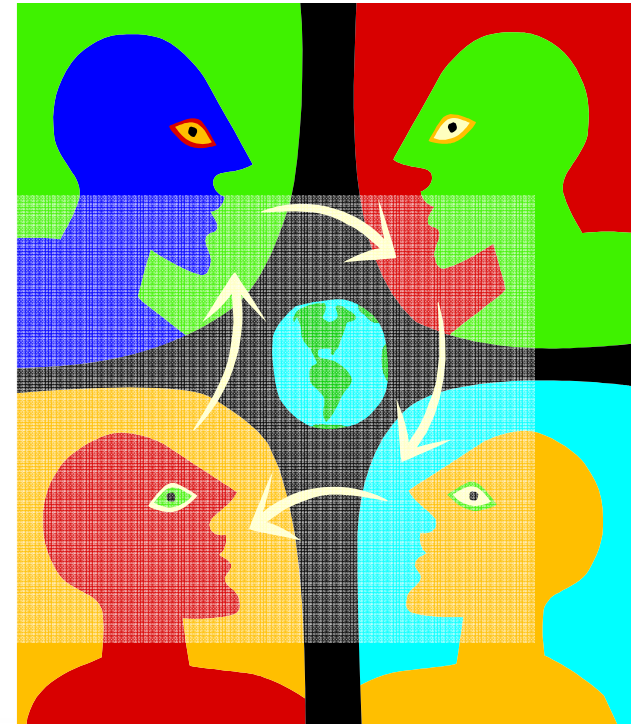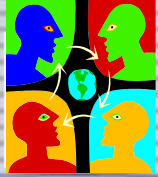# Building Relationships among Energized Employees

Challenges:

- Often not an employer of choice
- Company may not be growing
- Task pressure
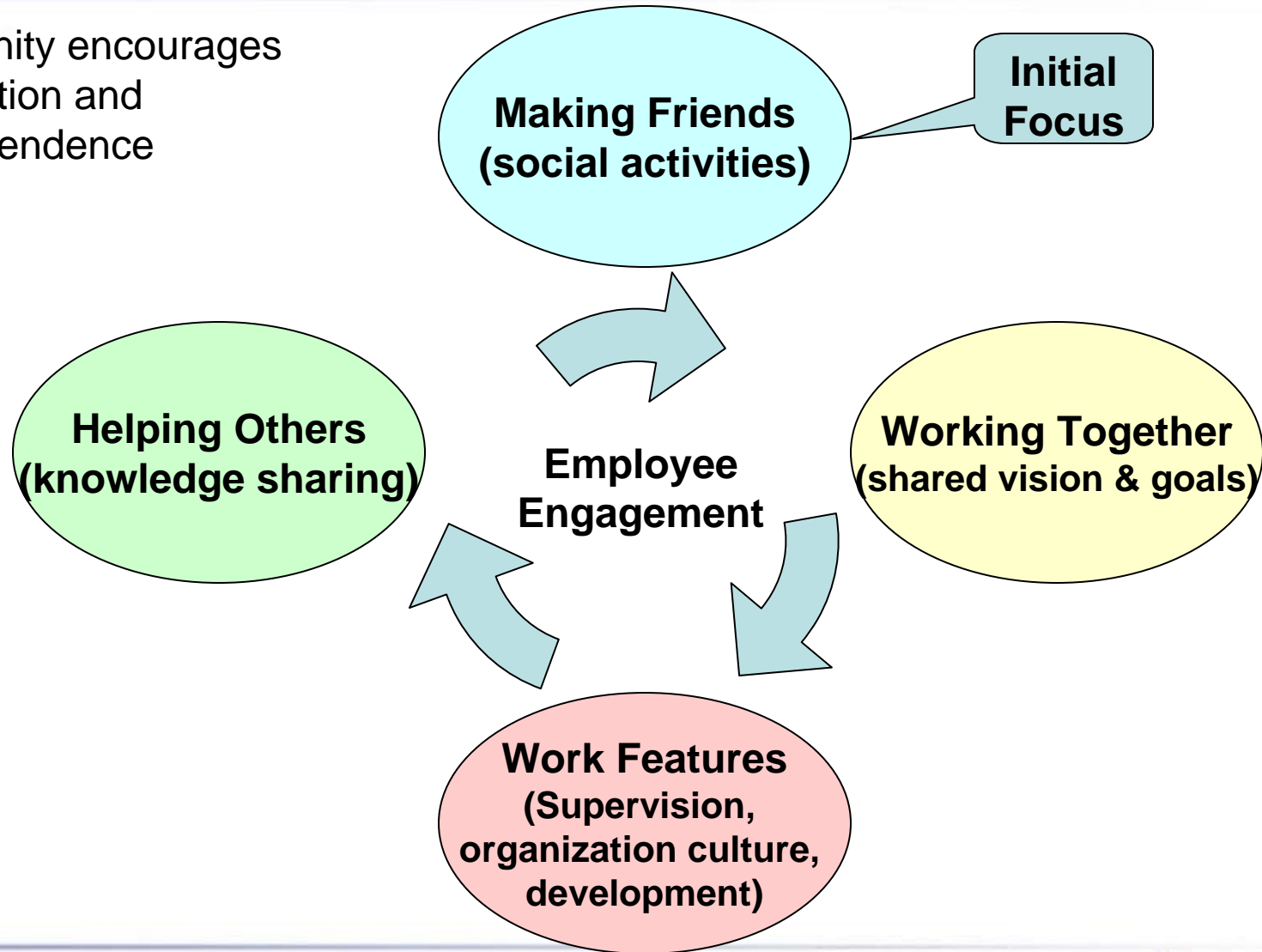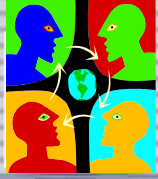- Recent organizational change

