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**FRONT COVER:**

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Wrapping Up

# Foreword

The mere gathering of a group of people does not necessarily constitute to the effective beginnings of a team training exercise that is going to be productive and successful. Several different aspects need to be taken into careful consideration before such an exercise even begins.

This will open your eyes to fundamental principles of teamwork. You will learn the secrets behind successful teams and how to have the same successes in your own teams. It closely examines team building since this is one of the ways to get a team working together. You get to learn what this entails and what kind of teams can use these exercises to succeed.

Many leading companies have embraced the act of team building. They have managed to realize just how important teamwork is. These organizations spend a lot of money and team investing in team building. This ebook also looks at why team building is important not just to the organization but also to every member of the team.

## ***Terrific Teams***

All The Ins And Outs Of Training A Team

# Chapter 1:

## *The Basics*

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### Synopsis

The primary and most important element of team training lies in the ability of the leader to instill the motto of working together towards the effective and successful achievement of a goal.

Teamwork is so important that it is virtually impossible for you to reach the heights of your capabilities or make money that you want without becoming very good at it” - Brian Tracy

To discover the keys to building teamwork, you need to learn about what it means to be a team. You also need to learn about team building. These are the two concepts covered in this chapter.

- Do you really know what teamwork means?
- Exactly what is team building and how does it help in teamwork?
- What kind of teams can use the team building exercises and learn to be a team?

By the time you complete this chapter, you will have found the answers to all this questions

## **The Basics**

Understanding the various elements involved, such as specifics of the theme within the training exercise, the measurable and achievable standards set, the relevant processes that enable the afore mentioned items and the time frame in which all this is to take place.

Discussions on project plans, schedules and budget should all be held at the onset of the training exercise to ensure the overall performance of the team properly reflects the management systems in place.

Within the team training exercise elements like the results to be produced by the team and clear objectives for measuring these results are outlined to be followed diligently and any deviations should be monitored and controlled.

The communications mechanism should also be clear and concise as not all participants within the team will have the same level of technical understanding. Such divulging of information can be done regularly through different yet equally effective tools such as meetings, emails, collaborations, newsletters and many other high tech avenues.

Developing staffing procedures that encourage team participations also allows for the platform where only appropriate participants

form the team. Randomly throwing together a group of individual and expecting them to work as a team is not only ludicrous but it can also have disastrous results.

Assigning an individual within the team training exercise to be responsible in ensuring all the participants are always kept abreast with all the relevant information is also important, as this ensure the smoothness of the overall team participation.

A team may simply be defined as a group of people who are working together towards a common goal. These people are entitled with different tasks that make a significant contribution towards the achievement of the said goal. Teamwork normally involves the team working interdependently. This means that one person's task is responsible for the success of the next person's tasks.

Teams are normally formed for a variety of reasons. There are some that are set up for short term goals while others are set for something more long term.

For instance, in an organization, you may find a team formed just to deal with a particular project. However, you may also find other teams in every single department that work together throughout to increase the productivity of their departments.

## **Team Building Basics**

The whole idea behind team building is to forge good working relationships between the team members. This ensures that they learn how to work as a team. The team building exercises help the players to successfully learn how to do this. These exercises can work for any teams, whether at work or even in sports.

Team building serves many more purposes than just helping the team to work together. These exercises also help the teammates to know each other better. This then builds the rapport between them and encourages them to be supportive of one another.

Team building also helps in developing the skills of each team mate through motivation and support. The exercises also help the members to learn how to communicate with each other. This is a key aspect of any successful team.

Through team building, the goals and objects of the organization becomes clearer. These are defined and each team member is encouraged to participate in helping achieve them. This also helps in sporting activities, a team gets to learn what they want to achieve and how to get there.

Team building also has a number of benefits on individual level. For instance, many people get to grow and develop their skills by being part of a team. When the team entrusts you with a role, you will find yourself trying your best not to disappoint everyone else. This helps in nurturing their abilities and honing the skills.



Team building has also helped individuals discover themselves. For instance, some people may not know that they can be leaders until they are assigned such roles. Other people find themselves when they got to know others better. For instance, knowing that your colleague is a single mom may make you more tolerant of her absenteeism. You may learn to evoke gentleness and sympathy in yourself.

In most cases, organizations normally hire a team building consultant to help with the exercises. The consultant takes time to know the team and come up with the right strategies for the particular team. This consultant is specifically trained for this. He can look at a team and come up with strategies to improve the performance of the said team.

The consultant normally makes a proposal to the organization, clearly laying out his plan of action. He states the problems with the team and what he recommends for helping solve these problems.

