Excerpt from Page 64 of *"The ABC's of Building a Business Team that Wins"By Blair Singer (Time-Warner)*

Stamp collecting rears its ugly head whenever people go underground with their gripes. It destroys teams from within like cancer and it nearly always happens when nobody is willing to call it.

Let me explain.

I may be dating myself a bit here, but do you remember years ago when you'd go to the grocery store and buy groceries, and for x-amount of groceries they'd give you these little green stamps? You'd keep collecting them, and would put them in a little book. And once the book filled up, you'd cash in the book for a prize.

The same thing happens on teams. I'll show you. Let's say you and I are on a team, and one of our team's rules says, "Be on time." Now I just KNOW that you've never had to wait on anyone, and I'm sure you've always been on time for everything, right? Yeah, sure.

So let's say that we've agreed to a sales meeting time of 8 a.m. on Mondays. And then I show up five minutes late for our first meeting. The meeting's already begun, and I walk in five minutes late. What happens? Well, typically nothing happens, right? I sneak in, people sort of look around, the meeting goes on and NOBODY says anything about it. Somebody catches me up later, and that's it. Right? The problem with that is ... at that very moment, subconsciously everybody collected a stamp.

You've collected a stamp when that "little voice" in your head says, "I thought we all agreed to be on time. I showed up on time. Now Blair shows up five minutes late, and nobody says a word! What's wrong with this picture?!" Familiar with that one? I thought so. At that moment you just collected a stamp.

So let's fast forward to the following week, when I or someone else show up five minutes late AGAIN! And again, nobody calls it. And everybody collects another stamp for their book. And then next week, somebody else is a little bit late, and again nobody calls it. Stamp.

Chances are this isn't just a problem at the Monday morning sales meeting. People who have a hard time being on time usually have it in lots of areas.

So let's say this goes on for a while, and then there comes that one day when you're having the 'Monday-Morning-From-Hell'. You can't get it together, you overslept, the kids are late for school, traffic's terrible, your significant other has said something that really irritated you and you're running late. You are frantically trying to get to this meeting on time and it's going to be close…really close.

Suddenly a thought pops into your brain: "You know, Blair was late a bunch of times. Frank was late, Mary was late, and nobody ever said anything! And every time, I have busted my behind to get there. You know what? I'll just get there when I get there!" At that point, you just cashed in your book of stamps. That's when the F-18 starts to fall apart in mid-air. The team implodes or reverts back to a cynical non-trusting every-man-for-himself attitude. Stamps turn into covert actions to get even and sloppy behavior turns into poor results and nasty energy.

Teams don't need competitors to kill them, they do it to themselves. If you have a Code, you have to be willing to risk momentary discomfort by 'calling it' in order to reap the rewards of championship play later.