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Strategies for effective team building

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What is a team? Is it a group of people?. My answer to this question is NO. Team building is the deliberate and ongoing process of turning a group of individual employees into a cooperative, cohesive, and high-performing unit. It involves using daily interactions, structured exercises, and collaborative activities to strengthen trust, improve communication, and align people around shared goals."It is the long history of humankind (and animal kind, too) that those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed."-Charles Darwin. The main confusion that people have is the difference between a team and a group. A group consists of individuals who have their personal goals and use their personal efforts for personal success. While a team works on interdependence and accountability for their success. They have shared goals and they pool in their talents and resources to achieve the shared goals. They discuss, decide and do things together. They have complementary skills and share responsibility together, they collaborate to move in the same direction, this is the basic distinction between a group and a team. Effective team building requires transparent communication, collaboration, bringing together all the ideas which can benefit the team's cause. To build a high performing team the first thing one must do is set a clear goal for the team, what would be the team's end goal should be clearly outlined. Then identify the calibre of the team, that is to know how the talents of each and every individual can be put to good use. Assigning them roles according to their calibre is very important, if we assign roles which do not align with the talents of the members the goal may not be achieved efficiently. Transparency in the team is very important. If the members keep

things from each other, there will be no trust among the team which is very important for effective team building. In fact it is one of the foundational features of the team. A team must have faith in its members that when they need them, they'll be present there to help. Trust building can be achieved through clear and open communication. When people can better express themselves, they're more likely to trust each other. Open communication can also help get creative ideas out. The members, when they communicate more openly they will then indulge in more creative conversations about how to achieve the goal better and faster. Effective team building requires that each and every voice should be heard. When people feel heard they are more likely to contribute more to the team. When conducting team meetings or in daily life, personal check-ins or starting a few minutes early for casual conversations help prioritize connections. Team building is the most effective when it happens in micro doses embedded inside existing routines, rather than long, exhausting, single day events. Feedbacks play the most important role in making an average team into a high performing one. After any event or any downfall, feedback should be taken from everyone to understand and analyse what went wrong. A team has many members, this means that each of them viewed the event in their own unique way and formed their own opinions about the event. When we take feedback then we are collecting all those different viewpoints and we get so many perspectives on the same event. We can analyse better what went wrong or what could have been done to make the event more successful. Feedbacks should not only be taken on downfalls but also on achievements to achieve even higher than before. Acknowledgement is another tool which can be used for effective team building. Acknowledging the works of all the team members and praising them for their success will end up boosting their confidence. When the team feels that their efforts are being noticed and are being taken into consideration, they will work even harder the next time, chasing that high which they felt previously. Acknowledgment need not be loud but just right enough to leave a powerful impact. This way people feel that they are an important part of the team and the team needs them. They feel that their presence is important and much needed for success. This ensures greater team participation. Positive leadership plays an important role in team building. If the leader creates an environment where people are not just complying with him out of fear but instead they are comfortable enough to share their feelings and their ideas too, this environment then creates teams that are cohesive. Leaders should model vulnerability so team members feel safe sharing errors without fear of blame. When in a team disagreements

emerge, they should be immediately addressed. When they are not addressed immediately things linger in people's heart and they may hold prejudice from next time onward. Disagreements are a part and parcel of a team. Having them not only shows the negative aspect of team building but also its positive aspects. It shows that the team members are comfortable enough to share their opinions and raise questions about things they find unfit. It also shows that the team consists of various ideologies and different thinking processes. This offers a variety of perspectives on different company policies and provides them with a scope to perform better or improve their policies. Now team building is not just a thing which can be achieved, just while working in the office or changing managing techniques. While these things are foundational to effective team building, other things such as meaningful team building activities or team lunches play a huge part in bringing the team together. Things such as seminars and excursions from time to time helps them take their mind off work and makes getting along easy. When teams get along and they understand each other better they are more likely to work more efficiently. Teams that collaborate well and have high employee engagement see a 25% to 39% increase in productivity compared to poorly aligned or low-engagement groups. In companies where the employees don't engage with each other, according to Asana's Anatomy of Work, they spend 60% of their time trying to solve this problem rather than actually getting some work done. Another benefit of effective team building is, organisations that foster strong communication and teamwork see reduced employee turnover rates of up to 50%. In a nutshell, effective team building is not something which can be achieved in one day, or any one method. To build a cohesive and productive team, there are many strategies which must be used. Using any one method will not harbor effective results. They must be used in a combination as such that they complement each other. There are multiple methods of team building but one must choose a combination which suits their needs and their circumstances well. Team building is not an easy task but once a team actually starts coming together then we can see how much of an important task it is for every organisation. No organisation can work without teams. If teams are continuously fighting among themselves and everyone only cares about their wellbeing, then the organisation will fall and will never be able to grow. Because team members are what makes an organisation what it is. A strong team is the core engine of a company. It turns individual efforts into meaningful growth and success. A quote by Brian Tracy fits this description the best, "Teamwork is so important that it is virtually impossible for you to reach the heights of your capabilities or make the kind of

money you want without becoming very good at it… The greatest achievement in the history of the human race is not the invention of the wheel or fire, or even the airplanes, computers and the atomic bomb. It is the ability of a number of people to work together and combine their efforts to achieve greatness." In this article we have shed light on numerous strategies for effective team building, ranging from importance of feedback, acknowledgement , or day to day initiatives to enable smooth communication. There are a number of other strategies mentioned above, all have proven to be very effective for team building. Some focus on increasing productivity, while others focus on employee satisfaction. They are all as important as the other for the proper functioning of the organisation. They all contribute equally for the growth of the individual and the company. Effective team building is an ongoing journey that transforms a group of individuals into a unified, high performing force. In the end I would like to end the article with these statements, team building is a process not an event, culture drives success, and lastly the collective wins. All this says that true cohesion does not happen from a single workshop or retreat. When you prioritize trust, clear roles and open communication, productivity follows. And lastly shifting the mindset from "me" to "we" unlocks the true potential of your organisation.