The organization then makes the decision to hire the consultant or not based on the proposal. Sometime, the organization may only agree to some of the strategies but not all. The consultant is then faced with the team building task. After the program, he has to give the necessary feedback to the organization illustrating just how effective the exercise was.

## **The Types of Teams That Can Participate In Team Building Exercises**

Team building can basically work in any given team. It can work at work, school or even when it comes to sports. One of the most popular types of teams that use these strategies is the departmental teams. These are teams made up of people who do the same kind of work .For instance; you may have a team from the human resources department or even have a team from the I.T department. This type of team is normally found in work environments.

There are also management teams. These teams may comprise of managers from various departments. Even as leaders, these people need to learn how to work together for the overall success of the company. Team building also helps the managers to become better leaders to their teams. The skills acquired can be passed down to the team by the leader.

There can also be team building for mixed or cross-functional groups. These are usually teams that are made up of people from different departments in an organization.

These departments have to have some common ground. For instance, you can have departments that deal with people such as customer care and human resources. Team building will build all the members of the team and enable them to cooperate and be more productive.

Special projects teams can also use team building exercises. These are teams that may be set up for just short term goals. If they successfully complete the team building program, such teams will be more effective. In addition, the team may be able to complete the project in a shorter time than anticipated. This all comes from learning how to work well with each other.

Self directed teams that comprise of people from different fields also use team building exercises. They take the program to help themselves grow as leaders.

They also use what they have learned to train their individual teams on how to foster the bond that will enable them to work together.

Any team that has a common goal can use team building to help them work together much better.

A good team is one that has learnt how to work together to achieve a common goal. This is the essence of teamwork.



# **Chapter 2:**

## ***Solving Issues***

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### **Synopsis**

In the very competitive and cost conscious environments today, a lot of companies are beginning to realize that most matters can be successfully dealt with within the company if there are workable teams of problem solving expertise in place. By getting the most out of the resources available from the people already knowledgeable on the problem the company can problem solve more effectively and in a fraction of the time.

Team work entails a lot of activities. There is decision making, problem solving, communication and a number of other activities. In this chapter, we look at the team building exercises that tackle different aspects of teamwork.

- What are the different exercises that a team can participate in?
- What do these exercises entail and how are they important?

Relationships can't be forced; people need to work on different things to make them work. This is the same thing with teamwork.

People will not just automatically learn to communicate and trust each other. They have to practice on these skills

## **Fixing It**

The successful companies realize that by getting the employees to work in teams, ongoing challenges, opportunities, improvements, re-engineering, product development and many other aspects can be better addressed and solutions found simply based on the oneness effect of the problem solving mindset.

Being able to quickly deploy teams whenever there is a need, can only be done if the proper complimenting tools and training are constantly available.

Some of the problem solving areas that should be covered within the exercise should be clearly defined. These may include clearly defined goals, indentifying and priority listing the barriers pertaining to the said goals, suitable development of solutions that are not only clever and cost effective but should also be workable.

Not forgetting the cooperation of all involved, is another very important element that should not be overlooked as this one element can derail any problem solving exercise.

When all this has been discussed and explored, the next step in the problem solving venture should be to ensure the proper execution of the plan takes place.

Constant or periodic checks should be practiced to ensure the exercise is kept on track and the problems are effectively solved or at the very least some success is shown in understanding the problem and addressing it.

All this is done with the end goal in mind to ensure its smooth and speedy attainment. With the necessary tools and techniques available, most teams can help to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the company.

### **Communication Exercises**

Needless to say, communication is a vital part of any given relationship. Two people can't live and work together unless they can communicate with each other. The same theory applies to team, for a group to work together they must be able to effectively communicate with each other.

Communication goes beyond sharing a common language. Two people may be English speakers but even without the language barrier, they may not be able to communicate with each other. There are so many fundamental principles that go into effective communication. This is why this type of exercises is normally vital in any given team.

There are many types of communication exercises all geared to help team members communicate with each other effectively. One such exercise is the “blind man and guide”. In this exercise, two teammates are forced to work with each other. They need to retrieve a certain object within the vicinity. However, one teammate has to do the retrieval while blind folded. The other teammate will then give directions to help them make the retrieval. The only way they can do this is by working together and communicating. If the guide becomes frustrated and starts yelling at the “blind man” this will bring about confusion and hinder their progress. On the other hand,” the blind man” will not succeed if he decides not to listen to the “guide”.

There are also communication exercises that involve interaction with all team members. You are supposed to mingle and bond with members and get to know them well. After this, you will be asked details about the team members. This normally tests listening skills and memory.

### **Trust and Interdependence Exercises**

According to research, this is one of the most difficult exercises to administer. Naturally, people take time to build trust. Trying to get the team members to trust each other may be a hard task but still achievable. Trusting each other cements the relationship between the team. This helps them to work with each other well. It also makes an individual gain some sense of responsibility.

