

2023 EDITION



Your Roadmap to Successful Corporate Team Building



Corporate Team Building in 2023

Insights and solutions for today's top corporate team challenges and practices.

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Introduction

01



Team building activities have always been vital for improving collaboration and productivity. But they've never been more essential than today.

Employees have grown accustomed to working from home (or from anywhere) and are resisting a return to the office. We're in the midst of a Great Resignation, with record numbers of workers voluntarily leaving their jobs. The labor market is tight, making recruitment challenging, and retention even more crucial.

The common thread is that employees feel disconnected from their employers and their coworkers. That leads to dissatisfaction, reduced productivity, and higher turnover.

The GOOD news is that team building can help on all of these fronts. It can make new employees feel welcome, get them integrated into your team, and make them more productive, faster. It improves employee engagement, morale, and loyalty. And on top of all that, it's FUN – a word that many of us haven't heard enough of over the past couple of years.

This eBook explains exactly how team building can help you retain, engage, and optimize the performance of your teams. It's based on the experiences of our expert facilitators over many years, particularly what we've learned from our clients during these challenging times.

It's designed so you can easily navigate between different sections with just a couple of clicks. And beyond theory, it provides guidance about *specific* team building programs that address the difficulties your organization may be facing today. We hope this eBook inspires you with ideas for bringing your teams together in positive, productive, and fun ways this year.



Roy Charette

In 2021, International DMC Association ADMEI asked our managing partner Roy Charette to rewrite the entire team building section of their Handbook. It seems we had become experts, having designed and delivered thousands of team building programs over the past decade.

So we put together a series of our blog posts into an eBook, *Your Roadmap to Successful Corporate Team Building*. For 2023, we've revised and expanded it. We are **Best Corporate Events**, and you'll find our Bio at the end of this eBook. Enjoy!



Team Building Now

02



2

Why Team Building Should be Job 1 in Today's Challenging Labor Market

The practice of corporate team building has been around for **almost a century**. But it's never been more critical than today, as businesses struggle with the "new normal" and an ongoing battle for talent. Here's why.

Although business is constantly evolving, rarely has so much changed in such a short time in terms of human resources. The word "unprecedented" has been thrown around a lot recently, but in terms of the speed and scope of change in the workplace, that word fits what enterprises face today.

Team building encompasses a wide range of activities, from uplifting programs and fun charitable CSR events to impactful training and professional development workshops.

And there are virtual events like game shows and escape rooms to bring your team together. Here are six reasons why team building is more important than ever in the flux of today's work world.



To Welcome and Onboard New Employees

Many organizations have experienced significant turnover over the past few years, as new employees have come on board to replace those who have retired or left to pursue other opportunities.

Fun team building activities are a great way to welcome new staff and introduce them to others and play a crucial role in new employee orientation.

And beyond the benefit of getting acquainted with team members enjoyably, team building provides practical benefits in making new employees more productive, faster.



To Adapt to a Different Type of Workforce

The pandemic accelerated retirement plans for many workers. According to NPR, roughly two million more workers retired over the past three years than would otherwise have been expected.

In addition, the closure of schools and daycare facilities during the pandemic forced young mothers out of the workforce in disproportionately large numbers. Though that trend has reversed itself over the past year, the high cost and limited availability of daycare in many places is still impacting the structure of the workforce today.

Together, these changes mean that your organization may have not only new workers but different types of workers: more young workers, fewer older workers, and more people at ages in between re-entering the workforce or changing jobs.

Team building programs are not only great for welcoming new workers but also for positively impacting the morale of existing employees and making them more comfortable, more quickly, with their new coworkers.



To Support Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Workplaces are becoming increasingly diverse in terms of race and ethnicity. Diversity is valuable in surfacing better ideas by bringing together a broader range of perspectives.

Team building activities focused on diversity, inclusion, and culture help organizations maximize the productivity and benefits of a diverse workplace while helping everyone understand each other better, so they feel comfortable working together.

To Make the New Structure of Work Function More Effectively

The pandemic forced millions of workers out of their offices to work from home or other remote locations. Over time, many workers grew comfortable working remotely. And while many employers began requiring workers to return to the office last year, many others have concluded that they can maintain (or increase) productivity while reducing real estate needs by not having all of their employees on-site every day.

Team building increases employee engagement, which can be a challenge when workers aren't physically together. It helps ensure that employees are working together effectively as a team, no matter where they are. As recent research has shown, *it's not WHERE employees work that matters most to performance but rather HOW they work.*



What's more, because our team building programs can be delivered in-person, virtually, or as **hybrid team events**, they can fit the structure of your workplace – whatever that structure may be.

To Help Upskill Your New (and Existing) Team

Team building programs focused on professional development and leadership skills are an engaging and enjoyable way for workers to expand their knowledge and understanding, and ultimately do their jobs better.

These programs are helpful in bringing new employees up to speed faster as well as enhancing the abilities of your current staff.

To Do Well by Doing Good

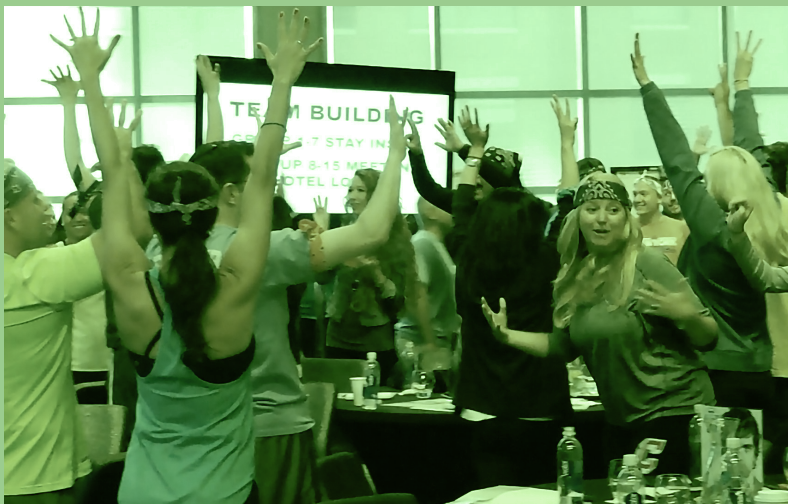
Employees today are looking for more than just a paycheck. They want to work for organizations that have a larger purpose, give back to the community, and provide a sense of contributing to the greater good.

That's why the majority of in-person engagements we managed last year were charitable CSR programs (see [sidebar](#)). Whether delivered in-person or as hybrid events, these programs are fun; they develop teamwork skills; they enhance employee engagement; and they provide the opportunity to support a great cause in your local community.





Fun Activities for Bringing Teams Back Together



Charitable CSR Programs

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs enhance the benefits of team building activities with the added element of giving back to the community.

Bike Build Donation®

One of our signature trademarked programs, this worthwhile event incorporates engaging audio/video clues and fun challenges and activities, enabling teams to earn the parts necessary to assemble bikes for children in need.

Mini-Golf Build and Food Donation

This is a fun charity team building program where teams design, construct, and play a mini-golf course using canned and boxed food items—then deconstruct the course and donate the food items to a predetermined food bank or other charitable organization.

Build-a-Wheelchair®

Build-a-Wheelchair is another trademarked program where teams assemble, safety test, and decorate new wheelchairs for donation to organizations serving wounded American veterans or other people with impaired mobility.

SmartHunts® (High-Tech Scavenger Hunts)

Best Corporate Events' sister company, SmartHunts®, combines mobile app technology with traditional scavenger hunts and games to take these activities to an exciting, engaging, and interactive new level. SmartHunts are a great way to discover a new campus, museum, or city. Among the most popular of these is the City SmartHunt®.

City SmartHunt®

This program is a creative way to experience the essence of your chosen city. Photo missions, video challenges, and trivia questions guide teams on a fun scavenger hunt through monuments, historic sites, and local attractions.

Team Building Events

Whether your focus is on strengthening team connections, developing professional skills, enhancing employee engagement, or just fun competition, team building events improve trust and performance.

Competition to Collaboration®

This engaging, trademarked training program highlights the positive impacts of organizational synergy, both in sharing best practices and celebrating colleagues' successes.

A Minute 2 Win It!

As seen on the popular TV game show, and adapted for team play, groups participate in rounds of fast-paced tabletop challenges.

Igniting Team Performance Series™

Whether your team is a newly formed group or an existing project team, this dynamic training session will measure your group's teamwork proficiency, identify areas that need improvement, and deliver activities custom-tailored to those needs.

Business Lessons from the Greatest Comeback in NFL History

Even if you're not an NFL fan, you have to be impressed by one team's performance in one of the most amazing games ever. And if you're a leader on any level, what happened that Saturday afternoon offers valuable lessons for your organization.



At halftime in their game on December 17, 2022, the Minnesota Vikings trailed the Indianapolis Colts by a score of 33-0. Forty minutes of playing time later, the Vikings had pulled off the **biggest comeback in NFL history**, emerging with a 39-36 victory. What lessons can business leaders take away from this historic achievement?



Before answering that question, just a quick note about exactly how remarkable that comeback win was. As reported by [CBS Sports](#), "According to Sportradar data available since 1930, the Vikings became only the second team in 1,551 regular-season or playoff games to trail by 30 or more points and still win." The game has its own [Wikipedia page](#).

No one has reported exactly what head coach Kevin O'Connell said to his team at halftime (and probably won't until O'Connell's book comes out at some point – you just know there will be a book in this), and the football-specific, X's-and-O's part of his speech wouldn't have much applicability in business anyway.

But what business leaders **can** learn from this amazing comeback is less about the messages delivered during that 12-minute halftime talk and more about what O'Connell and his staff did over the five months between the start of training camp in July to that painful walk to the locker room at halftime on December 17.

Here's a closer look at the building blocks O'Connell and his staff put in place to enable the Vikings to go from a mediocre 8-9 team in 2021 to that incredible comeback against the Colts en route to a 13-4 season and a spot in the playoffs – and how organizations can build them into their enterprise DNA.

The Nine Building Blocks of Winning Teams

(in Business or Football)

The ability to perform at a high level and achieve remarkable goals, whether in business or sports, doesn't just happen. It's a combination and culmination of many factors, built upon a foundation of these nine components.

Culture

During the 2021 season, the Vikings went 6-8 in one-score games. The 2022 Vikings were 10-0 in the regular season in those close contests. That transformation was largely due to the difference in culture created by Kevin O'Connell versus his predecessor at head coach, Mike Zimmer.



O'Connell [acknowledged the importance of culture](#) following the comeback win over the Colts:

"After the Minnesota Vikings completed the greatest comeback win in NFL history and clinched the NFC North on Saturday, first-year coach Kevin O'Connell received all sorts of congratulatory phone calls and text messages. But he didn't dwell too long on all the praise coming his way...

'Honestly, what I've spent the majority of my time thinking about is what put us in that situation in the first place and the role that I played in that, and more importantly, what I need to do better for our team,' O'Connell said (after the game).

'We've got to look at kind of an accountability, both as players and coaches, to making sure that we hold ourselves to that standard from the jump... I did hear from a lot of the mentors and people that have helped shape my football journey and culture,' O'Connell said."

High-performing organizations likewise build that culture through leadership, accountability, clear expectations, and practices like a [regular cadence of team building](#) and professional development training.



Workplace Relationships

Closely related to culture, [strong workplace relationships](#) are vital to employee well-being and building high-performing teams.

The shift in culture, and the Vikings' approach to coach-player relationships, was visible even before the season started. As the [Minneapolis StarTribune](#) reported:

"One of the defining quotes... was from veteran linebacker Eric Kendricks: 'I don't think a fear-based organization is the way to go.' Kendricks had identified a culture shift he was hoping to see... and indeed the choices of Kevin O'Connell as coach and Kwesi Adofo-Mensah as General Manager ushered in the idea of 'communicators' and 'collaborators' addressed by owner Mark Wilf after Zimmer and (Vikings General Manager) Rick Spielman were fired."

An article from [Heavy.com](#) made the point further, revealing that:

"Kevin O'Connell, a new-school leader at the age of 37, made a point to be as candid and transparent with players as possible. That means plenty of conversation, and the coach's office should be where some more personal chats are held.

"O'Connell's approach immediately diverged from Zimmer's. During training camp, O'Connell invited (star wide receiver Justin) Jefferson to his office for a conversation, which is how he learned that Jefferson - top five receiver in the NFL, two-time Pro Bowler, most popular Viking by far - had not only never been to the head coach's office but didn't have any idea where it was."

Strong workplace relationships improve communication and the open sharing of ideas, which are vital to achieving high levels of performance – in business as well as football.



Belief in the Mission

Every team in the NFL wants to win the Super Bowl. What distinguishes those that make the playoffs from teams that struggle is, largely, a belief that they have the coaches, players, and system in place to make it happen.

On winning teams, players play for each other as well as their organization and the fans. On losing teams, there's [dissent and distrust](#).

Companies that achieve extraordinary things foster that belief in the mission: think Apple, Tesla, Starbucks, Cisco, SpaceX, Patagonia, and Google. People want to work for those companies, and they will often put forth extraordinary efforts to meet goals, because they believe in the mission.



Collaboration

In football, success depends on every player understanding their role on every play, plus on-field communication about last-second adjustments.

Collaboration is vital to every winning team, to an extent often not appreciated. Roy Charette, a leader in the fields of team building and professional development training, and managing partner at Best Corporate Events, cites the example of the 2008 NBA champion Boston Celtics.

"In 2007, Paul Pierce, Kevin Garnett, and Ray Allen were all putting up 25, 26 points per game. But they played on different teams. When they all came to the Celtics in 2008 and won the championship, every one of them had lower average points per game. Every one of them had lower statistical data the year they won the championship because they had to become a team instead of being individual all-stars."

Here are their actual numbers, per [NBA.com](#):

Player Averages for 2007 (different teams) vs. 2008 (Celtics Championship Team)

Player	2007 Season	2008 Season
Kevin Garnett		
Point per game (PPG)	22.4	18.8
Rebounds per game (RPG)	12.8	9.2
Ray Allen		
PPG	26.4	17.4
RPG	4.5	3.7
Paul Pierce		
PPG	25	19.6
RPG	5.9	5.1

To build a high-performing business team, professionals who are naturally competing (for promotions, recognition, bonuses, etc.) likewise have to learn how to excel both as individual contributors and as collaborators on work teams. We have a program dedicated to teaching exactly these skills, called **Competition to Collaboration®**.



Professional Development and Succession Planning

Because of the salary cap in the NFL, no franchise can simply load itself up with all of the top players at their positions and then dominate their competitors. Every team is a mix of veterans and young players, early-round draft choices and undrafted walk-ons.

Teams have to win with the talent they have, and that means developing every player to optimize their skills.

In the business world, companies also have cost and personnel constraints, which makes **professional development** and one-on-one **coaching** so vital. Along with specific skills training, these programs help employees to improve in their current roles as well as preparing them for advancement opportunities.

Tying that back to sports, Roy notes, “As a coach, you have to create other coaches. You have a defensive coach, an offensive coach, and a special teams coach. And the head coach has to train those folks how to impart their knowledge to players. You’re even training some of your players to be coaches on the field.”



Resilience

The Vikings pulled off their comeback against the Colts despite missing several starters from the beginning of the season, particularly in their injury-riddled defensive secondary.

That is, of course, typical for NFL teams by the 15th week of the season – which is why the “next man up” concept is so crucial. Every player on the roster has to be prepared, through individual effort and coaching, to step in at any time.

Most businesses don’t lose the services of their employees to torn ACLs or pulled hamstrings, of course, but people will miss work time due to illness, PTO, or family leave. Others will retire, leave the company, or get promoted.

In Roy’s words, “In business as in sports, being able to ‘win without your star players’ is a sign of a great team – and great coaching. When a co-worker gets promoted, leaves the company, or is out temporarily, the rest of the team is asked to step up and keep delivering the same results, just as NFL teams are expected to win even when some of their stars are standing in street clothes on the sidelines.”

Strategy + Agility

In the NFL, every season starts with developing an overall offensive and defensive scheme, and every game is prepared for using a game plan. Obviously, in the 12-minute halftime span between the Vikings being outscored 33-0, then turning the game around to outscore the Colts 39-3, they couldn’t completely change all of that.



They needed to have the agility to make tactical adjustments while motivating players to believe in the underlying game plan and scheme. The ability for the Vikings to improve their execution on offense and dial up pressure on the defensive side came from months of preparation, not some miraculous 12-minute transformation at halftime.

There's no directly analogous situation in business to trailing 33-0 at halftime, but enterprises constantly have to adapt to challenging circumstances: competitor moves, changes in government regulation, a PR crisis, shifts in consumer preferences, bad economic news, supply chain disruptions, or any number of other scenarios.

A prime example is the sudden shift to remote work when the pandemic hit in March 2020. Organizations that had both a solid underlying business strategy and the ability to adapt quickly were able to redesign operations with minimal business disruption. Those that didn't have these characteristics were still struggling weeks later to maintain even basic functions.



Leadership at Every Level

While no one has reported on exactly what transpired in that Vikings locker room, one key exchange between veteran cornerback Patrick Peterson and quarterback Kirk Cousins, plus the reaction of O'Connell, has been covered by ESPN and other sources:

Peterson: My mentality didn't change when we were down 33-0. Came into halftime, what did I say? I said we need five touchdowns to win the game. Take it one at a time. Believe in one another. And let's see what happens.

Cousins: I didn't know if [Peterson] was being sarcastic or what. When I looked at him, he was serious. I think his point was, 'We're not going to let them score anymore. So if you can get five touchdowns, that will be good enough.'

O'Connell: It was a nice little moment for me to lead right in off of. I said, 'Pat, you're exactly right.' That's what we needed at the time. It was probably the most motivated I've been to kind of challenge our players.

As noted above, great coaches create other coaches; not just on their staff, but among the players on the field as well.

High-performing businesses do the same, creating leaders at all levels and in all areas of the business who influence others to do more and do better, whether they have any official management title or not.

And that's why we've written about how [every employee can benefit from leadership training](#). Employees who aren't leaders today may be called upon to step into leadership roles tomorrow. And even those who have no interest in moving into management roles will still benefit from a better understanding of the perspective of leadership, and how to influence others.



Trust

After almost 70 minutes of play, the contest between the Vikings and Colts came down to a last-second field goal attempt. The Vikings' Greg Joseph is not the most reliable kicker in the league. Or even in the top 10. Actually, for the 2022 season, among kickers with at least 30 field goal attempts, Joseph ranked 18th.

What's more, the Vikings have a history of [lack of trust in the kicker position](#). But O'Connell's trust in Joseph in the final seconds of that Colts game paid off. And just a week later, as Yahoo! News reported:

"A week after Joseph was hoisted onto his teammates' shoulder pads after a winning 40-yard field goal vs. the Colts, Joseph said he appreciated the trust coach Kevin O'Connell showed by letting him even try a 61-yarder – 5 yards longer than the previous high by both Joseph and any kicker in Vikings history."

In business, employees who feel trusted are more likely to be engaged, take ownership of their results, and feel purpose in their work. On the other hand, those who are micromanaged are [less productive, more likely to quit](#), have lower morale, and are less engaged. Micromanagement destroys trust.



What Team Building Does

While a wide range of factors contribute to creating those nine building blocks of successful teams, professional development and [team building programs](#) can play a role in all of them.

"Team building," says Roy, "delivers activities that remind people of what it looks and feels like to be supportive of each other, to be engaged with each other, and to position each other for success."

One of the most vital contributions that team building programs make to organizational success, adds Roy, is positioning other people in the group for success. "It's not just your individual success. The entire group has to be successful in order for you to 'win.' Every one of our programs reminds people of what it looks and feels like to be engaged, not multitasking or checked out during an activity. That's huge.

"When we deliver a program like [Igniting Team Performance™](#), [Breaking Through](#), or [Momentum](#), we run a series of small activities. Each one builds on the success of the previous. People don't get that a lot at work.

"But if employees can be reminded of what it looks and feels like to be celebrating, high-fiving, cheering, and acknowledging and recognizing each other because they are nailing it on a series of activities no one's ever seen before, it's an amazingly powerful and useful block of time. They're collaborating, communicating, and rotating in leadership roles, all in two hours. Participants are engaging with each other in a very positive manner from the start to the finish."

Team building programs, particularly [corporate social responsibility](#) (CSR)

programs such as *Bike Build Donation*[®], *Build-a-Guitar*[®], or our *Mini-Golf Build and Food Donation* use collaboration in pursuit of a greater purpose – giving back to the community – in a way that creates an emotionally powerful shared experience. Much like winning a game against all odds.

Conclusion

The Minnesota Vikings' historic comeback win against the Indianapolis Colts on December 17, 2022, offers many lessons for business leaders seeking to build high-performing teams and organizations. While it would be fascinating to know exactly what was said by head coach Kevin O'Connell in that locker room at halftime, it's clear the foundation for that achievement was laid months before.