Meeting the Challenges

- **Often not an employer of choice**
  - Must reinforce a culture of friendly & helpful employees – family that cares for its members
- **Company may not be growing**
  - Must raise the energy level to offset lack of growth
- **Task pressure**
  - Must overcome burnout & put enjoyment back into work
  - Must strengthen team orientation with a shared vision
- **Recent organizational changes**
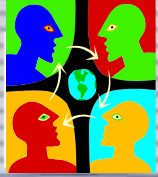 - Must rebuild team within the new organization structure

This can be accomplished by building a *community of employees* who are interested in each other's success and enjoy the company of fellow employees

Building a Community of Employees

Community encourages cooperation and interdependence

Making Friends (social activities)

Initial Focus

Helping Others (knowledge sharing)

Employee Engagement

Working Together (shared vision & goals)

Work Features (Supervision, organization culture, development)
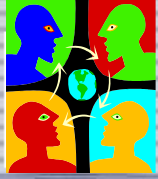
Friends at Work – Social Integration

- Requires interaction beyond daily work activity
  - Provide an alternative to job stress & burnout
  - Get to know the person behind the job
  - Gatherings help define the community & relationships
    - Reminder of commonality and shared goals

- Drivers for successful events
  - Element of "fun" and the unexpected
  - Regular schedule that involves most employees
  - Employee movement & mingling
  - Ability to identify individual employees within larger context
  - Involves employees in the event planning & running
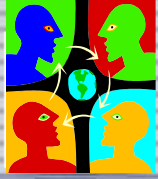 - Incorporates a specific business objective that can be met
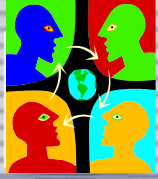
Opportunities for Interaction

- Monthly events that are employee centered
- Find reasons to "Celebrate Success"
- Employee recognition opportunities
  - Individual accomplishments & Team mileposts
  - Organizational improvement initiatives
    - Linked to helping others through sharing knowledge
- Gathering Places – purposeful and accidental
  - Share information and meet & greet
- Help establish employee identity in a crowd
   - Develop reputation & champion desired behavior

Event Ideas– partial list

- Ice cream sundae party Friday afternoon
  - Some rationale used for choice of servers
- Employee picnic out in front of the building
- New Hire awareness luncheons
- Roving juggler, mime, magician, or caricature artist during lunch
- Department-centric Open house & scavenger hunt
- Bingo party – charity fundraiser
  - Company merchandise as prizes
- Holiday contests
  - Halloween costumes, Pumpkin decorating, Christmas door decorating
- YourCo Idol Talent Show
- United Way cookie sales by Executives
- Competitive Business Simulation Championship
  - Uses available learning games with teams
 - Optional Market Maker fundraiser – game within a game

