Barak Barclay

Leslie Tekamp

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Hitchhiker Report

When I first started going to college, I was going to UCD and wanted to become a surgeon. During my first semester at UCD, I was taking a biology class where I was in a team with two other students to create a WordPress website that would educate the rest of the class about cystic fibrosis. During our first meetup, one of my team members wasn’t helping much with the research we needed to do to write about cystic fibrosis. Most of the time he was texting his girlfriend or distracting my other team member from doing research. His actions caused us to decide to assign specific sections of the website that each of us would be responsible for. He waited till the last minute to finish his section, and it was littered with grammatical issues. I had to spend the night before the assignment was due to go through his section and correct all of his mistakes.

With the advice from “Coping with Hitchhikers and Couch Potatoes on Teams,” the website might have gone much better and I wouldn’t have had to spend time doing someone else’s work. I should have been firm with him by telling him that the meetup we had was the time we all designated to work on website and the research needed for it. I also should have told him a specific time to get his part of the website done as well, if we still ended up divvying up all the work. If I had the support of my hard-working team member to get out slacker teammate to do those things, it would have been more persuasive as well.

Identifying a hitchhiker and dealing with them are important skills to have. If a team member says that he/she is too busy to meet up, tell them to either find time to meet, or talk to the professor about it. Don’t give credit to a team member that doesn’t do any work by not letting his name be on the submitted work. Set your expectations for all your team members high because hitchhikers will try to take advantage of whatever they can. Don’t waste a bunch of time trying to contact a hitchhiker if they don’t respond to e-mails, answer phone messages or show up for meetings.