



# Your Roadmap to Successful Corporate Team Building





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# Your Roadmap to Successful Corporate Team Building

*from America's #1 Team Building Company*

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# Introduction

# 01





Team building activities have always been vital for improving collaboration and productivity. But they've never been more essential than today.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, many workers are spending less (or even no) time together at the office. We're in the midst of a Great Resignation, with record numbers of workers voluntarily leaving their jobs. The labor market is tight, making recruitment challenging, and retention even more crucial.

The common thread is that employees feel disconnected from their employers and their coworkers. That leads to dissatisfaction, reduced productivity, and higher turnover.

The GOOD news is that team building can help on all of these fronts. It can make new employees feel welcome, get them integrated into your team, and make them more productive, faster. It improves employee engagement, morale, and loyalty. And on top of all that, it's FUN – a word that many of us haven't heard enough of over the past couple of years.

This eBook explains exactly how team building can help you retain, engage, and optimize the performance of your teams. It's based on the experiences of our expert facilitators over many years, particularly what we've learned from our clients during these challenging times.

It's designed so you can easily navigate between different sections with just a couple of clicks. And beyond theory, it provides guidance about specific team building programs that address the difficulties your organization may be facing today. We hope this eBook inspires you with ideas for bringing your teams together in positive, productive, and fun ways this year.



Roy Charette

In 2021, the *Association of Destination Management Executives International* asked us to rewrite the team building section of their ADMEI Handbook, used by DMCs worldwide and in their DMCP Accreditation Program. After our managing partner, Roy Charette, had completed it, we realized our decades of designing and delivering thousands of team events had made us the experts in this field. So we wrote a comprehensive eBook called ***Your Roadmap to Successful Corporate Team Building*** for everyone's benefit. Our company bio is at the end of this eBook. Enjoy!  
- Scott Flynn, Founder/CEO of Best Corporate Events, LLC.



**Team Building Now**

02



# Why Team Building Should be Job #1 - NOW

The practice of corporate team building has been around for [almost a century](#). But it's never been more critical than today, as businesses struggle with the “new normal” of the post-COVID economy. Here's why... Although business is constantly evolving, rarely has so much changed in such a short time in terms of human resources. The word “unprecedented” has been thrown around a lot recently, but in terms of the speed and scope of change in the workplace, that word fits what enterprises face today. Team building encompasses a wide range of activities, from uplifting programs and fun charitable CSR events to impactful training and professional development workshops. And there are virtual events like game shows and escape rooms to bring your team together. Here are six reasons why team building is more important than ever in the post-COVID work world.

## **To Welcome and Onboard New Employees**

Many organizations have experienced significant turnover during the pandemic, as new employees have come on board to replace those who have retired or left to pursue other opportunities. Fun team building activities are a great way to welcome new staff and introduce them to others and play a crucial role in new employee orientation. Beyond the benefit of getting acquainted with team members enjoyably, team building provides practical benefits in making new employees more productive, faster.

## **To Adapt to a Different Type of Workforce**

The pandemic accelerated retirement plans for many workers. According to [NPR](#), roughly two million more workers retired over the past two years than would otherwise have been expected. In addition, with schools and daycare facilities closed during much of the pandemic and only now (tentatively, in many places) reopening, young mothers have been forced out of the workforce in disproportionately large numbers. Though that trend will reverse itself at some point (hopefully soon!), it's still impacting the structure of the workforce today. Together, these changes mean that your organization may have not only new workers but different types of workers: more young workers, fewer older workers, and more people at ages in between re-entering the workforce or changing jobs. Team building programs are not only great for

welcoming new workers but also for positively impacting the morale of existing employees and making them more comfortable, more quickly, with their new coworkers.

### **To Support Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**

Most workplaces are becoming increasingly diverse in terms of race and ethnicity. Diversity is valuable in surfacing better ideas by bringing together a broader range of perspectives. Team building activities focused on diversity, inclusion, and culture help organizations maximize the productivity and benefits of a diverse workplace while helping everyone understand each other better, so they feel comfortable working together.

### **To Make the New Structure of Work Function More Effectively**

The pandemic forced millions of workers out of their offices to work from home or other remote locations. Over time, many workers have grown comfortable working remotely. And many employers have concluded that they can maintain (or increase) productivity while reducing real estate needs by not having all of their employees on-site every day.

Team building increases employee engagement, which can be a challenge when workers aren't physically together. It helps ensure that employees are working effectively as a team, no matter where they are. What's more, because our team building programs can be delivered in-person, virtually, or as hybrid team events, they can fit the structure of your workplace – whatever that structure may be.







### **To Help Upskill Your New (and Existing) Team**

Team building programs focused on professional development and leadership skills are an engaging and enjoyable way for workers to expand their knowledge and understanding and ultimately do their jobs better. These programs are helpful in bringing new employees up to speed faster, as well as enhancing the abilities of your current staff.

### **To Do Well by Doing Good**

Employees today are looking for more than just a paycheck. They want to work for organizations that have a larger purpose, give back to the community, and provide a sense of contributing to the greater good.

That's why the majority of in-person engagements we managed last year were charitable CSR programs, including [Build-a-Wheelchair](#), [Bike Build Donation](#), [Build-a-Guitar](#), [Donation Nation](#), [Project Alzheimer's](#), [STEM Backpacks for Kids](#), [Fostering Hope](#), and [Kids Rock!](#) Other CSR events include [Bears and Blankets](#), [Charity Game Show](#), [We Care For Schools](#), and [Operation Military Care](#).

Whether delivered in-person or as hybrid events, these programs are fun; they develop teamwork skills; they enhance employee engagement; and they provide the opportunity to support a great cause in your local community.



# Fun Activities to Bring You Back Together



## Charitable CSR Programs

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs enhance the benefits of team building activities by giving back to the community.

### Bike Build Donation®

One of our signature trademarked programs, this event incorporates engaging clues and fun challenges and activities, enabling teams to assemble bikes for children in need.

### Mini-Golf Build and Food Donation

This is a fun charity program in which teams design, construct, and play a mini-golf course using canned and boxed food items – then deconstruct the course and donate the food items to charities.

### Build-a-Wheelchair®

Teams assemble new wheelchairs for donation to organizations serving wounded American veterans or others with impaired mobility.

### SmartHunts® (High-Tech Scavenger Hunts)

Best Corporate Events' sister company, SmartHunts, combines mobile app technology with traditional scavenger hunts and games to take these activities to an exciting, engaging, and interactive new level. SmartHunts are a great way to discover a new campus, museum, or city. Among the most popular of these is the City SmartHunt®, a fun and creative way to experience the highlights of your chosen city.

## Team Building Events

Whether your focus is on strengthening team connections, developing professional skills, enhancing employee engagement, or just fun competition, providing team building events improve trust and performance.

### Competition to Collaboration®

This engaging, trademarked training program highlights the positive impacts of organizational synergy, both in sharing best practices and celebrating colleagues' successes.

### A Minute 2 Win It!

As seen on the popular TV game show, and adapted for team play, groups participate in rounds of fast-paced tabletop challenges.