There are (at least) nine key building blocks for creating winning teams, in sports or business. Organizations outside of sports will never face the direct equivalent of a 33-0 halftime deficit, but having these building blocks in place will enable them to respond rapidly and effectively to any adverse business events they may face.

Winning teams are more than just collections of extraordinarily talented individuals. The best coaches and leaders are able to articulate a shared vision, build a culture of high performance and collaboration, develop the talent they have in place to support resilience and succession planning, and adapt quickly and effectively to challenges.

Putting these building blocks into place requires skills and actions. Team building and professional development programs can play an important role, through their *four pillars* of improving communication, building workplace relationships, enhancing engagement, and creating powerful shared experiences.





Team Building Is Vital for New Employees

03



3

The Role of Team Building in New Employee Orientation

Team building activities should ideally be a vital and integral part of your employee orientation process. Here's why – and it includes a big impact you may not have thought about.

Every company has an onboarding process for new hires: get all the necessary forms signed, assign them a laptop, create their access badge, set up an email account, provide login credentials for the appropriate software systems, and so on.

Many corporate leaders have a general sense that team and relationship building are an important part of that onboarding process as well, but may not be able to articulate exactly why. Unfortunately, that can make it tempting to skip this step when budgets are tight, or the department is short-staffed, or a new manager comes on board. It's easy to view team building as the "fun stuff" that can be skipped because there is "real work" to be done.

Here are four important reasons to avoid that mistake, and to make sure team building *is* part of the new employee orientation process.

It Builds Trust

As business author Patrick Lencioni points out in his book, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, trust is the foundational element of team effectiveness. Unless you have trust within a team, you won't get constructive conversations, accountability, or the results you're looking for.

Team-building at its core starts creating that element of trust, through understanding each other and developing relationships. It does this by allowing the team to actually work together on a problem or challenge that is non-consequential in the sense that, if the group isn't able to solve the problem, nothing is at stake. It enables teams to "work out their bugs" without business risks.

And it gives team members the sense that they can rely on each other. Obviously, trust won't be fully established during orientation, but a team building exercise is highly effective for starting to lay the groundwork.

It Fosters Personal Connections

As workers return to the office, many companies are dealing with significant employee turnover as well as bringing back staff who've been working remotely, possibly in a hybrid work arrangement.

That means, frequently, companies are not only onboarding new hires but also bringing in people hired within the last 3 years who've *never physically met* many

Most employees, even those who enjoy the flexibility of remote work, are anxious to get back together in person. Company leaders can sense that people have been disengaged by the isolation, and things need to change.

When everyone is remote, there's less connection. There's less of the element of, "We're a team," and a lot more of, "This is a job," and "We're a workgroup, not a team."

There's a definite difference between a workgroup and a team. A team has energy. People feel like they have each other's back. They talk about "we" and "us." A workgroup is just a collection of individuals who are working on the same project. Both workgroups and teams work on tasks, but they work on tasks in two very different ways.

In-person team building activities let workers see each other in full, three-dimensionally and head to toe, not just as a torso within a box on a Zoom screen. They're able to interact directly and enhance relationships that will lead to more of those informal, ad hoc hallway conversations that are difficult and awkward to manage virtually.

At in-person team-building events, participants get a different perspective; they see a completely different side of coworkers. Returning to the idea of trust, one of its foundations is showing some degree of vulnerability: that you can't do it all, that you do need other people, that you have some challenges and weaknesses. Just showing that vulnerability in a team exercise where you do need to rely on other people can be incredibly valuable.



It Improves Team Dynamics

Often during a team-building activity, participants learn about each other's communication do's and don'ts; about what approaches resonate, and which ones drive a person crazy. When they're working in a team environment, they can understand some of those aggravations. For example, if it's analysis paralysis, they can see the frustration that creeps up – or they can see that pure enjoyment at areas of success.

When we understand and appreciate those value differences, pet peeves, communication styles, and what truly motivates people, we can really start to apply those into the work we have to do on a daily basis. Fundamentally, team-building exercises help with new employee orientation by establishing a foundation they can build upon as they start their journeys working together.

It Creates a Shared Experience

Establishing trust, connections, and communication may seem like obvious benefits of team building within the new employee orientation process. But a less apparent and easily overlooked bonus is the memorable, shared experience it creates.

The initial feedback from new employees after a team building exercise may focus on the fun, or the different perspective they got on coworkers, or the sense that the company cares enough about them to make sure they are engaged, that it's not just "get straight to work."

But when employees are asked about their overall orientation experience two, three, or more years later, the team building experience is what sticks. They may not recall much about the orientation videos they watched or the policy manuals they read, but they remember details from the team building program because of the emotional impact it had.

That makes the lessons learned in team building incredibly strong. People remember that it was a great way to get to know their coworkers and get started in their roles. For employees who went through a team building program together and even coworkers who went through the same exercise, though not together – it's a common, shared experience that creates a strong and valuable bond between them.

The Wrap

Team building activities can play a vital role in new employee orientation. They are as critical to setting up employees for success as getting them the right laptop with access to the right software systems.

By helping to establish trust, build connections, understand team dynamics, and create shared experiences, team building prepares new employees to contribute productively to group efforts more quickly.





3 Categories of Programs for New Employees



1

Charitable CSR Programs

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs combine the benefits of team building activities – teaching problem-solving, leadership, communication, and collaboration in a fun, engaging way – with giving back to the community. The result is a powerful, emotional experience that **increases employee loyalty** and engagement.

2

SmartHunts® (High-Tech Scavenger Hunts)

Best Corporate Events' sister company, SmartHunts®, combines mobile app technology and games with traditional scavenger and city hunts to take these activities to an engaging and interactive new level. In addition to testing participants' knowledge and collaboration skills, SmartHunts are a great way to discover a new campus, museum, or city.

3

Professional Development Programs

Professional development workshops enhance your employees' career growth and value to your company, and are a productive choice for new employee orientation. They focus on the critical core competencies required to succeed in today's business environment – from conflict resolution to time management skills. These workshops combine professional facilitation with an engaging and dynamic approach to learning and retention.



Four Ways Team Building Makes New Employees More Productive, Faster

How long does it take for a new employee to become fully productive? Estimates from different studies vary widely, from **six months** to **eight months** to a year to as long as **two years**.

The process of onboarding a new employee (or a current employee transitioning into a new role) can't be skipped over or short-circuited. As Dick Grote, performance management consultant and author of *How to Be Good at Performance Appraisals* has said, "The idea of a new employee 'hitting the ground running' is a farce. You know what happens if you do that? You fall on your face."

There are many aspects to bringing a new employee up to speed, of course, from learning about the company and its products or services to understanding the requirements of the role and the supporting technology.

But one of the most critical factors is getting to know the people they will be working with. What are each person's strengths and unique knowledge? Are they outgoing or introverted? A "numbers person" or someone who operates more on gut instinct? Do they like to talk things out, or are they more of a "just the facts" type? Visually oriented? A good listener? Get 'er done?

One of the best ways to get new employees productive more quickly is to find a way to get them acquainted with the people they'll be working with most closely. This will enable them to communicate more effectively with each coworker and avoid missteps or misunderstandings. And the best way to accomplish that is through team building!

Here are four ways team building activities help make new employees (or new-to-the-role employees) more productive, more quickly.



It Breaks Down Barriers

Team building breaks down barriers by removing the shackles of work. It's not about deadlines and priorities; it's about addressing communication skills, learning how to deal with conflict, and building relationships at a deeper level.

One of the biggest challenges when starting in a new role is getting to know people well enough to work with them productively. Just being introduced to Pat in accounting is fine, but team building shortens the process of getting to know coworkers, to really understand what they are like and how to communicate effectively with them. It's light-hearted, it's easy, and it's non-threatening.

In team building exercises, the groups can be departmental but are often cross-functional to help build relationships across the organization. In any case, doing a team building event helps employees break down barriers, create openness, and get to know each other on a more personal level.



It Helps Align Actions with Team Goals

Team building is really about aligning actions with team goals: improve performance, create synergies, and deliver results. The reason to do a team building event/workshop is to get your team firing on all cylinders.

You've put together this group of people with different backgrounds and strengths, and you want to leverage all of those strengths. You also want to address any shortcomings someone may have, to help with their career development and benefit the team.

Professional development programs are about getting to that next level with a person to make it easier to have challenging discussions. It makes it less awkward to have a conversation about changing processes or bringing on somebody new and to align these actions with team goals.



It Builds Connections

Often (particularly in large organizations), teams in different locations need to coordinate efforts. How do you create that connectivity? The challenge goes beyond just holding a team meeting over Zoom. Team-building activities help those groups learn how to solve a problem together and how to include everybody in the solution.

The crux of that is communication skills. Some team members will be alphas, while others are followers. Team building programs require all team members to work together to accomplish the goal. It creates a situation where you align everyone's individual actions for the greater good.



It Creates a Shared Experience

Team building creates a shared experience that gives people something in common even if they don't have much otherwise. You may have an extrovert and an introvert, but they built a bike together for a donation. And even if they weren't on the same team, they can compare how their teams solved a specific problem. They have that shared experience to talk about.



In Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs*, the bottom two layers are physiological needs (food and shelter) and safety. Once those are satisfied, people are looking to be valued, included, to have a seat at the table, to make a difference. That's what team building does. It checks all those boxes.



Wrapping Up

The faster a new employee can become fully productive, the better it is for everyone involved. It's good for the business. It's good for team members who want to be able to rely on each other. And it's good for the individual new employee, who wants to feel they are spending their work time contributing to the organization – not just watching safety and training videos.

A key component in bringing new employees up to speed is integrating them into the work environment, helping them get to know and understand their coworkers well enough to communicate effectively and avoid misunderstandings.

Programs like escape rooms or our *Escape SmartHunt*[®] are great for bringing new employees on board because the clues pull on different strengths: memory, visual, reasoning. By relying on different people's skillsets, they keep the whole team involved and working collaboratively.

Trivia games or programs like *Best Corporate Feud* are also effective. They can be customized to include company facts and information, making them educational as well as fun and challenging for new employees.

Finally, any of our charitable CSR programs like our *Bike Build Donation*[®], *Build-a-Wheelchair*[®] program, or *STEM Backpacks for Kids* work well for new employee orientation, as teams work collaboratively to assemble items then donate them to worthy charities. They not only enhance teamwork but also build a memorable, emotional bond.

Team building can help employees get acquainted with the people they'll be working with most closely and learn how to collaboratively solve problems with the team in a fun and non-threatening setting.

It accelerates team development, breaks down barriers, helps to align actions with team goals, builds connections, and creates a shared experience. In so doing, it helps new employees become more productive, faster.

How Team Building Creates More Effective Teams

As technology automates more and more simple, linear tasks, more of the work that people do involves collaboration. Put another way, professionals today spend less time on individual, solo tasks than in the past and more time working as part of a team.

New products are designed by teams. New software is developed by teams. Sales are often closed by teams. New system procurement decisions are made by teams. Even this eBook was created by a team (a writer, a facilitator/subject matter expert, an editor, a project coordinator, and a graphic designer).

Team building helps teams to be more effective and productive. Regardless of how long each individual member of a team has been employed in an organization, any time a new team is formed there are phases it will pass through before reaching full productivity.

Team building can help accelerate that formation process, helping teams become more productive more quickly. In his [classic book on group and team communications](#), author Donald B. Egolf, Ph.D., defines four stages of team development: forming, storming, norming, and performing.

Forming

The forming stage is the “playing nicely together in the sandbox” phase. Everyone is polite, deferential, and on their best behavior. There’s an almost artificial niceness as everyone is feeling things out. This generally lasts only for a relatively brief period of time before teams go into the next stage, storming.



Storming

The storming stage is where conflicts begin to arise. There are behavioral differences that come up. There are certain irritations and annoyances that are surfaced. There are differences of opinion about what's going to happen, or how to proceed.

Norming

Effective teams work through those issues and move into the norming stage, as they start to figure out how to work together. They ask, "How are we going to operate?" They come up with team agreements. They understand and accept each others' differences. They define when and how they will communicate, and how they will work together.

Performing

If the team does a good job getting through that norming process, it reaches the final stage, becoming a high-performing team.

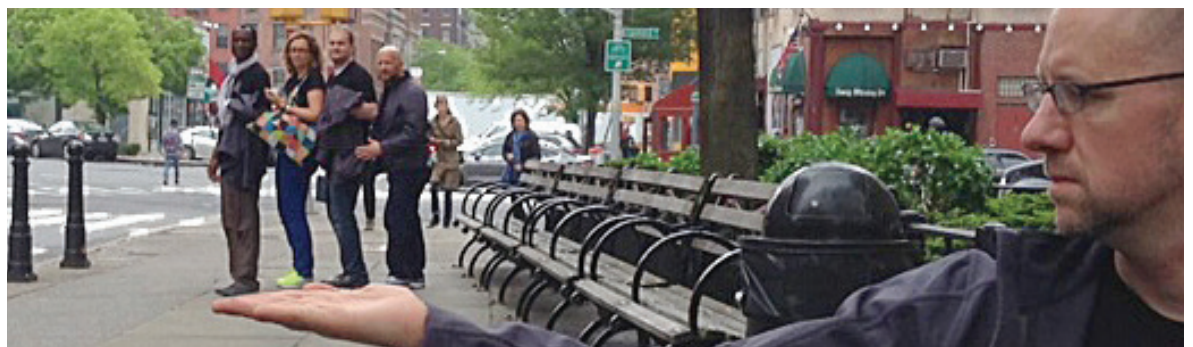
How Team Building Helps

In a typical work environment, teams can languish in those early stages of forming and storming for a long time as they're feeling each other out. This is even more of a danger when people are working remotely, as their interactions with each other are much more limited.

Team building activities can accelerate this process; you can get through the forming stage pretty quickly and get into some storming. Storming within groups – having some challenges in a team-building activity – isn't a bad thing. It's actually helpful.

It's not that you want groups constantly struggling at a team-building activity, of course. But having a few frustrations and needing to work things out among team members can be a great thing because it gives members the tools and knowledge to better understand each other and begin creating some norms.

If they can go through the process of forming, storming, and then creating some norms during their orientation stage when solving an inconsequential team building problem (such as a *Crack the Case* mystery activity or an *Amazing Chase Smarthunt*®, as opposed to a real-world business problem), it will help them move through those stages much faster when they're back in the workplace, and hopefully, reach a high-performing level more quickly.



How to Maximize Team Cohesion with Different Personalities and Work Styles

When it comes to the performance of work teams, “our diversity is our strength” isn’t just a slogan. Dozens of research studies over time have shown that diverse teams **are smarter**, increase financial returns to the organization, and **perform 30% better** than homogeneous teams.

Diversity and inclusion are often thought of in racial or ethnic terms, but also include diversity of approaches, life experiences, and perspectives. When team members think about problems differently, the team is more likely to make better decisions because it will evaluate the situation from different angles.

As a very simple example, “drivers” – people who throw around phrases like “move fast and break things,” “get ‘er done,” and “just do it” – help keep teams moving forward. But team members who are detail-oriented “questioners” and “collaborators” prevent the group from moving *too* fast and overlooking important considerations. The most effective teams have a mix of these personality types.

The key to unlocking the high-performance potential of diverse teams is skilled management. Without the right tools in place for managers to understand and address the different personalities, perspectives, and work styles of team members, there are significant risks of dissatisfaction, dysfunction, and eventually employee turnover.

Here are several tools, processes, and programs that can help managers optimize the collaboration, cohesion, and performance of diverse work teams. But first, a quick look at the risks of getting it wrong.



Risks of Mismanaging Diverse Teams

Improper management can lead to dissension and disagreement within the team, as well as disengagement and even departure of skilled employees. So how does a manager know there are problems that need to be addressed?

It’s a combination of verbal and non-verbal cues. Is there conflict? Is there frustration? Are people unhappy? You, as the team leader, can probably see by their body language or their tone of voice that something is bothering them.

Getting the team back on track requires digging in to determine what’s really going wrong beneath the surface. Too often, when one team member is seen as “holding the team back,” the temptation is to steamroll forward and let that individual work it out and catch up.

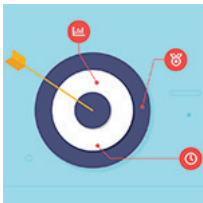
Talented employees start off in new roles with enthusiasm, with the desire to be empowered and to make a difference. But if they aren’t given time to think things through, if they don’t feel their concerns are being listened to or addressed, they will begin to disengage.

Leaders are generally skilled at managing employees at the tactical level: “Do you have enough resources? Enough training? How are you doing on your goals? How’s your task list going on our timeline?”

But they also need the “soft skills” (which [may be better termed](#) as “power skills”) to understand how each of their employees processes information. Do they need more details? Just the big picture? Do they need to collaborate and check in with others? When managers don’t get this and accommodate different work styles, they too often end up surprised when talented employees walk out the door.

How to Optimize Performance Teams with Diverse Personality Types

Effectively managing team members with diverse personalities starts with a behavioral assessment. You need a tool that will provide a roadmap for these discussions, because optimizing team cohesion isn’t tactical; there isn’t a simple list of items you can check off.



The tactical side of team management is about metrics you can hit when thinking about **SMART** goals. Did we complete all of our tasks? Did we meet our timelines? Did we stay within budget? Those are checklist goals.

But when you think about team cohesion, culture, and managing a mix of personalities, you have to take a different tack. It’s all about building a culture.

A behavioral assessment is ground zero for this effort because it provides insights about “what makes people tick” in ways you usually can’t get from observation, even if you’ve worked with an individual for years. Suppose that person doesn’t say much in meetings - is it because they are processing the information, or because they are thinking three steps ahead?

As an example, a salesperson and an accountant may both be very good with numbers, but the accountant values structure and detail while the salesperson prefers more operational latitude and the freedom to move quickly.

It’s up to you as the leader to figure out who on your team needs details, who wants to “figure out as we go,” and who wants to discuss the issues with a wider range of people.

Tools to Help Manage Teams with Different Personalities and Work Styles

Building team cohesion across diverse personalities is like driving without GPS (or even a map) if you aren’t using some type of assessment tool. You’re making decisions based on gut instinct instead of science. Here are three tools that can provide the basis for more effective management of diverse personality types.



DiSC: DiSC is an acronym that stands for the four main personality profiles described in [the DiSC model](#): (D)ominance, (i)nfluence, (S)teadiness and (C)onscientiousness. Depending on which personality type an individual best fits, that person will place relatively more or less emphasis on factors like getting results, influencing others, collaborating, or digging into details.

Julie, Josh, and Michael are all “Let me think it through” types as well, while Catherine and Ian like to talk it out. So, again, when you’re in meetings and talking about launching a new product or project, understanding how your different team members address the problem helps you facilitate that conversation because you can see that Catherine and Ian want to talk it out, while you may need to prompt the other team members to tell you what they are thinking or what pieces of the puzzle you may be missing.

Using any of these behavioral assessment tools is more effective than simply asking questions, because most people aren’t able to articulate what these assessments reveal. The results are as enlightening to the individuals themselves as to their managers.

As a leader, these assessments will help you understand, for example, whether a team member needs more details in order to make a decision; prefers to collaborate with others first; or simply needs to think it all through. From a team cohesion standpoint, you need to understand these workplace drivers because they don’t fit neatly into management checklists. The key is behavioral assessments.

Team Building and Professional Development Programs to Help Manage Diverse Personalities

Best Corporate Events offers a number of team building and professional development programs that can help your managers better understand teams with diverse personality types while helping team members to better understand themselves and each other. The result is more cohesive, higher-performing teams.

Among these programs are:



Developing Emerging Leaders: Over a series of five virtual group sessions, this program utilizes the Predictive Index to assist in developing high-potential individual contributors into your organization’s next generation of leaders.

It addresses the four workplace drivers at several levels, starting with identifying who you are and understanding where you are. The program then progresses into communication; dealing with conflict; managing up and across the organization; and finally, managing and developing others.



DiSC Profile Workshop: This program introduces your team to the DiSC Model, a behavior assessment tool that helps professionals understand their own styles of behavior and communication, as well as those of their colleagues. Learning how to manage these styles and identify areas in need of improvement can help participants eliminate bad habits, minimize conflict, and improve team success.

