

Teambuilding Events Don't Work

Have you ever attended a teambuilding event only to return to work and encounter the same team issues that existed prior to the event? So, why didn't the experience and bonding from the event stick? Why did it have an impact while you were there but little or no residual effect?

Were the participants not committed? Were the event activities lackluster? Was it just *"too little, too late"* for your team? The answer to all of these could be 'yes.' More likely, though, it's because **teambuilding events don't work.**

Now, don't get me wrong. I think teambuilding events are great and can be a powerful step towards greater team effectiveness. They are not, however, a silver bullet or magic solution. Building a team is a **process** not an **event**.

Are you looking for a one-day silver bullet or are you willing to look deeper at long-term solutions for the challenges your team is facing? If the latter is true, then keep reading.

When I get requests to facilitate a teambuilding event, I begin the process by asking questions.

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Seven Timeless Steps To Build Successful Working Relationships

Here are some great foundations for creating lasting relationships in any area of business, no matter what your position is:

1. **Never criticize, complain, or condemn.** Be as positive and cheerful as possible. Never share negative things about your personal life in a business setting, and never criticize anything political or religious in your workplace. Appear open and easygoing.
2. **Aim for acceptance.** Respectfully accept others' viewpoints and opinions. People crave acceptance, and those who feel accepted by you personally will want to do business with you.
3. **Offer approval.** Give praise and approval to people for practically anything they do. Coworkers will gravitate toward you and you'll be welcome wherever you go.
4. **Show your appreciation.** Make others feel more valuable and important by acknowledging their actions and presence graciously.
5. **Admire the achievements of others.** Avoid jealousy and make admiration your goal.
6. **Be straightforward.** Disagree or agree with others when appropriate. Be frank with your opinions and avoid gossip. People will feel comfortable in your presence when they know where you stand and what you genuinely believe.
7. **Give loads of attention to others.** You can pay anyone a great compliment simply by focusing your attention on them. Nothing can make a human being feel more special than to be seen and heard.

— Adapted from *Advanced Selling Strategies*, by Brian Tracy

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Here are some questions you can ask yourself to begin the **process** of teambuilding.

- ✓ What do the words "teambuilding" and "teamwork" mean to you and in your organization? Teamwork is one of those innocuous terms that mean very different things to different people. Sometimes performance management issues are confused with a general lack of teamwork and teambuilding will not usually help you solve individual performance management issues.
- ✓ What are the current challenges that the group is experiencing?
- ✓ What is the source of these challenges, and are they truly teamwork issues?
- ✓ What are the environmental factors that may be contributing to the team's current situation (company culture, dept. culture, the management and leadership style for the team, etc.)?
- ✓ What behaviors constitute teamwork for you or your organization?
- ✓ What are the specific behaviors that you want to see displayed?
- ✓ How will you know the teambuilding was effective?



A day or two of teambuilding is a great START and can definitely give the team a *kick "in the rubber parts."* Teambuilding exercises get people thinking about the other individuals in the team and their strengths and weaknesses, they can build more cohesiveness and trust in a relatively short period of time and they can help individuals to consider what behaviors are most effective for optimum team performance.

Recently I facilitated a teambuilding event that utilized the DISC Behavioral Assessment to help participants understand, appreciate and begin to work better with the different styles in the team. One of the participants said, *"This is all well and good, but how do we keep what we've learned here going? How do we keep ourselves from slipping back into the same behavior?"*

Continued on next column –

I gave a hearty 'AMEN, sister'! This person was seeking a **process**, not an **event**.

If you really want to create a highly effective and performing team you must consider a long-term teambuilding plan. Teams aren't just created over night or via a one or two-day offsite event.

Here are 5 ways to **"keep the music playing"** after a teambuilding event:

1. **Continue the conversation.** Plan follow-up events, discussions, reports or meetings and consider these part of the teambuilding event.
2. **Keep it regular.** Make room for regular, ongoing teambuilding in team meetings, along with your other business agenda items. As a leader, rotate responsibility to other team members to facilitate the teambuilding activity and increase *"buy-in."*
3. **Commit to it in writing.** With the team, create a Team Charter outlining the appropriate behaviors the team will engage in and post it during meetings or in the teams' work area.
4. **Train the team.** Hold periodic skill development training on topics that impact team effectiveness like conflict management, peer accountability, project management or receiving and delivering feedback. Issues like these have a direct impact on a teams' effectiveness.
5. **Special events.** As long as you're also committed to an ongoing teambuilding **process**, special **events** are a great way to give the team a *"booster shot"* and sends the message to team members that what is accomplished is as important as how it's accomplished. These don't have to be full days, and they don't have to be focused only on teambuilding. Teambuilding can be mixed in with other agenda items to create a balanced and valuable team development event.



