Be the first to praise others and the last to brag or draw attention to yourself
- Have them focus on the message, not the messenger
- Show appreciation with awards
- Enforce by being the first to confront violations of team standards and being last to ignore problems
- Learn how to handle conflict
- Listen

## **List 2 Ways You Will Encourage Teammates & Enforce Standards That Will Help Your Team**

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BE **A**CCOUNTABLE

- Be an example of accountability
- Be an example of work ethics of the team
- Understand the team goals and be the first to display the needed behavior to make them successful
- Let them know what is needed in an upbeat and supportive way
- Set standards not rules
- With the team, develop a team mission and have everyone sign it
- Have each cheerleader sign a commitment pledge

## List 2 Ways You Will Be Accountable

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\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
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*“The difference between possible and impossible lies in the man’s determination.”*

Tommy Lasorda

*“You must learn how to hold a team together. You must lift some men up, calm others down, until finally they’ve got one heartbeat. Then you’ve got yourself a team.”*

Bear Bryant



## **D**EMONSTRATE

- Demonstrate the behavior that you want from your teammates
- Demonstrate the positive behavior needed to get it done
- Demonstrate trust in your teammates and your coaches
- Demonstrate high standards through your actions and deeds
- Demonstrate the importance of academics by maintaining good grades
- Be first to protect and defend and last to criticize
- Protect and defend by being loyal to your coaches and teammates

## List 2 Ways You Will Demonstrate Needed Traits

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*“Well done is better than well said.”*

Benjamin Franklin

*“The strength of a group is the strength of the leaders.”*

Vince Lombardi

# **DEMONSTRATING NEEDED TRAITS**

## **Successes?**

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## **Problems?**

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## **Solutions?**

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## Leading Tips- \*Mike Smith, Difference Makers, Ltd

**Hold a great expectation** - Nothing ensures success of a project or program more than an **attitude** that it will be successful. If you, or the group you are leading, has any doubt as to the successful outcome, stumbling blocks become boulders. Turn those potential stumbling blocks into stepping stones by taking the time before you begin any project to visualize and verbalize the successful outcome - "We can do this!!"

**Explain the "Why"** - The foundation for motivation is motive or reason for doing whatever it is you are doing. As the leader, it is vital you share that reason with your entire group. The sooner you help your followers arrive at the same motive with the same intensity you share, the sooner you are all on the way to the successful completion. Covey says, "Begin with the end in mind." Visualize and verbalize the "why." Humans are goal driven beings so the most successful leader is constantly reinforcing the end picture.

**Be seen and heard** - A message cannot be effectively delivered and therefore, not effectively received, when the group members cannot see or hear the leader. Standing on a box, chair, bench, etc., to get yourself in line of sight for everyone, commands a certain attention. When they can see you and know you are talking to them, you have a better chance of them working to hear you. Make that hearing as easy as possible. A great message poorly delivered is not HEARD. Leaders must be heard.

**Give clear instruction** - Try as we might to be succinct and clear, we often fall short when in front of an audience. To insure your effectiveness and clarity of delivery, try these tips: A) Time permitting, write the instructions out and edit them. It is best to write them out without concern for length and then to edit them into the powerful shorter version. B) Less time to prepare? Gather one or two trusted friends and bounce the instructions to them to test their clarity. C) If you have no time at all to prepare, end your instructions with a phrase like, "What are your questions, comments or concerns about what I have said?" This should open the floor for those who may not have understood the instructions.

**Always treat questions with respect** - That treatment will engender an atmosphere where questions are accepted as ok and good to ask, thereby insuring your followers will not be hesitant to ask questions and ensure understanding before they begin any task. Remember the old saying, "Ask a stupid question and look stupid for 15 seconds but don't ask, and you may be stupid for a long long time."

**Model what you want** - Too many of us give instructions in words only. Often without emotion or body language as support. It is no wonder we are disappointed in the outcome of the activity. Human beings are most afraid of appearing silly or dumb. If an activity has any risk at all of making us look like that, we are reticent to get actively involved. As the leader, you must demonstrate the behavior you desire to provide a visual reference for your followers. Once the behavior is seen, there is little problem emulating it. Be first to do what may be risky.

**Begin low risk and lead to higher risk** - The fear of being laughed at or perceived as clumsy or dumb, is so powerful a force, a leader must be aware of it and work with it to help the followers overcome its immobilizing effects. Not only do you need to model what you want, but you need to bring your group to higher threat opportunities by building their confidence and trust in you and each other. Simply begin your project with simple low threat activities. Accomplishing these will provide the spring board you need to reach for an even higher risk activity. Confidence and trust are the foundations of followership. Build them.