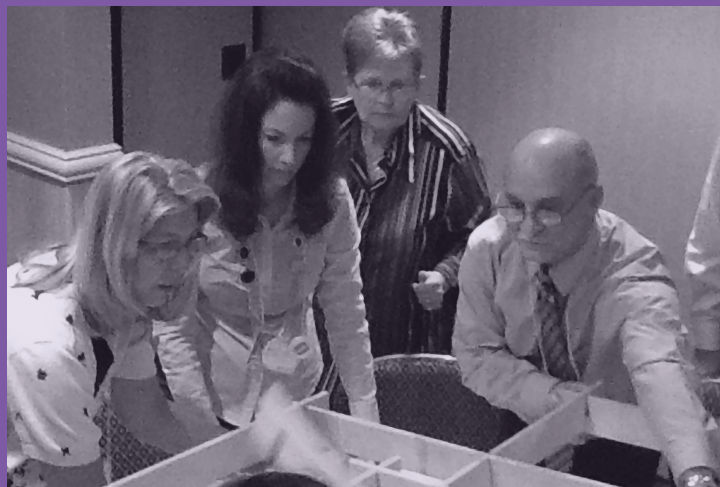


Emotional Intelligence (EI) Training: An emotionally intelligent organization is one in which each member understands their Emotional Quotient (EQ) and how best to tap into it for professional growth. Applying EI within an organization helps to build trust and encourage open communication. This compelling, informative workshop covers case studies on EI, its six major components, and how one can apply their own EQ in the workplace.

How Team Building Optimizes Employee Engagement



04



4 The Seven Factors Behind Employee Engagement, Retention and Loyalty - And How to Make Them Work for Your Organization

Regardless of how the economy performs in the near term, workforce retention and engagement challenges will be part of life for years to come. Fortunately, there are positive ways employers can respond to these issues that will benefit everyone involved.

Slower population growth combined with a lower labor force participation rate (due to the aging population in the U.S. as well as in most developed countries) will [keep conditions tight in the labor market](#). Organizations of all types will be challenged to recruit and retain talent.

That means even with a slowing economy, phrases like “the Great Resignation” and “quiet quitting” will remain concerns for business leaders (as well as their peers in the government and nonprofit sectors). What’s behind these challenges, and how can organizations respond? A number of recent research studies identify the underlying factors.

Recruitment and Retention Challenges

People keep quitting at record levels, yet companies are still trying to attract and retain them in the same old ways. [Research from McKinsey](#) shows that 40% of US workers are “somewhat” to “very” likely to leave their current jobs within the next six months. How can employers keep them?

Of course, considerations like total compensation, workplace flexibility, and leadership matter. But employees also place a high value on opportunities for career advancement (professional development), meaningful work (giving back), and support for health and well-being (fun, workplace relationships).

Another McKinsey study suggests that part of the reason so many employees are leaving jobs is that returning to the office after the pandemic-caused disruption of the past three years is somewhat like returning from an overseas military deployment. Employees crave the normalness of pre-pandemic life, but going back to the office feels awkward. It’s not the same. Employers need to recognize this, take steps to address it, and help employees adjust to workplace changes.

As noted here previously, team building has never been more critical than today, as businesses struggle with the “new normal” of the post-COVID economy. [Team building activities should be job #1 in the return to working in the office](#) – whatever that return looks like. There are lots of [options for productive and fun programs](#), in-person or virtual, to help get your team back together.

A third study, this one focused on [how to play the new talent game](#) and win back workers, notes that “Nearly half of the employees who voluntarily left the workforce during the pandemic aren’t coming back on their own. Employers must go and get them.”

There’s a lot of overlap between the reasons workers leave their jobs and why they choose new ones. That is to say, they are likely to leave jobs that lack certain characteristics and are attracted to roles they believe offer those attributes, among them: opportunities for career advancement, meaningful work, reliable and supportive coworkers, caring leaders, and support for employee health and well-being.

Engagement Challenges

According to [reporting from Axios and Gallup](#), “At least half of American workers say they’re ‘quiet quitting’ – performing only the tasks they’re required to, giving up on going ‘above and beyond’... The proportion of ‘actively disengaged’ workers is now at 18% – the highest it’s been in nearly a decade.”

The number one reason? Poor leadership. As Axios also observes, “The least effective managers have three to four times as many people who fall in the ‘quiet quitting’ category compared to the most effective leaders.”

That contention is further supported by [reporting from SkillSurvey](#), finding that “those who are doing the ‘bare minimum’ at work – meeting the criteria for ‘quiet-quitters’ – now comprise 21% of the US workforce .”

The least engaged employees blamed micromanagement along with a lack of guidance and trust from leadership for their attitude towards work. But among the most engaged workers, notes SkillSurvey, “the one engagement driver that correlated the strongest with manager ratings of their work behavior was how supported the employee felt by their manager.”

Loyalty Challenges

In summarizing research from Great Place to Work, which publishes the annual list of the [100 Best Places to Work](#), the Miles LeHane blog notes there are several reasons why workers remain loyal to their employers: good pay and benefits, transparent communications, strong leadership, and the opportunity for advancement.



But the number one factor underlying employee loyalty is *purpose* – the degree to which an employee feels that their work has special meaning and isn't "just a job." People want to feel that they are giving back to their communities, and that their employer has a mission and vision beyond simply making a profit.

The Seven Factors Behind Retention, Engagement, and Loyalty

Examining all of the research cited above, these seven factors overlap in helping organizations attract, retain, and get the highest levels of performance out of their workplace talent:

- Opportunities for career advancement
- Meaningful work/sense of purpose
- Support for health and well-being
- Adapting to change (the "new normal")
- Reliable and supportive coworkers
- Strong, effective leadership
- An inclusive and welcoming community

Here's how employers can improve in all of those areas, and specifically how to use team building and professional development programs to help address each of those seven factors.



Opportunities for Advancement

While this factor certainly isn't new, the way we need to think about it has changed, according to team development professional [Steve Ockerbloom](#). The days of working for only one or even a few employers over the course of one's career are long gone.

According to data from the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), the median job tenure for all employees is 4.1 years. But that number varies considerably with age. Workers aged 25-35 have a median tenure of just 2.8 years, and the average person works for five different employers during the time between graduating from college or trade school and celebrating their 34th birthday.

As Steve puts it, "The classical way managers think about providing opportunities for career advancement is in the context of the good of the organization. That's fine, but today's younger workers are asking about WIIFM (what's in it for me?). The 'good of the team' is all well and good, but I may not be here very long.

"So, in thinking about how to motivate and retain people, managers need to be thinking a lot more about their employees' individual goals. Are they given opportunities to learn a new skill, become subject matter experts in a particular area, or do work that really aligns with a strength or passion of theirs? Leaders need to think about that a lot more."



Professional development programs from Best Corporate Events, such as *Developing Emerging Leaders*, help managers develop the skills and get truly committed to figuring out the WIIFM for their teams. Our DiSC Profile Workshop helps leaders understand the motivational and communication differences that are important among their people.



Work with Purpose

In his book, *Drive*, bestselling business author Daniel Pink identifies what he calls the three elements of true motivation:

- Autonomy: the sense that we are in control of what we're doing;
- Mastery: the ability to get better and better at something; and
- Purpose: the idea that what we're doing isn't just a series of tasks, but it is actually fulfilling to other people on our team or in our community.

While there are many ways organizations can integrate a larger purpose into their mission and vision, one popular, effective – and fun – way is through *corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs*. Activities like our *Bike Build Donation*[®], *Build-a-Wheelchair*[®], or other programs that benefit local or national charities create a sense of purpose. They demonstrate to employees the importance their leadership places on giving back to the community, which is incredibly motivating.

On the professional development side, there's our *Competition to Collaboration* program. As Steve explains, "When people have a chance in that program to help each other out, to provide information that's going to set up other people for success, and when people feel a shared sense of success as a team, it can be incredibly engaging. Participants make the connection to the purpose-driven work they are actually doing."

Support for Mental Health and Well-Being

Across society, there's an increasing awareness of and importance placed on good mental and physical health. While going to work is a lot different from going to the gym, it shouldn't counteract efforts made to maintain a healthy lifestyle.



Forbes points out, “With many people spending one-third (or more) of their day working, the workplace plays a significant role in employee health. Employers who prioritize both mental and physical health within their companies’ cultures through health and wellness programs can provide a strong foundation for employees to thrive.”

Again, there are many ways for employers to promote well-being at work, from managers checking in on stress levels to formal wellness programs to the use of apps such as [BetterYou](#).

Professional development programs like our [Manager’s Guide to Business Coaching](#) teach proven coaching practices that can strengthen relationships, bolster trust, and realize the benefits of open and positive communication in the workplace. Team building programs, particularly CSR activities, also contribute to workplace well-being by reducing stress, getting participants active, developing healthy workplace relationships, and giving employees a sense of larger purpose. And, they’re *fun*.



Adapting to Change

Though the phrase “new normal” has been grossly overused, it can’t be ignored. Workplaces have changed for almost everyone. Some employees are still dealing with changes in their structure of work: they are going back to the office full-time, taking roles that are fully remote, or adjusting to a hybrid work structure.

Significant turnover means many people are collaborating with new coworkers. Many businesses are still struggling to recruit enough workers, which means current employees may be asked to take on more tasks.

Management support is the most important element in managing change. But team building programs can also play a beneficial role in terms of building relationships with new team members, welcoming new people to the team, improving communication and collaboration, and jump-starting conversations about working together effectively in this new environment. Programs like [Momentum](#) challenge participants to collaborate and strategize, reflecting real-life challenges in a fun and engaging way.

And team building programs can be delivered in the format that works for your work environment, whether that means in-person, virtual, or hybrid events.



Reliable and Supportive Coworkers

As noted above, the combination of pandemic-caused workplace changes and ongoing labor shortages means that many employees are being asked to do more, to take on additional tasks at work. In this environment, it’s vital that everyone is “pulling their weight” in order to make the team successful.

There are many different types of negative issues that may arise among coworkers, but two that stand out are *bad attitudes* and *slackers*. Steve refers to employees

with corrosive attitudes as “negative viruses.” These are people who are constantly whining, complaining, and seeing the glass as perpetually half-empty. Like a virus, left unchecked, their bad attitude can infect others.

Slackers (who may be “quiet quitting”) put in the absolute minimum level of effort required. They’re unhelpful to coworkers, and often leave it to other employees to pick up extra tasks to compensate for their poor performance.

Team building activities can play a powerful role in counteracting both of these headaches. As Steve points out, positive viruses can be infectious as well. “When people exude positivity, it spreads tremendously well to others. One of the great things about team building activities is that they create positivity, which can be incredibly productive.

“To pick one great example, our *Igniting Team Performance Series*[™] does more than enhance individual and team performance; it ‘infects’ people in a good way with positive energy, good feelings, and great experiences that carry over into the workplace and last a long time.”

Programs that help counteract quiet quitting and improve team collaboration include *Bridge to the Future* and *Pipeline*. As Steve explains, “In *Bridge to the Future*, each team is split into smaller groups, each charged with building a section of a bridge built out of cardboard and duct tape that needs to be strong enough to hold the weight of the entire group standing on it. The thing is, my section can be great, but if another group doesn’t make the effort or do their part, the bridge will completely collapse.



"In our **Pipeline** activity, the objective is to transport a series of marbles dropped from above and continuing along sections of the pathway that must perfectly connect with each other in order to eventually guide all of the marbles into an end container.

"What's great about both activities is that if somebody isn't doing their part, or if a team of people isn't really talking about how to connect and move things forward, it highlights clearly how they'll fail to reach the goal. They're not going to get their entire group across the bridge or the marbles into the end container.

"These activities put the failure of one team to do their part into stark visualization. It's not just that metaphorical idea of, 'I'm just working in my department or my office, and that's not going to affect anyone else.' I can actually see the results right there.

"And what's most powerful is we do a debrief at the end about those themes. We have conversations about how we set up each other for success, and how we can make sure everyone is doing their part to help the team reach the end goal."



Strong, Effective Leadership

As noted in *Forbes*, "It's almost a cliché to say that employees don't leave companies; they leave bad bosses. However, this happens all the time. A top talent will resign, and in the exit interview, it's confirmed that their manager was the root cause of their departure."

This is emphatically backed up by research from McKinsey, Gallup, and others (and for many readers here, likely their own experience).

As the *Forbes* article continues, "Managing people seems easy from afar. It's actually a difficult skill... When you're in a management position, there is an initial belief that your staff will automatically respect, listen and follow your directions... It's not that simple, and it hardly ever works out that way. In fact, it's exceedingly difficult to earn the respect, admiration, and loyalty of your team."

The good news is that leadership is a skill that can be taught and learned. Becoming a great leader, like excelling at a sport, requires a combination of instruction in the basics and then ongoing coaching to reach ever-higher levels of performance.

Professional development programs such as **Developing Emerging Leaders** noted above, **Emotional Intelligence Training**, and our **Strategic Leadership** program, together combine training in essential skills with ongoing learning and coaching sessions to help individual contributors make the transition to effectively getting work done through others.



An Inclusive and Welcoming Community

Starting a new job is often difficult and awkward. People are more likely to join an organization if it has a structured onboarding process in place, and more likely to stay in a job where they feel welcome and supported.

Unfortunately, employers don't typically do a great job of making new employees feel welcome and comfortable with their team – and they pay for it in the high cost of turnover. Research shows that **22% of new employees leave within six weeks** of being hired, **30% within 90 days**, and **50% within the first two years**.

These statistics bolster the case for **making team building part of your new employee orientation process**. Team building helps **make new employees more productive, faster** (as well as happier in their new roles) by breaking down barriers, aligning actions with team goals, building relationships with coworkers, and creating shared experiences.

While there are lots of great options for **new-employee team building activities**, Steve recommends CSR programs. "When you're part of an activity that is giving back to the community – whether it's something like **Bears and Blankets** for children who are hospitalized or in crisis centers, or **Donation Nation Care Packs** for homeless shelters or nursing homes – that creates a strong, lasting connection and powerfully emotional shared experience with coworkers."

In diverse work environments, the experience of working together for a great cause helps people look beyond their differences and focus on their efforts to collaborate in accomplishing something very positive.

Wrapping Up

With slow projected growth in the labor force over the next several years, businesses and organizations of all types will face continued challenges in attracting, retaining, and engaging talented employees.

Fortunately, the factors that most strongly influence employee engagement (or the lack of it) are well understood from research. Enterprises that invest in professional development and team building to improve the quality of their leadership and team collaboration will win the battle for talent and continually improve their operational performance.



How Team Building Increases Employee Engagement

Improving employee engagement is always a productive move, but it's more crucial now than ever. Here's why, and how to accomplish that goal.

Highly engaged employees see their work as meaningful. They feel trusted and respected, and often feel an emotional commitment to their organization. As a result, they are more productive, more consistently, which ultimately leads to a happier workplace attitude and higher profits for their employers.

That's always been true. But with the structure of work changing in this post-pandemic environment, increasing employee engagement is both more vital and more challenging than before. Many employees are coming back to the office on a part-time basis, while others are working remotely most or all of the time.

Maintaining engagement when employees are physically separated is difficult but essential to preserving that sense of connection and high productivity. Team building programs can be extremely effective in sustaining and strengthening the bonds that keep employees highly engaged. Here's what you need to know.

Team Building is Inherently Engaging

Team building activities and initiatives by their very nature incorporate certain pillars that are essential for engagement: communication, leadership, problem-solving, and establishing roles.

Whatever the specific program, the foundation is the same: bringing together a group of co-workers and presenting them with a challenge to solve or a project to complete. Out of necessity, the group must begin communicating, asking questions to make sure they understand the activity, goal, rules, and guidelines.

The team (or teams) then work together to achieve the objective. It's fun, collaborative, and engaging. And when it's over, this experience translates directly into positive workplace attitudes and behaviors.

Get a GRPI

GRPI stands for goals, roles, personalities, and interpersonal relations. This is a core component of effective team building. What are the goals the group must accomplish? What different roles will team members establish in order to complete the task? How will the different personalities in the group affect the roles chosen? And in terms of the interpersonal aspect, how are team members getting along? How effectively are they working together to complete the task?

Again, these are skills that employees will learn and hone as part of the team building program – and have fun doing it! And they will bring these new and enhanced skills back into the workplace with them, increasing their engagement with the organization.

Another benefit is that with many programs, special skills of certain employees come to light – skills that are desirable for the position the employee fills



in the company. Management has many times observed employees in team building exercises displaying skills they didn't know their employees possessed.

Create a New, Shared Experience

Team building increases engagement by encouraging communication, collaboration, and problem-solving in an activity the participants have never done before. It's not basketball, rock climbing, or bowling. The facilitator is introducing activities that are brand new to everyone in the room.

That puts all team members on equal footing, with the same information, starting out on a level playing field. Everyone starts with the same (limited) knowledge, so no one is "the boss" and no one is shy about asking questions. As participants get more engaged in the activity, the facilitator acknowledges fruitful collaboration and recognizes individuals for strong communication.

Today's team building activities are less physical than old-fashioned team building: "trust falls," obstacle courses, boot camp. Now, it is more cerebral.

These activities allow for full and active participation, regardless of the physical condition or abilities of any participant. Every team member, even someone with back problems, a sprained ankle, or mobility limitations can take a full and active part in the team building because there are roles for everyone. That structure keeps all participants engaged.

Enhance Engagement by Showing What Matters

Employers are in the midst of the great resignation. There's evidence that labor shortages will persist, as companies compete for a shrinking (or at best, slowly growing) pool of workers. Engagement is more critical than ever. How can companies retain their best employees and make new employees feel like part of the team, even if they aren't physically in the office?

To maximize engagement, you need to make your employees feel that you care about them as individuals. Every employer offers a paycheck and benefits. What sets some employers apart in this competitive environment for talent is hosting social events for employees (live or virtual), giving back to the community, and team building activities.

Send employees (particularly those working remotely) little gift boxes with cheese, crackers, and beverages. Maybe an engraved wine glass or coffee mug. Conduct surveys to help increase engagement. Report on the results. Announce what you'll start doing, do differently, or do more of.

Show employees they are important by investing in team building activities: a scavenger hunt, a charitable event, or a game show program. All of these types of actions show that you care about each person, beyond what they do to drive revenue for your company.

The payoff in engagement means you retain your best people, bring new people up to speed more quickly, and make all of your employees happier in their work and more consistently productive.



How to Build and Maintain High-Performing Teams

In today's tight labor market and challenging economic environment, it's more vital than ever to not only attract great employees but also keep them engaged. So what's the secret to building and maintaining extraordinary teams?

According to *Harvard Business Review*, "When it comes to building extraordinary workplaces and high-performing teams, researchers have long appreciated that three psychological needs are essential: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Decades of research demonstrate that when people feel psychologically fulfilled, they tend to be healthier, happier, and more productive."

Of those three needs, relatedness – connection to others – is the most challenging for organizations to develop. The difficulty has been compounded as organizations have moved to remote and hybrid work models since March 2020.

The HBR article lists several things that high-performing work teams do differently which help to foster connection, including being more strategic with their meetings; bonding over non-work topics; and giving and receiving recognition.

Professional development trainers and team building facilitators can help in all of those areas. Here's how to recognize the need and then use those resources strategically to help create and sustain high-performing work teams.

Signs of Trouble

Obviously, any falloff in team performance is a source of concern worth investigating. Employee complaints are another sign of trouble, whether those relate to coworkers, tasks, strategy, the work environment, or other issues.

However, if those complaints are followed up by an acknowledgement of the employee's role in the problem, and ideas for solving it, that's actually a *positive* sign. It shows that the employee is engaged, concerned, thinking about the issue, and taking at least part of the responsibility for making things better.

Silence can be more dangerous than complaining, according to Roy Charette, managing partner at Best Corporate Events, “A key sign of trouble is disconnectedness. When employees stop caring enough to complain or identify what’s wrong, they just go silent. That’s a big red flag.”

If you’re seeing any signs of performance or engagement issues, it’s vital to look for ways to build or rebuild that sense of connectedness among team members.

How Team Building Creates Connections

Team building activities can help any work team to do those things that high-performing teams do differently, as identified above, even in [hybrid and remote work environments](#).

Be more strategic with meetings: Professional development programs like our in-person [Meeting Management](#) workshop or online [Conducting Better Virtual Meetings](#) program equip your team leaders to run meetings that are more effective, productive, and valuable for everyone involved.

Bond over non-work topics: Every type of team building program creates memorable shared experiences, particularly corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs, which have a [profound emotional impact](#) on participants.

That common experience is one type of shared interest, which “fosters deeper liking and authentic connections” per HBR. Organized team building events develop relationships that lead to more ad hoc employee conversations and gatherings.

Professional facilitators explain to managers how to bring the energy and enthusiasm of team building activities back to the work environment. This is even more effective when combined with [personality assessments](#) and [leadership training](#) workshops.



Give and receive recognition: Per the HBR article, “recognition is often a more powerful motivating force than monetary incentives.” Recognition, appreciation, and acknowledgement are key elements in team building activities.

Roy shared a remarkable story about the power of team building for recognition and connectedness:

“One of the nicest compliments I ever received was at the end of a workshop, when a woman came up to me and said, ‘I wasn’t going to attend this workshop because, unknown to my boss and everyone here, I was planning to leave the company tomorrow. I had my resignation paperwork all written up. But after what I just did with my team, I’m staying.’”

“And she stayed. She told her team a year later that she had planned to quit that week but then changed her mind, and that the impetus was the workshop I had led, because she had so much fun with her team. She hadn’t thought that was possible anymore, but it happened. And then she hired me to work with her team again. That’s a great compliment.”