### Igniting Team Performance Series™

Whether your team is a newly formed group or an existing project team, this dynamic training session will measure your group's teamwork proficiency, identify areas for improvement, and deliver activities custom-tailored to those needs.



# Vital for New Employees

# 03





# The Role of Team Building in New Employee Orientation

Team building activities should ideally be a vital and integral part of your employee orientation process. Here's why – and it includes a big impact you may not have thought about.

Every company has an onboarding process for new hires: get all the necessary forms signed, assign them a laptop, create their access badge, set up an email account, provide login credentials for the appropriate software systems, and so on.

Many corporate leaders have a general sense that team and relationship building are an important part of that onboarding process as well, but may not be able to articulate exactly why. Unfortunately, that can make it tempting to skip this step when budgets are tight, or the department is short-staffed, or a new manager comes on board. It's easy to view team building as the “fun stuff” that can be skipped because there is “real work” to be done.

Here are four important reasons to avoid that mistake, and to make sure team building is part of the new employee orientation process.

## It Builds Trust

As business author Patrick Lencioni points out in his book, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, trust is the foundational element of team effectiveness. Unless you have trust within a team, you won't get constructive conversations, accountability, or the results you seek.

Team building at its core starts creating that element of trust, through understanding each other and developing relationships. It does this by allowing the team to actually work together on a problem or challenge that is *non-consequential* – nothing's at stake. It enables teams to “work out their bugs” without business risks.

And it gives team members the sense that they can rely on each other. Obviously, trust won't be fully established during orientation, but a team building exercise is very effective at laying the groundwork.

## **It Fosters Personal Connections**

As workers return to the office post-COVID, many companies are dealing with significant employee turnover as well as bringing back staff who've been working remotely, possibly in a hybrid work arrangement.

That means, frequently, companies are not only onboarding new hires but also bringing in people hired within the past couple of years who've never physically met many of their coworkers.

When everyone is remote, there's less connection. There's less of the element of, "We're a team," and a lot more of, "This is a job," and "We're a workgroup, not a team."

There's a definite difference between a workgroup and a team. A team has energy. People feel like they have each other's back. They talk about "we" and "us." A workgroup is just a collection of individuals who are working on the same project. Both workgroups and teams work on tasks, but they work on tasks in two very different ways.

In-person team building activities let workers interact directly and enhance relationships that will lead to more of those informal, ad hoc hallway conversations that are difficult and awkward to manage as a torso within a box on a Zoom screen.

Returning to the idea of trust, one of its foundations is showing some degree of vulnerability: acknowledging that you can't do it all, that you need other people, and that you, like everyone else, have some challenges and weaknesses. Just showing that vulnerability when you need to rely on other people can be incredibly valuable.



### **It Improves Team Dynamics**

Often during a team-building activity, participants learn about each other's communication do's and don'ts; about what approaches resonate, and which ones drive a person crazy. When they're working in a team environment, they can understand some of those aggravations. For example, they can see the frustration that creeps up from analysis paralysis (or overthinking) – or, they can see that pure enjoyment that results from areas of success.

When we understand and appreciate those value differences, pet peeves, communication styles, and what truly motivates people, we can really start to apply those into the work we have to do on a daily basis.

### **It Creates a Shared Experience**

Establishing trust, connections, and communication may seem like obvious benefits of team building within the new employee orientation process. But a less apparent and easily overlooked bonus is the memorable, shared experience it creates.

The initial feedback from new employees after a team building exercise may focus on the fun, or the different perspective they got of coworkers, or the sense that the company cares enough about them to make sure they are engaged, that it's not just "get straight to work."

But when employees are asked about their overall orientation experience two, three, or more years later, the team building experience is what sticks. They may not recall much about the orientation videos they watched or the policy manuals they read, but they remember details from the team building program because of the emotional impact it had. For employees who went through a team building program together – and even coworkers who went through the same exercise, though not together – it's a common, shared experience that creates a strong and valuable bond between them.

### **The Wrap**

Team building activities are as critical to setting up employees for success as getting them the right resources for the position, by helping to establish trust, build connections, understand team dynamics, and create shared experiences.



# Categories of Programs for New Employees





# Three Categories of Programs for New Employee Orientation

1

## Charitable CSR Programs

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs combine the benefits of team building activities – teaching problem-solving, leadership, communication, and collaboration in a fun, engaging way – with giving back to the community. The result is a powerful, emotional experience that [increases employee loyalty](#) and engagement.

2

## SmartHunts® (High-Tech Scavenger Hunts)

Best Corporate Events' sister company, SmartHunts®, combines mobile app technology and games with traditional scavenger and city hunts to take these activities to an engaging and interactive new level. In addition to testing participants' knowledge and collaboration skills, SmartHunts are a great way to discover a new campus, museum, or city.

3

## Professional Development Programs

Professional development workshops enhance your employees' career growth and value to your company, and are a productive choice for new employee orientation. They focus on the critical core competencies required to succeed in today's business environment – from conflict resolution to time management skills. These workshops combine professional facilitation with an engaging and dynamic approach to learning and retention.



# 4

## Ways Team Building Makes New Employees More **Productive**, Faster

How long does it take for a new employee to become fully productive? Estimates from different studies vary widely, from [six months](#) to [eight months](#) to a year to as long as [two years](#). The process of onboarding a new employee (or a current employee transitioning into a new role) can't be skipped over or short-circuited. As Dick Grote, performance management consultant and author of [How to Be Good at Performance Appraisals](#) has said, "The idea of a new employee 'hitting the ground running' is a farce. You know what happens if you do that? You fall on your face."

There are many aspects to bringing a new employee up to speed, of course, from learning about the company and its products or services to understanding the requirements of the role and the supporting technology.

But one of the most critical factors is getting to know the people they will be working with. What are each person's strengths and unique knowledge? Are they outgoing or introverted? A "numbers person" or someone who operates more on gut instinct? Do they like to talk things out, or are they more of a "just the facts" type? Visually oriented? A good listener?

One of the best ways to get new employees productive more quickly is to find a way to get them acquainted with the people they'll be working with most closely. This will enable them to communicate more effectively with each coworker and avoid missteps or misunderstandings. And the best way to accomplish that is through team building!

Here are four ways team building activities help make new employees (or new-to-the-role employees) more productive, more quickly.



### **It Breaks Down Barriers**

Team building breaks down barriers by removing the shackles of work. It's not about deadlines and priorities; it's about addressing communication skills, learning how to deal with conflict, and building relationships at a deeper level.

One of the biggest challenges when starting in a new role is getting to know people well enough to work with them productively. Just being introduced to Jane in accounting is fine, but team building short circuits the process of getting to know coworkers, to really understand what they are like and how to communicate effectively with them. It's informal, it's light-hearted, it's easy, and it's non-threatening.

In team building exercises, the groups can be departmental but are often cross-functional to help build relationships across the organization. In any case, doing a team building event helps employees break down barriers, create openness, and get to know each other on a more personal level.



### **It Helps Align Actions with Team Goals**

Team building is really about aligning actions with team goals: improving performance, creating synergies, and delivering results. The reason to do a team building event/workshop is to get your team firing on all cylinders.

