

# Top 10 for 2010: Top 10 Ways Simple Ways to Help Build Your Team

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In most corporations the concept of “team” is highly valued and sought after; but how can you achieve it? If you’re not achieving it currently, what are some simple ideas and events you can implement to improve your “team” relationships?

While team building is an extremely effective tool – it can also be misguided if it is not used with the correct intention or in a way that speaks to the audience. So, before you start planning just like with any project in the corporate environment it is essential to your success to be clear about your desired outcomes. If you don’t know what aspect of your team you are looking to build, the program you choose may not be effective. Before you look further at ideas consider your reasons for doing the team building. Are you looking to introduce new members and help the team assimilate? Are you working to smooth over tumultuous working relationships and start with a clean slate? Or are you simply looking to have fun with your team and help solidify already existing positive working relationships? Depending on your reasons for team building – the type of program you may choose is going to vary dramatically.

With your intention clear, next you’ll want to carefully consider your audience. Who are they, what do they enjoy, and most importantly what they don’t enjoy (there is not much worse than putting a lot of time, money and energy into planning an event that doesn’t have much of a hope in being well received). Team building which pushes people out of their boxes can be an amazing tool - but only if it doesn’t push them too far out! And you certainly want to ensure the activity is enjoyable. Knowing your demographic and also the team’s interests will go a long way to selecting the best kind of activity.

Finally, also consider how you want to approach team building – do you have a full day planned or do you want to do a small exercise at the start of a meeting? Regardless of your intentions, interests and time available team building is a great way to get people working together in a cooperative functional way that is sure to help improve the communication and camaraderie within your team. Here are some ideas to get you started.

## 1. Make it Social

The social aspect of team building is one of its greatest tools. Providing a medium for teams to become more engaged and build healthy relationships with one another is a great way to help build team. Social events such as fun sporting events which don’t require a high level of fitness (think bowling, croquet, bocce, mini-golf, etc.) can be a really fun way to engage a team.

## 2. Have an Adventure

Doing something adventurous together is another great way to help develop positive relationships. Consider an activity such as a hike, rock climbing (indoor or outdoor), ropes courses, scavenger hunt or car rally, white water rafting, kayaking or canoeing. There are lots of outdoor activities which are fun and push people out of their comfort zones – helping team members to support and encourage one another and build positive supportive working

relationships. Just keep in mind your specific group when planning – and make sure everyone is comfortable and open to the activity before you head out. For adventure activities you also want to strongly consider having it organized and guided by an experienced leader to keep you and your whole team safe.

### **3. Put on your thinking caps**

Plan an activity that forces your team to use their minds as a collaborative team. Check out the Marshmallow Challenge on TED Talks (see below for the link). There are plenty of activities such as this one which will engage your team's brain and help develop and foster collaboration and team. Depending on your objective for the team building there are a lot of different activities to choose from. For some other ideas check out the resources below.

### **4. Get Creative**

Connect with the artists inside and have fun together doing a creative task. It could be something as simple as designing a team t-shirt or something more outside many people's comfort zones like taking a painting or pottery class. Or consider heading to a 'paint your own pottery' shop where you can each choose a project to unleash your inner artist. Being creative stimulates different areas of the brain – which will not only help your team think outside the box, but the activity itself will engage and encourage positive relationships.

### **5. Find a focus**

Keep in mind your intention for the team building and do a series of activities with the same focus. For example we offer a team building program where all of the activities are focussed around communication and fun. The activities are designed to help participants better understand their own communication styles and abilities and help promote healthy communication – all through fun activities. Regardless of your focus, having a theme or overriding message guide your event can go a long way to hitting home an important point.

### **6. Mix it up**

Make sure you incorporate different activities to inspire and connect with each type of learner (kinaesthetic, auditory and visual). This is important from a learning perspective but it is also important from a team perspective. The act of simply learning more about your team's learning style can really help teams work better together in all environments.

### **7. Give Back**

Why not work as a team to lend a helping hand in your local community. Whether you plan a charitable event which the team works together to bring to fruition or you head to the local food bank to help out, simple acts of charity can go a long way to helping teams connect on a higher level.

### **8. Learn Something New**

The success of the event isn't dependent upon what you learn as much as learning to do it together. Whether you're learning to juggle or how to blow up balloon animals, the activity itself isn't as important as the act of learning in tandem as a team. It will not only help different learners discover more about how their team members learn, if it's a fun task the laughter and fun

will engage and ignite positive working relationships. If you have one team member you are trying to integrate into the team, depending on the circumstances you may want to consider seeing if they have a special talent they can share and teach to the team.

### **9. Step Outside the Box**

Do something different. Make sure you don't do the same activities again and again. It's tempting to make fun social team building events regular occurrences – but doing something different helps to stimulate growth, creativity and development.

### **10. Have Fun**

This is one of the most important elements to consider when planning your event. It doesn't have to be all "fun and games" but definitely ensure you have a healthy dose of fun and laughter to guarantee you have a successful event.

## **Recommended Resources:**

TED Talks: The Marshmallow Project

[http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/tom\\_wujec\\_build\\_a\\_tower.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/tom_wujec_build_a_tower.html)

Team Building Activities – ideas for games and activities

<http://wilderdom.com/games/InitiativeGames.html>

<http://www.group-games.com/>

<http://www.teambuildingportal.com/games>

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