**Process what you do together** - Doing for the sake of doing is not very satisfying. All groups form for reasons. Since you have explained the "why" in the beginning it is a good idea to reinforce the group purpose by evaluating the event or activity upon its completion. Anything worth doing is worth evaluating. Make sure that process includes the praise for the work and workers necessary to help them know how good they are and an opportunity for them to provide their observations.

Humans love to hear themselves talk and they are experts on what they think. The smart leader learns to provide a forum for those opinions and to listen to them.

## A “How To” Guide for Captains

The captain is one of the most important aspects of a cheerleading squad. A captain can make or break a team. There are many responsibilities associated with the job of captain. Being captain will be both a wonderful experience, and sometimes, a bit stressful.

### Make lists

- List the traits that make a good captain (e.g. being a good role model). List the traits that make a bad captain (e.g. not listening to team members).
  - Post this in your locker and look at it before every practice and performance. This will help remind you what type of captain you want to be.
- List things you want to accomplish.
- List ways to help or improve the team. Be specific, and realistic. If the team has never gone to competition, it is not very realistic to expect to win first at nationals.
- List ways to motivate the team
- Make a list of team-building games

As a captain, you have many responsibilities. Jobs and responsibilities will vary from team to team so it is important to sit down with your coach and discuss what will be expected of you in detail. The amount of power you have will depend on how you handle yourself, the respect of your teammates, and the respect of your coach. Here are some possible duties:

- Act as a role model to the rest of the team. You will be expected to help maintain the team's reputation.
- Informing your teams of upcoming events and/or schedule changes.
- Always be first to arrive and last to leave. After practice, you should stick around a minute or two to make sure no one has questions or problems. The captain should never be the first one out the door!
- Be the primary motivator. It is your job to make everyone feel a part of the team. Develop a list of team bonding ideas and games.
- Lead chants, cheers and dances
- Lead warm-ups and practices
- Choreograph routines
- Be the liaison between the school leadership organization and the cheerleading team

In order to be a strong leader, you must have good communication skills. You need a clear, concise way to express the desires, thoughts and opinions. In Bobbi DePorter’s book called, *“The 7 Biggest Teen Problems and How to Turn Them Into Strengths”*, she offers a communication system called Open the Front Door.

### **OTFD or Open the Front Door.**

In this system,

O = Observe

T = Thought

F = Feelings

D = Desire!

Here’s how it works: in any interpersonal communication, especially when there is tension or the potential for conflict, start with sharing what it is you have **Observed**, then the **Thought**

that accompanies this Observation. Then, state the **Feeling** you have about this and finally ask what it is you want to happen (**Desire**).! As for any new skill, it must be practiced in order to truly be a perfected skill. Practice this technique in an easy, non-threatening situation. Use this technique every day in communicating all situations that occur during cheerleading. OTFD framework helps you to step back from the emotional heat of the moment to gather your thoughts and feelings and find a way to communicate them.

## **Captain Coach Relationship**

### **1. Coach and Captain must cooperate**

For a team to function to their fullest and best abilities, the Coach and Captain must cooperate. You must be on the same page and be willing to compromise.

### **2. Communications with the Coach**

Most importantly, you must COMMUNICATE problems, situations, and any relevant information that could affect the squad. Here are a few tips to help get you communicating with your coach/advisor:

There must be constant honest and open communications between the captain and the coach. This is not only the coach's responsibility; the captain should play an equal part.

The best way to establish and maintain a line of communication is to set up weekly/monthly meetings between the captain and coach. No other team members should be present. It must be known that all dialogue exchanged during these meetings are confidential - neither party should discuss what is said with anyone else unless it is agreed upon by both the coach and captain. During these meetings, open-ended questions should be asked. An open-ended question is one that cannot be answered by one or two words (like yes or no questions).

For example: How does the team feel about that fundraiser we were talking about? Or: Jenny was very upset after practice on Friday. There have been a number of arguments, can you tell me what's going on?

### **3. Work with the Coach**

All teams experience arguments, cliques, and other problems. It is important for you work with your coach to work out on these issues. As captain, you should keep your coach aware of all arguments, disagreements, or problems that interfere with or are relevant to the team. Again, trust is something that is a must. When you talk to your coach, you should also have a plan on how to fix the situation. Sometimes you may want they coach to step in and help. You should be specific on what you want to do or what you want him/her to do.