You've put together this group of people with different backgrounds and strengths, and you want to leverage all of those strengths. You also want to address any shortcomings someone may have to help with their career development and benefit the team.

[Professional development programs](#) are about getting to that next level with a person to make it easier to have challenging discussions. It makes it easier to have a conversation about changing processes or bringing on somebody new and to align these actions with team goals.



### **It Builds Connections**

Often (particularly in large organizations), teams in different locations need to coordinate efforts. How do you create that connectivity? The challenge goes beyond just holding a team meeting over Zoom. Team-building activities help those groups learn how to solve a problem together and how to include everybody in the solution. The crux of

that is communication skills. Some team members will be alphas, while others are followers. Team building programs require all team members to work together to accomplish the goal. It creates a situation where you align everyone's individual actions for the greater good.



### **It Creates a Shared Experience**

Team building creates a shared experience that gives people something in common even if they don't have much otherwise. You may have an extrovert and an introvert, but despite their differing approaches to the task, they successfully built a bike together for a donation. And even if they weren't on the same team, they can compare how their teams solved a specific problem. They have that shared experience to talk about.

In Maslow's [hierarchy of needs](#), the bottom two layers are physiological needs (food and shelter) and safety. Once those are satisfied, people are looking to be valued, included, to have a seat at the table, to make a difference. That's what team building does. It checks all those boxes.

### **Wrapping Up**

The faster a new employee can become fully productive, the better it is for everyone involved. It's good for the business. It's good for team members who want to be able to rely on each other. And it's good for the individual new employee, who wants to feel they are spending their work time contributing to the organization – not just watching safety and training videos. A key component in bringing new employees up to speed is integrating them into the work environment, by helping them get to know and understand their coworkers well enough to communicate effectively and avoid misunderstandings.





Programs like escape rooms or our [Escape SmartHunt®](#) are great for bringing new employees on board because the clues pull on different strengths: memory, visual, reasoning. By relying on different people's skillsets, they keep the whole team involved and working collaboratively. Trivia games or programs like [Best Corporate Feud](#) are also effective. They can be customized to include company facts and information, making them educational as well as fun and challenging for new employees.

Finally, any of our charitable CSR programs like our [Bike Build Donation®](#), [Build-a-Wheelchair®](#) program, or [STEM Backpacks for Kids](#) work well for new employee orientation, as teams work collaboratively to assemble items then donate them to worthy charities. They not only enhance teamwork but also build a memorable, emotional bond.

Team building can help employees get acquainted with the people they'll be working with most closely and learn how to collaboratively solve problems with the team in a fun and non-threatening setting.

It accelerates team development, breaks down barriers, helps to align actions with team goals, builds connections, and creates a shared experience. In so doing, it helps new employees become more productive, faster.

## **How Team Building Creates More [Effective](#) Teams**

As technology automates more and more simple, linear tasks, more of the work that people do involves collaboration. Put another way, professionals today spend less time on individual, solo tasks than in the past and more time working as part of a team.

New products are designed by teams. New software is developed by teams. Sales are often closed by teams. New system procurement decisions are made by teams. Even this eBook was created by a team (a writer, a facilitator/subject matter expert, multiple editors, and a designer).

In the section above, *4 Ways Team Building Makes New Employees More Productive, Faster*, we detailed how team building programs help get new (or new-to-the-role) employees up to speed more quickly by helping them get to know, understand, and connect with their coworkers.

Team building also helps *teams* to be more effective and productive. Regardless of how long each individual member of a team has been employed in an organization, any time a new team is formed there are phases it will pass through before reaching full productivity.

Team building can help accelerate that formation process, helping teams become more productive more quickly. In his [classic book on group and team communications](#), author Donald B. Egolf, Ph.D., defines four stages of team development: forming, storming, norming, and performing.

### **Forming**

The *forming* stage is the “playing nicely together in the sandbox” phase. Everyone is polite, deferential, and on their best behavior. There’s an almost artificial niceness as everyone is feeling things out. This generally lasts only for a relatively brief period of time before teams go into the next stage, *storming*.

### **Storming**

The storming stage is where conflicts begin to arise. There are behavioral differences that come up. There are certain irritations and annoyances that surface. There are differences of opinion about what’s going to happen, or how to proceed.

### **Norming**

Effective teams work through those issues and move into the *norming* stage, as they start to figure out how to work together. They ask, “How are we going to operate?” They come up with team agreements. They understand and accept each others’ differences. They define when and how they will communicate, and how they will work together.

### **Performing**

If the team does a good job getting through that norming process, it reaches the *performing* stage, becoming a high-performing team.



## How Team Building Helps

In a typical work environment, teams can languish in those early stages of forming and storming for a long time as they're feeling each other out. This is even more of a danger when people are working remotely, as their interactions with each other are much more limited.

Team building activities can accelerate this process; you can get through the forming stage pretty quickly and get into some storming. Storming within groups – having some challenges in a team-building activity – isn't a bad thing. It's actually helpful.

It's not that you want groups constantly struggling at a team-building activity, of course. But having a few frustrations and needing to work things out among team members can be a great thing because it gives members the tools and knowledge to better understand each other and begin creating some norms.

If they can go through the process of forming, storming, and then creating some norms during their orientation stage when solving an inconsequential team building problem (such as a [Crack the Case](#) mystery activity or an [Amazing Chase SmartHunt®](#), as opposed to a real-world business problem), it will help them move through those stages much faster when they're back in the workplace, and hopefully, reach a high-performing level more quickly.





# How Team Building **Jumpstarts** Employee Morale

Burnout. Turnover. The Great Resignation. Labor shortages. A common thread across all of these issues is low employee morale. The good news is there is a solution – an answer that's more effective, more fun, and less costly than big pay increases.

As noted in the opening section of this ebook, team building should be job #1 as employees return to work post-COVID. Team building turbocharges morale because it's interactive, engaging, reconnective, and it plants seeds for building new relationships. Many companies have hired employees on a full-time remote basis during the pandemic. Many of these employees have never actually met most of their coworkers (other than perhaps as a video image in a Zoom box). And many long-time employees haven't seen (or at least haven't seen much of) each other since early 2020.

The fun team building programs we've delivered lately, whether they're charity-focused or competitive events, have reunited people. Face-to-face interaction is exciting. It's rejuvenating. It's folks getting to see and associate with each other in three dimensions again. Here are three ways team building positively impacts employee morale.

## **Reunited and It Feels So Good**

At one of our recent live team building events, 20% of the client's workforce was hired during COVID. This is the first time they were ever meeting their other coworkers in person. The longer-term employees were also thrilled to finally get together live again.

But team building isn't just about reconnecting, as crucial as that is in boosting morale. It also provides the opportunity to meet in a non-work setting and solve fun problems, engaging with each other in collaborative and unifying ways.

When professional facilitation, the right venue, and clear purpose – whether team building or team building with charity – are brought together, people have fun and feel good about benefiting their community.

## **More Than a Paycheck**

Many employees today are rethinking where they work and why they work there. That's part of The Great Resignation; workers are asking, what am I getting besides a paycheck? Why am I working so hard? Do I believe in what I'm doing and where I'm going, personally and professionally?