Programs for Creating High-Performing Teams

Any of our professional development programs are excellent for building team effectiveness and cohesion. Options include:



Competition to Collaboration[®]: This is a unique series of team collaboration activities with a powerful message of organizational synergy. This engaging session will impart to your group coaching and mentoring skills, and highlight the positive results of sharing best practices, while celebrating the success of colleagues.



Igniting Team Performance[™]: A fun, fast-paced, and dynamic training series that measures and defines your group’s current teamwork ability while imparting lessons on goal-setting, leadership enhancement, and communication skills. This program challenges your team to complete a series of progressively difficult challenges. Guided conversations uncover strengths and areas for improvement.



Total Recall: In this challenging and multi-faceted event, sub-teams of five are assigned specific roles while working together to replicate a pre-built structure – to be assembled in a totally different location – utilizing communication skills only through a chain of conversations. This is the ultimate activity to drive home critical lessons that can be applied immediately to enhance clear communication in the workplace.

What's most important is the value of creating a shared experience. As Roy notes,

"When you have a life-changing event and then try explaining it to someone who wasn't there, it's hard to make them understand why it was so powerful. But when you share an experience with your team, you develop connectedness, a shared understanding of why the activity was so impactful. It's something everyone can relate to, look back on, and apply lessons from in the workplace."

Bringing It All Together

Regarding relatedness, that most challenging need for organizations to address, the HBR article notes that, "Members of high-performing teams were significantly more likely to express positive emotions with their colleagues. They reported being more likely to compliment, joke with, and tease their teammates. In emails, they were more likely to use exclamation points, emojis, and GIFs."

That paragraph caught Roy's attention, who added, "When we deliver live programs, we share laughing and good times. That's a smiley face emoji in real life. Participants will tell each other, 'Great idea! That's exactly what we needed.' And then they will implement that idea. It's the in-person equivalent of the exclamation point.

"High-performing teams share several attributes: bonding, recognition, strategic meetings, phone calls, direct communication, and positive interaction. Team building delivers the equivalent of smiling emojis and funny GIFs in a live, three-dimensional experience."

As the HBR article concludes, "Creating a high-performing workplace takes more than simply hiring the right people and arming them with the right tools to do their work. It requires creating opportunities for genuine, authentic relationships to develop." Team building programs are among the most effective and fun ways to create those opportunities.





Why Team Building Should be Ongoing

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How Team Building Jumpstarts Employee Morale

Burnout. Turnover. The Great Resignation. Labor shortages. A common thread across all of these issues is low employee morale. The good news is there is a solution – an answer that’s more effective, more fun, and less costly than big pay increases.

As noted in the opening section of this ebook, team building should be job #1 as employees are required to return to the office, even if only part-time. Team building turbocharges morale because it’s interactive, engaging, reconnective, and it plants seeds for building new relationships.

Many companies have hired employees on a full-time remote basis during the pandemic. Many of these employees have never actually met most of their coworkers (other than perhaps as a video image in a Zoom box). And some long-time employees still haven’t seen (or at least haven’t seen much of) each other since early 2020.

The fun team building programs we’ve delivered lately, whether they’re charity-focused or competitive events, have reunited people. Face-to-face is exciting. It’s rejuvenating. It’s folks getting to see and associate with each other in three dimensions again.

Here are three ways team building positively impacts employee morale.

Reunited and It Feels So Good

At one of our recent live team building events, 20% of the client’s workforce was hired during COVID. This is the first time they were ever meeting their other coworkers in person. The longer-term employees were also thrilled to finally get together live again.

But team building isn’t just about reconnecting, as crucial as that is in boosting morale. It also provides the opportunity to meet in a non-work setting and solve fun problems, engaging with each other in collaborative and unifying ways.

When professional facilitation, the right venue, and clear purpose – whether team building or team building with charity – are brought together, people have fun and feel good about benefiting their community.

More Than a Paycheck

Many employees today are rethinking where they work and why they work there. That’s part of The Great Resignation; workers are asking, “What am I getting besides a paycheck? Why am I working so hard? Do I believe in what I’m doing and where I’m going, personally and professionally?”



When people see that their organizations are willing to re-engage in a team-building program and reach out to the community, that says something to them about the company they work with and the corporate culture.

And people are taking a hard look at that element of culture. Is it just to work us as hard as possible to maximize the bottom line... or is it more than that? Do they care about me, my personal and professional growth, about giving me the opportunity for continued education within the organization? Are they reaching out to the community and showing who they are as a company? And do I believe in that?

And if so, how important is it for me to be involved in a program where we're not only thinking about what's happening within the organization, but we're benefiting the community around us? That electrifies morale.

It makes employees feel more connected to the organization, to believe that leadership cares about their professional growth, and shows it with continued workshops and the opportunity to be coached by people within the organization to help move up the ladder.

Combining fun collaboration with professional interpersonal skills development and community service is tremendous for boosting morale. It gives employees a reason to work and to stay beyond just getting a paycheck.

New Work State of Mind

Much has been written about the pandemic's toll on mental health. The mix of fear, anxiety, isolation, sense of loss, and frustration has had many employees reassessing where and why they work.

People have been through a lot. They feel the need to get together and reconnect. To help employees improve their mental health and re-establish their connections – to each other and to the organization – companies are using team building programs to bring workers together to collaborate in an environment that's high on fun and creativity and virtually stress-free.

Study after study shows that laughter, fun, and engagement are good for mental and physical health. Laughing is good for your blood pressure, your diaphragm, your face, and your brain. To have fun and interact in an engaging way with colleagues is more vital than ever in light of the psychological challenges of the past three years.

The Heart of the Matter

Every team building program incorporates fundamental pillars: communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and leadership. In today's environment, they provide the added benefit of improving morale through healthy re-engagement.

Many activities also involve fun competition. The winners may receive certificates, medals, or gift cards. But the value, for both participants and the organization, comes from the shared experience.

Although in-person events have the greatest impact, virtual get-togethers can also help improve morale. They still engage people. Virtual options include everything from professional development (presentation skills, meeting management, time management) to outright fun with challenges like escape rooms. Virtual game shows and trivia contests provide learning, and when company content is added to the mix, the game can become even more relevant to the organization.

Team building events, whether live or virtual, re-energize employee morale by bringing people together, enhancing their connection with each other and the organization, and improving mental health. There's only one bad choice when it comes to team building - which is to do nothing at all.



The Impact of CSR on Employee Loyalty

If Charles Dickens was writing his classic novel today, the opening line might read "It was the weirdest of times."

Job openings in the U.S. hit a record high in September 2021, as companies across industries and regions struggled to find enough help. There were a record number of container ships waiting to unload off the California coast because there weren't enough dock workers to unload them. Even if there were, there weren't enough truck drivers to pick up the containers, or enough warehouse workers to unload the trucks.

Although the worst bottlenecks have since been cleared, 61% of respondents in a recent [CNBC survey](#) said their current supply chain is not operating normally, and don't expect it to until 2024 or later.

At the heart of supply chain woes is a labor shortage, and the story is the same across companies and job categories. The economy is strong, but a record number of workers are quitting their jobs. In many industries, there aren't enough employees to go around.

According to the [U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#), businesses are struggling to find enough employees. "The transportation, health care and social assistance, and the accommodation and food sectors have had the highest numbers of job openings," but there are also worker shortages in durable goods manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, education, finance, professional business services, and healthcare. Companies are struggling to recruit software engineers, nurses, and tradespeople (e.g., welders, plumbers, mechanics, and electricians).

Employers have to think hard about retention and recruitment. Many are raising wages, but know they need to offer more than a paycheck. How does a company become an employer of choice - a place that people want to join and don't want to leave?

One answer is to emphasize corporate social responsibility (CSR). How does community philanthropy impact employment choices? While its importance varies from individual to individual, as a whole, people feel pretty good about reaching out and helping others. And when a company does that, it's not just saying, but *showing* that its leadership cares about more than just the bottom line.

Invest in Your People

Any type of team building activity - whether the objective is to improve collaboration, problem-solving, or professional skills - improves employee engagement.

It demonstrates to employees that their worth to your company is more than just the immediate value of their daily efforts. You're willing to invest in improving their skills and their work life over the long term. You're paying them not to do their regular jobs for a few hours because you place a priority on team building.



Even more than holiday bonuses or employee surveys, team building programs let individuals know your company really does care about them, by investing in developing their leadership and interpersonal skills, while having fun doing it!

We all know the statistics about how difficult and expensive it is to retrain someone when a good person leaves your company. So, retention is so critical. Employee engagement done correctly equates to retention and enthusiasm.

Show Your Heart

Incorporating CSR in your team building takes it to a whole different level. It's tremendous when a company is willing to do something charity-related or philanthropic in combination with developing their people.

From the perspective of employees, it has to do with heart. It has to do with the spirit of the company, with the culture that your company embraces. At one of our recent team-building events, the client said, "I feel like every time we do one of these activities, it enhances who we are, the culture that we have as a company." That's a pretty powerful statement.

This manager felt that the fact the company took some time to do a team building activity enhanced the culture; it had the entire group feeling unified because they had just worked through a very difficult activity together. They had just celebrated together, with each of the participants sharing something they learned from the activity.

At our **Bike Build Donation**[®] events, we usually don't tell the participants that kids are going to be there; it's a "reveal" at the end of the activity. When those kids come in, it's very emotional.

Many of those kids have never even owned a bike before. And when the facilitator asks everyone to close their eyes, and they sneak the kids in and tell a story, when everybody opens their eyes and the kids are standing there with the bikes, it's really powerful. It's so emotional that it has an impact on employee engagement and employee retention. It's above and beyond work.

A bike-build program has all of the pillars for a team-building event. It's got a goal, roles, fun, communication, competition, collaboration, and problem-solving, plus it's got building. Everything an organization could want in a team building program happens in the bike build. All of our charity events have an inherent team-building foundation. It's a double bonus.

Or there are our **Build-a-Wheelchair**[®] events, often done in collaboration with Disabled American Veterans and other veterans' support organizations. In one of these programs, a charitable representative came with two retired service members in wheelchairs...that really had an emotional impact on the participants.

For our **Project Alzheimer's**[™] program - we get calls from people who go to our website and might say, "I just went through this very difficult situation with my mom with Alzheimer's. And I saw you have an Alzheimer's program. I know one of my workers is dealing with the same thing. We're absolutely doing this program."

All of our CSR programs allow participants to reach out to others. It's about emotions, caring, company culture, the community. Those are all things that any of our charity programs represent.

Make It Part of Something Bigger

More often than not, our team building program options are a part of a full-day or multi-day offsite employee meeting. In those cases, the company is making a broader investment in enhancing the knowledge and skills of its employees, as well as defining their corporate culture.

Team building is a vital piece of that investment. A CSR program might even be a surprise piece of that because it has such a tremendous impact.



But whether the CSR team building event is hosted in a hotel, conference center, or on the campus of a Fortune 500 company, it enhances company culture in a powerful way.

Make an Impact on Your Community

Some companies allow employees to take a few days off each year, separate from their vacation days, when they're paid to volunteer for different nonprofit organizations such as Habitat for Humanity or their local soup kitchen. For employees who value giving back to the community, any type of CSR policy or activity has a powerful impact on loyalty, engagement, and retention.

Again, any type of team building program has a positive impact on employee morale and engagement. But incorporating CSR takes those effects to a higher level.

For any team building or professional development program we deliver, we can end with a surprise CSR component. It's the best of both worlds when team building is combined with charity.

For example, we'll take off the tablecloths, and lo and behold, there are all these school supplies. What are these school supplies for? Because we're going to be putting them into backpacks and donating them.

How about our Golf Build Food Donation program? In two hours, your group gets to build a mini-golf course using canned and boxed goods, play a round of golf with medals to the winners, and then donate all the canned and boxed goods to a local food bank - it doesn't get any better than that!

CSR team building events increase employee loyalty and engagement by enhancing your culture and creating an emotional as well as practical impact.



How to Teach Collaboration Through Competition

Most team building activities are competitive – and for good reasons.

Competition is fun, it's engaging, and it helps set clear goals for the exercise. And business itself is, of course, a constant competition for the attention, loyalty, and dollars of clients and customers.

But success within an organization frequently relies more on collaboration than competition. People need to work together to design the best products, make the best decisions, and deliver the best customer experiences.

How do competitive team building activities provide value to organizations? How can they be used to teach collaboration? And how can team building combine competition with collaboration to deliver the "best of both worlds"?

Here are the answers to those questions and more.



Teaching Collaboration is Hard

Why? Because for most people, competition is their default. It's innate, hard-wired into us. Collaboration is not.

Think about it. Turn a group of small children loose on a playground, then sit back and watch. What do they do? They race. They see who can get to the top of the monkey bars the fastest. They play tag – and try not to be "it."

When you're in college, you're competing against other students for grades. When you're going out to get your first job, there may be eight people vying for that role, and only one person is going to get it. When you get the job, four people are being eyed for promotion; you're one of them. You're always competing.

Even within the same company in the same sales department, people will compete for regions, compete for clients... no matter how much collaboration there is, people are usually rewarded for shining, for standing out.

The results of competition are also much more straightforward to measure. It's easy to see who crossed the finish line first, who got the high score, whose numbers look best.

Even in team sports, where collaboration is crucial, it's hard to tease out its exact value.

To what extent did the New England Patriots win six Super Bowls because they out-collaborated their opponents - and to what extent was it the individual performance of Tom Brady? The same could be asked about Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls, or Maya Moore with the Minnesota Lynx.

Collaboration doesn't come automatically. Competition does. All of that makes teaching collaboration much harder than simply telling people to share information.

So, when it comes to teaching collaboration in a team building workshop, it is one of the most difficult things to do. An effective facilitator can model the behavior, point it out, and celebrate it. But to actually teach it and have it ingrained takes a highly skilled facilitator plus great program content. Leadership, problem-solving, and communication are teachable. Collaboration is the most difficult skill to ingrain into people.

Competition Can Be Constructive

Of course, the competitive aspect of team building is certainly valuable. It just depends upon what the goals are. At Best Corporate Events, about a third of our clients just want competition. They're thinking *A Minute to Win It*, *Catapult*, *Corporate Survivor*, *Go-Kart Competition*, *Team Olympics*, or a scavenger hunt. They want groups of x employees to compete, and to have one winner, or three teams to win the Gold, Silver, and Bronze, beating out all of the other teams.



We offer many different programs, in-person or online, wherein one team is going to have the most points. They win the gold medals. Competition can drive people to make extraordinary efforts to win, which is great.

But what makes these team building competitions even more impactful is that although participants are competing against other teams, they are working highly collaboratively with the other people on their team.

Team members are problem-solving, brainstorming, looking for solutions, and pumping each other up. Within each group, the efforts are tremendously collaborative, but all the groups are competing against each other. So these programs provide the best of both worlds.

But Collaboration is More Powerful

Another way to teach collaboration in a competitive team building situation is to add all of the teams' scores together and make that the score for the activity. When participants realize the goal is to maximize every team's score rather than simply out-scoring the other group, they will share information and discoveries in order to help the other team(s), and therefore maximize the overall point total.

Organizations often identify that realization as one of the highlights of the entire day: that even though the program was set up like a competition, someone recognized collaboration, verbalized it, and got the entire room to understand. Suddenly these teams of employees, who were all too willing to immediately compete for the highest score, started sharing information instead of hoarding it.

A twist on that is to recognize the high-scoring teams but also add the scores of all the teams together and calculate the average. Then there is a "half time" called. The highest-scoring teams are asked to share what they did, to identify and share best practices so that every team does better in the second half.

And then in the second half, though all teams are still operating and being scored independently, all the scores are added together again. The goal is for all of the teams combined to achieve a 25% or 30% improvement compared to the overall scores in the first half. That's collaborating to compete.

Bringing It All Together

The business benefit is the mindset those employees take back to the workplace. They look for opportunities to collaborate, and are excited about it. They focus more on how their activities and communications impact the overall organization, not just their own roles.

Virtually all of our team building programs involve competition. Most incorporate some level of collaboration as well. And if the idea of improving collaboration through competition sounds really intriguing, you may want to check out our trademarked **Competition to Collaboration**[®] program.

How Every Employee Can Benefit From Leadership Training

Leadership training isn't just for leaders. If your organization is thinking about leadership training too narrowly, you could be missing out on big opportunities to improve communication, collaboration, and productivity across your enterprise.

Companies often view leadership training as something that's helpful for new managers, as well as junior managers looking to advance within the organization. But it can actually be helpful for just about everyone in your organization.

That's because leadership is more than just a title; it's about how you act and react to people and situations. It's about improving "people skills" as opposed to technical skills, answering questions such as: How do I communicate more effectively? How do I resolve unproductive conflict? How do I build relationships to help get things done?

Here are several reasons to look at leadership training more broadly.

Today's Uncertain Labor Market

With record levels of employees voluntarily leaving companies as well as workers taking early retirement, companies are recognizing the need to improve their "bench strength" at every level.

It's not only about preparing senior director-level talent to move into a VP or CxO role, but also about backfilling director spots; training managers to move into director roles; and preparing talented, ambitious individual contributors to make the move into management.

Leadership training can also help with retention. When employees see that their company is making an investment in them and helping prepare them to advance in their careers, it increases satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty.





The “Superstar” Problem

Quite often, the people who get promoted into management positions are those who are strong performers as individual contributors, whether in finance, marketing, operations, or another function.

This is particularly true of salespeople. The hope of management is that by promoting their top-performing salesperson into a sales leadership role, they can replicate that strong performance.

But for many people, making the leap from being a strong individual performer to becoming an effective leader is challenging. That individual became very good at accounting, or sales, or whatever their role may have been, by honing their technical skills over many years. Leading others, however, requires a very different skill set.

The problem is that many companies don’t have the structure or training process in place to mentor the new mentor. So, new leaders are left on their own. That’s where leadership training comes in; pulling them out of the office gives them an opportunity to stop and think.

It starts with a behavioral assessment, asking the new leader to look in the mirror first, to be able to say, “This is what drives me in the workplace. This is how I communicate. This is how I interact with people.”

Then we ask them to flip the mirror and say, “Okay, these are the people whom I now work with. How do they behave in the workplace? How do they communicate? How do I interact with them?” Leading becomes less about the leader and more about the team they manage.



It’s Not About You

In making the move from individual contributor to leader, the employee needs to shift their focus from doing a task well to increasing the skills of others. It can be tempting for new leaders to keep “doing the work,” which leads to a lack of focus, resentment from the team, and even burnout.

It’s challenging to make the transition from managing one’s own to-do list to leading a team of people, each with their own task lists. An individual who may have been comfortable as an individual contributor in sales or accounting is now being pulled into more meetings, called upon to resolve conflicts, and asked to coach others.

They may know that having regular one-on-one meetings with their team members is part of their role, but they may not understand how to get the most out of these. Those individual conversations are more than just a status check – that can be done with email. They are opportunities to coach, to make sure employees are engaged, and to help them improve their direct or indirect job skills. Leadership training helps managers to not only do the right things, but to do those things consistently well.

One Size Does Not Fit All

Any work team may include one person who is eager to get promoted; another who loves their role and never wants to get promoted; another who has young children at home and whose focus is therefore on work-life balance; and others, each with their own priorities.

Managing each of those people requires a somewhat different skill set or approach. Being an effective leader requires learning how to recognize and adjust to those different perspectives.

Individuals often underperform or limit themselves because of obstacles they've unconsciously placed in their own way. It may be an attitude, a belief, or a shortcoming they are unaware of.

Leadership training helps managers help employees to recognize the limitations or hurdles they've placed in their own way, so they work to change those things. The employee often can't articulate why they're not performing; they can't figure it out. Leaders need to understand different approaches they can try to help the employee see the answers that are right in front of them.

Managing Up, Down, and Across

It's clear why new leaders and even experienced managers can benefit from leadership training, but what about that employee who loves being an individual contributor and isn't interested in a promotion to management – how can leadership training benefit them?

First, it helps them learn to “manage up” more proficiently; to influence their boss so they can get what they need in order to be more productive in their job. The basis of leadership training is empathy and communication, which can improve outcomes when an employee is talking to their boss just as much as when the boss is coaching that employee.

Second, it helps people to “manage across” more effectively. A great deal of work today is done collaboratively. Employees rely on others, in their own department or other parts of the business, in order to accomplish goals. The ability to influence others is just as important when working with a peer who is not a direct report as it is when managing and coaching subordinates.

Third, it helps employees to better understand how their manager thinks, and why they do or say certain things. Developing the ability to understand that perspective helps employees to ask better questions when meeting with their manager, and to improve that working relationship.

Finally, most employees value increasing their skills and appreciate their employer investing in them. This may mean direct skills like sales training or classes with CPE credits. It may mean learning indirectly helpful knowledge like presentation skills. Or it may mean enhancing their interpersonal relationship skills through leadership training.