### **4. Be Open to Coach's Suggestions and Follow Coach's Wishes**

You should also be open to the coach's suggestions and feelings. They've been doing this a long time. The captain should always follow the coach's wishes. If she says a dance is too promiscuous or a stunt is too difficult, LISTEN! Never argue with the coach, especially in front of the team. If you disagree with his/her opinion or choice, wait until after practice for a private moment. Don't attack her "You don't know what you're talking about!" Or: "BACK off!" These types of remarks won't get you respect and they certainly won't change any minds. You should explain your reasons for your opinion (calmly and rationally) and listen to his/hers; then

make a decision together. If she holds her ground, she is not trying to make your life harder; there are reasons that she may not be able to share with you.

### **5. Know When to Get the Coach Involved in Situation**

It is also important for you to know when to get the coach involved and when to handle the situation on your own. Usually, commonsense will help in this area, however, sometimes it can be difficult. Each situation is different and you may feel more comfortable with the coach handling some of the more difficult situations.

- A team member is in immediate danger: this can mean several things. If it is believed that the person is suicidal, experiencing depression, an eating disorder, or other conditions that may seek medical attention you should inform the coach. If you want to be a true friend and a good captain, you will tell someone of your team member's problem. These types of problems won't go away on their own and they are potentially fatal.
- If the situation has gotten out of control to the point of extreme aggression and/or violence.
- If anyone on the team is being shunned or ganged up on by the other members. The situation has snowballed: sometimes, if we just leave things alone they will work themselves out, other times the situation will build and build and build until it has grown to mass proportions. Generally, if you feel overwhelmed or the situation isn't improving, it's time to let the coach step in and take some action.
- You are unable to deal with the situation from a professional standpoint, you are personally involved or hold a strong opinion for one side or another; the coach should step in as the neutral person.
- If the problem can directly affect the school, yourself, or the team as a whole. This could be a rivalry that has gone too far with another team's cheerleaders or your cheerleaders are taking part in smoking or drugs.

### **Handling Problems**

Arguments, disagreements, rivalries and cliques can be found on almost any team. Some are unavoidable and should be expected, but NOT necessarily tolerated. The key to a good team is working together toward a common goal. It is best to address such problems with your coach present and if possible, the captain or adult should address the group. Here are some things to remember:

1. Everyone wants her hand in making decisions - the key is to compromise - don't sweat the small stuff!
2. Being a team does not mean everyone has to be best friends. It does, however, mean that outside issues should be left outside and everyone MUST be willing to work together as a team.
3. Try to make all of the team members feel equal. In other words, don't let one have more privileges and leeway than the others.

### **Tips for Handling Disagreements**

Here are some tips and guidelines to help work out problems disagreements, arguments, and rivalries

Disagreements are a part of life. Disagreeing is not a bad thing; it merely says that each person has her own opinion on how something should be done. The best way to handle a disagreement is to let the team work it out.

For a BIG disagreement: Sit all of the team members down in a circle. Have a "Speaking Stick" to pass around. A speaking stick can be any item (a pompom, a pen) it is passed around the circle so that whoever is holding the item has the floor and others cannot interrupt or comment until they get the stick. There should not be any criticisms from other team members. As captain, you should LISTEN to everyone's idea or suggestion. Write it down and show interest, then either vote on them or speak with the coach about them. Tell team members that their opinions are important, but they won't always be used. Try to use everyone's suggestion at least once during the year. This makes the members feel more involved - it helps to get rid of that puppet-on-a-string feeling.

For smaller disagreements: Try someone else's idea, it might just be better than you though! Or, Try to compromise. Give a little, take a little, then everyone is happy.

Generally, disagreements should be easy to handle. Just remember that everyone wants to have a hand in the decision-making. If you allow them to have their ways sometimes, they will come to respect the decisions that aren't up for deliberation.

### **Handling Arguments**

Arguments can sometimes be tough to handle. Arguments are different from disagreements in several aspects:

1. They can be directed toward an individual
2. They can be over non-team related circumstances

Sometimes an argument can be handled within a team; sometimes it's best to bring in the coach.

The best way to handle it is to get to the bottom of the argument, have only the involved parties (the ones arguing) present. Ask them to tell their views on the argument one at a time, no interrupting, no exceptions. (Sometimes this will be a stopping point because they will both see that the situation was either misinterpreted or not worth arguing over).

You should NEVER chose sides, no matter what. If a punishment must be administered (and should be done by the coach) it should be done to both parties unless there is an obvious innocent/guilty party (one spreading nasty rumors about the other, etc).

Next, ask them what they think should be done (within reason) to fix the problem.