When people see that their organizations are willing to re-engage in a team-building program and reach out to the community, that says something to them about the company they work with and the corporate culture.

And people are taking a hard look at that element of culture. Is it just to work us as hard as possible to maximize the bottom line...or is it more than that? Do they care about me, my personal and professional growth, about giving me the opportunity for continued education within the organization? Are they reaching out to the community and showing who they are as a company? And do I believe in that?

And if so, how important is it for me to be involved in a program where we're not only thinking about what's happening within the organization, but we're benefiting the community around us? That electrifies morale.

It makes employees feel more connected to the organization, to believe that leadership cares about their professional growth, and shows it with continued workshops and the opportunity to be coached by people within the organization to help move up the ladder.

Combining fun collaboration with professional interpersonal skills development and community service is tremendous for boosting morale. It gives employees a reason to work and to stay beyond just getting a paycheck.

## **New Work State of Mind**

Much has been written about the pandemic's toll on mental health. The mix of fear, anxiety, isolation, sense of loss, and frustration has many employees reassessing where and why they work.

People have been through a lot. They feel the need to get together and reconnect. To help employees improve their mental health and re-establish their connections – to each other and to the organization –

companies are using team building programs to bring workers together to collaborate in an environment that's high on fun and creativity and virtually stress-free. Study after study shows that laughter, fun, and engagement are good for mental and physical health. Laughing is good for your blood pressure, your diaphragm, your face, and your brain. To have fun and interact in an engaging way with colleagues is more vital than ever in light of COVID and the effect it's had on everyone.



### **The Heart of the Matter**

Every team building program incorporates fundamental pillars: communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and leadership. In today's environment, they provide the added benefit of improving morale through healthy re-engagement.

Many activities also involve fun competition. The winners may receive certificates, medals, or gift cards. But the biggest value, for both participants and the organization, comes from the shared experience.

Although in-person events have the greatest impact, virtual get-togethers can also help improve morale. They still engage people. Virtual options include everything from professional development (presentation skills, meeting management, time management) to outright fun with challenges like escape rooms. Virtual game shows and trivia contests still provide learning, and when company content is added to the mix, the game can become even more relevant to the organization.

Team building events, whether live or virtual, re-energize employee morale by bringing people together, enhancing their connection with each other and the organization, and improving mental health. There's only one bad choice when it comes to team building, which is to do nothing at all.

# How Team Building Increases Employee Engagement

Improving employee engagement is always a productive move, but it's more crucial now than ever. Here's why and how to meet that goal.

Highly engaged employees see their work as meaningful. They feel trusted and respected, and often feel an emotional commitment to their organization. As a result, they are more productive, more consistently, which ultimately leads to a happier workplace attitude and higher profits for their employers.

That's always been true. But with the structure of work changing in this post-pandemic environment, increasing employee engagement is both more vital and more challenging than before. Many employees are coming back to the office on a part-time basis, while others are working remotely most or all of the time.

Maintaining engagement when employees are physically separated is difficult but essential to preserving that sense of connection and high productivity. Team building programs can be extremely effective in sustaining and strengthening the bonds that keep employees highly engaged. Here's what you need to know.

## Team Building is Inherently Engaging

Team building activities and initiatives by their very nature incorporate certain pillars that are essential for engagement: communication, leadership, problem-solving, and establishing roles.

Whatever the specific program, the foundation is the same: bringing together a group of co-workers and presenting them with a challenge to solve or a project to complete. Out of necessity, the group must begin communicating, asking questions to make sure they understand the activity, goal, rules, and guidelines.

The team (or teams) then work together to achieve the objective. It's fun, collaborative, and engaging. And when it's over, this experience translates directly into positive workplace attitudes and behaviors.



## **Get a GRPI**

GRPI stands for goals, roles, personalities, and interpersonal relations. This is a core component of effective team building. What are the goals the group must accomplish? What different roles will team members establish in order to complete the task? How will the different personalities in the group affect the roles chosen? And how are team members getting along? How effectively are they working together as a unit to complete the task?

Again, these are skills that employees will learn and hone as part of the team building program – and have fun doing it! What's more, they will bring these new and enhanced skills back into the workplace with them, increasing their engagement with the organization.

Another benefit is that with many programs, special skills of certain employees come to light – skills that are valuable in the employee's position at the company. Managers have frequently observed employees in team building exercises displaying skills they didn't know those employees possessed.

## **Create a New, Shared Experience**

Team building increases engagement by encouraging communication, collaboration, and problem-solving in an activity the participants have never done before. It's not basketball, rock climbing, or bowling. The facilitator is introducing activities that are new to everyone in the room.

That puts all team members on equal footing, with the same information, starting out on a level playing field. Everyone starts with the same (limited) knowledge, so no one is "the boss" and no one is shy about asking questions. As participants get more engaged in the activity, the facilitator acknowledges fruitful collaboration and recognizes individuals for strong communication.

Today's team building activities are less physical than old-fashioned team building: "trust falls," obstacle courses, boot camp. Now, team building is more cerebral.

These activities allow for active participation, regardless of the physical condition of any participant. Every team member, even someone with back problems or mobility limitations can take a full and active part in the team building because there are roles for everyone.

## Enhance Engagement by Showing What Matters

Employers are in the midst of the [Great Resignation](#). There's evidence that labor shortages will persist, as companies [compete for a shrinking pool of workers](#). Engagement is more critical than ever. How can companies retain their best employees and make new employees feel like part of the team, even if they aren't physically in the office?

To maximize engagement, you need to make your employees feel that you care about them as individuals. Every employer offers a paycheck and benefits. What sets some employers apart in this competitive environment for talent is hosting social events for employees (live or virtual), giving back to the community, and team building activities.

Send employees (particularly those working remotely) little gift boxes with cheese, crackers, and beverages. Maybe an engraved wine glass or coffee mug. Conduct surveys to help increase engagement. Report on the results. Announce what you'll start doing, do differently, or do more of.

Show employees they are important by investing in team building activities: a scavenger hunt, a charitable event, or a game show program. All of these types of actions show that you care about each person, beyond what they do to drive revenue for your company.

The payoff in engagement means you retain your best people, bring new people up to speed more quickly, and make all of your employees happier in their work and more consistently productive.



# Impact of CSR on Employee Loyalty

If Charles Dickens was writing his classic novel today, the opening line might read, “It was the weirdest of times.”

Job openings in the U.S. hit [a record high in September 2021](#), as companies across industries and regions struggled to find enough help. There are [a record number of container ships](#) waiting to unload off the California coast because there weren’t enough dock workers to unload them. Even if there were, there weren’t enough truck drivers to pick up the containers. Even if there were, there weren’t enough warehouse workers to unload the trucks.

And so it goes, across companies and job categories. The economy is rebounding, but [a record number of workers are quitting their jobs](#). In many industries, there aren’t enough employees to go around now. Businesses are struggling to find enough people.

Employers have to think hard about retention and recruitment. Many are raising wages, but know they need to offer more than a paycheck. How does a company become an employer of choice – a place that people want to join and don’t want to leave?

