

What's the Purpose of Team Building Activities?

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The purpose of team building activities is generally to foster awareness of the team spirit and to reinforce commitment to the team's shared goals and objectives. Properly applied, these activities can develop strong interpersonal relationships which help to bond the team closer together.

The purpose of team improvement should include the encouragement of individual team members to cooperate together in the team's work environment, interacting and integrating skills into a united effort so that each individual's goal achievement is connected to the greater overall team goal achievement.

It's not enough to create a feeling of interdependence among team members where each one feels they are all in the same boat together. This can force people to get along with each other as they face no alternative option. When they then take part in competitive activities, the end result is only about winning and all too often there is nothing they can take back to the work place of lasting useful value.

Poorly thought out activities confuse strong competitiveness with overt aggression. This should not be the purpose of team building activities. A cohesive team that can work successfully together doesn't need aggression to achieve its goals. Such activities can be demeaning to individuals who are often forced to compete at a level that is largely meaningless in the work place.

The only purpose of engaging in such activities should be to unite a group of individuals who all need each other in order to achieve their individual goals, as well as the group's common goals. This can be done by increasing or creating an understanding of common commitment to the team goals.

When the purpose of these activities are properly thought out, then put into action on away days (for example), the end result can be marked improvement in team functioning, as well as the increased effectiveness of team members who then become real team players.

There are different types of activities developed for the purpose of improving team effectiveness. They should never be chosen at random on away days. Prior to the away day a need assessment should be conducted to discover exactly what kind of team building activity will suit the team best. This should be one that concentrates on improving the team's weaknesses while maximising the team's strengths.

Team development is really about creating an effective team spirit in a group of people who need each other in order to accomplish common goals. The purpose of developing a team through targeted activities should be to clarify team goals and strategies. It should reduce conflicts

between team members, increase awareness of each individual's worth and usefulness, as well as bonding and binding the team together for the common good.

Team activities should not confuse team members in any way. This can happen, not because the team building activity is at fault, but because the facilitator is unfamiliar with the activity, or does not have the necessary skills to facilitate it properly.

When, on the other hand, the facilitator understands the purpose of team building activities and understands how to deliver it expertly, the team will benefit considerably from the exercise and the company will too.