Celebrate your devil's advocates. They will keep you out of hot water and help make you more successful than you've ever dreamed. All you have to do is translate their statements into powerful "how" questions that your dreamers and realists can understand.

STOP AND THINK

Here's another idea: Have Stop-and-Think sessions. My VP friend led a reengineering project that I facilitated. Every few weeks she'd have a "Stop-and-Think" session to evaluate where we were, if we were off course, what we'd missed, what could be tuned up and any brilliant flashes of the obvious that we could incorporate into the design. This was the ideal opportunity for the Devil's Advocates to voice their concerns. I often found myself translating their statements into questions so that the discussion could move forward.

WHAT ARE OUR OPTIONS

When another executive I know gets stuck, she pauses and asks herself: "What are my options?" (Notice this is *Innovator* thinking.) When the status quo stops working, Processors don't know what to do, but Innovators start looking around for new ways to achieve their outcome. You can too. Just notice when the team is stuck and ask: "What are our options?"

THE WALT DISNEY STRATEGY

Consider using the Walt Disney strategy for animation projects. First they would *dream* a story, then storyboard it, and then begin with pencil animations of the story. They would film the pencil animations and take them down under a stairway they called "the box" to screen them. This is where they would don their curmudgeon hats and pick apart the animations and story. Then they'd go back with what they'd learned and enhance the story and the animations, which led to some of the most loved children's movies of all time. Consider using one conference room purely for ideation, another space for making it happen, and still another for criticism.

MOTIVATE YOUR TEAM!

DREAMERS, REALISTS, AND CRITICS

I was having lunch with a friend of mine who was a VP with one of the Baby Bells. She mentioned the value of having a curmudgeon or Devil's Advocate on any team. "They keep you honest," she said. I replied, "The Dot-Com crash was a clear example of a curmudgeon-free zone. No one was attending to the need to produce a profit, and anyone who mentioned it was probably shouted down and introduced to the idea of "the next round of venture capital funding."

I have found that every successful team has three main players: *dreamers*, *realists*, and *critics* (a.k.a. Devil's Advocates).

DREAMERS

Dreamers imagine possible futures like dot-com companies. In the language from *Motivate Everyone*, these people are *revolutionary innovators and achievers*. Like Captain Kirk, they like to "boldly go where no man has gone before." In terms of management fads, think *reengineering* as an example of this mindset.

If you want to motivate the *Dreamer* on your team, talk to them in terms of the *new or innovative ways* to *achieve* the desired objective.

REALISTS

Realists turn these dreams into reality like dot-com sites with the attending infrastructure and so on. In the language of *Motivate Everyone*, these folks are *evolutionary, procedural achievers*. They like to get things done in a systematic and ever improving way. *Six Sigma* or *TQM* are examples of this mindset.

If you want to motivate the *Realist* on your team, talk to them in terms of the *step-by-step or improved method* to *achieve* the desired objective.

CRITICS

Dreamers and Realists are both motivated to move toward possibilities without necessarily considering the consequences.

Critics, on the other hand, are *problem solvers*. They can look at the dreams, plans, and realities, and tell you what's missing or in error. This is the great value of the critic-they keep you out of the inevitable tar pits in any new project.

Unfortunately, critics aren't very good at communicating their issues and objections. Instead of asking questions that the dreamer and realist can answer, they make statements about possible problems like:

"We wouldn't want to have the same kind of problem we had last year on that other project." Or, in the case of dot-coms: "We wouldn't want to run out of money."

And they'll keep repeating the same statement over and over again in the hopes that everyone else will see the glaring error that they see. This grates on the dreamers and realists because they want to move forward, but the critic won't let the team move forward until their objection is "heard."

When the dreamers and realists hear this kind of statement, they think "Of course we wouldn't want that; what's your question?" And that is the heart of the communication difficulty: dreamers and realists can answer questions about the dream, plan and reality, but *they don't know what to do with a statement about possible tar pits*.

So if you have a critic on your team, consider learning how to turn their statements into "how" questions that the dreamer and realist can answer: "So are you asking: how we can avoid the kind of problem we had last year?" "Are you asking: how we can avoid running out of money?"

Dreamers or realists might answer: "We'll go back for our next round of venture capital funding." To which the critic might respond: "We might consider making a profit."

"So, are you asking: how can we make a profit so that we don't need more venture capital?"

Get the idea? And if you are the critic on your team, consider shifting what seems like a perfectly logical statement into a question that the dreamers and realists can answer. They will love you for it and stop hating it when you speak up in meetings.