One answer is to emphasize corporate social responsibility (CSR). How does community philanthropy impact employment choices? While its importance varies from individual to individual, generally, people feel pretty good about reaching out and helping others. And when a company does that, it’s not just saying, but *showing* that its leadership cares about more than just the bottom line.

## Invest in Your People

Any type of team building activity – whether the objective is to improve collaboration, problem-solving, or professional skills – improves employee engagement.

It demonstrates to employees that their worth to your company is more than just the immediate value of their daily efforts. You’re willing to invest in improving their skills and their work life over the long term. You’re paying them *not* to do their regular jobs for a few hours because you place a priority on team building.

Even more than holiday bonuses or employee surveys, team building programs let individuals know your company really does care about them, by investing in developing their leadership and interpersonal skills, while having fun doing it! We all know the statistics about how difficult and expensive it is to retrain someone when a good person leaves your company. So, retention is so critical. Employee engagement done correctly equates to retention and enthusiasm.

### **Show Your Heart**

Incorporating CSR in your team building takes it to a whole different level. It's tremendous when a company is willing to do something philanthropic in combination with developing their people.

From the perspective of employees, it has to do with heart. It has to do with the spirit of the company, with the culture that your company embraces. At one of our recent team-building events, the client said, "I feel like every time we do one of these activities, it enhances who we are, the culture that we have as a company." That's a pretty powerful statement. This manager felt that the fact the company took some time to do a team-building activity enhanced the culture; it had the entire group feeling unified because they had just worked through a very difficult activity together. They had just celebrated together, with each of the participants sharing something they learned from the activity.

At our Bike Build Donation® events, we usually don't tell the participants that kids are going to be there; it's a "reveal" at the end of the activity. When those kids come in, it's very emotional. Many of those kids have never owned a bike before. And when the facilitator asks everyone to close their eyes, and they sneak the kids in and tell a story, when everybody opens their eyes and the kids are standing there with the bikes, it's really powerful. It's so emotional that it has an impact on employee engagement and employee retention. It's above and beyond work.





A bike build program has all of the pillars for a team building event. It's got a goal, roles, fun, communication, competition, collaboration, and problem-solving, plus it's got building. Everything an organization could want in a team building program is in the bike build. All of our charity events have an inherent team-building foundation. It's a double bonus.

Or there are our Build-a-Wheelchair® events, often done in collaboration with Disabled American Veterans and other veterans' support organizations. At one of these programs, a charitable representative came with two retired service members in wheelchairs... that really had an emotional impact on the participants.

For our Project Alzheimer's™ program, we get calls from people who go to our website and might say, "I just went through this very difficult situation with my mom with Alzheimer's. And I saw you have an Alzheimer's program. I know one of my workers is dealing with the same thing. We're absolutely doing this program."

All of our CSR programs allow participants to reach out to others. It's about emotions, caring, company culture, and the community. Those are all things that any of our charity programs represent.

### **Make It Part of Something Bigger**

More often than not, our team building program options are a part of a full-day or multi-day offsite employee meeting. In those cases, the company is making a broader investment in enhancing the knowledge and skills of its employees, as well as defining their corporate culture. Team building is a vital piece of that investment. A CSR program might be a surprise piece of that because it has such tremendous impact.

But whether the CSR team building event is hosted in a hotel, conference center, or on the campus of a Fortune 500 company, it enhances company culture in a powerful way.

### **Make an Impact on Your Community**

Some companies allow employees to take a few extra days off each year when they're paid to volunteer for nonprofit organizations such as Habitat for Humanity or their local soup kitchen. For employees who value giving back to the community, any type of CSR policy or activity has a powerful impact on loyalty, engagement, and retention.

Again, any type of team building program has a positive impact on employee morale and engagement. But incorporating CSR takes those effects to a higher level.

For any team building or professional development program we deliver, we can end with a surprise CSR component. It's the best of both worlds when team building is combined with charity.

For example, we'll take off the tablecloths, and lo and behold, there are all these school supplies. What are these school supplies for? We're going to be putting them into backpacks and donating them.

How about our [Golf Build Food Donation](#) program? In two hours, your group gets to build a mini-golf course using canned and boxed goods, play a round of golf with medals to the winners, and then donate all the cans and boxes to a local food bank – it doesn't get any better than that!

CSR team building events increase employee loyalty and engagement by enhancing your culture and creating an emotional as well as practical impact.

## **How to Teach Collaboration Through Competition**

Most team building activities are competitive—and for good reasons. Competition is fun, it's engaging, and it helps set clear goals for the exercise. And business itself is, of course, a constant competition for the attention, loyalty, and dollars of clients and customers.

But success within an organization frequently relies more on collaboration than competition. People need to work together to design the best products, make the best decisions, and deliver the best customer experiences.

How do competitive team building activities provide value? How can they be used to teach collaboration? And how can team building combine competition with collaboration to deliver the “best of both worlds”? Here are the answers to those questions and more.



### **Teaching Collaboration is Hard**

Why? Because for most people, competition is their default. It's innate, hard-wired into us. Collaboration is not.

Think about it. Turn a group of small children loose on a playground, then sit back and watch. What do they do? They race. They see who can get to the top of the monkey bars the fastest. They play tag—and try not to be “it.”

When you're in college, you're competing against other students for grades. When you're going out to get your first job, there may be eight people vying for that job, and only one person is going to get it. When you get the job, four people are being eyed for promotion; you're one of them. You're always competing.

Even within the same company in the same sales department, people will compete for regions, compete for clients...no matter how much collaboration there is, people are usually rewarded for shining, for standing out.

The results of competition are also much more straightforward to measure. It's easy to see who crossed the finish line first, who got the high score, who's numbers look best.

Even in team sports, where collaboration is crucial, it's hard to tease out its exact value. To what extent did the New England Patriots win

six Super Bowls because they out-collaborated their opponents—and to what extent was it the individual performance of Tom Brady? The same could be asked about Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls, or Maya Moore with the Minnesota Lynx. Collaboration doesn't come automatically. Competition does. All of that makes teaching collaboration much harder than simply telling people to share information.

So, when it comes to teaching collaboration in a team-building workshop, it is one of the most difficult things to do. An effective facilitator can model the behavior, point it out, and celebrate it. But to actually teach it and have it ingrained takes a highly skilled facilitator plus great program content. Leadership, problem-solving, and communication are teachable. Collaboration is the most difficult skill to ingrain into people.

### **Competition Can Be Constructive**

Of course, the competitive aspect of team building is certainly valuable. It just depends upon what the goals are. At Best Corporate Events, about a third of our clients just want competition. They're thinking [A Minute to Win It](#), [Catapult](#), [Corporate Survivor](#), [Go-Kart Competition](#), [Team Olympics](#), or a [scavenger hunt](#). They want groups of X employees to compete, and to have one winner; or three teams to win the Gold, Silver, and Bronze while all the other teams are losers.

We offer many different programs, in-person or online, wherein one team is going to have the most points. They win the gold medals. Competition can drive people to make extraordinary efforts to win, which is great. But what makes these team building competitions even more impactful is that although participants are competing against other teams, they are working highly collaboratively with the other people on their team.