Wrapping It Up - the Best Leadership Training Programs

Leadership training can benefit virtually every employee in an organization in some way. And it's a wise investment for companies to make: it helps increase retention, develops bench strength, assists employees with the transition from being strong individual contributors to effective leaders, and helps non-management employees better communicate up and across the organization.

Among the key skills employees develop through leadership training are communicating more effectively; resolving conflicts; coaching and developing others; goal setting and time management; strategic thinking; and relationship building.

Leadership and professional development programs offered by Best Corporate Events include:

Conflict Resolution Training

Managing conflict effectively can make the difference between a simple "bump in the road" or lost productivity and long-term animosity in the workplace. Participants learn strategies to engender a workplace culture better equipped to handle conflict.

DiSC Profile Workshop

Participants are introduced to the DiSC Model, a behavior assessment tool that helps professionals understand their own styles of behavior and communication, as well as those of their colleagues. Learning how to manage these styles can help participants eliminate bad habits, minimize conflict, and improve the overall success of their team.

Manager's Guide to Business Coaching

Constructive guidance and consistent coaching are critical responsibilities of all managers, but the best managers utilize proven coaching practices that can strengthen relationships, bolster trust, and reap the benefits of open and positive communication.

Emotional Intelligence Training

An Emotionally Intelligent company is one in which each member understands their Emotional Quotient (E.Q.) and how best to tap into it for professional growth. Applying E.I. within an organization can build trust and encourage open communication.

In short, as noted above, leadership training isn't just for leaders. Employees at all levels can benefit from learning how to productively influence others. These training programs are ultimately about helping your team members better understand each other by first learning more about themselves.

“Never Mind, It’s Fine”.

Activities to Combat Passive-Aggressive Behavior

Passive-aggressive behavior is poisonous to workplace cohesion and productivity. Fortunately, team building programs can supply the antidote.

One of the most insidious characteristics of passive-aggressive behavior is that it’s rarely an event. There’s no app managers can download that will send them an alert when this crops up. Instead, it tends to build over time, its corrosive effects gradually damaging team collaboration.

That means managers need to be alert to early warning signs, ready to take action.

Signs of a Passive-Aggressive Problem

Typically, when teams are first formed or expanded, everyone is excited. Team members are fully engaged, on their best behavior, and want to be part of the process.

But, over time, people can become less engaged, for a variety of reasons. Perhaps their ideas were rejected. Or they don’t agree with the direction the team is taking. Or they feel that their opinions aren’t valued.

The path of least resistance is to just go along. There’s no “big bang” confrontation. There is just a slow erosion of effort, engagement, and input. There may be some grumbling, but much of the frustration remains beneath the surface.

Managers and team leaders need to be attuned to these types of changes, which may be manifested in missed deadlines, apathy, and less discussion during team meetings.

How Team Building Helps

If you Google “benefits of team building,” you’ll get a long list. The positive impacts are widespread. Here are five ways that organized team building exercises directly help to eliminate passive-aggressive behavior at work.

Improved morale: Team building activities are fun, engaging, and a break from the normal routine. Employees enjoy the exercises and appreciate the investment the company is making in improving their collaboration and communication skills.

Enhanced creativity: Many of these activities present participants with a new and completely unfamiliar problem to solve, whether it’s completing a scavenger hunt, figuring out an escape room challenge, or assembling bicycles, wheelchairs, or guitars. Team members need to work together and often “think outside the box” to solve the challenge. You’ve empowered them to think differently.

Improved relationships: There’s a feel-good aspect to working together on solving a fun, non-work problem. But beyond that, there’s an openness to see

coworkers in a different way. People who may be reluctant to ask questions or acknowledge any professional shortcomings in the workplace aren't afraid to admit when they don't know how to do something in a team building activity. They're more authentic and open, because the puzzle isn't work-related and is therefore less intimidating.

Increased trust: Team events often include time limits and competition that compel participants to rely on each other. They are more willing to offer and ask for help. That process builds trust which gets taken back into the workplace.

Productive fun: Almost all team building experiences produce laughter. That makes endorphins go up and walls come down. Team members lower their mental and psychological barriers. Working together to accomplish the team building goal positively impacts professional relationships; it improves peoples' demeanor and perspective in ways that carry through to the workplace.

Combined, all of these effects of team building combat passive-aggressive behavior by shifting the mindset of employees. The result is improved trust, collaboration, and engagement.

Here are four specific ways organizations can use team building programs to improve morale and productivity by reducing passive-aggressive behavior.

Reframe the Situation

A common manifestation of this problem is that people are afraid to speak out. Even if they are very unhappy or frustrated about an issue, they aren't comfortable being direct, saying what they are really thinking and feeling. They may worry about hurting a coworker's feelings, or making that person angry, or about having their ideas rejected.

Team building literally puts everyone in a different place. They are in a different environment, solving a fun non-work problem, relaxed and laughing. This puts people in a different frame of mind. Conversations are easier because the participants are in a non-intimidating, non-confrontational environment.



Build Trust

Leaders need to establish the trust of their team. That trust has to be earned all the time, in different scenarios. They need trust that they are going to hold everyone on the team accountable to the same criteria. That they will provide honest feedback, and not let poor performance just slide.

Ignoring poor performance doesn't help the employee who is not receiving an honest appraisal, and it doesn't help the team. There needs to be two-way dialogue, but from the leader's perspective, there is no single way to do that because every employee is different.

Team building improves communication and team cohesiveness by taking the team out of the office to solve a fun challenge. Earning trust and establishing a dialogue in another environment carries over into the workplace.

Break Down Barriers

We've seen even some rather cynical, jaded employees lower their guard and open up after a feel-good team building experience. During the socializing that follows, it's not unusual to hear an employee conversing with a coworker along the lines of, "That was really great. I wish we could talk like this at the office."

By attacking obstacles to team cohesiveness from different vantage points, team building helps lower or eliminate barriers to effective collaboration.

In addition to breaking down barriers, it helps participants to better understand the communication styles and preferences of their colleagues. Co-workers seem more approachable, opening the door to better and more productive discussions at work.



Make It a Habit

While team building programs are clearly helpful for combating passive-aggressive behavior, they aren't a one-and-done solution. Rome wasn't built in a day, and team performance isn't optimized overnight.

That's why top-performing organizations make team building a regular event, often running programs several times each year.

The goal of one event may be dealing with passive-aggressive behavioral issues. At the next event, the focus may be on team cohesiveness, improving communication skills, conflict resolution, or managing a significant organizational change.

Team building activities, especially if done two or more times per year, help build social trust. Frustrations, disappointments, and misunderstandings aren't allowed to fester to the point where they cause operational or performance problems.

A regular cadence of team building exercises helps develop a culture of high performance. Over time, those exercises become less about resolving problems and more about taking organization performance to successively higher levels, going from good to better, better to great, great to amazing, and from amazing to extraordinary.

The Best Team Building Programs for Combating Passive-Aggressive Behavior

Many different team building programs can be helpful in dealing with this issue, but among the best are ***Build-a-Raft Competition***; ***Catapult*** (where teams utilize their creative brainpower to build a working catapult, and then compete on distance on accuracy using their creations); ***Crack the Case!*** (where teams solve clues and puzzles together to break into a series of locked boxes); ***Pipeline*** (where teams design and assemble a delivery system for marbles using PVC pipe, bamboo, rope, and other materials); and ***Team Olympics***.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs, such as ***Build-a-Wheelchair***[®] and ***Bike Build Donation***[®], are also effective, and create powerful emotional experiences.



And for situations where it's not practical to gather everyone together in one physical location, [virtual escape rooms](#) and game shows are an excellent alternative.

Wrapping Up

Passive-aggressive behavior in the workplace is anything but "just fine." It's damaging to team cohesion, morale, and productivity.

Fortunately, team building can help in several ways, from breaking down barriers and increasing trust to improving relationships, communication, and collaboration.

One event will produce positive results, but to really help people change and be more open with their coworkers, it's important to run organized team building exercises on a regular basis.

High-performing cultures aren't created by one team building experience. They're built over time with consistency, cultivating an environment where people are motivated. And that leads to higher employee retention, morale, and productivity.

If you're looking to build a best-in-class team or organization, you can do it over time with a little effort and a lot of fun by making regular team building activities part of your operational planning.



Recruitment, Retention, and Relationships

How Team Building Helps

While there are hopeful signs on the horizon for employers that labor market tightness may be easing a bit, the long-term trend of slower growth in the workforce means competition for talent will continue for years.

That makes it imperative for organizations to create a workplace culture and environment that employees want to join, want to stay with, and are engaged in. Those that don't, risk declines in performance and competitiveness.

This shouldn't be surprising, and yet recent research shows that employee stress is at a new all-time high, while global engagement and employee well-being measures are low.

According to the *State of the Global Workplace: 2022 Report*:

“Before the pandemic, engagement and wellbeing were rising globally for nearly a decade – but now, they’re stagnant... With only 21% of employees engaged at work and 33% of employees thriving in their overall wellbeing, most would say that they don’t find their work meaningful, don’t think their lives are going well or don’t feel hopeful about their future.”

Numbers like that should spur leaders across business, government, and academia to action. But before developing strategies, it's vital to understand what's causing these high levels of stress and low levels of engagement.

Why Are Employees Dissatisfied and Disengaged?

The bad news for employers is that today's worker shortage isn't just a temporary blip caused by the pandemic, but is part of a longer-term trend. The good news is that the underlying reasons for worker dissatisfaction are within the control of leaders.

In a series of studies going back to 2012, [Pew Research has found](#) that while the specific reasons given by employees for voluntarily leaving their jobs has changed somewhat over time, nevertheless:

“When you look at the patterns and trends across the last decade, the big picture becomes clear – employees have realized that they are no longer willing to work in roles and for employers that consistently compromise their universal needs.”

The universal needs at the root of the labor crisis are identified as:

- **Foundation/function need:** Compensation, benefits such as health care, child care issues, excessive hours, etc..
- **Value need:** People quitting because they didn't feel important, they felt disrespected, a lack of support, favoritism, and not being recognized for their contribution.
- **Growth need:** Lack of challenge, not growing professionally, career development, and no opportunities for advancement.

Team building, training, and professional development programs can help, particularly with "value" and "growth" needs. As noted above in regard to [leadership training](#), "When employees see that their company is making an investment in them and helping prepare them to advance in their careers, it increases satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty."

Here's how.

Recruitment

Prospective employees will check out your company online before you even know they exist. Sites like Glassdoor and Reddit give them a glimpse into your company culture, leadership, compensation practices, and more, provided by your current (or former) employees.

When you bring jobseekers in for interviews and tours, they will scope out your offices. Do your people seem happy and collaborative in their work, or stressed and harried? Are the people they meet with friendly and welcoming, or do they treat the interview like an imposition? Or worse, an inquisition?

[Team cohesion](#) and management practices set the tone, and both can be improved through team building and professional development programs. Team building should also be part of your [new employee orientation process](#), as it builds trust, creates shared experiences, and helps new employees get productive more quickly.

Retention

As any type of leader in your organization – manager, supervisor, executive, team leader – it's vital to have open communication and dialogue with those who report to you.

You need to know how things are going; not just in the tactical sense (is this project on track?) but also how things are going with each specific team member on a personal basis. Do they feel secure? Is their work meaningful? Are they optimistic about their professional future?

Again, team building and leadership development programs can help break down barriers and improve that communication. But in terms of enhancing employee retention, they can do much more. Team building programs specifically help employees feel:

Valued: According to Roy Charette, “We run team building activities that let people shine. People take turns feeling valued. They smile a lot in these workshops. We introduce activities designed to showcase people’s competence and ability and productivity, events that bring out the best in people.”

Motivated: Roy points out that in workshops and programs, participants are so busy focusing on the task at hand, laughing, and high-fiving each other that they forget to look at their phones for an hour... or two, or three. He challenges team members, “If you can get this excited, energized, and motivated around an activity where there’s really nothing at stake, except for fun and team building, shouldn’t you be able to carry some of that over into your workplace where everything’s at stake: food on your table, a roof over your head, supporting your family?”

Passionate: Participants discuss how they can support each other, position each other for success, and move from competition to collaboration in the workplace in the same way they did during their team building exercise. The emotional impact is even more powerful when that activity has a corporate social responsibility (CSR) component. **CSR team building activities** such as a Bike Build Donation® or Build-a-Wheelchair® event help employees to feel more connected to their communities as well as to each other, **increasing loyalty** by creating emotionally impactful shared experiences.

Professional development programs for leaders help them carry those outcomes back into the workplace, to create an environment that fosters those same feelings. They learn what they can and should be doing as managers to lead high-performing teams in ways that don’t lose the “connectedness” developed through team building activities.



Relationships

Strong working relationships are key to employee retention and high performance. Employees who have poor relationships with peers or feel their supervisor is treating them unfairly will start looking for new opportunities elsewhere.

Team building activities help build and strengthen those relationships. The experiences are positive and designed to foster collaboration, to enable each team member to bring unique strengths to help achieve the objective. “We’re not putting people into a situation where they will need to deal with conflict resolution,” says Roy, “unless that’s what the workshop is about.”

“Our 100-plus workshops are very positive and engaging,” he adds. “They bring about the best examples of how we interact with each other. We have great communication, we share laughter, and we position others for success. We celebrate each other’s accomplishments. There is recognition, acknowledgement, and value.”

The Best Programs for Attracting, Retaining, and Engaging Employees

Choosing a team building program or professional development workshop starts with From there, any program may be customized to some degree to meet the specific needs and goals of the organization.

Managers also often ask if it’s better for them to participate in the team building activity or to observe it from the outside, looking for strengths and weaknesses.

“I normally say, ‘If you participate, that will have an impact, but you don’t have to participate in the whole event,’” says Roy. “I can explain the activities and then based on what they’re looking for, tell them which activities they should step away from, which ones they’re going to want to see from the outside because they’ll love what they see.”



That approach works well with programs that have “pause” points built in where participants can be debriefed and process the experiences, such as **Competition to Collaboration**[®]. But in programs like **Build-a-Guitar**[®] or **SmartHunts**[®] (high-tech scavenger hunts), all participants are involved from start to finish.

Leadership and professional development programs such as the **DiSC Profile Workshop**, **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator** (MBTI) Training, **Developing Emerging Leaders**, and **Emotional Intelligence Training** help managers bring some of the collaboration and communication benefits of team building programs back into the workplace.

Half of Best Corporate Events team building programs use iPads[®] for participants to take photos, record videos, and answer trivia questions among other activities. This provides the ability for participants to look back at those activities later on, enhancing the value of the shared experience.

“Quite frankly,” Roy summarizes, “all of our programs allow for everyone to feel good, to shine, to feel connected, and to have fun with each other. Having fun, feeling connected, and laughing with each other can have amazing impacts on employee retention, loyalty, and engagement.”

Wrapping Up

The bad news is that a tight labor market and competition for talent will be with us for several more years. The good news is that most of the factors driving (and avoiding) employee turnover are within management’s control.

As noted in *Entrepreneur*, “The reality is that there’s no such thing as a labor crisis right now if you have employees who are happy, engaged and loyal... (and) other people actually want to work for your organization (which happens when you gain a reputation for employees whose universal needs are supported through working with you).”

Among the top reasons employees voluntarily leave organizations today are that they don’t feel valued, recognized, or connected, and don’t see opportunities for advancement.

Team building and professional development programs can help on all of those fronts. They provide recognition and build relationships. And the fact that the organization is investing in their skills and paying them to take time away from their normal work to enhance their collaboration and communication abilities demonstrates to employees a commitment to their career advancement.

Virtually any type of team building or training program will ultimately help with recruitment, retention, and relationship building. Team building activities build recognition and a sense of connectedness through shared experiences. Leadership development programs help managers bring some of the enthusiasm and collaboration fostered by team building events back into the day-to-day work environment, to help build a culture of high performance.

To Build High-Performing Teams, Focus on Relationships and Employee Well-Being

Every enterprise today has access to technology, information, capital, and even talent (though they may have trouble retaining it). So what is it that separates high-performing organizations – those able to retain and engage the best people, and operate at a consistently high level – from their struggling peers? Recent research studies from Harvard and the U.S. Surgeon General agree on the answers.

Two closely related workplace factors have an outsized impact on organizational performance: relationships and well-being. These intertwined elements have huge effects on employee satisfaction and engagement as well as communication and collaboration, all of which are critical ingredients in the high-performance mix.

Here's a closer look at the research; the elements of workplace well-being; and how team building and professional development can help organizations improve in these areas, to ultimately perform at higher levels.

The Value of Workplace Relationships

Harvard Business Review reports that workplace friendships are anything but trivial: “By fueling our basic human psychological [need for belonging](#), meaningful workplace connections drive many of the outcomes central to high-performing teams... Employees with close connections at work are more productive, creative, and collaborative. They also report being more satisfied with their job, are less susceptible to burnout, and are less likely to leave their organization to pursue another role. In other words, not only are they better contributors, they provide more stability to a team.”

Relationships have far more value than just their contribution to employee retention. They are the secret to happiness. [As Inc. magazine notes](#), “Personal connection creates mental and emotional stimulation, and those things are automatic mood boosters, while isolation is a mood buster. Humans are an intensely social species.”

The *Inc.* article goes on to explain how technology, for all of its benefits, plays a big role in increasing isolation. Technology is vital to high performance. But to optimize both performance and employee happiness (which are closely linked), organizations need to foster human connections as well.

The Elements of Workplace Well-Being

Based on extensive research, the Surgeon General has created a [framework for workplace mental health and well-being](#). In introducing the framework, the Surgeon General's website states: “Work affects both our physical and mental well-being – in good ways and bad. (In recent surveys) 84% of respondents said their workplace conditions had contributed to at least one mental health challenge (while) 81% of workers reported that they will be looking for workplaces that support mental health in the future.”

“These five essentials support workplaces as engines of well-being... Creating a plan to enact these practices can help strengthen the essentials of workplace well-being.”

Note that workplace relationships (Connection & Community) are one of the five critical components in the model, working with and supporting the other elements.



Office of the Surgeon General

The Role of Team Building and Professional Development

Obviously, applying this model in the workplace requires several elements: leadership, executive buy-in and commitment, investment, and creativity among them.

Team building and professional development programs can also play vital roles in enhancing workplace relationships as well as the four other elements in the Surgeon General’s model. Here’s how.

Protection from Harm

Physical security is a big consideration of course, particularly given recent stories ranging from rude restaurant patrons to abusive air travelers.

But psychological security is also crucial to workplace mental health and well-being. Our **Emotional Intelligence Training** workshop helps participants better understand their own emotions and the emotions of others to manage them constructively. The application of EI at work helps create a culture of trust, loyalty, enhanced social awareness, and honest and open communication.

Conflict in the workplace is unavoidable, but our **Conflict Resolution Training** teaches participants strategies to handle disagreements with respect and professionalism. Finally, our **DiSC Profile Workshop** and **MBTI Training** enable employees to better understand their own personalities and recognize key traits in others, to eliminate bad habits, minimize conflict, and improve communication.

Connection & Community

As noted in a previous post here about [how team building jumpstarts employee morale](#), every team building program incorporates four fundamental pillars: communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and leadership. Those pillars help employees build and enhance workplace relationships by working together to solve problems in a fun and challenging way, outside the normal context of work.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs specifically, in addition to incorporating those pillars, create a connection between the workplace and the wider community. Working together at events that benefit deserving nonprofits creates an emotionally powerful bond and shared experience among employees.

Work-Life Harmony

Many factors play into healthy work-life balance, from management to company policy to workplace structure.

Team building also can also play a role in fostering this harmony. According to Roy Charette, the [takeaways from corporate team building](#) that transfer to life outside of work help bridge that gap.

“When a team building activity really resonates with a participant, the lessons they experience are often the ‘24/7’ variety in that they apply to all aspects of both personal and professional life. Enhanced active listening or conflict resolution skills, for example, will transcend the workplace and brighten interactions at home with friends and family.

“Participants will sometimes feel so connected to the lessons from a particular activity that they want to replicate that experience with their family, church group, or other organization they are associated with. It reminds them of a struggle they are having or a problem they need to solve outside of work.”

Mattering at Work

Team building impacts this component of workplace well-being in a couple of different ways. First, CSR activities help employees see a larger purpose in their work. They see their organizations making an investment in giving back to the community – whether it’s a **Bike Build Donation**® or **Bears and Blankets** program to help kids or a **Build-a-Wheelchair**® activity to help seniors, veterans, and others with mobility impairment – and are powerfully impacted by the opportunity to play a part in that.

Second is the feeling these activities create in terms of making a difference. For the sake of mental health and well-being, employees need to feel a purpose larger than just crossing items off of an (often ever-expanding) to-do list.

What precisely will make employees feel like they’ve made a difference will vary among people. It may be making a difference for customers or clients. For some workers, it’s about making a difference in helping out their team. For others, it may be taking on a big challenge that no one has been able to figure out, or becoming the go-to subject matter expert in a certain area.