By approaching teambuilding as a process, not an event, you will achieve more lasting change that will have a greater impact on your teams' effectiveness and ability to produce results.

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Federal Minimum Wage Rate Increase

President Bush signed legislation increasing the federal minimum wage from the current level of \$5.15 per hour to \$7.25 by 2009. The “Fair Minimum Wage and Tax Relief” measure is part of a larger spending bill authorizing additional funds for the war in Iraq, among other things. This is the first increase in the federal minimum wage rate since 1997.

In addition to increasing the federal minimum wage rate, the new law extends the minimum wage to American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The new law also includes certain measures designed to provide tax relief for small businesses.

New Minimum Wage Rates: Under the new law, the federal minimum wage increases to \$5.85 per hour on **July 24, 2007** (sixty days after enactment of the law). On **July 24, 2008** (twelve months after that 60th day), the minimum wage will increase to \$6.55 per hour. On **July 24, 2009** (twenty-four months after that 60th day), the minimum wage will increase to \$7.25 per hour.

Impact on Tipped Employees: Currently, employers who use the “tip credit” are permitted to pay tipped employees a cash wage of \$2.13 per hour, under the assumption that these employees will make enough in tips to earn the required minimum wage. The new law does not change the required cash payment; however, employers should ensure that tipped employees earn enough in tips to bring their wages up to the new required minimum wage rates.

State Minimum Wage Laws: At least thirty states currently have minimum wage rates higher than the federal minimum wage. Many of these state laws provide that the state minimum wage rate applies only if it is higher than the federal minimum. Other state laws tie the state minimum wage to the federal minimum wage. Thus, the minimum wage rate in some states may be affected by the increase in the federal minimum wage.

This article is reprinted with by permission of Ford & Harrison Law Firm. If you have any questions regarding the new legislation or federal wage and hour laws, please contact or John Duvall, jduvall@fordharrison.com, 904-357-2003, or Jeff Mokotoff, jmokotoff@fordharrison.com, 404-888-3804.



Change does not necessarily assure progress, but progress implacably requires change. Education is essential to change, for education creates both new wants and the ability to satisfy them.

– Henry Steele Commager

It's not so much that we're afraid of change or so in love with the old ways, but it's that place in between that we fear . . . It's like being between trapezes. It's Linus when his blanket is in the dryer. There's nothing to hold on to.

– Marilyn Ferguson



ONE MINUTE IDEAS

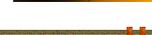
Global Incident Map

This free public service web site was created to give the public law enforcement, military, government, and individuals a new way to visualize and become instantly aware of terrorism and security incidents around the world.

It was created by the publisher of TerroristWarning.com with inspiration garnered from RSOE Havaria Information Service, the federal map systems used by FEMA, and other types of incident maps.

GlobalIncidentMap.com and its publishers do NOT receive any funding from any foreign or domestic government entities, nor any special interest, religious or political groups.

Check it out at:
www.GlobalIncidentMap.com



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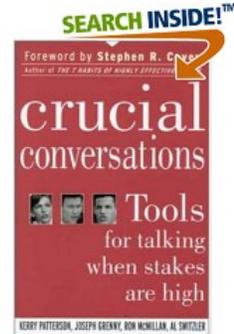
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Reading Recommendations –

When stakes are high, opinions vary, and emotions run strong, you have three choices: Avoid a crucial conversation and suffer the consequences; handle the conversation badly and suffer the consequences; or read *Crucial Conversations* and discover how to communicate best when it matters most. *Crucial Conversations* gives you the tools you need to step up to life's most difficult and important conversations, say what's on your mind, and achieve the positive resolutions you want. You'll learn how to:

- Prepare for high-impact situations with a six-minute mastery technique
- Make it safe to talk about almost anything
- Be persuasive, not abrasive
- Keep listening when others blow up or clam up
- Turn crucial conversations into the action and results you want



Whether they take place at work or at home, with your neighbors or your spouse, crucial conversations can have a profound impact on your career, your happiness, and your future. With the skills you learn in this book, you'll never have to worry about the outcome of a crucial conversation again.

To order this or other great books to go <http://www.harmonycc.net/links.htm>

The problem with communication ... is the illusion that it has been accomplished.

— George Bernard Shaw

Schedule of Public Courses

The following courses are being offered to the public by Harmony Coaching & Consulting. Click on the associated link for more information on the program or to register.

Course Title	Date(s)	Time	For More Information/Registration
Coaching & Counseling Skills	July 20 th	9:00 – 5:00	www.coned.memphis.edu
The Coaching Clinic	July 30 th & 31 st Orlando, FL	8:30 – 5:30	www.harmonycc.net/coachingclinic.asp
The Coaching Clinic	October 3 rd & 4 th	8:30 – 5:30	www.harmonycc.net/coachingclinic.asp

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