Team building

The US military uses lifting a log as a team-building exercise.

Team building is a collective term for various types of activities used to enhance social relations and define roles within teams, often involving collaborative tasks.

It is distinct from team training, which is designed by a combine of business managers, learning and development/OD (Internal or external) and an HR Business Partner (if the role exists) to improve the efficiency, rather than interpersonal relations.

Many team-building exercises aim to expose and address interpersonal problems within the group.[1]

Over time, these activities are intended to improve performance in a team-based environment.[2] Team building is one of the foundations of <u>organizational</u>

[development](#) that can be applied to groups such as sports teams, school classes, military units or flight crews. The formal definition of team-building includes:

- aligning around goals
- building effective working relationships
- reducing team members' role ambiguity
- finding solutions to team problems

Team building is one of the most widely used group-development activities in organizations.[3] A common strategy is to have a "team-building retreat" or "corporate love-in," where team members try to address underlying concerns and build

trust by engaging in activities that are not part of what they ordinarily do as a team.[4]

Of all organizational activities, one study found team-development to have the strongest effect (versus financial measures) for improving organizational performance.[5] A 2008 meta-analysis found that team-development activities, including team building and team training, improve both a team's objective performance and that team's subjective supervisory ratings.[1] Team building can also be achieved by targeted personal self-disclosure activities.[6]

Four approaches

Team building describe four approaches to team building:[7][8]

Setting Goals

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This emphasizes the importance of clear objectives and individual and team goals. Team members become involved in action planning to identify ways to define success and failure and achieve goals. This is intended to strengthen motivation and foster a sense of ownership. By identifying specific outcomes and tests of incremental success, teams can measure

their progress. Many organizations negotiate a team charter with the team and (union leaders)

Role clarification

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This emphasizes improving team members' understanding of their own and others' respective roles and duties. This is intended to reduce ambiguity and foster understanding of the importance of structure by activities aimed at defining and adjusting roles. It emphasizes the members' interdependence and the value of having each member focus on their own role in the team's success.

Problem solving

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This emphasizes identifying major problems

Interpersonal-relations

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This emphasizes increasing <u>teamwork</u> skills such as giving and receiving support, <u>communication</u> and sharing. Teams with fewer interpersonal conflicts generally function more effectively than others. A <u>facilitator</u> guides the conversations to develop mutual trust and open communication between team members.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of team building differs substantially from one organization to another.[9] The most effective efforts occur when team members are interdependent, knowledgeable and experienced and when organizational leadership actively establishes and supports the team.

Effective team building incorporates an awareness of team objectives. Teams must work to develop goals, roles and procedures. As a result, team building is usually associated with increasing task

accomplishment, goal meeting, and achievement of results within teams.[10]
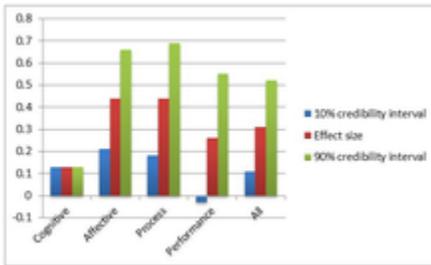
Effects of team building strategies on all four outcomes, with 10% and 90% credibility intervals [11]

Effect on performance

Team building has been scientifically shown to positively affect team effectiveness.[12] Goal setting and role clarification were shown to have impact on cognitive, affective, process and

performance outcomes. They had the most powerful impact on affective and process outcomes, which implies that team building can help benefit teams experiencing issues with negative affect, such as lack of cohesion or trust. It could also improve teams suffering from process issues, such as lack of clarification in roles.[3]

Goal setting and role clarification have the greatest impact because they enhance motivation, reduce conflict[13] and help to set individual purposes, goals and motivation.

Teams with 10 or more members appear to benefit the most from team building. This is attributed to larger teams having – generally speaking – a greater reservoir of cognitive resources and capabilities than smaller teams.[14]

Challenges to team building

The term 'team building' is often used as a dodge when organizations are looking for a 'quick fix' to poor communication systems or unclear leadership directives, leading to unproductive teams with no clear of how to be successful. Team work is the best work.

Teams are then assembled to address specific problems, while the underlying causes are not ignored.

Dyer highlighted three challenges for team builders:[15]

- **Lack of teamwork skills**: One of the challenges facing leaders is to find team-oriented employees. Most organizations rely on educational institutions to have inculcated these skills into students. Dyer believed however, that students are encouraged to work individually and succeed without having to collaborate. This works

against the kinds of behavior needed for teamwork. Another study found that team training improved cognitive, affective, process and performance outcomes.[11]

- **Virtual workplaces and across organizational boundaries**: according to Dyer, organizations individuals who are not in the same physical space increasingly work together. Members are typically unable to build concrete relationships with other team members. Another study found that face-to-face communication is very important in building an effective team environment.[16] Face-to-face contact

was key to developing trust. Formal team building sessions with a facilitator led the members to "agree to the relationship" and define how the teams were work. Informal contact was also mentioned.