Rivalries are a natural part of life- in the office, in school, at home and just about everyplace else ~ even between animals! The best way to end a rivalry is to make sure everyone is on even ground- all team members should be equal. No extra attention, leeway, or privileges (unless earned) should be shown to individual members

Here are some other team problems that you should anticipate:

There is a lot of tension on our team, people are arguing and fighting, now what!? When things get out-of-control, it's time for a sit-down. The team should schedule 15 to 30 minutes to sit down in a circle and discuss the problem(s). As previously mentioned, during a sit-down, only one person talks at a time (have something that allows them to talk, a stick or something. The only person who can talk is the one that has the stick.) Before peace talks begin, remind them that this is a team. You need to all work together to accomplish a common goal (whether it be a game or a competition). Point out that they obviously enjoy cheerleading enough to give up time to practice and cheer at events. Explain that you understand how important they are to your team and how important the team is to them. Tell them that if they really belong and believe in the team, they will try to help fix the problems.

Now, the next thing is you need to find out what is going on, and what are their problems. Start out with something like: "I have noticed that the team has some personal issues, is there anything that we need to bring out and talk about?" You can say whatever you feel comfortable with.

Be prepared to hear whatever they are feeling, no matter how bad it is. Also let them know that personal attacks (so-and-so is fat and can't stunt worth a darn, you suck, etc.) will not be tolerated. Let them talk; let them voice their problems/opinions. Make them feel apart of the "healing" process.

If two cheerleaders have a big argument, it should NOT be brought onto the team. It should not affect the team in any way. Most importantly, the team should not get mixed up in it. Everyone on the team should leave personal problems outside of practice; they should NOT interfere with or have any part of the team.

### **Steps to Work Through a Conflict**

- Identify and state the problem/conflict
- Express your concerns/feelings with "I" statements not "you" statements.
- Listen to understand -- never to interrupt.
- Check that you understand by briefly repeating what you heard in your own words.
- It is ok to laugh with each other but not at each other.
- Final resolution is achieved when apologies are exchanged, and/or reconciliation occurs, and/or
- Everyone reaches a solution that they can "work with" and solution allows the group to proceed.

### **The Good & the Bad**

As captain, you will have both good times and bad. Being a team leader can be very challenging and yet very rewarding experience. You must accept both the benefits and the risk in order to lead responsibly. There will be times you want to go home and cry because it seems like everyone is against you, and there will be moments you want to remember forever.

# TECHNIQUES FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION FOR TEAMS

## I. REFLECTIVE LISTENING

1. Have squad members practice listening to the feelings of others and then reflectively paraphrase the other's feelings.
2. The person's whose feelings paraphrased responds to the accuracy of the reflective listener.

## II. SAY 4 THINGS ABOUT THE SQUAD

As the squad sits in a circle, inform them that you have 4 questions/statements that you would like them to respond to one at a time. Give each member a certain amount of time to complete the answers.

3. Say one positive item about the squad.
  1. What is something you would like to work on in your squad?
  2. What item does your squad need to work on? How can this be improved?
  3. What is something you've learned at camp that you would like to try?

## III. TEAM BONDING GAMES (see next page)

# UNDERSTANDING AND DEALING WITH DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES

Working with cheerleaders some years is more difficult than others. Coaches asked themselves questions like "Why is this year so hard? I have a talented group of cheerleaders but they just don't want to work together" or "Why am I having so many complaints from parents this year?"

Squads are comprised of different personalities and coaches need to learn to work with these personalities. Each type needs to be handled in very different ways. What works with one may not work with the other. Therefore when dealing with both cheerleaders and parents, you need to take into account their temperaments.

- **AGGRESSIVE\***: People who bully or attack. They come out swinging verbally. They want to take control.

*UNDERSTANDING*: They need to prove themselves. Most things are black and white to them and they become easily upset when things are not seen their way. They usually achieve short-term objectives quickly. They have the inability to accept feedback.

*COPING*: Give them time to "run down". Look directly at the person and stand your ground. When they take a breath interrupt them and get to the point with a polite smile on your face. Get their attention by either calling their name or having them sit down. Maintain eye contact. Do not attack back but express your opinion in " I disagree with you because..." Do not fight with them because, often, aggressive people have to win.

- **COMPLAINER\***: The person that has sentences connected with "buts". Often their voice is whiny. They always find fault with everything and have excuses for everything.

*UNDERSTANDING*: They believe they are powerless. Often they crave attention and this is their method to receive it. Complaints give them excuses for not being accountable for their actions or responsibilities.

*COPING*: Listen attentively to complainer. Acknowledge what they are saying by paraphrasing it back to them. Try to move to problem solving by asking specific questions. If all else fails ask the complainer "How do you want this conversation to end?"

- **UNRESPONSIVE\***: You get one-word responses like “yup”, or a shrug of the shoulders or no response.

*UNDERSTANDING*: They learned early that a “no response” is a noncommittal way to handle situations.

*COPING*: Ask open-ended questions. Wait calmly for a response. Do not fill in the silence. If you get no response, comment on what is happening. If the person answers, be attentive. Be careful not to put down their opinion.

