

Winning Together

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Introduction

When work teams and organizations are working effectively; delivering business results and people feeling fulfilled in their jobs, it is usually because many elements for winning together are functioning well. When groups are not functioning well, it is helpful to analyze the group and identify which of these elements are malfunctioning and intervene strategically. The elements below are divided into three functions: **Vision**, which include a vision statement, a mission statements and goals. **Process** which include: cooperation, contracts, commitment, multiculturalism, communication, sustenance and reward, conflict resolution, and transitions and **Outcome** concerning individual and group assessment and product. Leaders of collaborate groups or organizations are familiar with and supports and practices the elements describe here. The elements are applicable to personal internal dialogue when different parts of us; our values and morals are in conflict with our wants and or the needs of others and when our wants are in conflict with our desire to please others. The elements are also applicable in interpersonal relationships as well as in interagency and inter-group relationships and how governments, corporations, schools and other organizations and associations function. This article will focus on organizational applications of the elements.

Elements for winning together

Vision

Vision includes a description of the group; an operational strategy for how the group works together including: underlying values for the group; what the group is hoping to accomplish; and the actions needed for success. Vision is a dynamic process. It is an understanding, an agreement and a commitment by all members of the group to work together at maintaining the integrity of the group or organization and achieving its purpose. The vision statement describes the organization's values and behaviors expected of team members in working together. The vision statement is the most basic and necessary element for winning together. A community or group wins together when they have a common goal such as: profit, a world without war, a school that is successful educating students; producing an excellent product or a maintaining a loving marriage and family.

Winning Together moves individuals from “being a winner,” personally, to winning with other. Winning together occurs where two individuals or a group of individuals reach a mutual goal in

support of a mutual vision.

Winning together means that both or all persons or parties involved win; the group wins and the group's mutual goal or vision also wins. In other words, I win, you win and the company or organization wins as do the students, customers or clients.

The VISION STATEMENT is a brief paragraph worded in the present tense that describes the group or organization functioning and producing to its fullest potential. Vision statements are best when stated in positive language in the present tense; avoiding words like "not", "try", "stop" using instead words like "will, is, are".

Example: The Falcon Research Leadership Team is an empowered, energetic, trusting, supportive, and collaborative community who lead successful collaborate teams and deliver excellent results to the company.

The vision statement sets the direction for how the team members behave in working towards the goals and working with each other. It is Important for as many members of the organization or their representatives have an opportunity to provide input into the working of the vision statement. Get buy in from all members or the organization and make it part of the interviewing process of new hires. Distribute the vision statement and post in work and meeting areas to remind and inspire all team members of the mutual goal. Some organizations may want a measurable deliverable attached to it such as "the company will gain a 7% increase in profits as a result of our work". Or, "we will increase our membership by 20%." or "85% of our freshman class will graduate."

Gordon Bethune, understood the importance of a clear, measurable vision and mutual goals in moving Continental Airlines from being nearly bankrupt when he took over in 1994 to becoming one of the most successful airlines in the country (Bethune, G 1998). He, along with all of the employees who had been discouraged by the instability and unpopularity of the company, agreed that getting passengers to their destination on time needed to be their primary goal and vision. The airline went from 61% of "on time" arrivals in January 1994 and being ranked last in the ten top airlines for on time arrivals to being the top airline with "on time" arrivals by March of 1995.

MISSION and VISION are sometimes used interchangeably. You may want to write a Mission statement in addition to a Vision statement in order to describe, in greater detail how the group operates when working towards its vision. The Mission statement can be longer than the Vision statement and include the underlying values that serve as guiding principles for the group's

activities.

Example: In working towards their goal of “getting passengers to their destinations on time,” Bethune realized that the vision needed to be broader so that the whole company was working together. The mission became: *to run a good airline—an airline that got planes in on time, with their bags; that fed its passengers and treated them well; that showed them nice looking planes all painted the same color, with first class seats, frequent flyer miles and polite people working at the gates and on the reservation lines.* (G. Bethune 1998)

The mission statement can also include: when the group meets, who facilitates the meetings, how decisions are made, an organizational chart and other procedures that assist with the group working toward the vision. Such details can also be described in the goals.