- **Globalization and virtualisation**: Teams increasingly include members who have dissimilar languages, cultures, values and problem-solving approaches problems. One-to-one meetings has been successful in some organizations.[16]

Application of team building

Schools

Diana and Joseph claim that instructors can motivate students to develop teamwork skills and provide a guideline on how professors can help students build effective study/project teams.[17] This approach emphasizes examples of job situations that require teamwork skills.

Instructor guidelines:

- Define the objectives and associated tasks that make up the project. The most important instruction is clear timelines/deadlines.

- Show the team how to define roles and underline that to succeed, every role must be fulfilled.

- Stress the balance between task roles and relationships. Assigning task roles ensures that nothing is forgotten, while relationships minimizes misunderstanding and conflict.

- Attend (some) team meetings and observe the discussions, sometimes without prior notice. Give constructive feedback on how to improve.

- Diana and Joseph recognize seven basic rules:
    - Know your team members

- Communicate accurately and unambiguously

- Accept and support one another

- Check for understanding

- Share ideas and understanding

- Check for agreement

- Resolve conflicts quickly and constructively

- Help the team create a problem solving system. Diana and Joseph provide a scoring system that lets students assess a conflict and see how to resolve the issue. For example, students may be at a 0-1 score of "no decision" where the members are unable to reach a

consensus or a score of 10 where all are satisfied.

- Teams log their meetings and activities so they know where they are and can see problems while they can be solved.

Organizations

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Team building in organizations is a common approach to improving performance.

Fun is an important component to team building, but the intent is to become productive, focused, and aligned. Purely recreational activities can be helpful, but must be timed and consider the

capabilities of team members (e.g., sports are not for everyone). Other activities geared toward creating a learning environment, exceeding results and engaging employees must be present.

Employee engagement exercises allow teams to create solutions that are meaningful to them, with direct impact on the individuals, the team and the organization. Experiential learning and ramification methods are effective ways to engage millennials in the workplace. Employee engagement is effective because:

- employees enjoy problem-solving activities;

- problem-solving creates ownership;

- it can increase capacity;

- competitive activities encourage a results-based outlook.

[Outdoor activities](#) can be an effective way to engage the team, but there are many different types of team building activities possible.

Sports

Team building was introduced in sports in the 1990s. A 2010 study that analyzed the

effects of team building[18] found that team building activities increase group cohesion.

According to Yukelson, "In sports, teams are made up of a collection of interdependent individuals, coordinated and orchestrated into various task efficient roles for the purpose of achieving goals and objectives that are deemed important for that particular team".[19]

Team building in sports develops behaviors and skills that increase team functioning. One of the fundamental strategies is to emphasize team identity.

This can be done by instilling a sense of shared destiny.

A study examined whether a team building intervention program that stressed the importance of goal setting increased cohesion:[20] 86 high school basketball players were studied. The hypothesis employed season-long goal setting. Participants were asked to individually assign targets for the team and negotiate with other team members to finalize a goal score for the team.

In the control branch, the coach occasionally encouraged participants to

cheer for and support other team members. The research concluded that at the beginning of the study, all the teams had the same level of cohesion, but the team with the season long goal setting intervention program performed better.

The level of team cohesion did not increase as a result of ceiling effect with the intervention program, but the level decreased significantly for the control group. This was attributed to the lack of emphasis on team goals.

Core components for building a successful sports team:

- The coach communicates the goals and objectives to the team, defining roles and group norms.

- Team members should know what is expected from them. Mission statements can encourage the team to support each in achieving the goals.

- Team members should be trained that the team comes first and that each member is accountable for individual action and the actions of the team as a whole.

- "Team culture refers to the psychosocial leadership within the team, team motives, team identity, team sport and

collective efficacy".[21] The coach builds a positive culture. This can be done during recruiting for team-oriented athletes.

- **I**nstill a sense of pride in group membership. Team identity can be created by motivating team members commit to team goals and have pride in performance.

- Open and honest communication process can bring the team together. This includes both verbal and non-verbal communication. Trust, honesty, mutual sharing and understanding should be emphasized. The team members should

be encouraged and given the chance to speak during debriefing sessions.

- Teammates help each other before, after and during games.

See also

- Group development
- Industrial and organizational psychology
- Leadership development
- Maslow's hierarchy of needs
- Personal development
- Socionics
- Team management
- Teamwork

- [Team effectiveness](#)

- [Workplace politics](#)

- [URBAN TEAM BUILDING](#)

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