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Professional Growth Articles

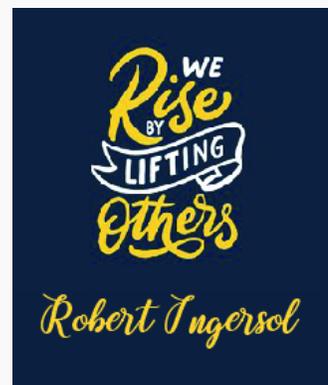


TEAM BUILDING is a Deliberate Act June 2021



I recently delivered several workshops on “Achieving Team Synergy and High Performance” and reminded the participants that high performing teams do not happen by accident and that team building is a deliberate act.

If you are a team LEADER, it’s your responsibility to see that you provide activities to build your team and help them grow in their relationships, their



“Coming together
is a beginning,
Keeping together
is progress,
Working together
is success.”

-Henry Ford

understanding of each other, their recognition of each others' strengths and weaknesses and help them agree on decision-making methods as well as other processes, etc. If you're a team member rather than a leader, feel free to share this article with your leader.

For those of you who are not trainers or facilitators, team building may be a familiar concept, but you may not have tools in your tool box. So this month, I decided to share a few favorite team-building activities for your use.

Team Building Activities:

Value to the Team

This is an activity with three purposes. It helps individuals recognize strengths in each of their fellow team members, it builds relationships within the team when the strengths identified are shared, and it boosts the confidence of team members hearing the strengths others see in them.

Sometimes it's easy to see the strengths others bring, and other times it requires some deliberate thought. Some people are not your favorites to work with and it's easier to see negatives in that person, so deliberately identifying that person's strengths can help you shift your negative perspective to a more positive one. When a team member shares with another team member the strength(s) they see in them, it feels good on both ends. The person giving the feedback feels they are giving a type of gift and the person on the receiving end is complimented and validated. It helps to build a bond between the two people. To do this team-wide brings each person's strengths to the conscious level for everyone's benefit,

"When you take out the team in teamwork, it's just work. Now who wants that?"

- Matthew Woodring Stover



"It's amazing what you can accomplish if you don't care who gets the credit."

Harry S. Truman

"Find a group of people who challenge and inspire you,



spend a lot of time with them, and it will change your life forever."

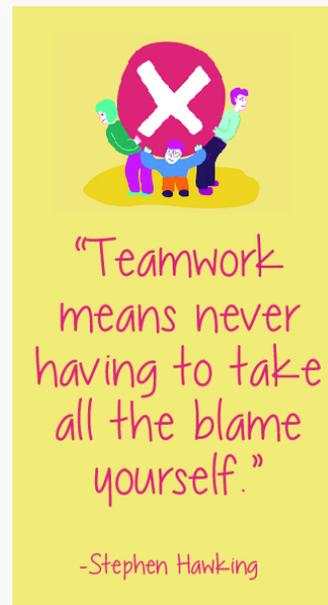
- Amy Poehler

boosts each person's confidence and acceptance within the team and when all the data is shared, it helps people see even more strengths in each other that they might not have individually seen.

Ask each team member to identify at least one strength or value of each of their teammates. Then, ask them to deliver the message individually to each person, in person. There are variations on this, but I believe the strongest method for delivery of this activity, is in person, one-on-one. If you work remotely or not in the same office, then ask the team to deliver the message virtually so they can read each other's facial expressions, tone of voice and other body language. That makes the message much more powerful than sending it in an email or listing it on some master list. I've had team members balk at this and want to just email it. Some just want to check this off their list as a chore. But after doing it in person, they admitted how great it felt to deliver the messages and see the other person's reactions and also to hear those messages from their teammates. After that has been done, then you can ask for all the data and share all the info for each team member. That helps the whole team see even more strengths in each other that they didn't think of. It has a multiplier effect!

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Commonalities and Differences
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This is an activity that helps team members recognize they are all similar in some ways and different in other ways, but it gives them commonalities to focus on and get to know each other better. Divide the team into smaller groups of 5 or 6. Then choose topics (vacationing, grocery



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shopping, planning a party, etc. or it can be work-related, how they approach planning for a type of job function or project, how they evaluate something, etc) In each group, give them a piece of paper, a chart, or white board – whatever is appropriate for in-person or virtual. Draw a square in the center of the paper that takes up about half the space. Have each individual group write inside the square what they all have in common with respect to the topic you assigned them and outside the square the ways in which they are different. Then have the groups share to the whole group. It's a way of helping your folks get to know each other on a more personal level – as humans, not just co-workers, and they begin to have some fun and build a stronger bond.