- **SUPER AGREEABLE\***: They always tell you what you want to hear.

*UNDERSTANDING*: They have strong desire to be liked or acceptable by others.

*COPING*: Let them know that you value them as people. Give them positive strokes.

- **NEGATIVIST\***: People who are personally capable, and they have a deep-seated conviction that any task not their own will fail.

*UNDERSTANDING*: They are similar to the complainer because they feel they have little power over their own lives. They usually do not trust people. Finding fault with others makes them feel better about themselves.

*COPING*: Do not be drug into the negativity. Make optimistic but realistic statements about past successes. Don't argue with the negativist. Be ready to take action on your own.

- **KNOW -IT-ALL\***: They have all the answers.

*UNDERSTANDING*: They feel in control if they think they have all the answers. They often feel others' opinions as irrelevant. They seek admiration and respect.

*COPING*: *State* correct facts but do not put down the know-It-all. Give them a way out to save face. Cope with them one-on-one.

- **INDECISIVE\***: Can't make up their mind. They tend to put things off.

*UNDERSTANDING*: They postpone decisions that might cause distress either to themselves or others.

*COPING*: Make it easy for the staller to tell you what the problem is. Listen to indirect words. When the problem has surfaced, help the indecisive to problem solve. Give support.

Understanding and learning how to deal with these different and sometimes difficult personalities will make you a better and more effective coach.

\* Coping with Difficult People, Robert M. Bramson, Ballantine Books, 1981.

## **TEAM BONDING**

Team "bonding" is a very important process that will help to ensure a close-knit team. A strong cheer squad becomes one in purpose and desire, Encouragement is very important in team bonding. If team members try to motivate one another, everyone will try harder to accomplish team objectives. Teambuilding games are a fun way to develop cohesiveness. They tear down walls in communications, provide avenues that encourage discussion, and increase productivity. Team building takes time but the end results are well worth the extra time. It is an ongoing process that boosts commitment. Here are some games and exercises to do with your squad to build a unified group.

**Relay Lock Race**- Each person selects a partner. They stand back to back and lock arms by the elbows while holding their own stomach with their hands. The coach gives the instruction to get from one side of the gym to the other. Don't give them specific instructions on how to get to the finish line other than they can't let go of their stomachs. This causes creativity and laughter.

**Truths and a Lie** - Each team member writes 2 true facts and one lie on a card. The coach collects the cards and reads them aloud. The rest of the squad tries to guess who it is and which fact is the lie.

**Sculpting** - Give your squad different supplies such as newspaper, scissors, construction paper, glitter, straws, tape, string, etc. and tell them to create a sculpture that represents their school's spirit. Have them explain the significance. If the school's spirit is low, use this opportunity to discuss how they can improve their school's spirit.

**Trust Fall**- Cheerleaders sit in a close circle with their legs straight and arms out. One cheerleader stands in the center of the circle. She should have everyone's feet around her ankles. The girl in the center squeezes all her muscles and is very tight. She falls to the side and the other cheerleaders catch her and push her back and forth in the circle. Let all members be the one in the center.

**To Be Or Knot To Be** – You need an even number of students, ideally no larger than twelve. Form a circle facing each other (the difficulty of the activity increases, the greater the number of students in the group). Students close their eyes and reach across the circle with their right hand to grasp the right hand of another student. They should pretend that they are shaking hands - but hold on! With eyes open, have each student reach across the circle with their left hand and grasp the left hand of a different student. No student should be holding both hands of the same person. Now, without letting go, have the students untangle themselves. The result should be a circle of intertwined circles, or one large circle.

**Cheerleader Tic-Tac-Toe**- You need nine chairs set up in three rows. Divide the squad into X's and O's. Just like in regular tic-tac-toe, the X's and O's alternate, except they sit in the chairs instead of drawing it out on paper. Ask questions about the rules of football, basketball or any sport. The cheerleaders must raise her hand to answer. If she is right, then she sits in one of the chairs. The first team to get three in a row, diagonally, vertically or horizontally, wins.

**Ball of String** - While standing in a circle; pass a ball of string from one member to another. The rules are only the person with the string can talk. After everyone has had their turn to speak and share their feelings, there will be a web of string. This web illustrates the interconnected nature of group process. Everything they do and say affects the team. Now toss a balloon in the middle and have them try to keep it. They are not allowed to touch it. This symbolizes "teamwork".

**Back to Back**- Divide into partners with one person left over in the middle. You need one person to be the "caller". The call will yell directions telling the partners to line up "back to back", "foot to foot", "elbow to elbow", "shoulder to shoulder" and so on. When the caller yells "people to people", everyone must find a new partner. The one left over is now in the middle. This is a form of people musical chairs.

