

Half Day Outdoor Team-Building Events for University Departments and Teams



Contents

1. Team Building Events - Introduction
2. Example Aim and Objectives of a Typical Teambuilding Event
3. Activities Overview
4. Example Timetable
5. Facilitators Role Throughout the Event
6. Evaluation of the Event

1. Team Building Events - Introduction

Thank you for requesting information about half day outdoor teambuilding events provided by the Human Resources Development Centre.

The use of effective teams is vital for the successful functioning of a department and hopefully you will recognize the value of utilising a training event, such as the one demonstrated within this information pack, to assist with releasing a teams potential.

Using outdoor learning activities can often provide a memorable learning experience for teams rather than experiencing an event which is purely training room based.

As with any team, a certain amount of development interventions will be required. However, it is often left to a team leader or manager to encourage and develop teamwork with a risk of loosing credibility when training interventions fail to be successful.

An effective approach therefore is to use an impartial facilitator who is skilled in creating learning opportunities for teams. The facilitator would design an event which should contain a minimum of three defined development areas.



An example of three development areas are as follows:

- To improve communication
- To build on individual strengths
- To apply new methods of collaborative teamwork in a safe and supportive learning environment.

These three areas can assist with creating an event aim and associated objectives which are focused upon encouraging the use of a team approach for future work based activities.

2. Aim and Objectives of a Typical Teambuilding Event

An example aim of a typical team building event is to ***'to encourage and develop a team approach for undertaking work based activities'***

This aim will be achieved by team members being able to:

- Establish effective communication channels
- Recognise the contribution of each individual team member
- Back at work, apply the key functions of an effective working team (*as developed during the event*)
- Develop a team action plan to assist with future goals.



3. Activities Overview

A blend of practical, theoretical and reflective activities are utilised during events. These activities are carefully selected to highlight the practice of considering individual learning styles when providing any learning experience such as a team building event.

Underlying principals of teambuilding will be covered throughout the event. Concepts such as the stages of teambuilding, the Action Centered Leadership and an effective task process model of Plan – Do – Review are frequently related to. The Belbin team roles self-perception questionnaire is often also introduced so that members can match their own personalities to particular team roles. These theoretical introductions of team building dynamics will satisfy team members whose preferred learning style is theory based.

All practical exercises are carefully managed by the facilitator. Two practical exercises can be undertaken out of doors in good weather. However, such an opportunity that could add to the learning experience, would require all participants to consent to the option. Only training shoe type footwear would be required for the exercises which involve the use of blindfolds. There is no specific health and safety hazard or risk associated with the exercises.

Icebreakers

A selection of icebreakers and energizers will be used to clarify the aim and objectives of the team building event, identify any hopes or fears of course participants and to set the scene for creating a supportive and learning experience for team members.



Improving Team Communications

The objective of *'establishing a set of communication channels'* will be achieved by the team examining their own perceptions of what typically constitutes the make up of a team. A statement is often created by the team which acts a focal point throughout the remainder of the event.

Members of the team who are usually active individuals will appreciate an opportunity to undertake an exercise called 'lifeboat' which identifies how initial individual opinions can be shaped by a team through effective communication channels and the sharing of opinions.

The widely utilised Belbin team roles questionnaire and diagnosis will allow each member of the team to identify their preferred role within a team whilst also identifying other members' roles and associated characteristics. The exercise will conclude the first session and is used as a building block for the subsequent session, which is focused upon building upon individual strengths.



Building on Individual Strengths

The objective of *'recognising the contribution of each individual team member'* can be achieved by the team focusing their efforts on others rather than themselves. The action-centered leadership model, as the name implies, focuses upon the achievement of a task with equal consideration of team and individual needs. This model is of relevance to team members who are assigned a leadership role in subsequent tasks.



Functioning Properly as a Team

The objective of *'apply the functions of an effective working team'* will be achieved by the team applying some of the concepts introduced throughout the first two exercises.

A Plan – Do – Review task model is introduced at this stage, if the team have not already utilised it some form. The process is a statement in so many words about how the team should be approaching any task for the remainder of the event and indeed back in the workplace.

A team direction exercise is focused upon the team developing a strategy for their achieving success in the next task. A relatively short board blast exercise, this is an opportunity for a team to confirm their goal for achieving success through confirming commitment to support and good communication. Positive learning can be derived from the exercise for the future.

'Go with the flow' is a practical, hands on, exercise/project which should embrace all the learning points from the previous exercises. It requires control, support and good communication for success. A performance framework will recognise if the exercise/project has been successful. This exercise/project will specifically use a variety of Belbin roles and should suit all four learning styles.

Action Planning

The final objective of *'develop a team action plan to assist with the achievement of future goals'* is often achieved by the team committing themselves to SMART* plans. The main plan will serve as a useful focus for the team to relate to back in the workplace. Individuals may identify additional learning needs from the exercise and if so, the needs should become documented with a personal development plan. Individuals will be invited to share their learning points during the structured debrief exercise at the event conclusion.

*SMART - Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time bound.

4. Example Timetable

This is a typical timetable for a half day event which follows a progression of learning exercises and activities.

1.00 – 3.00	15 minutes Break	3.15 – 4.15	4.30 – 5.00
Plan–Do–Review Model Activities Group Juggle Blind Square Spiders Web Pass the Bucket Group Skiing		Final Exercise Go with the Flow (Construction Project) Review How can we use our learning? Team Presentation	Goal Setting and Evaluation
120 minutes		60 minutes	45 minutes

5. Facilitators Role throughout the Event

The facilitators role is an important dynamic which assists with shaping the learning experience for the team. Drawing upon intuition and previous experience, his/her position will vary according to the progress of the team. The approaches range from providing and suggesting solutions through to allowing the team to experience themselves the best approach to adopt when tackling problems or challenges. At this problem finding stage the facilitator usually adopts a consultant’s role and allows the team to make minor errors. The skill is then to bring the team back on track by drawing on the positive aspects of the experience.

The ultimate aim of a facilitator, as in its Latin definition - *facilis* (easy) - is to allow the learning event to be owned by the team. As a consequence, any learning can therefore be more realistically transferred back to work situations.

6. Evaluation of the Event

The event will be evaluated at reaction level using a standard Stirling University training reaction questionnaire. The questionnaire is designed to identify if the participants are satisfied with the training and service they received.

Further evidence of the effectiveness of the event can be measured after 1 - 3 months. It is usually the responsibility of the event sponsor to undertake this task. However, the HR Development Centre are happy to advise about which measurement technique is best to utilise.