

# High-Performance Team Building

By Lynda Randall



One of the most neglected areas of training for employees is high-performance teamwork. There is a common misconception that any time a group of people are thrown together to work on a project, or as part of an on-going organizational work group they become a team. Many people who work in a group of people which never coalesces into a team become frustrated and demoralized when the group fails to achieve its objectives. Our firm belief is that groups given the tools they need to form teams will waste far

less time on conflicts and other non-productive behaviors and will deliver superior results.

The lack of appropriate training occurs in all types of organizations, including businesses, non-profits and government. School districts in particular face difficulty with employees who are expected to spend long periods working independently and then are thrown together on project, subject or grade level teams.

When organizations experience workplace problems with group dynamics and inter-personal relationships, they sometimes engage external facilitators to plan team building events, such as rope courses and other challenging activities. Many of these team building events are very physically demanding, and therefore are not inclusive of all people in the organization, who will have varying levels of abilities to perform the feats. When participants are debriefed after the team building event, they often have difficulty verbalizing the relationship between the activities and their effect on future behavior and performance in their workplace. Although these types of events help people to socialize and to form relationships, both important aspects of team building, they do not directly give participants the discrete skills they need to form and build their teams.

The first step in planning any team building activity with an outside facilitator is to hold a series of diagnostic interviews to assess and evaluate the reasons team building is needed. If a group of physically fit co-workers are looking for a retreat which will challenge them and provide entertainment for a day or more, then rope courses, towers of terror, and other forms of extreme adventure might be very appropriate. However, if team building is needed by a diverse group of individuals who are experiencing conflict and inefficient work methods, team building which is based on team building skills is more appropriate and provides a better return on investment.

All teams have two major functions which must be addressed: the tasks a team needs to complete to achieve its goals, and the relationships that need to be developed to have the team function at its most productive level. To meet these needs, New Level Advisors has designed a team building workshop and a team building treasure hunt which may be attended separately in half day sessions, or together in a one day session.

The **Team Building Workshop** takes group members through the steps and skills required to transform groups into high performing teams. Through an interactive process, participants form a team charter.

The charter deals with:

- Team membership
- Roles and responsibilities of team members (including spoken and unspoken roles)
- Team mission and goals
- Establishing ground rules
- Team sponsors
- Consensus and decision making procedures
- Conflict resolution activities.

The **Team Building Treasure Hunt** consists of 10-12 activities designed to help team members form positive and productive relationships by getting to know the skills and personalities of their team members.

The Treasure Hunt is designed to be inclusive of all people in a workplace. The emphasis is placed on fun and cooperation, not on demanding physical challenges.

The workshop is designed for groups of 10 to 50 participants who perform team building tasks in pre-determined groups. In order to ensure carry-over into the workplace, it is strongly recommended that the team sponsor attend the workshop with the teams

The workshop can be performed on or off site. For more information contact New Level Advisors at [info@newleveladvisors.com](mailto:info@newleveladvisors.com).