Team members are problem-solving, brainstorming, looking for solutions, and pumping each other up. Within each group, the efforts are tremendously collaborative, but all the groups are competing against each other. So these programs provide the best of both worlds.



## **But Collaboration is More Powerful**

Another way to teach collaboration in a competitive team building situation is to add all of the teams' scores together and make that the score for the activity. When participants realize the goal is to maximize every team's score rather than simply out-scoring the other group, they will share information and discoveries in order to help the other team(s), and therefore maximize the overall point total.

Organizations often identify that realization as one of the highlights of the entire day: that even though the program was set up like a competition, someone recognized collaboration, verbalized it, and got the entire room to understand. Suddenly these teams of employees, who were all too willing to immediately compete for the highest score, started sharing information instead of hoarding it.

A twist on that is to recognize the high-scoring teams but also add the scores of all the teams together and calculate the average. Then there is a "half time" called. The highest-scoring teams are asked to share what they did, to identify and share best practices so that every team does better in the second half.

And then in the second half, though all teams are still operating and being scored independently, all the scores are added together again. The goal is for all of the teams combined to achieve a 25% or 30% improvement compared to the overall scores in the first half. That's collaborating to compete.

## **Bringing It All Together**

The business benefit is the mindset those employees take back to the workplace. They look for opportunities to collaborate, and are excited about it. They focus more on how their activities and communications impact the overall organization, not just their own roles. Virtually all of our team building programs involve competition. Most incorporate some level of collaboration as well. And if the idea of improving collaboration through competition sounds really intriguing, you may want to check out our trademarked [Competition to Collaboration®](#) program.

# How **Every** Employee Can Benefit from Leadership Training

Leadership training isn't just for leaders. If your organization is thinking about leadership training too narrowly, you could be missing out on big opportunities to improve communication, collaboration, and productivity across your enterprise.

Companies often view leadership training as something that's helpful for new managers, as well as junior managers looking to advance within the organization. But it can actually be helpful for just about everyone in your organization.

That's because leadership is more than just a title; it's about how you act and react to people and situations. It's about improving "people skills" as opposed to technical skills, answering questions such as: How do I communicate more effectively? How do I resolve unproductive conflict? How do I build relationships to help get things done?

Here are several reasons to look at leadership training more broadly.

## **Today's Uncertain Labor Market**

With record levels of employees voluntarily leaving companies, as well as workers taking early retirement, companies are recognizing the need to improve their "bench strength" at every level.



It's not only about preparing senior director-level talent to move into a VP or CxO role, but also about backfilling director spots, training managers to move into director roles, and preparing talented, ambitious individual contributors to make the move into management.

Leadership training can also help with retention. When employees see that their company is making an investment in them and helping prepare them to advance in their careers, it increases satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty.

### **The “Superstar” Problem**

Quite often, the people who get promoted into management positions are those who are strong performers as individual contributors, whether in finance, marketing, operations, or another function.

This is particularly true of salespeople. The hope of management is that by promoting their top-performing salesperson into a sales leadership role, they can replicate that strong performance.

But for many people, making the leap from being a strong individual performer to becoming an effective leader is challenging. That individual became very good at accounting, or sales, or whatever their role may have been, by honing their technical skills over many years. Leading others, however, requires a very different skill set.

The problem is that many companies don't have the structure or training process in place to mentor the new mentor. So, new leaders are left on their own. That's where leadership training comes in; pulling them out of the office gives them an opportunity to stop and think.

It starts with a behavioral assessment, asking the new leader to look in the mirror first, to be able to say, “This is what drives me. This is how I communicate. This is how I interact with people.”

Then we ask them to flip the mirror and say, “Okay, these are the people whom I now work with. How do they behave in the workplace? How do they communicate? How do I interact with them?” Leading becomes less about the leader and more about the team they manage.

## **It's Not About You**

In making the move from individual contributor to leader, the employee needs to shift their focus from doing a task well to increasing the skills of others. It's tempting for new leaders to keep "doing the work," which leads to lack of focus, resentment from the team, and burnout.

It's challenging to go from managing one's own to-do list to leading a team of people, each with their own task lists. An individual who may have been comfortable as an individual contributor in sales or accounting is now being pulled into more meetings, called upon to resolve conflicts, and asked to coach others.

They may know that having regular one-on-one meetings with their team members is part of their role, but they may not understand how to get the most out of these. Those individual conversations are more than just a status check – that can be done with email. They are opportunities to coach, to make sure employees are engaged, and to help them improve their direct or indirect job skills.

Leadership training helps managers to not only do the right things, but to do those things consistently well.

## **One Size Does Not Fit All**

Any work team may include one person who is eager to get promoted; another who loves their role and never wants to get promoted; another who has young children at home and whose focus is therefore on work-life balance; and others, each with their own priorities.

Managing each of those people requires a somewhat different skill set or approach. Being an effective leader requires learning how to recognize and adjust to those different perspectives.

Individuals often underperform or limit themselves because of obstacles they've unconsciously placed in their own way. It may be an attitude, a belief, or a shortcoming they are unaware of.

Leadership training helps managers help employees to recognize the limitations or hurdles they've placed in their own way, so they can work to change those things. The employee often can't articulate why they're not performing; they can't figure it out. Leaders need to understand different approaches they can try to help the employee see the answers that are right in front of them.



## **Managing Up, Down, and Across**

It's clear why new leaders and even experienced managers can benefit from leadership training, but what about that employee who loves being an individual contributor and isn't interested in a promotion to management – how can leadership training benefit them?

First, it helps them learn to “manage up” more proficiently; to influence their boss so they can get what they need in order to be more productive in their job. The basis of leadership training is empathy and communication, which can improve outcomes when an employee is talking to their boss just as much as when the boss is coaching that employee.

Second, it helps people to “manage across” more effectively. A great deal of work today is done collaboratively. Employees rely on others, in their own department or other parts of the business, in order to accomplish goals. The ability to influence others is just as important when working with a peer who is not a direct report as it is when managing and coaching subordinates.

Third, it helps employees to better understand how their manager thinks, and why they do or say certain things. Developing the ability to understand that perspective helps employees to ask better questions when meeting with their manager, and to improve that working relationship.

Finally, most employees value increasing their skills and appreciate their employer investing in them. This may mean direct skills like sales training or classes with CPE credits. It may mean learning indirectly helpful knowledge like presentation skills. Or it may mean enhancing their interpersonal relationship skills through leadership training.

## **Wrapping It Up – the Best Leadership Training Programs**

Leadership training can benefit virtually every employee in an organization in some way. And it's a wise investment for companies to make: it helps increase retention, develops bench strength, assists employees with the transition from being strong individual contributors to effective leaders, and helps non-management employees better communicate up and across the organization.

Among the key skills employees develop through leadership training are communicating more effectively, resolving conflicts; coaching and developing others, goal setting and time management; strategic thinking; and relationship building.

## **Leadership and Professional Development programs offered by Best Corporate Events include:**

### **Conflict Resolution Training**

Managing conflict effectively can make the difference between a simple “bump in the road” or lost productivity and long-term animosity in the workplace. Participants learn strategies to engender a workplace culture better equipped to handle conflict.