“What’s great about the programs at Best Corporate Events,” says team development professional Steve Ockerbloom, “is there are so many different team building activities that help accomplish those goals, that help employees connect the exercise to their regular work and feel that sense of making a difference.



“In a program like **Crack the Case!**, groups of employees compete to solve a series of puzzles and challenges designed to test creative thinking, problem-solving, ingenuity, and deductive reasoning, in order to ultimately crack the case before competing teams.

“CSR programs like **Build-a-Guitar**[®] and the **Mini-Golf Build Food Donation** present challenges that produce a sense of accomplishment as well as giving back to the community. So if we think about meaningful work in terms of being purpose-driven, or solving challenges that seem impossible, or becoming the subject matter expert, these team building activities give people an opportunity to latch onto that aspect, which can be incredibly motivating.”

Opportunity for Growth

Performance coaching and feedback isn’t just for helping struggling employees get up to standard and feel like they are contributing what’s expected. It’s vital to also apply this to top performers to help them understand their opportunities and perform at an even higher level.

“Development coaching” is a skill taught in our **Managers Guide to Business Coaching** program. It will look different for every employee. For some, it will be about preparing them for a leadership role. Other employees may not be interested in a supervisory position, but will want to learn a new skill set, or make a lateral move to gain experience in a different part of the organization, or get involved in a new project. The key is to provide employees with a path to growth within the organization – rather than watching them walk out the door for a new job offer.

One more key point here: leadership training isn’t just for current or aspiring leaders. It can [benefit virtually every employee](#). Attending our personality assessment workshops or other [professional development programs](#) can help employees understand different perspectives and learn techniques and insights to influence peers within the organization, even without taking on a management role.

Conclusion

Studies from Harvard and other sources show that developing strong workplace relationships helps employees be more productive, collaborative, engaged, and happy at work, all of which contribute to higher levels of organizational performance.

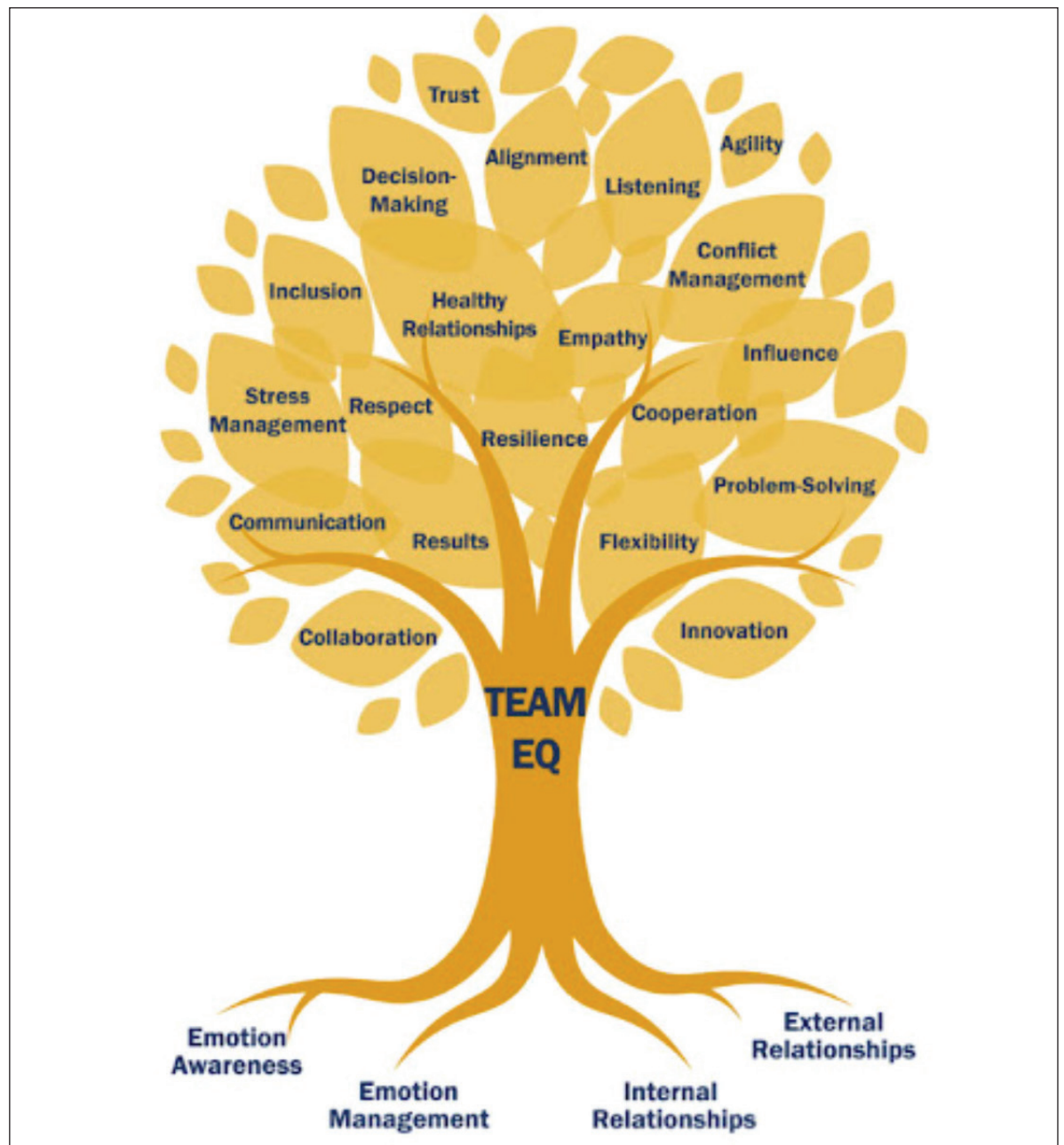
The sense of connection produced by those strong relationships with coworkers is one of five essentials in the Surgeon General’s framework for workplace mental health and well-being. The other essentials identified in this model include a sense of safety and security, work-life harmony, a sense of mattering at work, and opportunities for advancement.

Implementing the full model requires top-level leadership and commitment, investments, and creativity. Team building and professional development programs can also play a strong supporting role in all of these facets of workplace well-being, ultimately leading to greater employee retention and engagement, and improved operational performance.

Why Emotional Intelligence is Vital to High-Performing Teams

In business as in sports, high-performing teams aren't built on talent alone. While a certain level of individual talent is an essential element, teams that ultimately win championships – or outperform the competition in business – have talented members who work together and collaborate as a cohesive group. And the key element in creating that collaboration is emotional intelligence, or EQ.

Per Wikipedia, "Emotional intelligence (EI, or emotion quotient, EQ) is most often defined as the ability to perceive, use, understand, manage, and handle emotions. People with high emotional intelligence can... adjust emotions to adapt to environments. The term... gained popularity in the best-selling book Emotional Intelligence, by science journalist Daniel Goleman. Goleman defined EI as the array of skills and characteristics that drive leadership performance."



How can you visualize EQ? On the [Miles LeHane blog](#), Evan Watkins and Dr. Jean Greaves, authors of the book *Team Emotional Intelligence 2.0: The Four Essential Skills of High Performing Teams*, share this powerful graphic illustrating the four “roots” and 20 visible signs of teams with high EQ.

To help corporate and other organization teams improve their EQ and team performance, Best Corporate Events offers an **Emotional Intelligence Training** workshop within our professional development programs. We asked team development professional Steve Ockerbloom to explain how our EQ training supports elements in the Watkins/Greaves model.

The Roots of EQ

“There’s a great phrase, ‘IQ will get you hired. EQ will get you promoted,’” says Steve. “To go a step beyond that, EQ not only gets you promoted, but EQ helps you and the rest of the team more generally achieve high performance.”

“When you think about what EQ does, looking at the roots of that tree, it starts with awareness about yourself and awareness about other people. One of the nice things about emotional intelligence is that, while it can help leaders maximize team performance, EQ is also great in terms of learning how to work more collaboratively with team members, for their benefit and mine as well.

“Because if our team doesn’t have high EQ, we’ll be constantly butting heads, failing to maximize our potential, not being resilient through challenges and problems... and that’s incredibly stressful for all of us.

“In our **Emotional Intelligence Training** workshop, we really take a look at those four facets of the tree root system. How aware are we of ourselves and about the people around us? Are we strong in terms of being able to manage stress in the moment and in our lives more generally? What are some tools we can use to build and strengthen relationships with each other, as well as with our clients and other external relationships?”

The Visible “Fruit” of Strong EQ

“For example, understanding more about how we can innovate,” Steve continues. “How can we avoid ‘idea duck hunting’? That’s when somebody floats up an idea, but before it really has a chance to take off, someone else shoots it down. It really doesn’t feel good, and it makes everyone in the group hesitant to express new ideas.

“That’s a classic example of a lack of emotional intelligence about how easy it is for us to judge the ideas of others based on our own experiences and biases before anyone has a chance to really explore, discuss, and talk about why they think it’s going to be potentially useful.

“So, our emotional intelligence can help us improve at innovation by actually creating a better brainstorming process, whether as a leader or a team member.



With higher EQ, team members improve their listening skills and collaboration, and become more inclusive, leading to better decision making.

“What are some things that we can do in the moment from an emotional intelligence standpoint when we’re dealing with a client who is unhappy, upset, very vocal, perhaps even angry and aggressive? How do we remain rational?”

“It’s challenging because when our emotional side is engaged, we often have a ‘fight, flight, freeze, or appease’ (create artificial harmony) reaction. When we’re incredibly emotional, it’s really hard for us to be reasonable and rational.

“Our **Emotional Intelligence Training** workshop teaches participants how to get back to engaging reasonably and rationally when they’re in a highly charged emotional situation, how to ‘lower the temperature’ and de-escalate, handle that stress, express empathy, manage conflict, and deal with emotional clients, being able to understand and to establish more elements of trust.”

For some people, trust is as simple as “do what you say you’ll do.” But for many others, Steve points out, trust is more than that. “Trust is showing an element of vulnerability. One of the points Patrick Lencioni writes about in his book, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, is that 87% of people feel like they can establish more trust when their colleague shows an element of vulnerability. For example, vulnerability can be as simple as saying, ‘I need help with this issue,’ or admitting, ‘I’m not a subject matter expert in this area, and I value your opinion here.’”

There’s a limit to this, of course. Being vulnerable doesn’t mean being helpless. But, Steve explains, “Our emotional intelligence workshop talks about how we can show an element of vulnerability that can actually help and strengthen the team, and establish greater trust.

“In general, the **Emotional Intelligence Training** workshop gives us many tools we can use in our next meeting, in our decision-making, in cooperating with and influencing others, whether or not we’re leaders. Those tools are great for helping us assess problems, situations, and opportunities better as a team and to work together more productively.”

Summary

The most successful organizations are not simply collections of high-performing individuals, but rather teams of talented people who work together effectively and collaboratively to make and implement the best decisions.

But achieving that level of coordination and cooperation can be challenging. Everyone brings their own perspectives, biases, opinions, and emotions into the mix. Team members who are unable to recognize their own emotional reactions and empathize with others can derail progress and cause unnecessary, unproductive conflict.

Authors Evan Watkins and Dr. Jean Greaves have developed a helpful visual model of EQ, with the sources of emotional intelligence illustrated as tree roots and the benefits and effects of higher EQ as the tree's leaves or fruit.

Emotional intelligence training can help individuals become more aware of and better manage their emotions, and use those skills to improve relationships with coworkers, customers, and business partners. Teams with high EQ among their members can perform at a high level across many metrics, from clearer communication and lower stress to greater agility and better decision making.

Our ***Emotional Intelligence Training*** workshop teaches participants about the components of EI / EQ and how to apply them as tools for professional growth and building high-performing teams.





Key Considerations for Team Building Success

06





Choosing the Best Venue for Team Building

An effective team building program can accomplish several important business objectives: improving employee communication, engagement, collaboration, problem-solving, and leadership skills, among others.

It requires an investment in time, resources, and taking employees away from their regular roles. To optimize your return on that investment, it's essential to create an environment where employees are comfortable and able to focus on the team building activity.

While it's natural for workers to want to get out of the office and enjoy the fresh air, outdoor venues are usually not the best setting for team building (with the obvious exception of scavenger hunts or other activities specifically designed to be held outside).

Here's why - and how to create the best environment for success, whatever environment you choose



Focus on the... hey, squirrel!

Team building facilitators want to introduce activities in a setting where nothing will interfere with the group's ability to succeed. With any outdoor venue, almost anywhere and at any time, the weather is a concern: heat, cold, wind and/or rain can make conditions miserable. In a public outdoor space such as a park, there are also potential distractions from other people, pets, bugs, extraneous noise, Frisbees, balls of various types, and other sources.

The goal of the facilitator is to explain and deliver activities in an environment with as few distractions as possible. This maximizes your group's ability to succeed and increases the positive impact of your workshop.

In a purpose-built indoor space - such as a large meeting room on a corporate campus or a ballroom in a hotel or casino - it's much easier to eliminate distractions so everyone can focus on the team building activity. The climate is controlled, the sound system is built-in, and tables and chairs can be easily arranged to fit the program.





But if you really want to be outdoors...

There are times when the allure of the outdoors is hard to resist. Maybe it's (forecasted to be) a gorgeous Friday afternoon. Maybe it's (forecasted to be) one of those first 70-degree days of the spring in Minneapolis, or the fall in Phoenix.

If that's the case, here are a few strategies to maximize your chances of success:

- Have a backup indoor space where you can host the team building activity in case the weather doesn't cooperate.
- Choose a private, dedicated, or reserved location where you'll be free of distractions from other people, animals, and extraneous noise.
- If you are traveling to a different city and your backup indoor space isn't adjacent to your outdoor space, arrange for transportation in case it becomes necessary.
- Three to five days out from the program, check the current weather forecast. If it looks less than ideal, consider moving the program indoors. If that's not an option, decide if you simply want to warn employees to dress for the weather (e.g., it looks like it will be gray and cool but dry) or postpone the event (storms are likely). You want participants to benefit from and enjoy the activity – not to be miserable because they're too cold, too hot, or too wet.
- Have a "plan A" and a "plan B" to address the conditions. If it looks like the day will be damp, but not a washout, you may choose to move activities indoors, or keep it outside but use different materials (e.g., no paper or cardboard).

Wrapping it up

It's easy to understand why people love the idea of doing team building activities outdoors. But nature doesn't always accommodate.

Depending on your situation, you may decide the risks of trying to pull off a successful outdoor event are too great, and an indoor venue really is preferable. Or you may arrange for an outdoor location, with a backup indoor space or at least a "plan B" in case the weather doesn't cooperate.

What's most important is to create an environment where distractions are minimized; where you have plenty of space for the activity (follow the recommendations of your team building provider); and where employees are comfortable and able to focus on the activity. That will maximize the enjoyment for participants, the benefits they get from the team building program, and the return on your organization's investment in increasing employee engagement.

The Four Roles of an Effective Team Building Facilitator

An impactful and memorable team building event starts with effective facilitation. Having an experienced, engaging facilitator is vital to creating an experience that teaches leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills to participants while also being fun and engaging.

Why is that person called a “facilitator” instead of something else, like a team building leader, organizer, or instructor? Because facilitator is the most descriptive term and encompasses all the different roles involved in creating a valuable and enjoyable experience.

An effective team building facilitator is able to transition through several distinct roles very quickly, seamlessly transitioning from being the focus to putting the team members center stage. Here are four essential roles that the facilitator progresses through during the course of the team building exercise.



The Four Roles of a Facilitator

Organizer: The facilitator’s first role is that of organizer. This happens before the team members even arrive or any activities begin. In this role, the facilitator has spoken to the client/meeting planner (if necessary) and has assured that the activity(s) chosen is the best one for the team based on goals and shared outcomes.

Upon arrival, the facilitator will spend time making sure the space is set up ideally for the participants to enjoy and get the most out of the experience, including making sure the tables and chairs are arranged properly and the sound system works. They ensure that all of the materials and equipment needed are on hand. That the room isn’t too hot or cold. They know where the bathrooms are.

The critical objective in this role is to create an environment for success. The facilitator works to make sure the room or other event venue is comfortable, organized, and as free of distractions as possible so that the participants can focus on working through the activity (and on having fun doing it!).

Leader: The second role is that of (temporary) leader. Once the team members arrive and are ready to take part, the facilitator introduces the activity, explains the objective, answers any questions, and provides the team members with the information and materials they need.

Coach: The third role is to be a coach. As quickly as possible, the facilitator makes the participants the focus. In this role, the “coach” applauds team members, celebrates their successes, gives feedback and guidance, keeps the activity running smoothly, allows fun and friendly competition, and, if applicable, recognizes team members when they come up with solutions that everyone in the group can learn from. Like any good coach, they put the spotlight on the “players,” making the team members the superstars of the activity or program.

Role model: The final role of the facilitator is to be a role model. Part of the way they teach communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and engagement is by modeling that behavior. They communicate clearly, answer clarifying questions, and collaborate with the participants.

A facilitator needs to be able to adjust to any situation that arises once the program has started. They problem-solve on the spot, manage change on the fly, and demonstrate everything they want from the participants, so those team members know they are in the hands of a facilitator who can confidently and competently “drive the bus.”

Bringing It All Together

Through the course of the team building program, what the facilitator asks from team members evolves as well: from attention and observation to participation and collaboration. Great facilitation is key to enabling participants to walk away with a valuable and enjoyable experience.



Team Building Your Way -

The Value of Needs Assessment and Program Customization

Team building provides many benefits in improving organizational cohesion and productivity. But what if you have very specific goals or objectives in mind, and none of the activities offered are a perfect fit? That's where needs assessment and program customization come in, designing and delivering an event that meets your specific requirements.

Virtually all team building programs provide the four core pillars of team building: improved communication, interpersonal relations, engagement, and fun. They teach time management. They incorporate a combination of competition and collaboration.

As noted above, team building positively impacts employee engagement and loyalty, jumpstarts employee morale, helps make new employees productive more quickly, and creates more effective teams.

But what if you are looking for a team building event to help you deal constructively with a major organizational change, such as a merger or the implementation of new technology? Needs assessment and program customization are the answer to creating an activity that will accomplish your specific goals.

What Exactly is a Needs Assessment?

At Best Corporate Events, our needs assessment is done on three levels. When a client first contacts us, one of our sales representatives will conduct the first-level assessment. Beyond the basic parameters of the event (number of attendees, location, time allotted, etc.), they will also ask about the client's goals and objectives for the activity, and make recommendations if needed.

In addition, the sales professional will ask about customization and often make suggestions. For example, a client may be interested in arranging *Virtual Jeopardy* or a *Virtual Trivia Blast* game, while their company is in the midst of training employees for a new product introduction. In addition to the fun, general knowledge questions in the game, many clients are surprised and pleased to know we can help them craft 10 to 20 of their own company-specific questions.

Once an activity is locked in, a program manager will be assigned and will conduct a second-level assessment, asking deeper questions than the sales team. Finally, the facilitator who will actually be part of the event will ask a third, deepest level of questions around challenges the client may be dealing with and how the team building activity can address their specific issues and objectives.

One key question will be about how teams will be selected. Does the client want to specify which individuals will be on each team, or use an activity to randomize and "mix it up" so that employees are teamed with people they don't normally work with closely?

Do they want an activity focused on fun competition, with first, second, and third place winners? Or is it a program for a large, highly competitive sales team, where the client wants an activity that will get those employees to think about when it's best to collaborate, how to do so successfully, and how to learn from each other?

Another very important question is: What types of team building or training activities have the group done before? That leads to an additional series of questions such as: Have they had any experiences that didn't work out well? If so, why? Were there any training activities or team building events that the client loved? If so, what was it about them that made the experience fantastic?

The answers enable us to either create a unique new workshop for the client, or to replicate a successful past experience for a new group of employees.

When Program Customization Makes Sense (And When it Doesn't)

In some cases, a client knows pretty much exactly what they want. Perhaps they did a trivia game with their marketing department a few months ago and loved it. Now they want to do the same type of program for their finance team.

Or they may have done a charitable **Bike Build Donation**[®] program last year that had a profound emotional impact on the participants. They may want a very similar experience, but the company has a relationship with a military support organization, so they want to do a **Build-a-Wheelchair**[®] or **Build-a-Rollator** program instead this year.

In those types of situations, the assessment is completed quickly and there is little or no program customization involved. The client is familiar with team building programs and knows exactly what they want.

But more often, the assessment will reveal – or the client will know they have – a need for some level of customization.



Perhaps the company needs to bring together a group of new employees, either because of turnover or growth. Or the business is grappling with a major change, such as the implementation of new technology, developments in their industry, or a merger/acquisition situation. Perhaps employees have been through a challenging period, and the company simply wants to provide them with an opportunity to have fun and recharge.

In any situation where an enterprise is dealing with change or internal challenges, an in-depth assessment is extremely valuable. One approach is to “start at the end.” What are the outcomes the client is looking for? If they imagine the activity is over, and it was very successful and the employees are walking away not only smiling but also more engaged, what were the factors that made it a success?

