

Development Suggestions for Teambuilding

Suggested Readings

Title	Author/Publisher	Learning Mode
The Five Dysfunctions of a Team	Lencioni, Peter/2002/Jossey-Bass	Book
Team Building: Proven Strategies for Improving Team Performance	Dyer, William G./2007/Jossey-Bass	Book

Activities

1. Describe two situations in which you were on a team that worked well together and two in which they did not. Prepare an action plan before the next team endeavor that will build on the positive situations.
2. Monitor team effectiveness and performance on an ongoing basis. Ask yourself the the questions below and share your responses in a team meeting and ask your coworkers to do the same. You might want to do this on a quarterly basis or whenever you observe a drop in team performance and/or morale.
 - What’s really good about working on this team?
 - What’s not so good?
 - We work best on this team when
 - My job on the team could be made easier if
 - I’m unclear about
 - I could work more effectively on this team if
 - We could have more fun on this team if we
3. Use the following four techniques to help you and the team learn to break patterns and habits of thinking:
 - a. Springboarding – Forming ideas in a “how to” format can help you and the team “springboard” to a new idea. For example, in response to the need to increase productivity, someone might say, “The system is down a lot and it takes forever to get tech support.” A springboard idea might be, “how to improve support services.”
 - b. Escaping – Jumping off the main track of our thinking, even into absurdity, can create new linkages and relationships. Using “what if ...” statements can help you and the team jump off the track.
 - c. Triggering – Trigger new associations by taking excursions with your mind. Trust your imagination and your unconscious mind to make these connections. Use “I wish ...” statements to trigger new ideas.

- d. Building – Increase idea generation by building on the positive aspects of an idea. Praise what is useful in an idea or group of ideas. Look for what’s right about an idea rather than what’s wrong with it.
4. Work with your team to determine how much differences help the team and to what extent they are divisive or nonproductive. The following process can help you do that:
- a. Plan team-building exercises to explore the balance between diversity and shared values for your team. Before the first session, ask each participant to do the following:
 - Identify what he or she believes to be the shared values of the group. Examples may be: “we put customers first,” “we proactively help one another in crunches,” “we value quick, efficient analysis,” and so on.
 - List differences in values perceived within the group. For example, some may value direct, no-nonsense feedback, while others prefer feedback that is cautious and polite. Some may value training and like to be brought along gradually, while others value quick learning and risk taking.
 - b. At the team-building session, post the statements of shared values that each person generated. Discuss these, and come to a consensus on the shared values of the team.
 - c. Then, discuss the differences in values.
 - Reach consensus on what the differences are.
 - Talk about the impact of these differences. Determine how the group can accept differences whenever possible. Many times, the shared values are so strong or the business issues so great that people find they can live with the differences and not have their work negatively affected.
 - If the differences are affecting the work of the group, discuss how to manage the situation. For example, you may have a team where most members believe in supporting decisions, while others believe it is all right to oppose decisions and even go their own way. One way the team might manage that situation is by requiring consensus.
 - d. Discuss the team’s need for both divergent and convergent thinking. Ensure that you gather divergent opinions for creative ideas and solutions during problem solving, but strive for consensus when you need to cooperate, take action, or form a team.

Development Suggestions for Teambuilding, continued

Tips

1. Recognize the team for team accomplishments and individuals for individual contributions.
2. To promote teamwork, act as a role model by pitching in to do any kind of work when help is needed.
3. Accept ownership for team decisions.
4. Help team members decide how they will communicate within the group and how decisions will be reached.