

Teambuilding Plays Important Role in Stressful Times

BY BILLY KIRSCH

When I mention I'm passionate about teambuilding the eyes roll, or look away. The conversation shifts, and the comments usually go something like this: "That was so yesterday, so pre-recession. Talk to me about something with ROI. My boss won't go for a teambuilding program now." But being an undeterred optimist, I take this response as an invitation to enlighten people about why I am passionate about teambuilding. Because there's plenty of ROI; there's relevancy, efficacy and value.

In fact, you can't afford not to practice teambuilding. Quite often, taking a break from your habits and not working in the typical way will boost your own ROI by cutting down on negative energy and creating efficiency and enthusiasm when you return to work. What works on a personal level also works on a team level. An entire team or even an entire company can be sick, or chronically fatigued and running on empty without really being aware of it because this condition has become a part of their culture. There's real ROI in taking sick days, or alternative days, for a team or organization. It's important to plan a meaningful break to recharge,

if there's fun involved, too. Fun is a necessary component to sustaining a high level of activity, engagement and buy-in for the company mission. The teambuilding event should be engaging, interactive, intelligent and welcoming; it should promote creativity.

Preprogram questionnaires are vital to ascertain what your objectives, challenges and ideals are. They can be as simple as email questionnaires or they can be detailed preprogram assessment tools such as the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument, or The Team Dimension Profile. With a preprogram assessment and defined objectives, you can make sure your teambuilding event will key in on areas that need to be addressed. An effective debriefing also is vital to producing lasting results. Questions and discussions might include things like:

What was learned during the event?

What new awareness was created?

What is the plan of action to implement what was learned?

What support does your workforce need to try to follow those action steps and maintain the new lines of communication established during the teambuilding event?

resources to sustain and promote your human resources. Objective evaluations of areas of strength and of weakness, especially from the outside, help organizations move from old models and shake things up in the interest of growth and renewed efficiency.

THERE ARE REAL BENEFITS, INCLUDING:

- Increased efficiency through sharing of common practices, questions, concerns and challenges
- Better problem solving through networking and sharing solutions to common challenges
- Increased sales through sharing techniques, successful methods and information
- Increased morale leading to higher retention, efficiency and creativity
- A more cohesive, united vision and mission
- Last, but certainly not least, a teambuilding experience is just that—an experience. Having group experiences to promote engagement and emotional involvement within your workforce are vital to sustaining what you do. Think about a past experience you have had, maybe a favorite vacation. You might not remember the

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gain new perspective, and recognize and address areas within a group's culture that can be improved. A well-planned, productive teambuilding program can go a long way toward helping.

Qualified teambuilding providers facilitate programs that are catalysts for change within organizations, propelling growth, promoting a positive culture and healing rifts. And it's okay

An effective debrief won't mean much if there isn't follow-up by the teambuilding facilitator, such as email reminders to participants, surveys assessing results several months after the event and reports to managers.

You can't afford to ignore the culture and quality of life within your company. Especially in stressful times, it is vital to use your financial

hotel room you were in, or even the name of the beach, but the memory will take you back to that emotional place, and you'll reconnect with the feelings you had at the time. Shared positive emotional experiences in your work environment are equally important. Teambuilding is a great way to accomplish that. Now, you'll only have to convince your boss.



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