### **DiSC Profile Workshop**

Participants are introduced to the DiSC Model, a behavior assessment tool that helps professionals understand their own styles of behavior and communication, as well as those of their colleagues. Learning how to manage these styles can help participants eliminate bad habits, minimize conflict, and improve the overall success of their team.

### **Manager’s Guide to Business Coaching**

Constructive guidance and consistent coaching are critical responsibilities of all managers, but the best managers utilize proven coaching practices that can strengthen relationships, bolster trust, and reap the benefits of open and positive communication.

### **Emotional Intelligence Training**

An Emotionally Intelligent company is one in which each member understands their Emotional Quotient (E.Q.) and how best to tap into it for professional growth. Applying E.I. within an organization can build trust and encourage open communication.

In short, as noted above, leadership training isn’t just for leaders. Employees at all levels can benefit from learning how to productively influence others. These training programs are ultimately about helping your team members better understand each other by first learning more about themselves.





# **Key Considerations for Team Building Success**

# 05





# Choosing the **Best Venue** for Team Building

An effective team building program can accomplish several important business objectives: improving employee communication, engagement, collaboration, problem-solving, and leadership skills, among others.

It requires an investment in time, resources, and taking employees away from their regular roles. To optimize your return on that investment, it's essential to create an environment where employees are comfortable and able to focus on the team building activity.

While it's natural for workers to want to get out of the office and enjoy the fresh air, outdoor venues are usually not the best setting for team building (with the obvious exception of scavenger hunts or other activities specifically designed to be held outside). Here's why – and how to create the best environment for success, whatever environment you choose.

## **Focus on the... Hey, Squirrel!**

Team building facilitators want to introduce activities in a way where nothing will interfere with the group's ability to succeed. With any outdoor venue, almost anywhere and at any time, the weather is a concern: heat, cold, wind, and/or rain can make conditions miserable. In a public outdoor setting such as a park, there are also potential distractions from other people, pets, extraneous noise, Frisbees, balls of various types, and other sources.

The goal of the facilitator is to explain and deliver activities in an environment with as few distractions as possible. This maximizes your group's ability to succeed and increases the positive impact of your workshop.

In a purpose-built indoor space – such as a large meeting room on a corporate campus or a ballroom in a hotel or casino – it's much easier to eliminate distractions so everyone can focus on the team building activity. The climate is controlled, the sound system is built-in, and tables and chairs can be easily arranged to fit the program.

### **But if you really want to be outdoors...**

There are times when the allure of the outdoors is hard to resist. Maybe it's (forecasted to be) a gorgeous Friday afternoon. Maybe it's (forecasted to be) one of those first 70-degree days of the spring in Minneapolis, or the fall in Phoenix. If that's the case, here are a few strategies to maximize your chances of success:

- Have a backup indoor space where you can host the team building activity in case the weather doesn't cooperate.
- Choose a private, dedicated, or reserved location where you'll be free of distractions from other people, animals, and noise.
- If you are traveling to a different city and your backup indoor space isn't adjacent to your outdoor space, arrange for transportation in case it becomes necessary.
- Three to five days out from the program, check the current weather forecast. If it looks less than ideal, consider moving the program indoors. If that's not an option, decide if you simply want to warn employees to dress for the weather (e.g., it looks like it will be gray and cool but dry) or postpone the event (storms are likely). You want participants to benefit from and enjoy the activity – not to be miserable because they're too cold, too hot, or too wet.
- Have a "plan A" and a "plan B" to address the conditions. If it looks like the day will be damp, but not a washout, you may choose to move activities indoors, or keep it outside but use different materials (e.g., no paper or cardboard).



## Wrapping it up

It's easy to understand why people love the idea of doing team building activities outdoors. But nature doesn't always accommodate.

Depending on your situation, you may decide the risks of trying to pull off a successful outdoor event are too great, and an indoor venue really is preferable. Or you may arrange for an outdoor location, with a backup indoor space or at least a "plan B" in case the weather doesn't cooperate. What's most important is to create an environment where distractions are minimized; where you have plenty of space for the activity (follow the recommendations of your team building provider); and where employees are comfortable and able to focus on the activity. That will maximize the enjoyment for participants, the benefits they get from the team building program, and the return on your organization's investment in increasing employee engagement.

## The Four Roles of an Effective Team Building Facilitator

An impactful and memorable team building event starts with effective facilitation. Having an experienced, engaging facilitator is vital to creating an experience that teaches leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills to participants while also being fun and engaging. Why is that person called a "facilitator" instead of a team building leader, organizer, or instructor? Because facilitator is the most descriptive term and encompasses all the different roles involved in creating an enjoyable and valuable experience.

An effective team building facilitator is able to transition through several distinct roles very quickly, ultimately going from initially *being the focus* to transitioning to *making the team members the focus* seamlessly. Here are four essential roles that the facilitator progresses through during the course of the team building exercise.

### The Four Roles of a Facilitator

The facilitator's first role is that of *organizer*. This happens before the team members even arrive or any activities begin. In this role, the facilitator has spoken to the client/meeting planner (if necessary) and has assured that the activities that have been chosen are the best

one(s) for the team based on goals and anticipated outcomes. Upon arrival, the facilitator will spend time making sure the room/outdoor space is set up ideally for the participants to enjoy and get the most out of the experience, including making sure the tables and chairs are arranged properly and the sound system works. They ensure that all of the materials and equipment needed are on hand, that the room isn't too hot or cold, and that they know where the bathrooms are.

The critical objective in this role is to create an environment for success. The facilitator works to make sure the room or other event venue is comfortable, organized, and as free of distractions as possible so that the participants can focus on working through the activity (and on having fun doing it).

The second role is that of (temporary) *leader*. Once the team members arrive and are ready to take part, the facilitator introduces the activity, explains the objective, answers any questions, and provides the team with the information and materials they need.

The third role is to be a *coach*. As quickly as possible, the facilitator makes the participants the focus. In this role, the "coach" applauds team members, celebrates their successes, gives feedback and guidance, keeps the activity running smoothly, allows fun and friendly competition, and, if applicable, recognizes team members when they come up with solutions that everyone in the group can learn from. Like any good coach, they put the spotlight on the "players," making the team members the superstars of the activity or program.





The final role of the facilitator is to be a *role model*. Part of the way they teach communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and engagement is by modeling that behavior. They communicate clearly, answer clarifying questions, and collaborate with the participants.

A facilitator needs to be able to adjust to any situation that arises once the program has started. They problem-solve on the spot, manage change on the fly, and demonstrate everything they want from the participants, so those team members know they are in the hands of a facilitator who can confidently and competently “drive the bus.”

### **Bringing It All Together**

Through the course of the program, what the facilitator asks from team members evolves as well: from *attention* and *observation* to *participation* and *collaboration*. Great facilitation is key to enabling participants to walk away with a valuable and enjoyable experience.

## **Team Building Your Way - The Value of Needs Assessment and Program Customization**

Team building provides many benefits in improving organizational cohesion and productivity. But what if you have very specific goals or objectives in mind, and no pre-conceived activity is a perfect fit? That's where needs assessment and program customization come in, designing and delivering an event that meets your specific requirements.