GOALS describe who will do what by when. They include guide posts, action steps, time lines and point persons who are responsible for seeing that the action steps are being taken which moves the group towards its vision.

As part of revamping the company, moving from an “authoritarian” style of management to a culture of collaborative leadership, and empowering employees, Gordon Bethune “burned the employees’ manual and organized a committee to rewrite the manual. Instead of calling it a manual, they called it “Guidelines.” “The new guidelines,” says Bethune, “are supposed to help people solve problems; give them a sense of where the boundaries are... we want them to use their heads and use their recourses. We don’t want robots, we want team members.” In describing goal setting to accomplish the mission, Bethune continues, “now we give them actual goals instead of rules—and rewards if they make the goals rather than punish them if they miss them.

Goals can be action steps that support the mission. They may be job descriptions broken down into specific steps or be more general action steps for the group.

Goals are reviewed and changed and new ones defined on ongoing bases.

The following are examples of goals and action steps.

1. Develop a mission and Action plan by facilitating a group using a brainstorming sessions; creating statements and circulating to the full team (Jeffrey Longoria) by Tuesday.

2. Whole team convenes and decides on a vision statement.

(Jeffery Longoria) Wednesday

3. Administrative support is requested at our meeting on

Thursday. (Elaine Saratoga)

4. Dialogue and follow-up maintained with on-going support

from administration. (Frank Diaz and Jennifer Paul)

5. Regularly, biweekly meetings in the collaboration room. (Carmen Scott)

6. Avoid re-scheduling meetings based on individual agendas.

7. Develop a Collaboration room for project teams meetings. (Mary Goetz)

8. Develop an environment that enables our Vision and Mission statements (Jo Harris and Fritz Holtz)

9. Sponsor a fun event for department (All - Katherine Ross)

10. Review January action steps and report to the group. (Sarah McDermott) February 15.

11. Monitor our progress; calls on each other when we are not living the Mission: Ombudsman – All

This last goal leads to thinking about and monitoring the group process which is described in the following section.

Process

Process describes the relational dynamics that support and can also impede the group working together to win together and live out the Vision, Mission, and Goals. Process elements include: Cooperation, contracts, commitment, multiculturalism, communication, sustenance and reward, conflict resolution, and transitions.

Cooperation

Cooperation describes the desired relational interactions between members of the team; between the team and the leaders; and between the team and other entities outside the team necessary for achieving success. Cooperation is the operational foundation, the dynamic basis upon which Winning Together will occur.

While cooperation is an attitude and a value, it exemplifies itself behaviorally one relational transaction at a time; one person says something, the other person responds. Relational competition is the opposite of cooperation and relational competition interferes with the group members working together and is counterproductive to the team's efforts. Relational cooperative behaviors are based on the assumption that all members of the group regardless to role and level are important to the group. When the element of cooperation is functioning in a group, all members, employees, students of the group are treated with dignity and respect and are included in the group process and whenever possible to the extent that it is possible on all decisions that affect them. Individuals in groups that operate cooperatively speak up about their wants,

opinions, ideas and feelings and are listened to and responded to by others in the group.

Cooperation is also based on the assumption that there is enough time for recognizing each other by listening and responding respectfully to each other. Relational cooperation feels good and leads to winning together.

Competition in relationships is based on an assumption of scarcity and the belief that there are better than and lesser than people and function in the world and Relational competition results in a fighting for power either from a one up place or a one down place. "Do it my way". "I can't". Fear is the underlying feeling of all competitive relationships. Competitive behaviors are also based on the assumptions that there is one right way of doing things, "my or our way is right way, your way is wrong." It also assumes that someone always wins and someone always loses in relationships. Competitive behaviors include: rescuing, blaming, avoiding, hoarding, sabotaging, power plays from a one up or one down place of power and secret and lies. (Steiner 1974p.155-161; Karpman 1968 p39-46; Lewis, Jo Bowen 1998) Arguing to win is competitive and usually results in team breakdown because in this type of competition, no one wins. It may be necessary, at those times, to agree to disagree. (Batts2000p5) Debate and discussion to bring out all the points of view on a subject can be productive. It is useful to be aware when competing is occurring in relationships. Stop and ask, "Am I trying to win here instead of making my point or verbalizing my feelings and getting acknowledged? Am I listening to the other's point and feelings and acknowledging them?" Learn to be aware of how your body feels during useless competitive interactions; tense, tight muscles and raised blood pressure. Practice shifting to a cooperative frame and body state: relaxed, open-minded,. It is important in cooperative relationships that people's point is made, understood and responded to. Relational competitive behaviors are barriers to teams and organizations winning together. Other questions to ask to assess the level of relational cooperation and relational competition in your group may include the following:

Are members of this group sharing resources and information?

