Why Team Building Fails

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Bringing together a successful team is not an easy task. There are several steps to build a team that help unify members of the team and creates momentum. Some of the issues that arise may, however, be harmful to the development of a team and its long-term performance.

Problems of communication can really hinder the ability of a team to work together. It can be counterproductive to fail to adequately explain objectives, discuss priorities or even consider the opinion of another team member about the right way to do something. Problems with communication can prevent team members from adapting to work well together.

Furthermore, individual team members will have their own ways of working and the most successful will be their own processes, they believe. The best teams succeed because they change these methods and adapt to suit the wider team. Compromise is crucial in finding the most appropriate and effective ways to work together. Processes that do not function, conflicting personalities, and rigidly adhering team members to their strategies with no regard for the rest of the group, can create a lack of cohesion. Coupled this with communication problems and a team will easily disintegrate.

Team building can also fail when nobody takes care of it effectively. Effective leadership can help ease the pressures of adapting to new working practices and poor communication. If problems arise, an effective leader can mediate and promote improvements in how the team works that can help everyone. Effective leadership can motivate employees to achieve their goals, reach goals and be a real benefit for a business. Failure to do this can alienate team members, affect productivity, and cause valuable and useful staff members to leave, as they do not feel engaged, challenged, or appreciated.

Listed below are eight of the most common reasons teams fail based on research:

1. **Lack Of Clear Purpose & Goals** - The team would falter without clear purpose and priorities. Not knowing what to achieve is a big reason for lack of success, and why it is necessary.
2. **Unsure Of What Requires A Team Effort** - Not every decision or action requires a team; some individuals do best. When the result calls for multiple skills and perspectives and for a common goal, team action is required.
3. **Lack Of Accountability** - The very definition of a team is one in which result shared responsibility is a given. Strong teams hold each other and themselves responsible for commitments made and outcomes achieved.
4. **Lack Of Effective Or Shared Leadership** - The implementation of leader habits that do not reach the team's level of development impacts both efficiency and morale. Every team needs a leader but leadership needs to be shared as the team develops leadership. If the leader does not give up control you will never have a high-performing team.
5. **Lack Of Trust Among Team Members** - Teams are systems founded on trust. The lack of

confidence leads to poor communication and information withholding which is a barrier to relationships and innovation.

6. **Inability To Deal With Conflict** - Failure to deal with conflict will bring productivity and morale to a standstill or worse. It can become a fight for control, rather than being seen as differences. The source of innovation and deepened relationships can be if dealt with correctly.

7. **Ineffective Problem-Solving Skills** - The team's strength lies in its ability to tackle obstacles creatively and efficiently. It will not achieve high performance without this skill set (that thrives on different perspectives).

8. **Lack Of Focus On Creativity & Excellence** - Creativity and excellence can not be taken for granted but they are ideally written right into the team's values and standards. There are applause and honor for continuous improvement. It should allow team members to take calculated risks. If mistakes happen, they are treated as opportunities for learning.

According to Sanders (2015), the reasons why team building is often a waste of time is because; they are meaningless, they involve a lot of competition, they are just lame and they lack transferability. They are considered meaningless because team building activities are often organized by somebody who is so far away from the group and the people involved. Always, it is a generic program that is applied across all departments, usually after a quick google search, aimed at ticking off some staff wellness goal.

Team building is considered to involve a lot of competition and because competition also brings the worst out of people, and even if a team is split into smaller teams it always leads to someone losing out. Inevitably someone goes home empty-handed, feeling inadequate or unfairly disadvantaged. The' strong' and the' weak', the' winners' and' losers'.

Team building is considered lame as stated by Sanders (2015) because team-building exercises can get far too intense or personal and demeaning for a professional environment, often leaving workers feeling vulnerable or humiliated. Team building sessions are perceived to lack transferability when workers are left to wonder, "why do we do this?" and not being able to transfer the lessons learnt during team building sessions to their actual work, any positive effects will be short-lived while forgotten soon.

Another reason for failing team-building exercises is because it does not address the structural problems that exist in the work environment. Sure, everyone can work together for an hour or two in an off-site conference room without conflict, because deadlines are not a concern and everybody has all the tools they need to complete their work. Yet move outside this idealized environment, and things do not always go so well.

It is impractical when people do not get what they need, when they need it, from their colleagues in other departments, when they are restricted by time, money, or other resources, or when they are limited in other important ways, such as by regulatory guidelines and team building does not resolve those limitations. Team building that fails to address the challenges in the real world is unlikely to have any real-world effect.

It is not easy to overcome these obstacles but it is doable. Teams are a good tool for generating performance and creating morale. They can outperform any group of individuals when managed

strategically and can do more to unleash creativity and develop skills than individuals who work alone.

References

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