

WHY TEAMBUILDING?

The bottom line is productivity and accomplishment is synonymous with teambuilding. A team building process is a continual effort to provide exercises and direction that will result in **superior team development and dynamic energy**. Many leaders believe that one retreat or one intense exercise will result in improved dedication and team work. An example of this is a professional sports team that chooses a high adventure activity to **“bond” the team**. While it is true that this type of activity will provide an instant connection between team members, it does not guarantee long term team cohesion. The longevity of team synergy can only result from an intentional plan which ensures ongoing experiences that concentrate on team work - team building. This is even more important to a work or volunteer Team where trust and teamwork is critical to the safety and success of the team. A cheer team member who may be working individually on a stunt also needs to understand the importance of his/her role a group member in a bigger picture. While individual accomplishment must be evident, the team is only as strong as the weakest member. Teambuilding provides a sense of commitment and dedication that will “cheer on” individual achievement and foster group success.

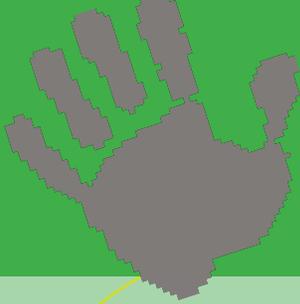
“Real” team building exposes feelings, provides avenues that prompt disclosure, breaks down barriers in communication blocks, gives team members a feeling of dedication, and most importantly facilitates fun in a team setting. Team building is not focused on individuals. Team building reveals talents and feelings of individuals and provides an understanding of their relevance to team productivity.

OK, so you may read this and say this is a fancy way of describing a team of people playing touchy feely games and pretending to get something out of it. We believe a true effort to facilitate team building in a team will result in **excellent communication skills, increased productivity (people want to achieve together as a team), amazing dedication to the team, and growth and development beyond your wildest dreams**. Some people will say, “Team building is just not for me.” In other words, I am afraid to take a chance and become vulnerable. This is communicated in a variety of ways: “I hate these kind of things,” “This is a waste of time,” “This is dumb,” etc. It is true that not all people can be convinced. It is, however, the team leaders duty to provide experiences (team builders disguised) which build the group into a team. If the team leader is willing to take a risk, success and improved productivity is a sure result.

The essence of team excellence is a synergistic team of people dedicated to superior results. It begins with you, the team leader. You hold the responsibility and the ability to start the process. The members of your team must be engaged for the process to be successful. Don't worry if some of your efforts seem like failures. This is to be expected. Nonetheless, perseverance is the key and it will pay off in the long run.

REMEMBER:

- Introduce the exercise
- Explain it thoroughly
- Process it completely



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Consider beginning every practice with a teambuilder. You may also choose to insert a teambuilder in the middle or at the end of a practice. The leaders of your organization (veterans & other emerging leader types) should have a set of goals for the year specifically geared for team dynamics. Try creating a teambuilding “curriculum” which targets those goals and schedule them appropriately throughout the year. Be sure to involve your team in the process of identifying your group dynamic needs. Use this resource to help you make exciting things happen!!

WHAT MAKES TEAM MEMBERS STAY INVOLVED?

Retention doesn't just mean a team of people who don't quit. Sustained active participation of members is always the ultimate goal. Consider the following as you explore ways to actively engage your members.

- What will make them eager to work hard?
- What do you do to keep them informed?
- What do you do to keep them interested?
- What role do they each play to make them feel like a valued member of the team?

- People stay involved because they see themselves as a part of something bigger and as someone who has a voice and ideas that matter.
- People stay involved because they find interpersonal interactions that are meaningful and impacting.
- People stay involved because they are having fun and feel connected with the other team members.
- People stay involved because they are held accountable for being a part of the team and therefore feel that their involvement matters!