Event Planning – involving others

- **Plan high employee involvement & event leadership**
  - Builds commitment to activities through involvement
    - Much greater engagement than just passive participation
  - Opportunity for cross-organization relationship development
  - Serves as a leadership development opportunity
    - Especially for those not in supervisory positions
    - Motivation through self-actualization
  - Extends available manpower beyond Human Resources
- **Approval and oversight by Human Resources**
  - Ensures alignment to program objectives
  - Driven by Charter outlining roles & responsibilities
    - Covers event initiation, approval, & execution
- **Event Planning with a clear business purpose**
  - More than just "having fun" – some embedded benefit
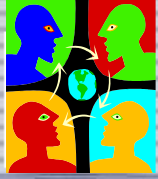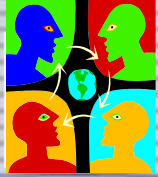
Budget

- Manpower
  - Human Resources personnel
  - Employee Involvement Team
- Expense
  - Recommendation based on business case
    - Adjust with experience from desired mix of events & activities
  - Number & types of events are dependent on funding
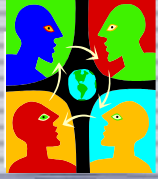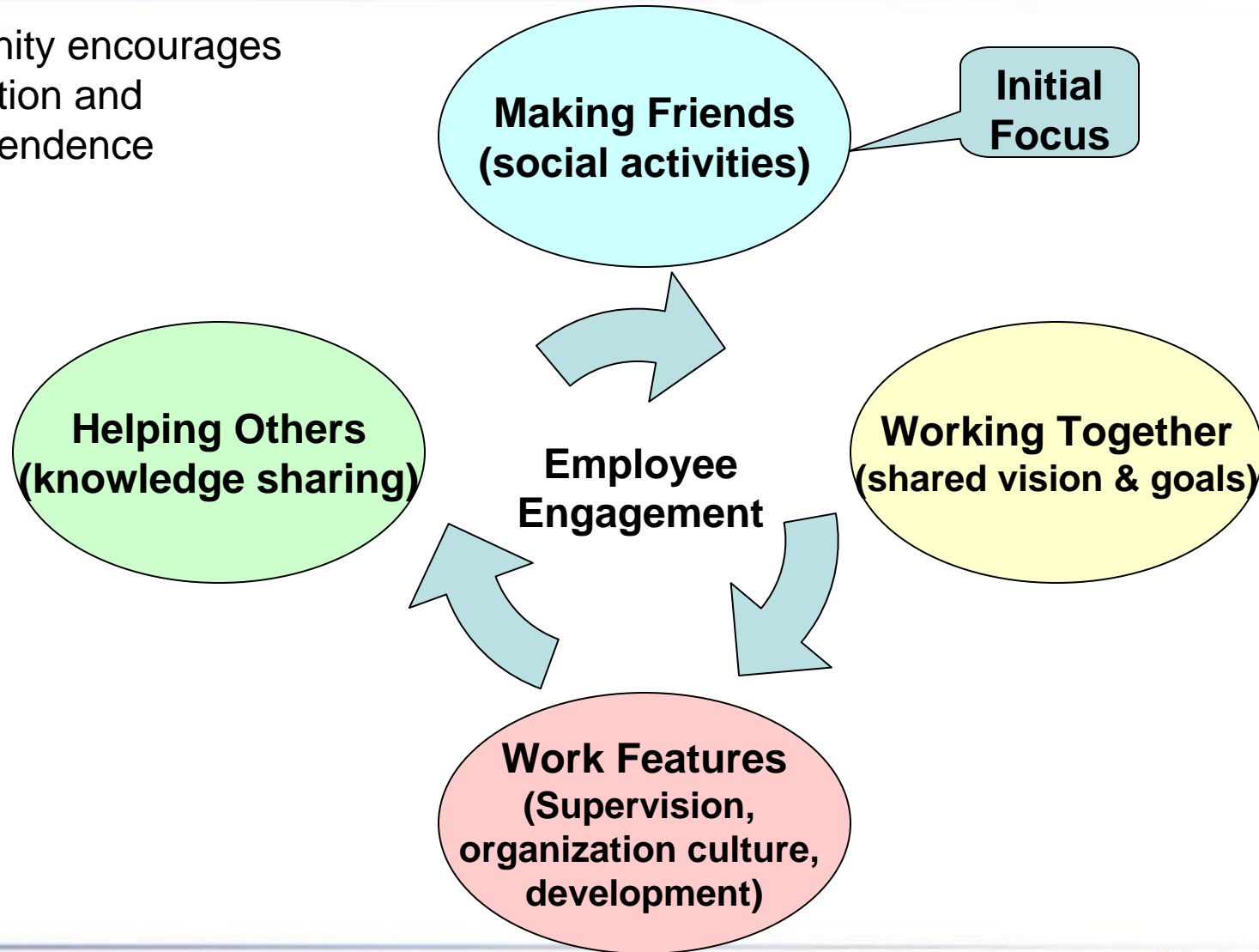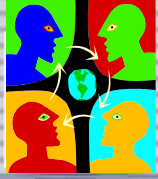
Summary – Employee Events