Is there a spirit of working together or is everyone out for themselves?

Am I responded to when I speak?

Do I feel included? Am I including others?

Do I feel included and respected by administration?

In cooperative environments, it is possible for individuals working diligently to improve their performance and chances for advancement and working together for the success of the project and group goals. Personal achievement and working for group goals are not mutually exclusive. Groups function in a competitive world and environment. The strengths and weaknesses of both relational competition and relational cooperation are described in fig. 1.

Relational competition and cooperation

Assumptions for Competition	Assumptions for Cooperation
<p>Scarcity: there is not enough...</p> <p>Inequality: Better than; less than</p> <p>Power: Perpetuate inequality by holding on to power and disempowering others.</p> <p>Competition: Someone wins and someone loses, always.</p> <p>There is only one right way, either or thinking.</p>	<p>Equality: Each person is worthy and valued. Feelings, needs and input from all are taken into account.</p> <p>Enough: There is enough: time recognition, energy for the relationship.</p> <p>Power: Power and information is shared.</p> <p>Responsibility: Each person is 100% responsible for asking and arranging to get what she/she wants.</p> <p>Mutual vision / goal</p>
<p>Functional Competitive Behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Position Power, inclusive hierarchy. + Debate + Striving for Excellence, achievement, success and advancement. + Taking a position on issues; being open to change; agreeing to disagree + Making and acting on a decision <p>Ineffective Competitive Behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unconditional disregard for self or other. (Not listening, not speaking up; blaming, shaming or attacking self or other. - Power Plays: one up and one down “Do it my way because I say so and I have the position power”. “Take care of me, I’m helpless and you have the means” “poor me”. - Secretes and lies, half-truths or misinformation. - Dysfunctional Rescues - Jealousy, envy, revenge, win-lose communication, fighting to win; violence, war and treats of violence and war. - All Non Target and Target Behaviors 	<p>Functional Cooperative Behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Asking for wants including clarification and or to make a point. + Stroking self and others positive and conditionally negative. + Setting limits and boundaries + Sharing Pertinent Information + Verbalizing Resentments and other feelings with permission from the other. + Checking out Reality; finding out what is true and what is not true about perceptions and interpretations. + Accounting; offenses are accounted for with contract for learning and closure. + All Alternative Behaviors to modern oppression and internalized oppression. <p>Ineffective Cooperative Behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Over adapting, pleasing instead of speaking up. - Endless negotiations - Abdicating leadership, position power and personal responsibility. - Seeking consensus when a decision is needed. - Acting nice when angry or in need. - Avoiding conditional negative feedback.

fig 1. ©Felipe N. Garcia, 2005

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Cooperation is enhanced and protected with a clear and mutually agreed-upon contract.

Contracts

Contracts are mutually accepted agreements. There are many types of relational contracts operating in a team and organization. Some describe roles and responsibilities, power and authority, and mutual benefits. (Berne 1972 p442) Contracts assume competence and are on behalf of a legal goal. (Steiner 1974 p243-250)

Examples: There are contracts between the employee and the company which describe benefits in exchange for expert contributions; there are contracts among the members of the group regarding who will do what and when. There are contracts between the team and the leader or leaders. There are simple contracts such as “I will meet you at a certain place at a certain time.”

There are three or more corner contracts. (English 1975 p.383-384) Three corner contracts may involve a scientist, a business director, and technical director, a manager with a local director and remote director. In the consulting business, three corner contracts involve the consultant providing the service; the person paying for the service; and the person receiving the service. In schools, three corner contracts include the contract between the student and the teacher and the teacher and her department head or the principle; and then the contract between the teacher, the student and the parent. These can get complicated and the clearer the expectations and agreements the enhanced probability of cooperation and winning together.