There are different exercises that can be used to build trust and interdependence. For instance, there is one exercise whereby the team players line up in two rows. The people on the first row normally have their backs to the others on the second row. Now without turning back, they are required to fall back letting their guard down. They should be able to trust that the team member standing behind them will catch them.

### **Problem Solving Exercises**

The whole concept of these exercises is to test the team's problem solving skills. You give them a problem to solve and watch every step that they make towards solving it. You will also get to see how well they will work together in order to solve it. This is a vital exercise because it can influence the success of any team. A team that can't handle the task may crumble and fall under pressure. On the other hand, a team that can do this well will be able to go through any difficulties and come out victorious at the end.

Some of the problem solving exercises include, putting a big puzzle together. Every team member plays a role in ensuring that this is done. You may also present a problem to the team and just ask them to solve it. This can be anything that has to deal with their work. For instance, a customer care department team may be asked to play out a scene whereby there is an irritable customer threatening one of their staff members with violence. The staff member isn't supposed to handle the situation alone. It is up to the team to come together with



strategy to handle the current problem and put measures in place for handling similar issues in the future.

## **Decision Making Exercises**

This is much similar to the problem solving exercises. It tests the team's ability to make decisions together. In these exercises, the whole team is supposed to work together. It will not be upon the leader to come up with the next plan of action. These exercises are very important in any team. When a team makes good strong decisions together, they will be successful. However, a team that doesn't involve all members in decision making may end up fostering resentment from the members who have been left out. It will also affect the quality of the decision since the best ones are the ones that are made by all members sharing ideas. On the other hand, total inability to make decisions will delay projects and can ultimately contribute to the failure of the whole team.

In such exercises, a team may be presented with a problem and about five different solution alternatives. They have to discuss these alternatives and decide on the best option for the whole team. Each group member should contribute as to why they believe that is the best option. They should also get to a point of either compromise or total agreement.

## **Planning Exercises**

Nothing much can ever be accomplished without the proper planning. This is why this exercise is very important in any given team. This goes hand in hand with the adapting exercises. This is supposed to help the group to realize their strengths and weaknesses. The strengths are then put all together to show exactly what the group is capable of achieving if at all they decide to work together.

Planning exercises are very many. You can have the team faced with a task whereby they are required to complete it effectively and in the shortest time possible. For instance, you can ask them to provide a budget for a certain amount of money. They should imagine that they are stranded at a bus station with just the basic amount of money. The budget should explain how they expect to get home with their limited funds and within the shortest time possible.

## **Socialization Exercises**

These exercises are sometimes referred to as, bonding exercises. They are supposed to help the employees to get to know each other through a social interaction. It is important for the team to learn how to socialize with each other. This will help build their work relationship making them much more effective in their job. It will also help create a good working atmosphere free of hostilities.

Socialization exercises are normally very simple. You can actually have a setting like a speed dating game. The employees will be asked to talk to each other for a few minutes. When these time elapses, they are to move to another team members. This is repeated until all team members have had a chance to talk to each other. This exercise should be fun and simple.

### **Personal Development Exercises**

Sometimes it's hard to be a team player if you have personality traits that are sociable. There are people who are naturally shy; others are anti-social while others may just not be comfortable in the team. This exercise helps each individual to examine themselves and evaluate what exactly they bring to the team. It encourages members to get out of their own shells or individual limitations and become the best that they can be.

Members may be faced with the challenge of individually coming up with their own shortcomings and listing them down. They should do this anonymously. The lists are then handed down to the leader. The team comes together after this and discusses the solution for each shortcoming. For instance, people who may have listed shyness as a shortcoming maybe offered advice on how to overcome this. Remember, nobody will be addressed directly due to the anonymity. It will just be like a brainstorming session. Once a person is comfortable with themselves in the team, they will be more productive.

## **Awareness And Sensitivity Exercises**

This is normally a delicate exercise especially in mixed teams. It isn't uncommon to find organizations refusing this part of team building. However, it is very important. There are so many stereotypes that come with every group of people. This may naturally bring about resentment and also distrust between members of a team. This definitely affects their ability to work together.

However, you can make this exercise fun and educative at the same time. Come up with name tags for everyone. In this name tag, don't put any negative stereotypes. Put positive messages that a group or a person. For instance, if a person is associated with a group of people considered to be sneaky liars but with very brilliant minds, put the later as the tag. Then put the tags at the back of each person. Each person is then supposed to guess what's on their back without taking a look. Teambuilding exercises aren't just about having fun. They help in teaching people the core aspects of teamwork and how to be a team

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