

## Strategy and Teamwork: Better Together

**A company can have a strategy. A company culture can promote teamwork. Put those two together and you get results.**



This summer, I was at my nephew's little league baseball game and I could hear the coaches plan their strategy.

I know enough about baseball to be dangerous. I understood why the coaches wanted so-and-so to bunt, the pitcher to face a certain batter or the outfield to play deep. And it hit me.

Strategy and teamwork can exist separately, but working together can achieve positive results. That's how it works in our shops!

### Strategies

Coaches have a plan going into the game. However, because things don't always go as planned, the coaches also update strategy for the situation developing in front of them. In business, we have the same challenges. We can create a strategic plan, develop all our tactics, plans and deadlines and then...BAM...a virus hits, the price of gas skyrockets or the government imposes new tariffs. Much like baseball, businesses need to look at the situation in front of them, update their strategies and work together to make it happen.

### Teamwork

The game of baseball cannot be played without all the players. You need the pitcher, catcher, infielders, outfielders and hitters to accomplish the goal of winning. It's not just enough to put them on the field, but they need to know how to work together to achieve a common goal. They need to know each other's strengths and weaknesses — so-and-so is fast and will steal second if the batter takes a pitch. They need to know they can count on each other — the shortstop will cover second when the second baseman runs to field a ball. They need



to communicate with each other — call for the ball when you have the pop-up so teammates don't collide.

Think about how those statements translate to your shop. How does your team work together? Do they know each other's capabilities? Can they count on each

other? Are they effectively communicating? Saying you have a team and having employees that work like a team are two different things.

### Better Together

So how do strategy and teamwork work together? Watch a baseball coach as he gives a batter signs — that's the coach communicating the strategy to the batter. The

team meets before the game to learn the strategy and after the game to determine what worked and what didn't work. The shortstop yells the number of outs and the base to throw to get the strategic out. The catcher sends the pitcher signs with the strategic pitch for that particular batter. Get the message? The strategy must be communicated. Everyone must know and understand it. And it must be repeated — don't assume everyone heard it once and understands. Does a particular customer need something a certain way? Does a part need something special? Does an employee understand their position in the strategy?

When shop owners and managers (coaches) communicate strategy, and employees (team) know how to work with each other to implement the strategy, then everybody wins. ⊕

---

Carli Kistler-Miller, MBA has over 25 years of experience with communications, event/meeting planning, marketing, writing and operations. Email: [cmiller@pmpa.org](mailto:cmiller@pmpa.org) — Website: [pmpa.org](http://pmpa.org).