One of the ways that Gordon Bethune of Continental Airlines increased team effort in meeting the goal of getting the planes in on time was to contract with employees that if they achieved the goal of being on the top three list of airlines arriving on time, each employee would receive a check for \$65.00. This incentive for meeting the goal was agreed upon by employees.

Continental Airlines surpassed expectations and each employee received the \$65.00 every month that airline came in on the top three list of on time arrivals. When a relational problem arises, it is often a result of unclear or conflicting contract expectations. Check out the clarity of the contract and work to clarify the contract boundaries and expectations as much as possible.

Think about the contracts that affect you in your work: which ones are clear, which are not.

Which ones are being kept, which are not? What is in your power to address and clarify? Where can you receive support for addressing the situation? Other questions useful in clarifying contracts and expectations include; “What do you expect me to do, deliver?” “What is my area of influence?” “What do you hear or understand to be your responsibility in the team?” “How will I be evaluated?”

Clear goals and mutually agreed upon contracts result in group members feeling committed to the vision.

Commitment

Commitment is indicated by the level of emotional and physical willingness to work with the others to accomplish the vision, mission and goals, Many of the other elements described here contribute to members of the team feeling committed or not. Committed members of a team or organization enjoy coming to work; are enthusiastic about their contribution to the group; are present, feel included, speak up and take others into account. First Officer Dutch Berkley, a psychologist and a pilot at Continental Airlines during the time that Gordon Bethune took over, noticed “everybody started working together and enjoying their jobs a lot more; being friendlier to each other. To me, it was amazing to see how quickly things got better as we understood and worked for the mutual goal. Animosity between groups that seemed to be constant at all levels of operations before the changes disappeared as we reaped the benefits of working together. I loved going to work.”

Some questions to ask in assessing level of commitment are:

Do I feel committed to this group and the work? Do I enjoy coming to work? Are the vision and mission clear to me? Do I buy into the vision and my role in it? Do I understand how my job contributes to our team meeting our goals? Is my job contract clear to me? Am I getting out of this as much as I put in? Do I have the resources I need to meet my job expectations? Are others carrying their load; honoring their agreements?

Am I a team player? It is important to not only judge others and the environment when exploring the reasons for personal lack of commitment. It may be that some people work better on my own and working together with others is not their style. Such people may need to take this into account in deciding on possible transfer of positions or job expectations. "Are my home/life issues affecting my commitment to work?" “Do I need to address personal Issues in some meaningful manner?

Other ways to notice the level of commitment by team members is by the number of days or meetings the member is absent, late arrivals, level of contribution in group effort and discussions; frequency of sick days. Intervention for lack of commitment may be done by addressing other elements cooperation, contract or communication.

Diversity – Inclusion – Multiculturalism

This element covers a lot of territory. First, it addresses the makeup of the group. Diverse groups in terms of gender, age, culture, race, religion, sexual preference, etc., result in richer outcomes. Because differences are challenging to our view of the world and our way of doing things, individuals in a group or organization must work harder at making sure that there is physical diversity within the group, that is, that there is representation from those variables mentioned above, namely, race, gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, age.

Sometimes diversity also means including different functions and levels in an organization in

planning and decision making. Diversity in terms of number of differences present, while important is not enough. It is also important to notice and address inclusive and excluding behaviors to ideas, feelings, opinions and suggestions, that diverse group member raise. MULTICULTURALISM pertains to noticing, understanding and appreciating differences within the group and recognizing that these differences have an impact on the functioning and productivity of the group. (Batts 2002) A lack of accounting for differences in race, culture, style, gender, age, physical ability level, function, geographical location, and such, can effect the level of commitment to the vision and results in the group or organization having internal conflict; spoken or not spoken. Dr. Valarie Batts in her article, "Is Reconciliation Possible"(Batts 2002) lists and illustrates behaviors which keep power imbalance between groups that traditionally have had more access to power (non-target groups) and groups that have had, and in many cases still have, less access to power (target groups). She also recommends alternative behaviors which can address problems and, if practiced, result in richer collaboration by members resulting in winning together.

