



# PRETTY GOOD TEAM RITUALS

## IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED

A strong team culture can make the difference between a productive, engaging work environment and a dull, disconnected group of clock-punchers. One of the oldest and most powerful ways to establish that culture is through ritual.

Rituals are **social** activities intended to create a strong feeling of **community**, and a sense of **focus**. Decide what you want to achieve, check out the lists below, then adopt, adapt, and apply some of these ideas to your own team situation. They can be serious, or silly, whatever best fits your team personality. The key is that they are **social**, so decide **together** what you want to do, then go for it. And don't forget to **have fun!**

### Improving Productivity

- ◆ Convene a daily 5-minute stand-up huddle to set priorities for the day; start and end on time
- ◆ Start meetings by sharing great team plays that someone else made
- ◆ Have someone share a "pro-tip of the week"
- ◆ Include a brief "trivia quiz" in your meetings; make topics work-related; let different people lead it; use a fun format like Jeopardy
- ◆ Take the meeting off site once a month – a coffee shop, restaurant, library, get creative
- ◆ Pick a "company value of the week" – open a meeting with a relevant story about what it means and why it's important, or ask others to share
- ◆ Have an After Action Review after every significant event; capture what went well and why so that you can keep on doing that. Talk about how it can be even better next time; focus on what happened, not on placing blame
- ◆ Start every meeting with an inspirational quote or reading
- ◆ End meetings with a ritual phrase that's meaningful; example: after every briefing, the precinct captain in *Hill Street Blues* advises his officers, "Let's be careful out there."
- ◆ Have an afternoon "stretch break" at an odd but significant time, maybe 3:37 pm; someone rings a bell, meet at the break room, stretch, and share how it's going and encourage each other for the final push of the day

### Celebrating Milestones

- ◆ Wear Hawaiian shirts the day after the team scores a big win
- ◆ Have a putt-putt golf/pizza party after reaching a key goal
- ◆ Have a monthly social hour at a favorite night spot or restaurant
- ◆ Celebrate high points and birthdays with a monthly lunch out; everyone signs a card
- ◆ Mount a sales bell – when someone makes a sale, hit the bell
- ◆ When you land a key new client, gather everyone together, talk about the ways that everyone contributed to the success, and elect a key player to have the honor of hitting a gong
- ◆ Make a "growing totem" an item given to the person making the greatest team play each month as voted on by everyone else; the awardee must add something to the totem and explain its significance (often humorous) before it is awarded to the next person
- ◆ Host a "Last Friday Brown Bag" lunch at the end of the month and talk about team successes



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- ◆ Boss serves doughnuts and coffee to the top performing team of the previous week
- ◆ Have the Birthday Person bring the treat of their choice for all to share

### Forming Connections

- ◆ Do something for the community together once a quarter – work at a food bank, adopt a park, support a charity, find a need and fill it together
- ◆ Together, come up with a monthly “Random Act of Kindness” that you can all do together, and then go make it happen
- ◆ Pitch in to donate holiday meals to families in need
- ◆ Share “highs” and “lows” for the week, they can be personal or work-related
- ◆ Pick a question that everyone answers; example “What is your favorite food, and why?”
- ◆ Spell each other’s names vertically, then write a descriptive word about them starting with each letter in their name; share; keep it positive!
- ◆ Bring toys to the meeting and let people choose one; ask them to speak about what they chose and why

### Welcoming New Team Members

- ◆ Give them a “team mug” for their coffee/tea with your team’s logo/name
- ◆ Assign them a “sponsor for the day” each day of the week until they have been teamed with everyone
- ◆ After 90 days on the team, hold a special “initiation ceremony” where they are given the team T-shirt, lab coat, or other memento to recognize their status as full team member
- ◆ Have each teammate contribute something small, inexpensive, and unique to a “survival kit” for the new person and have them explain how it can help them
- ◆ Have a mini-graduation ceremony when the new person completes orientation: cap, gown, cake, cards
- ◆ Each day have someone different bring in “Rookie Cookies” – treats for the new person – and take some time to introduce themselves and get to know each other
- ◆ Engineer an in-office scavenger hunt for the new hires that encourages them to get to know people all over the organization

### Rituals for Remote Teams

- ◆ Start conference calls by having members call out someone on their team for something good they did
- ◆ End the weekly meet-up with people sharing a “hot tip of the week”
- ◆ Circulate an inspirational quote by a “Famous Dead Guy;” make it the theme of the week
- ◆ Add a “break room” to your chat application where people can share funny photos, recipes, gifs or weekend ideas
- ◆ Make one video chat an “off-site” where members change their work location and try to check in from some place unusual



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- ◆ At holiday time, send gift cards to each other, then have them show what they purchased on a video call – it can provide fun insight into each other's personality
- ◆ Group Gift – when a teammate has a success, praise them on the video call, then mute them while the others discuss a gift to order them on line; maybe don't tell them what it is.
- ◆ Guide some tours – use time in a video call for one person each week to take everyone on a brief tour of their work space
- ◆ Anxious and Excited – at the start of the week, each person shares one thing they are anxious about and one they are excited about; helps to ID key issues and gives everyone a chance to support and assist
- ◆ In meetings with in-person and remote attendees, ask for input from the remote people first to keep them top of mind
- ◆ Get together once in a while. You can build stronger bonds when you know each other personally, so find a way to meet in person; pick a location that is fun and be sure to set aside some deliberate "fun time"
- ◆ Have a "coffee hour" where everyone tunes in from their favorite local coffee shop; discuss which one is best and why

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