- Employee centered events to
  - Build interpersonal ties between employees
  - Build excitement & put enjoyment in work environment
  - Build organizational attachment

- with a Business Objective in mind
  - Workforce Performance
  - Employee Retention

Building a Community of Employees

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Work Features (Supervision, organization culture, development)

Later Phases of Community Development

– Working together to build a Shared Vision

– Building a High-Performance Culture

– Knowledge Sharing – Helping Others
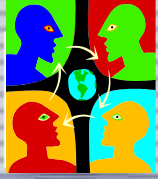
Working Together – Shared Vision

- Organization vision & goals with line-of-sight to jobs
  - Sufficient clarity to give guidance to daily work
- Teambuilding – leaders at all levels
  - Break down silos by emphasizing sub-teams working together
  - Everybody can be a leader within their area of influence
  - Individual creativity + value of teamwork
- Collaborative work processes
  - More than small workgroups – requires technology & culture that enables wide-scale information flow
- Diversity – multiple talents with a common vision
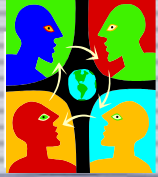
Work Atmosphere – Culture

- Rituals that focus attention, reinforce values, & establish "belonging"
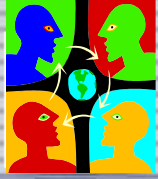 - Welcoming new employees
  - Transition celebrations
- Understanding of cultural differences
  - Seek a blend of the best from multiple cultures
- Supported with active employee communication
- Drivers for a high-performance culture
  - Attitude toward change and risk
  - Global orientation – understand local connectedness
  - Diversity of mental models
  - Employee empowerment – self-leadership
  - Decision-making process & transparency of reasoning
  - Service orientation – helping others as a customer
  - Understanding through technical analysis & intuition

Helping Others – Sharing Knowledge

- Employee Suggestion Program
  - Encourages innovation & leadership for ideas
  - Feedback provides learning within all outcomes
  - Linked to social element of employee recognition
- Community Spaces for sharing knowledge
  - Non-traditional meeting room
    - Built for dialogue and group innovation
  - Future Search & Open Space techniques
    - Large group innovation & consensus building
  - Community commons to encourage informal conversation
- Active volunteer efforts to build relationships

Pulling it Together - Engagement

- Employee Engagement is the key driver for

  - Performance – productivity & willingness to give the extra effort that is sometimes needed

  - Retention – commitment & desire to align personal goals with those of the company

These are points of sustainable competition
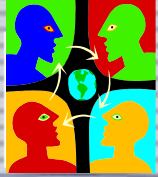
Objective – Employee Engagement

Outcome
- **Positive attitude**
- **Emotional attachment**
- **Discretionary effort**

Workforce Performance

Employee Retention

Employee Engagement

Human Capital Strategies

Challenges
- **Building excitement in a mature company**
- **Alignment toward a shared vision**
- **Meeting challenges associated with the competitive job market**

Approaches
- **Social activities – establishing friendships**
- **Working together to build shared goals**
- **Helping & sharing knowledge with others**
- **Building the high-performance culture**