



## TEAMBUILDING – IS IT REALLY JUST GAMES THAT YOU PLAY?

When people hear the word Teambuilding, their responses seem to range from ‘Great – another fun day away from the office’ – to ‘Oh no – not again!’

Hopefully, there is more to Teambuilding than bungy jumping in Taupo. Underlying all the hype should be some skill based objectives including; building on the team’s interpersonal skills, improving motivation and refining the procedures in place.

A good friend of mine once commented that we need to put the letter I into team. Her reason being - because a team is made up of individuals. In the workplace environment a team is a group of people working together towards a common goal. What needs to be recognised is that they will only be as successful as the individuals comprising the team. So it makes sense to build on the strengths and work with the weaknesses to ensure each individual member of the team is functioning collaboratively at peak performance level.

Take this a step further, and consider that if a team will only function as well as the members who comprise it – developing a strong sense of **US** is paramount, and the basis for where Teambuilding lies. But what seems to happen is that teams aren’t as successful operationally as Management would have hoped. Teams tend to dissolve, under perform and fall apart because of people not working well within the team framework. So what’s going wrong and how can it be fixed?

Let’s start at where it all begins...Leadership!

This is vital when it comes to developing successful teams.

- Making sure that the whole team – not selected individuals are involved from the outset is pivotal in ensuring success.
- Systems around decision making of set tasks and projects is crucial
- Another key factor is implementing a set time for the team to come together to share information, plan ahead and commemorate achievements.
- Checking that each member of the team has the same vision, and the same understanding of their own, and other’s roles within the team. Surprisingly this is not always the case.

Successful teams have as their basis – a leader who motivates and encourages their team collectively and individually. They are able to understand the differences between not only what frustrates but also what drives each member and how to work with and value that.

This has a natural lead in to motivation and whether it is experienced intrinsically or extrinsically by each member of the team. This is extremely important when you consider that how each member thinks contributes to the success **or** otherwise of the team.

Intrinsic rewards are those that come from within us, like feeling successful and skilled at what we do. Extrinsic Rewards are outside of us; for instance receiving an award or bonus are good examples of this. An enterprising leader knows that extrinsic rewards can help build intrinsic motivation – but the key point here is to encourage and build on developing their intrinsic motivation. Because it is this that sustains us as people in the long term. If individual members of a team don't feel personally motivated – it won't be long before that is felt amongst the team.

There are often comments made in the media about the similarities and differences between sport and business. Ruth Aitken Coach of the Silver Ferns, on talking about the parallels between them, cites that although the Silver Ferns aim to win, she doesn't believe winning is a full measure of their success at all. She believes it's how they operate as a team, and build, cope and grow with the challenges that are presented to them. To her that is the measure of success.

To help measure the success of your 'team', it could be helpful to check the following Team Planning Elements are addressed in your organisation:

**Tools** What areas of the business are we driving forward and planning for?  
When do we aim to have this done by?

**Roles** In order to achieve this what skills and resources do we need?  
If not on site, how do we organise this?  
Who will do that?

**Procedures** How does the team carry out its work?  
How are problems solved?  
How are decisions made?  
How will we mark this occasion/celebration?

**Relationships** Do members get on well enough to work together?  
What is in place to address that?  
How is conflict handled?

**Individual Objectives** How will this benefit each member of the team?  
How will staff commit themselves to goals set?  
How will staff commit themselves to personal achievements?

As a successful team leader having knowledge about what makes your team tick, will ultimately help you to have a happy, motivated and successful team.

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Please contact us if you would like the workshop outline on this topic.