Assessing this element requires: noticing the makeup of the group in terms of the variables mentioned above; noticing who talks, who doesn't; who gets advanced, who doesn't; what projects get funded, which don't. Individuals are invited to be aware and do something about their own non-inclusive behaviors and feelings of being excluded by practicing cooperative behaviors mentioned in fig. 1 practicing the external responsive process discussed below. (Garcia 1991)

Communication

Communication is another pivotal element in building collaborate teams and organizations and winning together. Some basic guidelines for effective communication are 1) mutual respect; 2) it is ok to disagree; 3) it is not ok to blame, share or attack self or other; 4) (Batts 2000) p.5 it is important that one transactional stimulus gets responded to before another one is initiated; 5) speak from an "I" place. In a collaborative environment, it is assumed that each person is 100% responsible for getting their own needs met. Differences in terms of power and position in the organization are taken into consideration by those in managerial and executive positions by insuring that those with less status and power are given a opportunity to speak up. In "The Role of Feelings in the Workplace" (Garcia 2006) a list of initiations and responses are identified that are helpful in maintaining clear communications and addressing all of the other elements listed in this document.

Assessing the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of communication in a work team, school or organization may include asking: 1) "Do others listen and respond to my feelings, thoughts, wants, ideas and suggestions?" 2) "Do I listen and respond to other people's wants, feelings,

interpretations of my behaviors with the seed of truth?" 3) "Am I asking for what I want; checking out my interpretations of reality; verbalizing resentments and other feelings? Am I accounting for my human errors? 4) "Am I stoking others positively for their accomplishments and for being a member of the team and also negatively when their behavior is interfering with our relationship or the effectiveness of the group? 5) Am I, and are others, sharing information that is important to the success of our project? Intervening in groups where communication has broken down or is at a stand- still requires careful attention to process. It sometimes is helpful for an outside, unbiased, coach to facilitate the process.

Sustenance

Sustenance refers to having the resources needed to do the job required for meeting the goals and mutual vision of the group. Sustenance includes financial resources for the project; adequate compensation for employees or volunteers time and expertise. Sustenance also often requires recognition and appreciation for individual contributions and for those of the group as a whole. While group success is fulfilling and gratifying, personal incentives and rewards also make a difference. It was mentioned earlier that Mr. Bethune introduced a \$65.00 personal reward for each member of the organization for accomplishing the group goal. The company also entered all employees in a raffle every six months for a chance to win one of six Eddie Bower Ford Explorers that the company offered as reward for meeting the company's goals. The chance to win a new Explorer helped make the company's goal, the members' goal as well. The company won, the passengers won, and the employees won. Rewards and incentives add greatly to sustenance and commitment by members to group goals and joint vision.

The basic questions in assessing sustenance are: 1) Am I getting out of this as much as I put in? 2) Do I (we) have the resources and support to accomplish our goals? 3) Do I feel appreciated for my contributions? Intervening when dealing with issues of inequities requires individuals speaking up and re-negotiating contracts and expectations. Speaking up and asking for wants or confronting injustices and inequities may be done most effectively by the group as a whole or with support from a person with more clout in the organization.

Conflict Resolutions

Interpersonal conflicts are often an indication that someone is not being heard, being taken into account, or is being treated unfairly and feels hurt, scared and/or angry. Conflicts also result from differences on how to do things or from misuse of power, or intrusion of physical or psychological boundaries and role responsibilities. Conflict also results from competing for who "has it worse" or who is going to define reality, who is right and who is wrong. Whatever the sources of the conflict, it results in competitive behaviors which can include attacking, blaming,

shaming, and/or avoiding. Resentments and grudges, violence and war are huge indicators of conflicts requiring resolution. Untended-to conflicts can be very toxic to group functioning and success and should be addressed in some effective way as soon as possible. Resolving the conflict is usually possible if both parties listen to and acknowledge each others' feelings regardless of intention of the behavior that elicited the feelings.

The steps for conflict resolutions are similar to those for creating and maintaining collaborative teams. 1) The first step is for each person to acknowledge and treat each other with mutual respect 2) All parties Involved In the conflict must have an understanding that they want to or have to work together for the benefit of each other and the project or vision. 3) Then each person takes turns verbalizing their resentments and feelings. 4) Each person listens to the others' feelings, ideally reflecting or mirroring those feelings. After everyone" feels heard and understood", 5) Each person identify and states their wants. After all persons have had an opportunity to verbalize their wants, clearly (6 the persons involved in the conflict brainstorm options for solving the conflict and 7) decide on a plan of action. This process may need to repeat if the chosen option continues to result in conflict. If the conflict is old and very emotionally charged, it is helpful to have an outside coach or consultant facilitate the process.