**Line Up** - Divide the group into 2. Each team will compete against each other to see who can get the challenge done faster. Challenges could be” line up according to birthdays, alphabetically by first name or last name, age, etc. Try the same challenges without talking.

**Machinery** - Divide the group into teams (3 or more teams). Assign each group to build a certain machine with their own bodies such as a toaster, washing machine, vacuum cleaner, lawn mower, television, etc. Give them time to work it out. Then they build the machine and the other teams guess what it is.

**Self-Disclosure Introductions** (this is great for new teams) - Ask each team member to state her name and attach an adjective that not only describes a dominant characteristic but also starts with the person’s first name. Examples: Serious Susie, Nice Natalie, and Loving Lauren.

**Amnesia Game** - A participant is identified as suffering from amnesia. That person needs to pretend not to know anything about the past. The rest of the group tells some things that help the amnesia victim to remember and to become the same person as before. The amnesia person can ask questions to gain more insight. Some questions could be “What would I do in a certain case”, “What is my favorite saying”

**PEER-O** - Make up bingo cards with nothing in the squares. Hand out one to each cheerleader. Every person has a cheerleader sign in a square. Each person can only sign a cheerleader’s card once unless you do not have enough cheerleaders to fill all the squares of one bingo card. You want to have a different name in each block. Put all the names in a container. The coach draws out a name and that cheerleader must stand up and tell something about himself or herself. The rest of the cheerleaders block out the name. The first cheerleader to get “bingo” or “peer-o” wins.

**Name Crostics** - Give a piece of paper to every cheerleader and ask them to write their name in the middle of the paper about a half an inch high. When given the signal, the cheerleaders should move around the room, attaching their names to their name if the letters fit (like a crossword puzzle). The person who is able to attach the most names is the winner.

**Human Scavenger Hunt** – Divide your cheerleaders into teams. Give each team a list of questions to answer. The first team to finish, wins. Examples of questions are

- Name 2 people on the cheer squad who has the same first and last initial.
- Name a group of people on the squad whose ages add up to 46.
- Who is the person on the squad that lives closest to the high school?
- Name group of three people who all have different colored eyes.
- Name 2 people who have a birthday in the same month.
- When is the coach’s birthday?
- When is the AD’s birthday?

**All Aboard** -Take a large sheet and spread it on the floor. Have all the students stand on the sheet together. Once they have done this fold the sheet to make it smaller. Again, have all the students get on the sheet. Continue this process. Eventually, the sheet will be so small that the students will need to use a great deal of cooperation, teamwork, and ingenuity to get the whole class on the sheet without anyone falling out/off the sheet.

**Team Talk** - Communication is another key to team unity. Part of communicating is getting to know your teammates, their opinions, concerns and aspirations for the team. Here is a great list of topics to use for learning about each other. Sit in a circle and have a leader ask a question. Allow each team member to answer the question until everyone has participated. Then continue with the next question.

- When did you first know that you wanted to try out for this team?
- What do your parents say about you being on the team?
- Veteran members: What past team member did you most respect and why?
- New team members: What do you think your most important job is as a first year member?

- What is one or two words that students in your school use to describe your team? What words do you want them to use?
- What do you think you'll remember about your team 10 years from now?
- Veteran members: What one piece of advice would you give to the new members if they want to have the most positive team experience?
- New members: What help or encouragement do you need from the veterans to be a successful team member?
- What one thing can you do consistently to show your dedication to the team?

**Minefield** - Have group discuss things that are detrimental to functioning as a group. For each characteristic/action, throw an object into the playing space, the "minefield." Have group choose partners. One partner is blindfolded at one end of field. The non-blindfolded partners stand at the opposite end of the field and try to talk their partners through the minefield without running into any of the obstacles.

**Human Dragon** - Divide your team into 4 teams of 6-8 individuals. You can have odd numbers or vary the length of the "dragon" depending on the skill, size and ability of your athletes. Each team designates the "head" person and the "tail " section of the Human Dragon. All other team members fill in behind the head of the dragon by holding on to the person in front of them at the waist. The goal of the activity is to have the head of each dragon attempt to tag the tail of any other dragon team. Only heads of the dragon can do the tagging because all other team members must remain connected (with two hands) to their teammates. Players attempt to avoid having their team's tail be tagged and skillfully attempt to shield their tail from other dragons on the prowl.

**Create A Monster**- Make a monster that walks with both hands and feet on the ground. The monster must have one less arm than the number on the squad and one more foot. Once the monster is created, it has to move five feet and make a sound.