Helping clients to articulate their goals for the team building exercise – whether it’s improving collaboration and morale, bonding as a new team, dealing with team conflict or stress, problem-solving, getting aligned with a new strategy or direction, or managing change – enables us to develop a workshop, activity, or training program that will be fun, productive, and successful.

The Three Levels of Program Customization

Although the degree of program customization is really a continuum from zero to “extensive,” it can be thought of on three basic levels.

1

The first level is essentially no customization. There may be some discussion during the assessment about issues such as how to organize the groups, but the program itself isn’t changed. Common examples would be where a client wants a program they’ve done before delivered to a new group, or where the objectives are simply fun competition with collaboration (which all of BestCorporateEvents and SmartHunts team building programs deliver!).

2

The second level is minor customization. The most common examples here are adding some client company-specific questions or information to a trivia game or activity. At these events and programs like **A Minute 2 Win It** or **Team Olympics**, every team has a score at the end. You know who came in first, second, and third. Though the activity may be enhanced with some company-specific content, its structure remains the same.

3

The third level involves the most extensive customization. In [professional development programs](#) such as **Competition to Collaboration**[®], the **DiSC Profile Workshop**, or **Igniting Team Performance**[™], success isn’t based on a winning score. It’s what the participants walk away with – the knowledge they have gained and the ideas they can apply in the workplace to improve collaboration and productivity – that really matters.

All of those types of programs help improve time management, meeting management, and communication skills. But they also offer greater opportunity for customization to meet other specific needs or goals for the client.

Bottom Line Benefits of Needs Assessment and Program Customization

All of our team building programs deliver a common set of core benefits: they improve communication and collaboration, help build relationships, teach time management skills, and they are fun and engaging.

Through needs assessment and program customization, these team building and professional development programs can also be modified to meet specific objectives for clients, from something as simple as how to run more engaging Zoom meetings to managing change, engaging new employees, or combining teams.

And our facilitators use their experience not only to customize activities to meet specific needs, but also to continually develop new team building and professional development programs to address the challenges our clients face. The best-performing companies conduct team building exercises on a regular basis; these new activities enable them to provide employees with fresh new experiences to continually build upon their success.

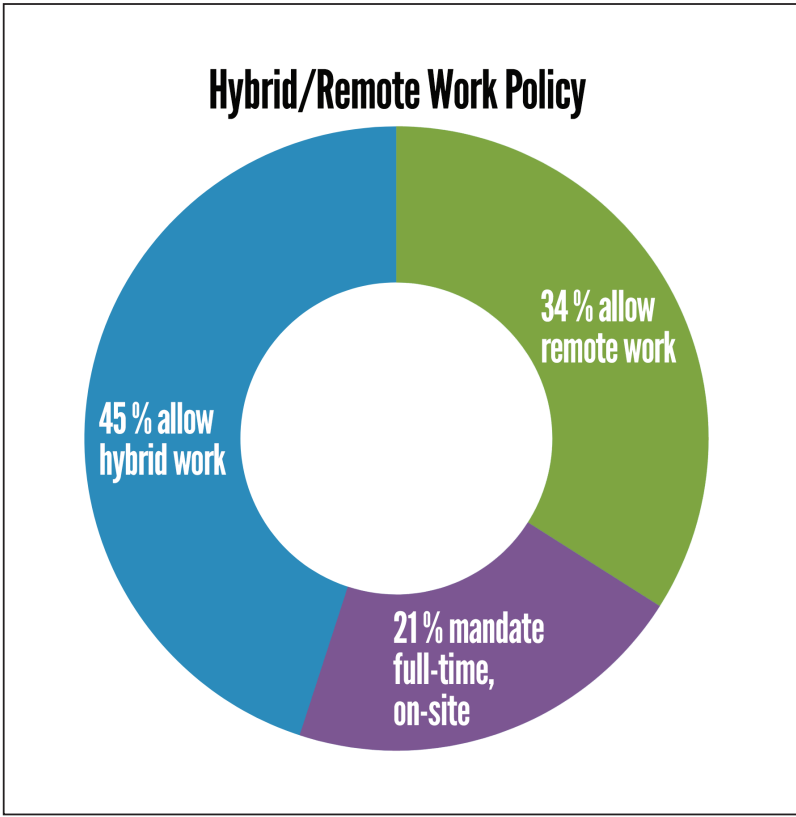


How To Use Training to Equip Teams for Remote and Hybrid Work Environments

Although COVID-19 is (hopefully) behind us, the pandemic will have long-term impacts on the working world. Having grown accustomed to, and comfortable with, working remotely, many employees are [resisting a return to the office](#).

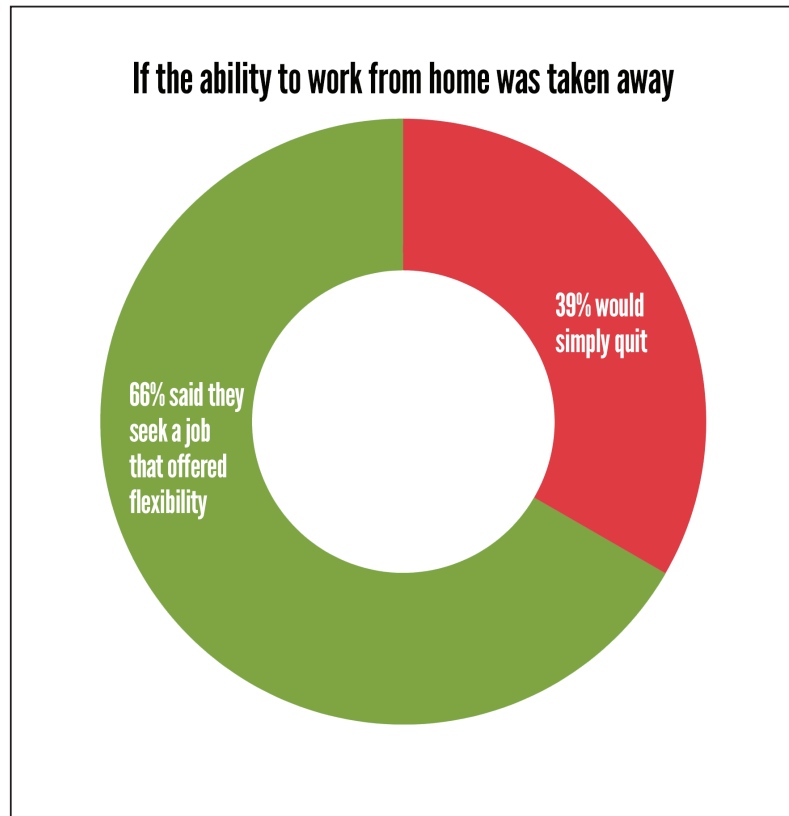
Though managers would generally prefer to have everyone physically back in the workplace, given the tight labor market and [projections for lower workforce growth](#) over the coming decade, they can't push too hard.

Of course, remote work isn't an option for everyone. But for knowledge workers who are able to work from home (or pretty much anywhere), some combination of remote and hybrid (part-time in the office) work is likely to permanently replace full-time in-the-office employment.



As of March 2023, [34% of U.S. companies](#) allowed employees to work fully remotely, 45% had a hybrid policy, and 21% said employees must work full-time on-site. 90% of companies planned to require employees to return to office in 2023.

But 87% of Americans said they want to work in a flexible environment that allows for work in an office setting as well as virtually, and “If the ability to work from home was taken away, two-thirds (66%) of workers said they would immediately start looking for a job that offered flexibility, and 39% would simply quit.”



Developing team cohesion and camaraderie is more important than ever for improving employee retention. Yet it’s also incredibly challenging to do when employees spend little time interacting in person. What are managers to do?

A regular schedule of team building and professional development programs can check all the boxes: it builds strong relationships, enhances collaboration, [increases employee loyalty](#), and improves interpersonal skills. The end result is an engaged, high-performing workforce. Here’s how to get there.

How to Use Team Building with Remote and Hybrid Work Teams

Effectively managing and optimizing the cohesion of physically disconnected work teams requires thinking about the challenge across multiple dimensions, including people, processes, and programs.

Building collaborative teams goes way beyond the technology. Tools like Slack, Zoom, and Monday can certainly be helpful, and remote work applications have in general gotten a lot better over the past few years. But the tools themselves are only infrastructure; it’s how the tools are used that leads to high performance (or not).

People

One challenge of managing remote/hybrid teams is that it's harder to really get to know your team, and for team members to really get to know each other, without the benefit of in-person verbal and non-verbal cues day in and day out.

As noted in a previous section above, [maximizing team cohesion with different personalities and work styles](#) starts with utilizing some type of personality assessment tool, such as the [DiSC model](#), [MBTI assessment](#), or [Predictive Index](#). The insights they provide are valuable in any environment but are even more crucial when managing physically disconnected work teams.

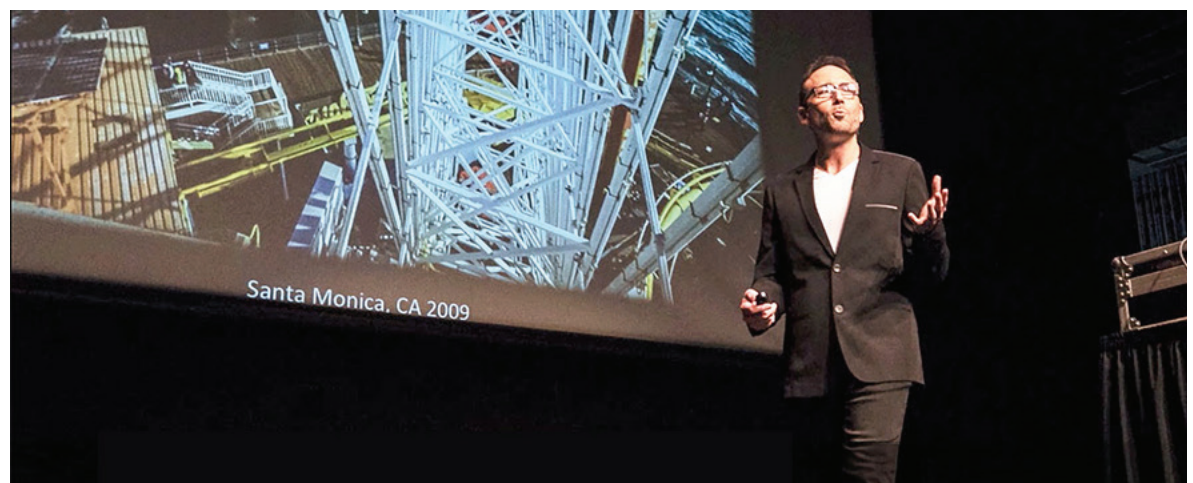
Some employees are comfortable working independently, with periodic check-ins and updates from team members. Others are more collaborative and prefer to talk issues through with teammates. Still others need time to process information and are uncomfortable making snap decisions.

It's vital for managers to understand these differences regardless of the work structure, but even more critical - and challenging - in remote or hybrid situations. For example, an employee who craves socialization may need opportunities for direct conversations with the team leader and coworkers in order to remain comfortable and engaged.

"Managing is less about tactics and goals and more about team cohesion, building culture, and creating 1-on-1 relationships. Then when conflict or a crisis does happen, you're better equipped to handle it," says leadership coach Wendy Bryan.

"You have to arm your managers of hybrid or remote work teams with assessment tools and skills. It's about really understanding the workplace drivers and what makes people tick, because most employees can't just tell you how best to manage them."

Leadership training is essential for enabling managers to understand and properly use the results of personality assessments. Team building programs help employees better understand and accommodate the different work styles and preferences of their colleagues.



Process

One basic component of managing geographically dispersed groups and making everyone feel like part of the team is not only a regular cadence of online meetings, but also an established structure, so that everyone [gets the most out of virtual meetings](#).

That's vital from a tactical standpoint, but it's also crucial for managers to understand the softer side of online communications. Who needs to be "called on" during team meetings because they aren't as eager as others to speak up? How do employees prefer to be contacted for urgent or quick questions: phone call? Text? Are they highly responsive on Slack or email? That's important to know on both tactical and interpersonal levels.

The output of personality assessments can also be incorporated in creative ways into remote team communications.

For example, notes Wendy, "We could take the placards from the Predictive Index and black out the names. Then interject those into weekly or monthly meetings, asking 'Who do you think is who? Which one is yours?' It's a 5-minute icebreaker that's fun, gets everyone relaxed, and is much more meaningful than small talk about sports or the weather."



It's also helpful for remote team cohesion to occasionally interrupt business with fun. For example, once a month, hold a mandatory 30-minute Zoom meeting where people have to be away from their desks and doing something physical, to encourage health and wellness.

People might be walking, at the gym, vacuuming, any physical activity. It may seem awkward at first, but after a few sessions, team members start to get creative and have fun with it. It's great for physical and mental health, as well as employees showing a different side of themselves.

Team building and professional development programs also play a crucial role. "Think about what happens at sales meetings, kickoffs, or other all-employee gatherings," says Wendy. "People get to see each other, give high-fives, and hang out together. That's so important. When it's not possible or practical, virtual team building helps to meet that need in building team cohesiveness.

“You can have a manager attend leadership development training or your people do a team building program. Both are important, but have two different psychological effects. One is addressing the manager and how to manage. The other is for the team and how to see other sides of coworkers beyond email, Slack, and Zoom meetings. Start with team building for everybody, then springboard off into getting managers trained to be better leaders.”

Programs

Helpful programs for leadership and professional development in hybrid / remote work environments include:

- ***Building Your Hybrid Team:*** This custom virtual workshop will give you and your hybrid team a roadmap for moving forward, while helping to organize for increased efficiency. It focuses on methodologies that your group can use in future meetings, and explores behavioral and work styles and situational leadership approaches. It will help you create an Objective Statement along with corresponding team goals to ensure everyone is on the same page.
- ***Virtual Coaching and Feedback:*** This online program will increase your ability and skill to provide virtual coaching and feedback that is engaging and effective. It helps develop trust and respect and promotes self-awareness that will allow for increased development and career planning.
- ***Conducting Better Virtual Meetings:*** Learn the skills and tools to make your virtual meetings effective and productive. Plan remote meetings that will deliver tangible results with clear takeaways and follow-up action plans that will ensure your attendees see value in attending and participating.
- ***Developing Emerging Leaders:*** For a more in-depth approach to developing and enhancing leaders in your organization, this comprehensive workshop series helps current and future leaders realize their full potential.

Among the most popular and effective virtual team building programs for strengthening remote team cohesion are:

- ***Virtual Morning Jumpstart:*** This event can be delivered on any day of the week as a fun way to launch into a productive workday with smiles and camaraderie. ***Virtual Morning Jumpstart*** promotes team cohesion and enhances relationships through a lively series of game-type challenges and morning wake-up-themed activities.
- ***Virtual Escape Rooms:*** Programs such as ***Escape the Office, Save the Boss***, and ***Search for the Cure*** bring together an immersive storyline, clues of varying difficulty, detailed graphics, and an advanced escape room platform to intrigue and challenge your group.



- **Virtual Speed Networking:** This engaging get-to-know-you event incorporates a series of fun and challenging icebreaker activities and discussion topics, conducted remotely. After every break-out session, teams will return to the virtual “General Session” space to reconnect with the large group and the host.

How to Schedule Workshops and Programs to Enhance Team Cohesion

Keeping remote work teams engaged and productive requires establishing protocols and processes, but also building team cohesiveness in a hybrid work environment. It’s very helpful to do some type of activity on a quarterly basis that brings the team together outside of the work you actually have to do. To maintain team cohesiveness among remote workers, you need to be even more deliberate about this than when you have the whole team on site every day.

In addition to training or professional development workshops that are just for managers, an ideal cadence is one team building event per quarter – live if possible, virtual if not. And the entire team should do at least one or two live, in-person team building events each year.

Conclusion

Building and maintaining highly collaborative and productive work teams is challenging in any environment, but even more so in remote or hybrid work situations. Leadership development and team building programs are essential for optimizing team cohesion and performance.

Managing successful remote teams requires the right mix of people management, processes, and programs. It starts with using a personality assessment tool to help managers really understand the unique characteristics of team members, and training managers on how to use the output of these tools.

Remote work processes help keep the team in sync. These need to take into consideration both tactical requirements and people management “soft skills.” Team building and professional development programs play a vital role in keeping remote team members engaged, and your teams performing at a high level. The ideal cadence for team building activities is quarterly, with at least one in-person event each year.

Want to Improve Your Business Performance? Fix Your Corporate Training Issues

The bad news is the state of corporate training in the U.S. today is abysmal. The good news is, this is fixable. And companies that do it well will reap numerous benefits.

First, the bad news: According to [recent studies](#), six out of ten employees say they've had no formal workplace training; they've had to learn the job on their own. Only a third of employees say they are "very satisfied" with their job-specific training, and less than 30% are very satisfied with their career advancement training and opportunities.

Yet more than 40% of workers say that training and advancement opportunities are very important factors in their job satisfaction; more than six in ten say career training and development opportunities are important when evaluating a prospective new employer, and more than three-quarters say a company is more appealing if it offers skills training.

Poorly trained or untrained employees are less efficient and productive than their properly trained peers, and in certain roles, can even cause safety risks.

In a nutshell, most workers say their employers do a poor job of corporate training. Those employers will find it harder to retain employees, attract new talent, and get the most out of their current workforce.

Benefits of Improved Corporate Training

Beyond the statistics cited above, [other research](#) has found that:

- 34% of employees who left their previous job were motivated to do so by more career development opportunities.
- 68% of employees say training and development is the company's most important policy.
- 70% of employees would be somewhat likely to leave their current job to work for an organization known for investing in employee development and learning.
- 93% of employees said that well-planned employee training programs positively affect their level of engagement.

And an astonishing 94% of employees say they will stay at a company longer if it invests in training and development.

Clearly, providing training opportunities is vital not only to retain your current workforce but also to attracting new employees.

Not only does training help you hang onto your smart and capable staff, but it also enhances engagement and improves their skills, making them more valuable and productive. Just as top-performing organizations make team building a regular event, they also weave training and development opportunities into the fabric of their operations.

Strive to Improve Inside and Out

Optimizing your organization's performance requires a combination of external training workshops for skills development and internal training to expand job-specific knowledge.

One challenge faced by internal trainers is that they often aren't taught how to be instructors. It's frequently simply a matter of seniority: Bill has been running the warehouse for years, so he can train anyone in on any function there, while Sheila has worked her way up through the finance department to a leadership role, so she can teach new accounting professionals all they need to know.

While that approach is certainly better than counting on new employees to figure things out for themselves, it's not a lot better. It's just as important for Bill, or Sheila, or any experienced employee to understand *how* to teach as to know *what* to teach.

The statistics cited above make it clear that employees value training and want to be trained effectively. But too often, the subject matter experts – the Bills and Sheilas of the world – while smart and well-intended, lack the communication skills, or the knowledge of how to be engaging and how to structure the information they're presenting, to maximize comprehension and retention.

Challenges Faced by Internal Corporate Trainers

Individuals who conduct training workshops, [facilitate team building](#) events, or [deliver keynote presentations](#) are professional communicators. They impart knowledge for a living.

But your internal subject matter experts, often tasked with training new team members, are experts in their respective fields: accounting, customer service, IT, HR, engineering, design, or whatever function it may be. They are, generally, not trained speakers or educators. Four specific areas that present challenges are:

Generational differences: Your senior staff members may be Millennials, but are more likely Gen Xers or even Boomers. Regardless, any of these individuals can potentially be called upon, at different times, to train and mentor members of these generations or Gen Z workers.

"A skilled trainer has to be able to work well with all of the current generations. No matter what age they are, they must be able to speak to them where they are coming from, to impart knowledge effectively," says Tom Leu, MS/CPC, who delivers a [keynote titled *My Generation*](#). "Having trainers or instructors who are also skilled communicators who know how to teach people from multiple generations is not only 'nice to have,' but more necessary than ever."

New technology: Experienced professionals know how to use current technology within their roles, of course, but may not grasp the way that different generations think about and view their devices and software.

For Boomers and GenXers, learning to navigate the web and their smartphones is something they've done as adults, or at least as teens. Members of Gen Z on the other hand, and most Millennials, haven't lived in a world without these things. They have no memory of a time before these existed.

It's important to understand these perspectives when training younger (or older) employees. GenZ office workers know where the "Save" button is in Microsoft Word, but many have no idea that the icon represents a diskette - because they've never used one.

Learning styles: Some people are auditory learners (they understand and retain information best by hearing it), while others are more visual or kinesthetic (hands-on). Corporate subject matter experts who aren't trained as trainers tend to teach in the style they learn best. But different styles, or a mix of different mediums, may work best for the employees receiving the training.