Transition

Transitions in life and in organizations are constant. All endings are transitions from one reality to a different reality. New beginnings are also transitions from the past to the future.

Noticing and addressing transitions in a group or organization is very important because there are usually strong feelings being felt; expressed or repressed, and impact the effectiveness of the group work. Acknowledging feelings is important because it is a way to acknowledging members unconditionally. Peoples' feelings and opinions feel to them like an expression of who they are.

Example: The following are a short list of the types of transitions that can impact members of a groups: 1) cutting back on funding, 2) "downsizing" or taking projects or responsibilities away from a group or individual; 3) someone dies or leaves the group; 4) a new person joins the group; 5) another company is acquired by the parent company; 6) a popular boss gets promoted and leaves; 7) someone in the team gets promoted. Transitions can be positive or negative. Sometimes they have both positive and negative aspects to them. Sometimes, when someone is promoted, they are confused because, in addition to the joy that the promotion brings, often there are also some sad and scared feelings. The sad and scared feelings make sense because they are about letting go of a secure, comfortable environment which is familiar and safe while moving to a new beginning that is not yet known. (Bridges 1980 p.112-130) It is like the first day of school all over again. Responding to transitions involves:

leadership or someone else acknowledging the feelings of grief, fear and or anger that group members are having in response to the change and allowing time for the healing from the loss and providing reassurance and or real facts about the scare. People will do better responding to reality instead of rumors or non-information. Transitions require that members of the group; after acknowledging their feelings work on self empowerment to acknowledge their responsibility and power for taking care of their career and their employment.

William Bridges, in his book, *Transition: Making Sense of Life's Changes*; provides excellent strategies for coping with difficult and sometimes painful transition.

Outcome

Outcome pertains to the results of the group's efforts and to ongoing evaluation and assessment of the group and individual effectiveness in accomplishing the vision.

Accountability

Assessing the effectiveness of the group processes systems and the outcomes are important both for the group as a whole and for individuals in the group. "How are we (I) doing?" "What is working and what is not working?" "What needs to change?" "Are we having the impact we want?" "Are we meeting our goals?" "Are we making a profit?" "What is the quality of our product?"

These questions and assessments can be informal or more formal through surveys, focused groups and other research instruments. Ongoing evaluations and giving and receiving feedback about the group or individual's effectiveness or ineffectiveness can lead the way to improved performance. Assessment is also possible by the quality and sales of product.

Share information about successes and areas of improvement with group members through newsletters, at meetings or through e mail. The information can serve as an impetus for continued commitment to working and winning together to achieve the vision and accomplish the goals

Product

Product refers to the results of the group's effort. It assesses the success of the product designed and/or produced by the group. Sales and profit are natural evaluators of the product. The quality of the product requires on-going evaluations.

Sometimes, the end goal is not a product but rather, a service, such as: health care provided by a hospital; quality of education provided by a teacher or a school; community services offered by a church or other service organization; or training and consultations provided by a group of consultants to an organization. Sometimes, the vision is much grander like working for world peace or an end to terrorism. These outcomes are more difficult to assess. Feedback and tangible results can be indicators of levels of success.

Summary

Building and maintaining collaborative work teams and organizations and winning together is enhanced when every member of the team and organization buys in to a clear, well-defined vision which defines the group and the mutual desired outcome. Other essential elements that enhance a group winning together are relational cooperation and commitment by members of the group to the vision and the group work. Also important are clearly defined and agreed upon contracts, and effective communication among members and between groups. Winning together is enhanced by diversity in the group makeup and multicultural recognition, understanding and appreciation of the differences that members bring to the group. Cooperative conflict resolutions, abundant sustenance and incentives for individual members and for getting the group's work accomplished contribute greatly to group cohesion and success. Attention to transitions and member's feelings in response to the transitions is important in dealing with change. Individual and group accountability by assessing what is working and what needs improvement is an ongoing process for maintaining group effectiveness and staying on course. Celebrating wins and learning from errors also encourages winning together.

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