**Encouragement**- Have a piece of paper for every team member on the squad with one name on each page. The team sits in a circle. Everyone has 30 seconds to write one positive thing on each team member's sheet (30 seconds per sheet, then pass them). At the end, each girl goes home with a sheet with many encouraging statements. A variation of this game is to have each team member have her own paper taped to her back.

**Human Letters** -Divide the squad into groups of 4 to 5 people. The coach calls out a letter. Each group has to spell out the letter on the ground with their bodies. The group to get the letter the fastest, or the most accurate, wins. Keep score.

**Rock-Paper-Scissors Tag** – Form two groups. During each turn, a team must decide whether they are “rock, paper, or scissors”. The teams face each other, and on the count of three shows either rock, paper, scissors. The one who wins chases the other team. If the chased team member gets caught before they reach a designated home base, she becomes part of the other team.

**Pass the Body** – Every lies on the floor in one straight line with heads together with legs and body extending out to the side. They extend their arms up and a person will lie on top of the hands. Group passes the body down the line.

**Turn Over a New Leaf** - you'll need a "magic carpet," or a single piece of tarp or small cloth 4' x 5', for a group of 8-12 participants. The object is to turn over the carpet without touching the ground surrounding it. This activity tests your team's ability to work physically close together while observing exactly what the problem is and work toward a solution as a group through a process of trial and error.

### **Activity to Try**

Four Corners (15-20 minutes)

State a situation or dilemma, then ask students to go to one of four corners of the room, marked Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree, Disagree. There student exchange their opinions or reasoning, and summarize their reasoning for presentation to the other three corners.

**Bonding Quotes** - Assign different cheerleaders to bring in bonding quote or word for each week. At the end of each practice, have each cheerleader explain how she applied that quote or word to practice.

Samples:

- All the talent in the world doesn't mean a thing without your teammates
- The only place success comes before work is in the dictionary,
- You have no control over what the other guy does. You only have control over what you do.
- The best inspiration is not to outdo others, but to outdo ourselves.
- Think big, believe big, act big, and the results will be big"

## **RECOMMENDED BOOKS**

**Developing a Successful Cheerleading Program**, Pam Headridge, Nancy Garr, Coaches Choice, 2004

**101 Exciting New Tips to Energize Your Cheerleaders**, Gwen Holtsclaw, Old Mountain Press, Inc. 1998

**Team Building Activities for Every Group**, Alanna Jones, Rec Room Publishing, 1999

**GameSkills**, Stephanie Hanrahan & Teresa B. Carlson, Versa Press, 2000\

**1001 Motivational Messages and Quotes for Athletes and Coaches**, Bruce Eamon Brown, Coaches Choice, 2001

**Big Book of Team Building Games**, John Newstrom & Edward Scannell, McGraw Hill, 1998

**Energizer and Ice Breakers**, Book I, Elizabeth Sabrinsky Foster, Educational Media Corp, 1998

**The Big Book of Motivational Games**, Robert Epstein, McGraw Hill, 2001

**Activities That Teach**, Tom Jackson, Red Rock Publishing

**More Activities That Teach**, Tom Jackson, Red Rock Publishing

## **CAPTAIN'S CONTRACT**

An **Excellent Captain** works well with the squad and coaching staff. She always attempts to keep communications opened in both directions. She does not show any favoritism and all decisions are based on what is best for the whole team. A captain does not consider it tattling or betrayal to report something that reflects on the squad to the coach. She knows how to delegate, has great people skills, can mediate disagreements without taking sides, and is familiar with all aspects of a cheerleading squad. An excellent captain is a very valuable asset to any squad.

### **Skills and Traits of a Good Cheerleading Captain and Co-Captain. . .**

**The coaches expect the captain(s) to possess the following qualities:**

- Have Good Communication Skills - speaks clearly and listens well.
- Be Responsible and Mature - is dependable, punctual, and emotionally mature.
- Be a Positive Role Model - sets a good example in what she says and how she acts.
- Be Fair and Impartial - can separate friendships from responsibilities. Decisions should not be based on favoritism and she should always do what's best for the whole squad and not any one individual.
- Be Helpful and Friendly - always be willing to do extra for others or to get tasks accomplished and be kind and considerate.
- Be Approachable - the squad should feel like they can discuss situations and problems with the captain.
- Be Able to Delegate Without Being Bossy - can be tactful and respectful of others' feelings. Remember it's not always what you say that's important but the way you say it.
- Be Respectful - must always respect peers and coaches.

