

# ***How Your TGIM Hoopla Team Will Save Your Company...AND Your Sanity***

By Roxanne Emmerich

Admit it. The first time you heard the phrase "Hoopla Team®"—maybe last week, or last month, or ten seconds ago, in that headline—you rolled your eyes. Oh yes you did.

But if you have heard it before, you probably also heard about the remarkable turnarounds that are happening across the country when leaders get serious about the transformation of their workplace culture—a transformation that has the Hoopla Team smack dab in the center of it.

Wait a minute, you say. Did you just use the words "serious" and "Hoopla" in the same sentence? You're darn right I did. Being serious about transformation is not the same as being "serious." In fact, real transformation starts with a *serious* commitment to JOY.

## **"So What in the World IS a Hoopla Team?"**

A Hoopla Team is a group of seven to ten volunteers drawn from the enthusiastic employees in your company—those special, dynamic, irrepressible folks who know how to get things done and do it with a smile. They should come from various positions and departments, and only one team member should be an executive.

The sacred duty of this team is to provide the energy and enthusiasm to sustain and accelerate breakthroughs in performance according to an implementation formula. They are responsible for continually rolling out new ideas every couple of months to power the ongoing evolution of the culture. Most important, they exist to help everyone in the organization recognize and celebrate successes at every level.

The team is also responsible for finalizing your company's service standards and following a process to assure those standards are constantly lived with impeccability through these rollouts and quarterly celebrations.

In short, the Hoopla Team is the keeper of your culture and the driver of your vision. It's not what they do, but how they do it that creates miraculous results.

## **Growing the Cup**

Imagine your efforts to improve productivity—sales training, service training, mystery shopping, hiring, the works—as coffee being poured into a cup. The cup is the capacity of your workforce to absorb new challenges and new information. Try to pour all that new coffee into the same old tiny cup and you'll have a mess on your hands. All the great training in the world offers no

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value. The mission of the Hoopla Team is to *grow the cup*—to increase the capacity of your workforce to receive and benefit from the content you are adding.

It's about taking small, incremental steps, celebrating each milestone and success along the way, learning from missteps and making course corrections as needed.

Now if you're imagining a lot of random, meaningless cheerleading and willy-nilly woohooing, you've got the wrong idea. That won't grow the cup—it'll just stir the coffee around. There's much more method to the madness. Hoopla Teams focus on celebrating and documenting successes not just to pump sunshine up everybody's skirt, but to get everyone focused on what works and letting go of what doesn't. Nothing could be more practical.

Get the picture?

The point is to get the culture change generating from the grassroots level instead of being imposed from above. In this way, everyone at all levels has more ownership of the transformation.

The more diversity in your team, the more likely this is to happen. Get different departments, ages, and genders represented—as great a cross-section of your people as possible. The only common element you need is that indefinable something—that energy and enthusiasm that some people simply have and is impossible to fake.

This isn't the Supreme Court, now—nobody gets a lifetime appointment. Part of what keeps the team vital and fresh is a constantly rotating membership. It also spreads the ownership far and wide by giving the greatest possible number of people the chance to serve on the team.

Most attempts to ramp up a company's sales and service standards consist of introducing the standards, then urging the troops on from the top down. Imagine instead an engine driving the standards from *right down inside the company*. That's the Hoopla Team.

## **Stay the Course**

I don't want to give the impression that a Hoopla Team guarantees a smooth road. NOTHING guarantees a smooth road. There will still be setbacks, bottlenecks, fumbles—what I call the "Oh, crap" moments. If it were just a flip-of-the-switch thing, anyone willing to energize a workplace with this approach would lose their competitive edge. Go into this knowing that there will be wrinkles, and that the Hoopla spirit gives you the best possible chance of powering *through* them.

It takes all hands on deck to shift a culture, and it's imperative to engage and hold all areas of your bank accountable, especially your executive management team. Supporting your Hoopla Team is important if you want the rest of your inputs, like sales and service training, to actually get results.

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There is real magic in creating a culture of people who, instead of telling you why everything can't be done, tell you why it CAN be done. That is the difference the Gallup organization cited when their research showed that for every \$10,000 in payroll, \$3,400 is lost to “disengaged employees.” You can't afford that. And THAT is why you have a Hoopla Team.

## **SIDEBAR**

### **Be the Hoopla!**

Don't just put a Hoopla Team in place and retreat to your office to wait for reports. Show your support of their efforts by grabbing the Hoopla spirit with both hands

- Realize fully that Hoopla isn't silliness or a sign of weakness. It's a demonstration of a daily commitment to joy.
- Show by example how you want and expect others to behave as they cheer and encourage each other.
- Expect good things from the people around you and reward them with palpable appreciation and recognition.
- Be sincere, and don't be afraid to let that sincerity show.
- Respect and be kind to each other. You're in this together.
- Don't wait for an annual awards presentation to let people know you value their performances.
- Treat everyone the way you'd like to be treated, and admit it—you're just as happy with a pat on the back as anyone.

*Roxanne Emmerich is renowned for her ability to transform “ho-hum” workplaces into massive results-oriented “bring-it-on” environments. To discover how you can ignite the passion of your employees, catapult performance to new levels, and boost the morale of your company subscribe to the [Thank God It's Monday](http://www.ThankGodItsMonday.com)<sup>TM</sup> e-zine at [www.ThankGodItsMonday.com](http://www.ThankGodItsMonday.com).*