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All Your Titles

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Even folks who have worked together for a while sometimes know little about their colleagues outside of work. This gives them yet another way to connect as humans and they will find things to talk about with each other, which further builds relationships. Give each person a few minutes to list all of the "titles" for themselves they can possibly think of (see an example list below) and then have them share one at a time with the group. Then give them time to mingle and have one-on-one conversations to ask questions about what they heard that left them curious. They can have multiple conversations and move among the group like you might at a party. After a little while, ask them what each other's skills and hobbies outside of work bring to the team – that's a thought-provoking conversation and also helps them see their team members through a different

Create a plan
you can confidently
embrace to move
forward



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8. Results Leadership

lens. They might begin to see new values, skills, etc. Here are examples of titles:

Parent, amateur photographer, collector of ??, gardener, fisherman or fisherwomen, horseback-rider, caretaker, actor/actress, reader, poet, lay pastor/minister, neighbor, sister/brother, caretaker, chauffeur, singer, musician, sports fan, camper, traveler, swimmer, builder, BBQer, chef, children's sports coach, dog or cat mom or dad, seamstress, quilter, knitter, embroiderer, runner, body-builder, food-bank volunteer, community organization volunteer, mechanic, hobby airplane pilot, etc. etc.

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Virtual Tour for Remote Teams

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If your team members all work virtually or even some of them do, ask them to turn their cameras on their work spaces, both office and remote work spaces, and give a virtual tour for their fellow team mates and answer questions about important items they choose to display. You might ask the team to share what each person's work space says about them. This helps the team feel more connected and allows them a few steps closer into each other's world of work.

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If Our Team Were an Animal or Song, What Would it Be?

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This is an activity to help teams think more deeply about the characteristics and strengths of their team as a whole, not just as a group of individuals. It will help them further value their team identity

(Part I & Part II)

9. Leadership Skills
10. Public Speaking & Presentation Skills
11. Effective Time Management Skills
12. Running Effective, Time-Saving Meetings
13. Working Effectively With Your Manager
14. Networking - Opportunities for You Personally and for Your Organization
15. Transitioning Into Retirement
16. Get Them There Better and Faster; Coaching & Mentoring Skills
17. Thoughtfully Choosing Your Approach to Conflict
18. Mediation Skills for Employee Conflicts

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and functional value. Divide the team into smaller groups and then ask them to decide what their team is. (??? – you can choose animal, song, sports team, city – anything your imagination chooses) So for example, each small group might be asked to decide, “If our team were an animal, what animal would it be and why?” Or what song would we be and why? Or whatever object you have chosen. This does a couple of things. It’s a little crazy and fun, gets their imaginations working and helps them think about their team to identify specific strengths and characteristics. And then it’s fun for the team to hear what each group came up with and then discuss all the various characteristics different people see in the team and what that means for them moving forward. What strengths had they not considered that others identified and how can they capitalize on the strengths they collectively identified to improve something about their work?

leaders. Feel free to download and share them.

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Doing it Together

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This is a fun and challenging activity that forces the entire team to work together and even strategize new methods to accomplish a goal. If you are all in the same space, bring in a long stick, perhaps a bamboo pole, pvc pipe or some other long straight rigid object. The object needs to be as long as half your team standing shoulder-to-shoulder. Then divide your team in two halves and have each group line up shoulder-to-shoulder facing each other with the pole on the floor between the two groups. Each person will bend down and put their two palms or two sets of fingertips (whichever you choose, but it should be the same for everyone) under the pole. If bending is a problem for some

team members, start the pole at an appropriate height where everyone's hands can be under the pole without bending over.

The goal is to see how high they can raise the pole without losing contact with anyone's fingers or palms. Once someone loses contact, they have to announce it and the activity starts over again. You'll find that it requires great teamwork, communication, paying attention to each team member, and strategizing to actually get the pole up high as possible without losing contact. You can set a specific height goal or let them see how high they can go. They may continue to challenge themselves to go higher. Then once they've done it, have a prize for them. Or, you can announce ahead of time what prize you will give them at different heights and they get one prize for their highest level. Obviously, be sure the prize gets better the higher they go. But, then ask them what they each learned from doing it and how it applies to their work?

The Most Important Tip!

Whatever type of team-building you do, the most important part is "processing the activity". What that means is having them talk about what they learned, how they can use what they learned, what they will do differently as a result, etc. The questions you ask and the team discussion it generates is where the real value is. Otherwise, it becomes an exercise without much purpose and some may even think it was just a stupid activity and thus can work against you.

So these are just a few. There are thousands. You can google team-building activities as well. These are a few I use often, because I have found them to work well, people enjoy them and they generate

really great team conversations.

Have fun with your team building!
If I can help you further, feel free to reach out for a chat.



Joy Conley Kacik

Joy is a conference speaker, team and leadership development consultant, customized trainer and facilitator and a Certified Professional Coach with expertise in personal career coaching, job offer and salary negotiations and executive coaching.

As an Insights Discovery® licensed practitioner, Joy provides clients the added value of the Discovery® Portfolio of tools when working with individuals, teams, leaders and organizations to create inspiring visions for collaborative, cohesive teams to produce superior results.

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