### **Responsibility and Duties of Cheerleading Captains and Co-Captains**

- Be to practices five minutes early and be the last ones to leave.
- Lead conditioning and stretching.
- Contact squad members when asked to do so by the coach(es).
- Call cheers/chants at games and/or establish how cheers will be called.
- Participate in extra scheduled activities.
- Greet and make visiting squads feel welcome before games. Make sure snacks are given to visiting teams.
- Establish a system for getting the run-through ready.
- Help solve conflicts by being fair and impartial.
- Meet with the coach(es) on a regular basis.
- Address all concerns, issues, etc. with the coach(es).
- Remain positive regardless of the situation.
- Keep girls on task (especially at games)... no talking, horseplay, etc.
- Be the linking source between the coach and the squad... all informational phone calls will be going to you. You are responsible for knowing the information.
- Other various tasks asked of you by the coach.

**NOTE: If the selected captain fails to meet the expectations set forth, she may be asked to step down at any time.**

**I understand my responsibilities.**

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**Signature**

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**Date**

# JOB TASK FORM

Work Smarter

SMARTER goals are: specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic, timely, educational, and rewarding to those involved.

**1. TASK** \_\_\_\_\_

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**2. STEPS TO EXECUTE TASK**

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**3. NEEDED MATERIAL** \_\_\_\_\_

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**4. AMOUNT OF TIME NEEDED TO COMPLETE** \_\_\_\_\_

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**5. DEADLINE** \_\_\_\_\_

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**6. EVALUATION** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Leadership Evaluation

Commitment	
1. Captain is one of the hardest workers on the team	
2. Captain cares passionately about the team's success	
3. Captain is a competitive person who wants to win	
Confidence	
4. Captain has confidence in him/herself as a person and his/her ability to lead	
5. Captain wants to perform in pressure situations	
6. Captain bounces back quickly following mistakes and errors	
Composure	
7. Captain stays calm and composed in pressure situations	
8. Captain stays focused when faced with distractions, obstacles, and adversity	
9. Captain keeps his/her anger and frustration under control	
Character	
10. Captain consistently does the right thing on and off the court/field	
11. Captain is honest and trustworthy	
12. Captain treats teammates, coaches, and others with respect	
<b>Leader By Example - Total</b> (subtotal / please fill in)	
Encourager - Servant	
13. Captain reaches out to teammates when they need help	
14. Captain takes the time to listen to teammates	
Encourager - Confidence Builder	
15. Captain regularly encourages his/her teammates to do their best	
16. Captain regularly compliments his/her teammates when they succeed	
Encourager - Refocuser	
17. Captain communicates optimism and hope when the team is struggling	
18. Captain knows what to say to teammates when they are struggling	
Encourager - Team Builder	
19. Captain has developed an effective relationship with each teammate	
20. Captain is a team player who seeks to unify the team	
Enforcer	
21. Captain holds teammates accountable for following team rules and standards	
22. Captain constructively confronts teammates when necessary	
23. Captain is willing to address and minimize conflicts between teammates	
24. Captain is firm, fair, and direct when dealing with conflicts and problems	
<b>Vocal Leader Total</b>	

### **Team Leadership Evaluation\***

Using a scale from one to five rate your team captain(s) on the following 24 questions.

**1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Undecided 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree** Team Leadership

### **Self Evaluation Scoring Directions**

The Team Leadership Self Evaluation is divided into two parts. The top 12 questions help you rate your captain as a Leader by Example. Then the first 12 questions are combined with the final 12 questions to help you rate your captain as a Vocal Leader.

### **Leader By Example Scoring**

The Leader by Example Self Evaluation measures the four critical areas your captain needs to be an effective Leader by Example: Commitment, Confidence, Composure, and Character. To compute your captain's Leader by Example score, add your ratings for the first 12 questions.

**12 - 44 = Not a Leader by Example**

**45 - 52 = Solid Leader by Example**

**53 - 60 = Spectacular Leader by Example**

The total for the Leader by Example section should at least be 45 if not higher. Anything 44 and below your captain is not successfully leading him/herself to earn the respect. The closer the score is to 60, the better job you believe your captain is doing of leading him/herself.

### **Vocal Leader Scoring**

The total score for all 24 questions will give you your captain's rating as a Vocal Leader.

**24 - 89 = Not a Vocal Leader**

**90 - 105 = Solid Vocal Leader**

**106 - 120 = Spectacular Vocal Leader**

Your captain's total as a Vocal Leader should at least be 90 if not higher. Anything 89 and below your captain is not doing an adequate job of leading him/herself or others. The closer your captain is to 120, the more he/she is doing what is necessary to be an effective leader.

*\*Team Captain Leadership Manual, Jeff Janssen*

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*Keep in touch with me so I know how things are going or if you just need to talk, let off steam or have questions. My email is [head@whidbey.net](mailto:head@whidbey.net), cell phone 360 202 1562*

*Coach Pam*