What's in it for me (WIIFM): To maximize understanding and knowledge retention, it's vital for professional teachers to communicate to their students why some particular information is important, and why it matters to them. Professional teachers, trainers, and instructors know how to communicate the WIIFM to their students. Corporate subject matter experts may understand this but often haven't been taught the skills or tools to impart that knowledge.



Even when businesses do make training a priority, the subject matter experts doing the training may not be optimally effective. They know the information and the role but frequently have never been taught communication or instructional skills.

Fortunately, there are a variety of professional development workshops and programs available through Best Corporate Events that can help internal trainers better understand the role that emotions, personality traits, learning styles, and generational differences can play in training and learning. By becoming more effective trainers, they can help their organizations improve retention, recruitment, and overall business performance.



Why Your Event Needs a Keynote Speaker (And How to Find the Right One)

If you organize corporate or collegiate events, chances are you've hired keynote speakers and understand their importance.

Keynote speakers typically kick off events and are vital in setting the tone. A competent keynote speaker will bring energy, enthusiasm, and entertainment. A great one delivers substance as well as storytelling and humor – bringing the steak, not just the sizzle.

The best keynote speakers take the time to research your industry, issues, audience, and the purpose of your event, then combine that with their own perspective and expertise to craft a unique and valuable presentation. By the time they wrap up their time on stage, the audience is saying, "Wow, that was valuable. I'm going to remember those key points."

If you've been doing this for a while, chances are also that you've had hits and misses – speakers who have knocked it out of the park, and others who have fallen a bit flat. Wouldn't it be great to be able to pick winners consistently? Here's how to do that.



What (Exactly) is a Keynote Speaker?

As [Will Rogers](#) famously said, "You never get a second chance to make a first impression."

Choosing the right keynote speaker is crucial because that person creates the "first impression" for your event. In their hour or so onstage, that person needs to entertain, educate, and create a sense of excitement in the audience for what's to come over the course of your gathering. Their presentation has to both stand on its own and connect to the content that will follow.

It helps to clarify what a keynote speaker *is* by understanding what that person is *not*. A keynote speaker is an experienced, engaging, professional communicator. Keynote speakers are not merely motivational speakers - though they do need to motivate, and often employ similar audio and visual tools.

Keynote speakers are different from industry experts (people who will often lead training sessions or breakout groups at events), though they will have some knowledge of your industry.

Keynote speakers are not entertainers, though their presentations do need to be fun and entertaining. A talented musician, comedian, or magician can provide entertainment - but not the kind of substance, insights, and valuable takeaways that a keynote speaker delivers.

Keynote Speakers Versus Trainers

Keynote speakers are distinct from trainers, though there is a fair amount of overlap. Professional trainers are rarely, if ever, also keynote speakers. But it's not uncommon for keynote speakers to also do training.

A keynote presentation is generally broad and high-level (though it should include some specific, memorable points) while training is more direct and often hands-on. A keynote speaker is a standalone type of communicator, different from a trainer, workshop facilitator, or seminar leader. A great keynote doesn't just impart information, but is inspirational, tone-setting, and reflects the theme of the event.

But again, there are keynote speakers who also do training. Their topics often revolve around leadership, negotiation skills, or (not surprisingly) how to be a more effective communicator.

What to Look For in a Keynote Speaker

Keynote speakers fall generally into two categories: celebrities and professional speakers.

Celebrities include well-known actors and actresses, politicians and government officials, former sports stars and professional coaches, journalists, authors, and other famous people. While some can be insightful, celebrities are generally hired more for entertainment value and their name recognition than deep substance.

The primary value of a celebrity speaker is to attract a crowd. And because these speakers command hefty fees, they are most often sought after for industry-wide events that professionals pay a significant ticket price to attend.

Industry associations and organizations often bring in comedians, ventriloquists, mentalists, magicians, or other entertainers as part of their events. These individuals are great to put onstage for dinner shows; not so much for keynotes.

True keynote speakers, again, are professional communicators. They deliver *entertainment with substance*. Their job is to combine motivation, inspiration, and excitement with expertise and credibility. It's fun and enthusiasm plus practical, actionable ideas.



Three key considerations when choosing a keynote speaker are:

Credentials: Professional keynote speakers can usually back up their expertise and credibility with advanced degrees and professional certifications. This is especially important when choosing a speaker for a gathering of professionals (e.g., doctors, lawyers, engineers, finance pros, executives) or an academic audience. *People with credentials care about the credentials of the people they'll consider listening to.*

Experience: No one becomes a professional keynote speaker at 22. Everyone who's qualified to do this has done other things first. When searching for a keynote speaker, look at what they've done professionally as well as through volunteer and professional organizations. Keynote speakers have to bring a combination of left-brained (analytical) and right-brained (creative) thinking to their presentations, so look for evidence of both. Often, the best keynote speakers have "unique" backgrounds, with some unexpected experiences.

Engagement: While this isn't the most important factor, it is essential. Even the best content provides little value if the delivery is dull. A boring presentation with endless primarily text-based slides will have attendees mentally checking out and fiddling with their phones. A keynote speaker needs to be able to hook the audience with style, then keep their attention with substance.

As with any "purchasing" decision, third-party validation matters. Every qualified speaker will have a sizzle reel on YouTube and numerous client testimonials. These will rarely be a deciding factor, but they're helpful to check out.

Why Select a Keynote Speaker from Best Corporate Events

Corporate conferences, all-company gatherings, and sales kickoff meetings are great opportunities to conduct [team building](#) and [professional development](#) programs. If you're already working with us for that activity (not to brag, but we literally wrote the book on corporate team building and you're reading it right now), why not hire your keynote speaker through us as well?

While there are lots of places to find keynote speakers, there are three significant benefits of working with Best Corporate Events for your keynote speaker in addition to your team building / professional development activities.

Single, powerful management portal: BEST's [client portal](#) enables event organizers to track all of the production aspects of your team building and professional development programs on a single page. See event details, information about your facilitator, shipping status, venue information, and more. If you also book your keynote speaker through us, all of those details can be tracked within the portal as well. We also offer a version of the portal with additional features for DMCs.

Package discount: If your organization purchases both a team building event or professional development workshop and a keynote speaker from BEST, you'll get a 10% discount on the total engagement. Not only will you save money, you'll also simplify the process since you don't have to work with a separate agency or speakers' bureau to bring in a keynote speaker.

More than a keynote: The keynote presentation can be a standalone event, or an initial touchpoint into a deeper dive into communications training. For example, BEST featured [keynote speaker Tom Leu](#) can deliver follow-up training workshops or seminars during the same conference, or at a later date. This training can be delivered in-person or virtually.

Tom is a member of the National Speakers Association, and a certified professional coach with a graduate degree in psychology, whose background includes both teaching and dean roles in the collegiate environment. But he also knows music (he's been in rock bands for decades and currently composes music for films) and is a published professional photographer. He brings all of that background and more to his one-of-a-kind energetic, entertaining, and educational keynote presentations.

Your choice of a keynote speaker is crucial, as that speaker sets the tone for your corporate or collegiate event. The best keynote speakers combine enthusiasm and entertainment with substantive, actionable takeaways for your people. You've got lots of options for finding a standout keynote speaker, but Best Corporate Events should be on your list for consideration, particularly if you're already working with us for team building.

Two Types of Team Building Takeaways

During team building activities, participants experience challenges, camaraderie, recognition, and fun. But what do they take away? After the shared laughter and the high-fives, what do they bring back home and to the workplace from that experience?

According to Roy Charette, the specific takeaways are many, but fall into two main types.

Team-Oriented Takeaways

High-performing teams require a mix of skills and attributes: technical, analytical, organizational, and social skills combined with energy, passion, creativity, and engagement.

Team building programs help individuals to better understand what they bring to the team as well as the unique strengths and contributions of co-workers. They build communication, collaboration, appreciation, and relationships.

As Roy describes it, “In our debriefs, we ask: ‘What have you brought to teams you’ve worked with? And what can people count on you for?’ Facilitated team building activities and initiatives allow individuals to highlight their strengths and specific attributes, giving others an opportunity to recognize and appreciate each other as valuable and contributing team members.”

Teams also have an opportunity to identify areas for potential improvement and gaps in team-related performance. The activities act as a vehicle to delve into rich process discussions on the steps that can be taken to improve areas of weakness – revisiting communication systems, for example.



Individual Takeaways

When a team building activity really resonates with a participant, the lessons they experience are often the “24/7” variety in that they apply to all aspects of both personal and professional life. Enhanced active listening skills, for example, will transcend the workplace and brighten interactions at home with family.

Participants will sometimes feel so connected to the lessons from a particular activity that they want to replicate that experience with their family, church group, or other organization they are associated with. It reminds them of a struggle they are having or a problem they need to solve outside of work.

In Roy’s words, “I’m always giving away props, card decks, or other materials to people who feel connected to the activities and the value in what we did. I’ll answer their questions and give them guidance on facilitating the exercise with their own groups.”

Conclusion

Participants in team building programs take away lessons pertaining to high-performing team attributes as well as lessons specific to themselves as individuals. Organizations that invest in team building give their employees opportunities to grow as people, not just to be better workers. The payoff comes in both higher team performance and increased connectedness and commitment among employees.

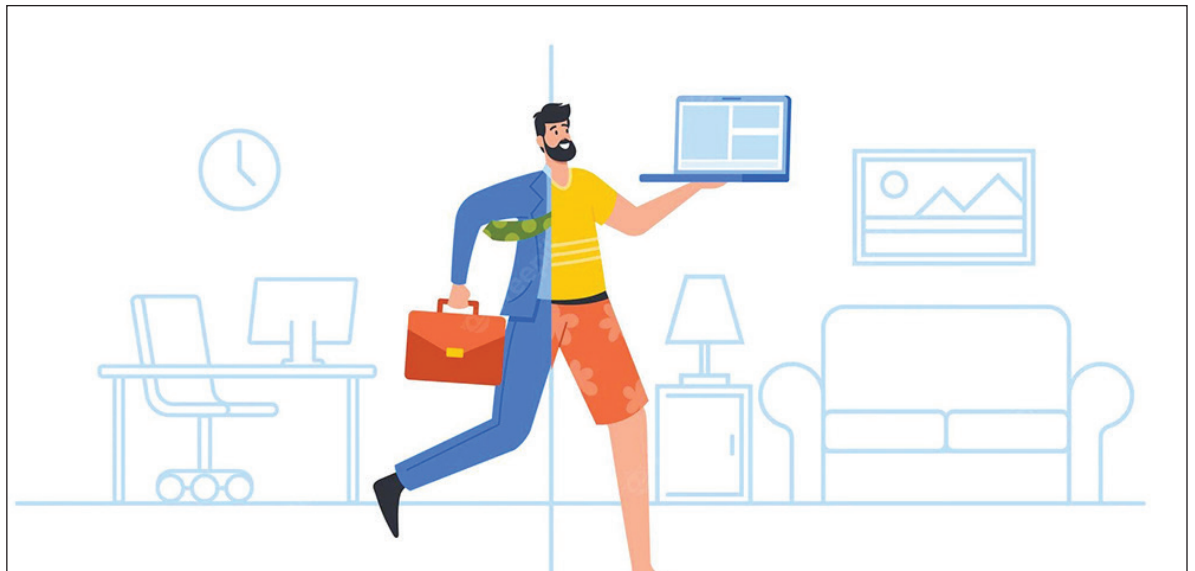


It's Not **WHERE** Your People Work but **HOW** They Work That Matters

With pandemic concerns receding, how should you structure your organization for the future of work: everyone back in the office, fully remote, or a hybrid approach? The latest research suggests that for enterprises focused on optimizing operational performance (i.e., pretty much everyone) – that's the wrong question to ask.

Different employers are taking different approaches, and doing so successfully. There is no one-size-fits-all best model. There are pros and cons, for both workers and the organizations they work for, to every approach.

For employees, remote work offers greater flexibility, plus freedom from commuting and dressing in office attire. On the other hand, working remotely can make collaboration with coworkers more challenging, and lead to a sense of isolation. [Research confirms](#) that we humans are intensely social, and that isolation is bad for our happiness and emotional well-being.



For organizations, having workers in the office improves collaboration, provides opportunities for serendipitous brainstorming, and is vital for mentoring and developing younger employees. But a remote structure expands the talent pool because employers can hire workers based anywhere, while reducing the need for expensive office real estate.

Obviously, enterprises need to consider a wide range of factors in designing their workplace structure for the future. But what's vital to keep in mind is that for optimizing performance, workplace structure isn't the most important factor.

The key to maximizing productivity and effectiveness is improving employee engagement. And according to research from [The Conference Board](#), "Work location – whether on-site, remote, or a hybrid blend of the two – has no impact on self-reported engagement levels."

The Importance of Flexibility

Study after study identifies flexibility as one of the most critical factors for increasing employee engagement.

According to *Future Forum*, "Flexibility improves work-life balance, decreases stress, and increases overall satisfaction." Their research also found that:

- 80% of all knowledge workers now want flexibility in *where* they work.
- 94% of employees want flexibility in *when* they work (e.g., the freedom to deviate from a preset schedule).
- Employees with rigid work schedules and structures are three times more likely to look for a new job in the coming year.

Forbes echoes these findings. Reporting on studies from Gallup, McKinsey, and Kings College, the publication noted:

- Roughly one-third of employees would prefer to work remotely all or most of the time.
- Only about 10% want to go back to the office full time.
- 60 to 65% prefer a hybrid structure, with more than 50% wanting to work less than half-time in the office.
- 25% say they would quit if forced to return to the office full time.

Finally, the [2022 State of Talent Optimization Report](#) from The Predictive Index concluded that:

- The number one driver of attrition is inflexibility.
- "Companies that prioritize the employee experience – whether through benefits, flexibility, inclusion, or a sense of purpose – see clear reductions in turnover compared to their peers."
- Remote-friendly companies are experiencing 33% lower turnover.

These findings reflect our own experience. BEST managing partner Roy Charette and our team of facilitators and trainers work with hundreds of organizations and thousands of individual employees every year.

According to Roy, “In my experience over the past year and in talking with facilitators, people love working remotely – but when they have a chance to come together in person, they really enjoy the camaraderie and the ability to have face-to-face conversations instead of virtual discussions.

“People really feel that the ability to occasionally work remotely gives them better work-life balance. They don’t have to get all dressed up and jump in a car to fight traffic to get to work every day. There’s a blend that people are feeling, the sweet spot of some in-the-office and some remote work. That’s the ideal scenario for many people, combining remote work with getting together in person for key meetings and specific training.”

Flexibility is clearly a key component of engagement and retention. But that’s only part of the story.

The Impact of Personality

The statistics above reflect the average feelings of workers across large groups. But it’s vital not to lose sight of the individuals who make up these groups.

People with outgoing, highly social personalities crave more in-person interaction. Even those who don’t want to go back to the office completely full time still want a significant degree of in-person interaction.

Roy notes that his team of Best Corporate Events facilitators “love the interaction they have with participants when they are delivering team building programs. They even enjoy the travel, just getting out and about. When everything suddenly went virtual back in 2020, and that situation lasted, some of the facilitators actually experienced something like [seasonal affective disorder](#).”

But other employees prefer to spend most of their time working remotely and alone. There are workers who are very efficient, effective individual contributors who don’t always work well collaboratively, because they are more introverted. They are talented, but less comfortable in social settings.

The challenge for leaders who want to build high-performing organizations is to create a high level of employee engagement – regardless of personality types or workplace structure.

The Role of Team Building

Not every employee wants the same workplace structure. And workers differ in the value they place on frequent social interaction. But (almost) every employee worth having enjoys:

- working collaboratively;
- solving problems;
- enhancing and expanding their own skills;
- helping others; and
- building relationships with coworkers.

All of those activities enhance employee engagement. And team building incorporates all of those elements.

Along with flexibility, employees value inclusiveness. The best team building programs are inclusive by design, with a variety of activities so that every team member can participate regardless of ability.

They are also designed to engage every participant – even those who may not be enthusiastic about being part of a team building exercise at the outset.

As Roy explains, “Some people will show up (and we see this a lot) with an attitude of ‘I’d rather be doing something else.’ But half an hour into the program, they love it. They’re having a blast along with everyone else.

“Some people arrive looking forward to the activity. Others will spend the first half hour making the facilitator ‘prove they can drive the bus’ before they will relax and enjoy the ride. Fortunately, one of the skills our facilitators have is that ability to prove themselves quickly, to open that door and break through any initial skepticism or emotional resistance.

“Our facilitators are used to that. They start with an icebreaker, then explain how the program will work, introduce the iPads, and then talk about the charity component if it’s a corporate social responsibility (CSR) program. Almost everyone is connected by that point. Even the folks who weren’t initially excited about being there start enjoying themselves very quickly.

“I and all of our trainers have been approached, time and again, by people during the break or after the program saying, ‘I really didn’t want to be here. I didn’t think I would enjoy this. But this was a blast.’”



How Professional Development Training Can Help

Teams are almost always a mix of different personality types. Keeping every member engaged and making the most of their talents requires the leadership ability to recognize these differences and adjust communication style accordingly.

Professional development programs like our *DiSC Profile Workshop, Emotional Intelligence Training, and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) Training* help leaders identify different personality types, build trust, and improve group communication.

Team Building and Flexibility

In large enterprises, employees often collaborate with team members in other offices as well as those working remotely. One benefit for organizations of the rise in remote work over the past few years is the ability to expand their talent pool.

Companies have realized that just because the headquarters is in Houston doesn't mean they can't hire a talented developer in Denver and an expert marketer in Minneapolis. In these environments, enterprises will often bring everyone together, physically, on a periodic basis: at least annually, sometimes bi-annually, or even quarterly.

Those events are not only great for presentations and group breakout sessions, but also for taking a break from the lecture or roundtable style meetings and doing something entirely new and different for a few hours in the middle of the two- or three-day offsite gathering.

"If they're coming together live, chances are the meeting planner knows exactly what they've done before, because meeting planners are really good about asking the right questions," says Roy.

- How well do the members of the group know each other?
- How often do they get together?
- How much time do we have?
- How large is the group?
- What other team building events have they done in the past?
- What have they tried, if anything, that didn't work?
- What have they tried that has worked great?

"With all of that information, we can recommend a program that will be a wonderful fit," adds Roy. "For example, we'll introduce an activity like *Pipeline* or *Competition to Collaboration*[®] that is initially fun and competitive, then ultimately becomes collaborative.

"Our *Bridge to the Future* program is a great visual metaphor for the goals and aspirations of the organization, and for individual teams moving forward. The bridge theme is very powerful because the organization is bridging the gap between the prior year or period and what they want to achieve in the coming period and beyond."

Team building programs can also be delivered flexibly, as in-person, virtual, or hybrid events. Professional development programs like Developing Emerging Leaders and Strategic Leadership combine an initial in-person workshop with a series of online sessions over several weeks.

Conclusion

As organizations balance competing priorities in developing their workplace structures of the future – remote, in-office, or a hybrid combination – there’s a strong link between employee retention and flexibility.

What matters most for developing a high-performing operation, however, is employee engagement. And research shows that engagement has essentially *no relationship* to work location.

Flexibility is one important component. But others include inclusivity, sense of purpose, workplace relationships, and leadership. Team building supports all of those elements.

Professional development programs help leaders to better understand different personality types and the role emotion plays in team dynamics, and improve communication with and among team members to help optimize performance.

Incorporating team building programs within all-company offsite meetings helps build relationships, improve collaboration, and enhance employee engagement. Fun, challenging team building activities can win over skeptics to create emotionally powerful shared experiences.





Thank You!

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About Best Corporate Events

Best Corporate Events® was formed in 2010 through a merger of top companies in the fields of team building, professional development, and interactive event technology. Together, we formed a great team that designed programs, tweaked, tested, trademarked, and delivered team building programs, charitable CSR events, training sessions, and professional development workshops.

Our sister company, **SmartHunts**®, began developing our event apps and delivered corporate scavenger hunts nationwide. We attracted top facilitators, who deliver amazing in-person programs for corporate groups with 25 to as many as 6,000 participants.



As we continue improving and expanding our in-person program lineup, we also added over 50 virtual and hybrid programs. In 2019, we decided to launch **Best Collegiate Events**, a complete line of programs, events, and training for students, faculty, and administrators at universities and colleges across America. Trustpilot began monitoring and publishing our client reviews and today, we are proud to have the **highest Customer TrustScore** in our industry.

We help companies ignite their teams' performance and achieve their goals with fun, challenging, and rewarding programs and events. We'd love to design and deliver a program for your team!

YOUR FEEDBACK PLEASE

Thank you for reading! We'd love to get your feedback about this eBook. Please send your comments to:

Feedback@BestCorporateEvents.com

FIND THE PERFECT PROGRAM FOR YOUR TEAM

Let's talk! You can connect with us at:

(800) 849-8326

BestCorporateEvents.com

Sales@BestCorporateEvents.com



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Best Corporate Events
3785 Alt. 19
Palm Harbor, FL 34683
800.849.8326

