

Team Building For Managers

Social Gatherings

Don't underestimate the power of social gatherings to build your team. While it's always important to recognize that family and other commitments can make it difficult for some team members to engage in social time outside of work, gatherings can still be a valuable tool in your team building kit. Whether you have regular team lunches where the topic of conversation is anything but work, an annual holiday gathering, or period get together after work for dinner, drinks, or other fun, social gatherings help to take your team out of their work environment so they can focus on each other. Ask your team what type of gatherings they would enjoy. Be wary of gatherings that center on alcohol, both for liability reasons and because it excludes those team members who do not drink. Vary the type of social gatherings so that those who may not enjoy one type of gathering have other options. Encouraging your team to spend time together as colleagues helps to further foster camaraderie and relationships.

Activities to Build Camaraderie

Sharing in an activity together builds camaraderie among your team members. The sense of having a shared experience can be a powerful way to form bonds and encourage team members to build relationships. Infusing activities with a sense of fun and play also encourages laughter and camaraderie among your people. Whether you choose to use activities that have many of the features of games, or find activities that are more focused on building relationships and skills for your team, the benefits in enhanced relationships, which brings a host of other benefits. When choosing activities that build camaraderie, focus on activities in which people participate as equals, and in which everyone can participate. One strategy is to break your team up into smaller groups, which allows for more one on one interaction. Some activities to consider as you build camaraderie on your team:

- **Building Challenges:** Teams build a product – bikes are a popular option – that will be donated to charity.
- **Charity Drive:** Teams collect for an agreed-upon charity. Food pantries or toy drives are common choices.
- **Office Olympics:** Teams compete in a variety of office-themed events, with fun prizes

Activities to Build Communication

Activities also offer a chance for team members to build communications. Games and formal training scenarios can help communication, but may feel artificial. Engaging in group activities, whether it's a team sport or organizing a charity drive, requires that team members communicate. Because activities are generally lower risk than work deliverables, they give the team a chance to experiment with new communication strategies. Team members may also work with colleagues in activities that they don't interact with regularly in their work duties, so activities offer chances to communicate with a variety of different people. Activities may also offer a chance to communicate in different ways than team member's everyday tasks require, which gives them a chance to try out new skills.