

# How to Keep Committees From Turning Into Evil Monsters

Six ways for committee heads to keep their committee on the path of good and away from evil

## 1 THE BLIMP RIDE RULE

Everyone wants to ride on a blimp. Yet very few people ever get the chance. A good committee is created with this in mind: Smallness and exclusivity are good things. A committee positioned like a blimp ride will always be more effective than one positioned like a cattle call.

## 2 THE KILL RULE

Kill every committee possible, and kill it before it forms. Use the handy chart below to determine the usefulness of your committee before it forms.



## 3 THE DEVOTION RULE

Only allow people to be on your committee (to ride in the blimp) after you are sure that they understand the purpose and importance of the task, and agree with the objectives.\*

## 4 THE SINGULAR SPINE RULE

Effective committees require a clear leader, one who can make a decision. This person must have a strong backbone, because decisions based on fairness and respect of feelings and opinions will always be watered-down decisions, resulting in watered-down marketing.\*\*

## 5 THE CIQ RULE

Write and provide to your committee members a *Creative Input Questionnaire (CIQ)* for them to fill out early in the committee process. Collect and review the written answers (hopefully prior to the very first meeting). The CIQ allows three things to happen:

- A. The CIQ allows individuals to think as individuals, before they're taken over by *committee think* in the meetings.
- B. The CIQ allows timid committee members to provide you with opinions, viewpoints and insights which otherwise might never be conveyed.
- C. The CIQ may generate some great ideas as people think alone and on their own, before meeting as a group and/or specific areas of focus are assigned or suggested.

### Some Suggested Questions for Your Creative Input Questionnaire:

- Please write (in a single complete sentence) our assignment as you regard it. Begin your sentence with, "Our assignment is..."
- Please list the three most important questions our committee needs to answer.
- Please list three words which describe our goal.
- Extra Credit: What word or term of jargon within our field have you grown to hate?

## 6 THE ANTI-SKID RULES

Committees go bad when they skid into the chasm of committee think. Committee think creates bland, non-stimulating and indistinct results.\*\*\* Avoid skidding into committee think by following the three anti-skid rules:

- A. Demand devil's advocate questions.
- B. Read portions of committee members' CIQs aloud.
- C. Have three unexpected (and perhaps unrelated) surprises in the room. At various points, whip one out.

\* The worst type of committee member is a drafted committee member.

\*\* One of the greatest compliments one can give another person: "She knows how to make a decision."

\*\*\* Committee Think also produces apathy, dullness, long meetings, and pointless alterations.

### A BRIEF BIDLACKIAN GLOSSARY OF COMMITTEE TERMS

**COMMITTEE THINK** A condition which comes into existence when a committee is waylaid by majority opinion, a strong leader is absent, or as committee members begin not to care.

**THE SPINELESS NOODLE** A committee leader who doesn't want to hurt feelings, is timid about prodding the committee into making decisions, and is afraid of giving orders and making declarations. The spineless noodle is very nice, but has no backbone.

**THE GRUMPY BUMP** A committee member who is opposed to logic, who hears but does not listen, and who hates creativity due to deep personal issues. Committee heads are frequently tripped up by Grumpy Bumps just as one might trip over a bump in the sidewalk. Grumpy Bumps offer no valuable input, but supply lots of input nonetheless. Avoid Grumpy Bumps as you avoid bumps in the sidewalk: Walk around them, quietly.