

Our main business is not to see what lies dimly in the distance, but to see what lies clearly at hand.

*Thomas Carlyle*

## TEAM BUILDING

Team building is the process of producing from a "group" a more effectively functioning, productive and cohesive "team." The characteristics of a team also define the benefits of team building:

- Common Goals
- Enhanced creativity
- Effective communication and feedback
- Effective decision-making skills
- Effective conflict resolution
- Broad interpersonal comfort zones
- High overall effectiveness

Some specific activities and techniques contribute to a group bonding together to form a team. The following list of ideas suggests some activities a leader can try to build a team:

- Brainstorming
- Effective delegation
- Ad hoc committees
- Open goal and objectives-setting meetings
- Individual recognition, public and private
- Schedule group work activities (making a banner)
- Group social outings, especially those that require group participation to plan and carry out
- Structured activities designed to involve all members

One of the most important outcomes of your efforts at team building will be the development of good team members. It is, after all, individual people who are the true building blocks of a good team. As the leader, you should attempt to develop the following characteristics within yourself and in others of your team:

- Aspire to be more effective and efficient
- Model appropriate work ethic and personal behavior
- Keep an open mind rather than rely on first impressions or what you hear of others
- Observe and listen carefully
- Express yourself as frankly and openly, but tactfully, as possible
- Confront disagreement and work towards resolution
- Accept limitations and feedback, and try not to be defensive
- Examine carefully problems before proposing remedies
- Check hidden perceptions and understandings
- Build on contributions of others, and allow others to build on contributions
- Defend the opportunities of others to express their views
- Recognize the value of maintaining morale in the team
- Support the team in all its endeavors

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