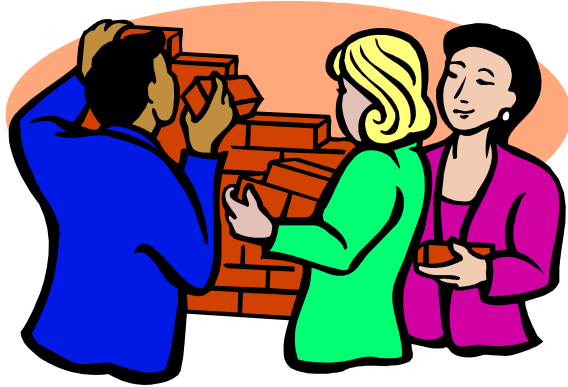


*It takes a lot of people to make a winning team. Everybody's contribution is important.*

***Gary David Goldberg***

## **Module Three: Types of Team Building Activities**

There is a wide variety of team building activities that you can use in developing your team. Using a mix of games, activities, and social events helps keep your team building plan interesting and engaging. Each team will respond to different activities, so be open to switching up the type of team building you do. Also seek input from your team about which activities they enjoy and find valuable.



### **Games**



Studies show that fostering a sense of play is a great way to foster camaraderie and team work. Using games also infuses a sense of fun and, depending on the game, a sense of friendly competition that can help people open up and form strong relationships. There are a variety of types of games you can use in team building,

including:

- Icebreakers or “get to know you” games
- Shared task games
- Problem-solving games
- Interaction games

No matter what type of game or games you chose for a team building session, there are several key components to any effective team building game:

- Focus on learning and remembering names
- Focus on the game itself
- Focus on strengthening relationships
- Cheers and pats on the back

## Activities



Group activities can also be a great way to build a team. Activities that are created specifically for team building are one option. Your training department can be a great source of information for team building activities, and there are a variety of excellent books and workbooks to draw from. Activities which are not specifically “team building” activities, but which encourage your team to interact with each other, are also valuable for building your team. Simply engaging in an activity together, whether a recreational activity or a community service activity, can give your team members a chance to take the focus off of work and instead focus on getting to know each other.

## Education



Training, development, and education also offer opportunities for team building. When your team builds a new skill together, learns a new technology or process, or otherwise engages in professional development as a group, this reinforces shared goals. Include some education in your training plan about team building specifically as well. Engaging in education about how to function better as a team has clear benefits, as team members build a set of skills together that they can then apply to working with each other. However, any shared learning experience has the potential to create a stronger team. When people learn together, they support each other’s development and can find a shared sense of purpose in learning something new or building a new skill. Take time to ask your team what they’d like to learn. You can also focus on the team’s strengths and development areas in planning education.

## Social Gatherings



Don’t underestimate the power of social gatherings to build your team. While it’s always important to recognize that family and other commitments can make it difficult for some team members to engage in social time outside of work, gatherings can still be a valuable tool in your team building kit. Whether you have regular team lunches where the topic of conversation is anything but work, an annual holiday gathering, or period get together after work for dinner, drinks, or other fun, social gatherings help to take your team out of their work environment so they can focus on each other. Ask your team what type of gatherings they would enjoy. Be wary of gatherings that center on alcohol, both for liability reasons and because it excludes those team members who do not drink. Vary the type of social gatherings so that those who may not enjoy one type of gathering have other options. Encouraging your team to spend time together as colleagues helps to further foster camaraderie and relationships.

## Case Study



Sylvia's team had been working very hard on a project. They were doing well, but she noticed that there were some communication breakdowns and people seemed to be getting short with each other. This was a team that had not worked together on a project of this scale before, and some of the members had never even met face to face until the project started. She decided that the team should take a day where the focus was just on them, *as a team*. With the help of her colleague Xochi, Sylvia arranged for the team to spend the day at their city's zoo. She had them break up into groups of three that would spend the day together, and gave them a simple zoo scavenger hunt to complete. At the end of the day, the team went over the scavenger hunt handout while they had ice cream to cool off. "You know, I haven't thought about the project all day," David, one of the team members said. "All I can think about it how funny it was when one of the chimps stole Sarah's sunglasses." There was a lot of laughter. But Sylvia also noticed that her team seemed to be closer in the following days.