Virtually all team building programs provide the four core pillars of team building: improved communication, interpersonal relations, engagement, and fun. They help with time and meeting management skills by incorporating a combination of competition and collaboration.

As noted above, team building positively impacts employee engagement and loyalty, jumpstarts morale, helps make new hires productive more quickly, and creates more effective teams.

But what if you are looking for a team building event to help you deal constructively with a major organizational change, such as a merger or the implementation of new technology? Needs assessment and program customization are the answer to creating an activity that will accomplish your specific goals.

### **What Exactly is a Needs Assessment?**

At Best Corporate Events, our needs assessment is done on three levels. When a client first contacts us, one of our sales representatives will conduct the first-level assessment. Beyond the basic parameters of the event (number of attendees, location, time allotted, etc.), they will also ask about the client's goals and objectives for the activity, and make recommendations if needed.

In addition, the sales professional will ask about customization and often make suggestions. For example, a client may be interested in arranging a [Virtual Jeopardy](#) or [Virtual Trivia Blast](#) game – while their company is in the midst of training employees for a new product introduction. In addition to the fun, general knowledge questions in the game, many clients are surprised and pleased to know we can help them craft 10 to 20 of their own company-specific questions.

Once an activity is locked in, a program manager will be assigned and will conduct a second-level assessment, asking deeper questions than the sales team. Finally, the facilitator who will actually be part of the event will ask a third, deepest level of questions around challenges the client may be dealing with and how the team building activity can address their specific issues and objectives.

One key question will be about how teams will be selected. Does the client want to specify which individuals will be on each team, or use an activity to randomize and “mix it up” so that employees are teamed with people they don't normally work with closely? Do they want an activity focused on fun competition, with first, second, and third place winners? Or is it a program for a large, highly competitive sales team, where the client wants an activity that will get those employees to think about when it's best to collaborate, how to do so successfully, and how to learn from each other?

Another very important question is: What types of team building or training activities have the group done before? That leads to an

additional series of questions such as: Have they had any experiences that didn't work out well? If so, why? Were there any training activities or team building events that the client loved? If so, what was it about them that made the experience fantastic?

The answers enable us to either create a unique new workshop, or to replicate a successful past experience for a new group of employees.

### **When Program Customization Makes Sense (And When it Doesn't)**

In some cases, a client knows pretty much exactly what they want. Perhaps they did a trivia game with their marketing department a few months ago and loved it. Now they want to do the same type of program for their finance team.

Or they may have done a charitable [Bike Build Donation](#)<sup>®</sup> program last year that had a profound emotional impact on the participants. They may want to repeat the same program, but the company has a relationship with a military support organization, so they want to do a [Build-a-Wheelchair](#)<sup>®</sup> program instead this year.

In those situations, the assessment is completed quickly and there is little or no program customization involved. The client is familiar with team building programs and knows exactly what they want.

But more often, the assessment will reveal – or the client will know they have – a need for some level of customization.

Perhaps the company needs to bring together a group of new employees, either because of turnover or growth. Or the business is grappling with a major change, such as the implementation of new technology, developments in their industry, or a merger/acquisition situation. Perhaps employees have been through a challenging period, and the company simply wants to provide them with an opportunity to have fun and recharge.

In any situation where an enterprise is dealing with change or internal challenges, an in-depth assessment is extremely valuable. One approach is to “start at the end.” What are the outcomes the client is looking for? If they imagine the activity is over, and it was very successful and the employees are walking away not only smiling but

also more engaged, what were the factors that made it a success?

Helping clients to articulate their goals for the team building exercise – whether it's improving collaboration and morale, bonding as a new team, dealing with team conflict or stress, problem-solving, getting aligned with a new strategy or direction, or managing change—enables us to develop a workshop, activity, or training program that will be fun, productive, and successful.

### **The Three Levels of Program Customization**

Although the degree of program customization is really a continuum from zero to “extensive,” it can be thought of on three basic levels.

The first level is essentially no customization. There may be some discussion during the assessment about issues such as how to organize the groups, but the program itself isn't changed. Common examples would be where a client wants a program they've done before delivered to a new group, or where the objectives are simply fun competition with collaboration (which all of [Best Corporate Events](#) and [SmartHunts](#) team building programs deliver!).

The second level is minor customization. The most common examples here are adding some client company-specific questions or information to a trivia game or activity. At these events and programs like [A Minute 2 Win It](#) or [Team Olympics](#), every team has a score at the end. You know who came in first, second, and third. Though the activity may be enhanced with some company-specific content, its structure remains the same.

The third level involves the most extensive customization. In [professional development programs](#) such as [Competition to Collaboration®](#), the [DiSC Profile Workshop](#), or [Igniting Team Performance](#), success isn't based on a winning score. It's what the participants walk away with – the knowledge they have gained and the ideas they can apply in the workplace to improve collaboration and productivity – that really matters.

All of those types of programs help improve time management, meeting management, and communication skills. But they also offer greater opportunity for customization to meet other specific needs or goals for the client.



## **The Bottom Line Benefits of Needs Assessment and Program Customization**

All of our team building programs deliver a common set of core benefits: they improve communication and collaboration, help build relationships, teach time management skills, and they are fun and engaging.

Through needs assessment and program customization, these team building and professional development programs can also be modified to meet specific objectives for clients, from something as simple as how to run more engaging Zoom meetings to managing change, engaging new employees, or combining teams.

And our facilitators use their experience not only to customize activities to meet specific needs, but also to constantly develop new team building and professional development programs to address the challenges our clients face. The best-performing companies conduct team building exercises on a regular basis; these new activities enable them to provide employees with fresh new experiences to continually build upon their success.





**Thanks  
for reading!**

06



# About **Best** Corporate Events



Best Corporate Events was formed in 2010 by a merger of top companies in team building, professional development, and interactive event technology. Together we formed a great team that designs, tests, trademarks, and delivers Team Building Programs, Charitable CSR Events, Training Sessions, and Professional Development Workshops.



Our sister company, SmartHunts, began developing our event apps and delivered corporate scavenger hunts nationwide.



We attracted top facilitators who deliver amazing In-Person programs for corporate groups with 25 to 6,000 participants. As we continue improving and expanding our in-person program lineup, we also added over 50 virtual and hybrid programs.



In 2019, we launched Best Collegiate Events, a complete line of programs, events, and training for students, faculty, and administrators at universities and colleges across America.



Trustpilot began monitoring and publishing our client reviews and today, we are proud to have the highest Customer TrustScore in our industry. We help companies ignite their teams' performance and achieve their goals with fun, challenging, and rewarding programs and events. We'd love to design and deliver a program for your team!



## **YOUR FEEDBACK PLEASE**

Thank you for reading! We'd love to get your feedback about this eBook. Please send your comments to:  
[Feedback@BestCorporateEvents.com](mailto:Feedback@BestCorporateEvents.com)



## **NEED A PROGRAM FROM YOUR TEAM?**

Let's talk! You can connect with us at:  
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