

October 2015

Team Manager Tips

The recent Destination News and Updates included an article from Melissa Dick, a six year team manager in Tennessee, with eight tips for new team managers. I have taken her tips and added some thoughts from both of us. I think you will find the list a good resource whether you are a new or experienced Team Manager.

1. **Find a Co-Team Manager** – Ask a friend to be your partner in crime.
2. **Find a Mentor** – Find someone who has been a Team Manager before and can answer questions such as “Is this interference” or “my team dynamics are not working, what do I do?” As mentioned in the last edition, CreateME has a Team Manager Resource Contact. If you have a question you can contact Lorrie at managerresources@createme.org
3. **Go to Team Manager Training** – Team Manager Training is a great resource and a great place to meet your peers and make new friends.
4. **Read** – The information you receive when you register may seem overwhelming, but it is helpful. Don’t read it all at once, but read it and then refer to it when you have questions.
5. **Get Volunteers** – Snacks, carpooling, instant challenge materials and more. What skills and talents do your parents have that they could share with the team?
6. **Learn how to ask questions and listen** – It’s hard not to give the team answers. Work on asking them open-ended questions and watch the results.
7. **Laugh** – If you’re not having fun, your team is not having fun. Enjoy the

process with them and show them you know how to have fun.

8. **Enjoy the process** – As you continue the process you will see the team members grow and learn new skills. You are a part of that.

Your First Team Meetings

Whether you are a new or returning Team Manager, the first meetings of a new year can provoke some anxiety.

First things first, your job is not to control the team. They are in control of what their project and how they work on it. That being said, it is your job to guide them and make sure they follow rules and don’t do anything that could hurt themselves or someone else. A little chaos is good for the imagination, but when they start jumping on tables it is going a little too far.

How do you help them pick a challenge? SLOW DOWN! Unless you are starting in January, you have time to let your team get to know each other. Use the first few meetings to play team building games and learn about each other. What are the individual skills of each team member and what skills do they have as a whole. You can find some great resources for this in your Team Manager materials.

Once your team gets to know each other, they will be able to make a better choice about which Central Challenge they want to work on.

Picking a Challenge

Remember that picking a challenge is up to the team. As a Team Manager, there may be challenges that you feel confident in or think would be really fun to try. It is okay if you are not an expert in the challenge that is picked. The team needs to become the expert.

If you know of someone who is thinking about DI or if you have any personal contacts at other schools or organizations that could help us spread the word about DI, please let either Chad or Tim know. We want to help make it possible for everyone to experience Maine DI and become a DIMAINIAC!

Picking a challenge is different depending on the age of the team. One of the things I have done for all my teams from third grade through high school is to take the summary of each challenge and turn it into an instant challenge. This allows the team to experience the challenge and get a quick idea if they really like it. The ability for the team to try a challenge before they pick it has completely changed the decision they made based on reading the challenges. The difference between the hypothetical (reading) and the practical (doing) allows the team to see the challenges in different ways.

For elementary teams you may not want to have them read the complete challenges. The summary is probably enough. However, you, as a Team Manager, want to read through all the challenges and prepare notes or a table on all of the different requirements of each challenge. The summaries do not cover all the requirements and those might entice or dissuade a team from choosing a challenge.

For early middle school (ours is 5-8) you may want to do the same thing, but as the team members get older and more experienced they should have the responsibility of reading through the challenges and finding the requirements on their own. They may still miss some and you need to be prepared with open ended questions to help them find what they are missing.

At the high school level, I hand them the challenges and ask them to read through them. I still do the instant challenge piece I mentioned above, but everything else is on them. I am there as a resource when they have questions about what something means, but not much more.

These are things that have worked for me. I am sure that there are a million different ways to help teams pick challenges. Use what works best for you and your team. If you are not sure, ask the Team Managers around you. I have never met a Team Manager who was not happy

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to talk about their teams and how they work with their teams.

Team Managers – You are not alone!

Sometimes Team Managers feel like they are on their own, with no help in sight. This is not true. CreateME wants to serve as a resource to all Team Managers. These Newsletters are one way we can provide information. Our Team Manager contact Lorrie, managerresources@createme.org is another. We encourage everyone to take advantage of the resources CreateME has to offer and to contact us with questions. We want you to have as great a year as your team.

As mentioned last month, we can help you recruit teams if you don't already have some. Members of CreateMe are willing to participate in DI nights in your area. We will bring challenges, information, and excitement. All we ask of you is that you work with us to arrange a date, secure the space, and invite people from all over, not just your district or immediate area. We already have one scheduled in Hampden and we are excited to do more.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please contact Chad Reynolds at affiliateddirector@createme.org

2015-2016 Dates

One of the things we hear about each year is not getting dates out to team managers soon enough. We listened. Below is a list of dates for the upcoming season. A complete list can be found on our calendar at www.createme.org

- 10/14/15 – DI Fun Night in Hampden
- 11/21/15 – Team Manager Training in Washburn
- January 2016 – Deadline for registration (but don't wait, register early)
- 2/27/16 – Southern Regional Showcase
- 3/5/16 – Northern Regional Showcase
- 4/9/16 – State Celebration at UMO
- 5/25/16 – Global Finals

Questions: contact Chad at affiliateddirector@createme.org or any of the CreateME team at <http://www.createme.org/index.php/get-involved/contact-us/>