



EVALUATING YOUR TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Team building has become one of the newest buzz words in the corporate lexicon. In fact, for at least the last decade surveys of business leaders in every industry have shown that the prime characteristic they look for in new hires is the ability to work with a team. And why not? Research has shown that when people work in teams, they can accomplish far more than a group of individuals working together. But not all team building activities are created equal. Over the last few years, some industry experts have leveled criticism at the 'quick-fix' attitude that has been adopted by many companies who attempt to create or sponsor their own team building activities.

In order to be effective, say experts in corporate teams, a team building event must:

- Be integrated with real work goals.
- o It's not enough to plan a fun day of activities for your team. The team building event that you plan should help focus the members of the team on what's not working and what needs to happen for the team to work together.
- Be part of an overall company goal.
- o Plan team building activities and events as part of the company's overall plan for success. That means more than just a one off event to go buggy riding. Team building events should be an ongoing, annual or semi-annual event.
- Be planned by a team.
- o After all, the goal is to promote teamwork. The planning team should model the behavior that you expect it to promote.
- Be followed up with real work integration.
- o A one off event that has no follow up in the work world will be seen as a holiday at best – and a cynical attempt at manipulation at worst. To be meaningful, team building efforts must continue beyond the event day.
- Be reinforced by rewarding teamwork and team behavior.
- o Once you have a team that's working as a team, you need to reinforce that behavior by rewarding it. Recognition of teams that are working exceptionally well, special corporate events to mark team accomplishments and notice in the company newsletter are all ways to reinforce and reward teamwork within your company.

If planning an event that will do all that seems daunting, keep in mind that there are companies who make this their business. A corporate events planner can offer your company custom team building activities that are designed to help your employees and coworkers focus on the importance of working together as a team by providing focused activities that require each participant to work as part of a team. Don't just hire on a company to throw a do for your organization. Seek out a real professional with experience and expertise in building exercises that build teams.

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