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**The Two Truths Of Team Building**

**By John Davis**

There are a few "truths" every manager, supervisor or team leader should realize before beginning any team building initiative. Ignore these principles and you'll be building your castle on sand. Recognize them at every step throughout the team's work and you'll have a group that will function smoothly and effectively.

"So what are these truths?" you may ask. Well, their simplicity may astound you, but their effect is significant. I've listed the Two Truths of Team Building in the order of their importance below, and I've also suggested ways for you to implement them for the benefit of your organization.

**Truth #1 - Know Your Team on an Individual Basis**

If I had to choose one of these truths to build on initially then this would be the one. People are far too anonymous these days. Even within families and in the workplace where we see each other every day, we don't tend to connect on a real level with very many people. In fact, if you ask anyone they'll probably tell you that their friends of their childhood years are far more memorable and meaningful to them than their present associates.

Now I'm not suggesting that you befriend everyone in your workplace in a deep, personal way. But a few extra moments of "lingering" after the necessary work-related communications have happened can open up a whole world of opportunities to learn about those within your workplace in a natural, non-threatening way.

**Truth #2 - Let Your Team Get to Know You**

Most managers, supervisors and team leaders have an unreasonable sense of how they should hold themselves within the workplace. In our efforts to serve as a role model and a standard bearer we tend to create a distance from the very same people who need to feel like they can come to us with their ideas and concerns. But who feels at ease in the shadow of Superman or Wonder Woman? Not very many people, that's for sure. Team building efforts will never come together as effectively as possible if the leader is seen as unapproachable or "too perfect".

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So how should we combat this? I wouldn't suggest for a minute that you do things that would lower your status in their eyes. But you can give them insights into who you are by being more of who you are at work. We all have lives outside of the office. Why not bring more of that to work? Do you have a favorite sports team? What kind of music do you like to listen to? Where have you been with your family recently?

Bring those things into your work environment so that your team can see who you are without having to come right out and ask you. Remember, it's hard to get close enough to an icon to find out who he or she is. You've got to make those features about yourself accessible so that they can pick up on them without being too forward in finding out for themselves.

When you practice these two truths on a consistent basis along the road of team building you will find your team coming together more easily and more effectively. The power of getting to know one another

within a work group can be the lubricant that eases the team through challenges that would stop a less cohesive group dead in their tracks. Which one do you want to be?

Business writer, John Davis, writes about

<http://www.better-business-now.com/general/articles/team-building-truths-to-live-by.html>

and

<http://www.better-business-now.com>

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<http://Better-Business-Now.com>

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### **Evaluating Your Team Building Activities**

**By Brett Danielson**

Team building has become one of the newest buzz words in the corporate lexicon. In fact, for at least the last decade surveys of business leaders in every industry have shown that the prime characteristic they look for in new hires is the ability to work with a team. And why not? Research has shown that when people work in teams, they can accomplish far more than a group of individuals working together. But not all team building activities are created equal. Over the last few years, some industry experts have leveled criticism at the 'quick-fix' attitude that has been adopted by many companies who attempt to create or sponsor their own team building activities.

In order to be effective, say experts in corporate teams, a team building event must:

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- Be integrated with real work goals.

- o It's not enough to plan a fun day of activities for your team. The team building event that you plan should help focus the members of the team on what's not working and what needs to happen for the team to work together.

- Be part of an overall company goal.

- o Plan team building activities and events as part of the company's overall plan for success. That means more than just a one off event to go buggy riding. Team building events should be an ongoing, annual or semi-annual event.

- Be planned by a team. o After all, the goal is to promote teamwork. The planning team should model the behavior that you expect it to promote.

- Be followed up with real work integration.

- o A one off event that has no follow up in the work world will be seen as a holiday at best – and a cynical attempt at manipulation at worst. To be meaningful, team building efforts must continue beyond the event day.

- Be reinforced by rewarding teamwork and team behavior.

- o Once you have a team that's working as a team, you need to reinforce that behavior by rewarding it. Recognition of teams that are working exceptionally well, special corporate events to mark team accomplishments and notice in the company newsletter are all ways to reinforce and reward teamwork within your company.

If planning an event that will do all that seems daunting, keep in mind that there are companies who make this their business. A company like that specialises in building team activities can offer your company custom team building activities that are designed to help your employees and coworkers focus on the importance of working together as a team.

Brett Danielson works for

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, a leading UK tour operator that specialises in

planning unique

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