



# THE SCIENCE

BEHIND CONSISTENT  
TEAM BUILDING

CORPORATE CHALLENGE EVENTS

# Discussion Outline

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# Welcome



Finding the right balance for team building is a crucial step towards nurturing a thriving and productive workplace culture. In our recent article, "[Optimising Team Building Frequency: Finding the Right Balance for Your Team's Growth](#)," we explored the importance of tailoring team building efforts to meet the specific needs of your team.

Now, armed with those insights, we embark on a deeper journey to uncover the science behind consistent team building and its profound impact on workplace productivity.



“IT IS NOT THE GENIUS AT THE TOP GIVING DIRECTIONS  
THAT MAKES PEOPLE GREAT. IT IS GREAT PEOPLE THAT  
MAKE THE GUY AT THE TOP LOOK LIKE A GENIUS.”

-SIMON SINEK





# Introduction

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In today's fast-paced work environment, regular engagement in team building often takes a backseat to pressing deadlines and immediate deliverables. However, neglecting the power of consistent team building can hinder your team's growth and stifle its potential. That's why we're diving into the science behind it!



In this eBook, we'll explore the fascinating link between team building and workplace productivity, backed by scientific research. We'll uncover how regular engagement in team building activities not only enhances collaboration and communication but also taps into the brain's adaptability to establish lasting behavioural changes.



Join us as we unravel the science behind consistent team building and unlock the strategies and insights you need to unleash the full potential of your team and drive workplace productivity to new heights.

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REGULAR TEAM BUILDING  
& PRODUCTIVITY

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# The Scientific Link



In the bustling arena of today's work environment, the connection between regular team building and productivity is not just anecdotal—it's scientific.

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# At the heart of this connection lies the concept of 'team building'.

Team building, as the term suggests, is about strengthening the bonds between team members. This can be achieved through a variety of activities, ranging from structured exercises like team building programs to more informal events such as team lunches or socials.

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"THE STRENGTH OF THE TEAM IS EACH INDIVIDUAL MEMBER. THE STRENGTH OF EACH MEMBER IS THE TEAM."

-PHIL JACKSON

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## COMMUNICATION & TRUST

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The benefits of these activities are substantial and multi-dimensional. They foster open communication, build trust, and create a sense of collective identity—all of which are known to boost productivity.

- For instance, a Harvard Business Review study found that teams that communicate effectively consistently outperform their peers (1).
- In the same vein, research published by the Association for Psychological Science points out that trust within a team leads to improved collaboration and better team performance (2).

63% of leaders

FEEL TEAM COMMUNICATION  
IMPROVED AFTER PARTICIPATING IN  
TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITIES. 61% OF  
LEADERS FELT TEAM MORALE  
IMPROVED.

-TEAM BUILDING HUB

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<sup>1</sup>.Pentland, A. (2012). "The New Science of Building Great Teams." Harvard Business Review.

<sup>2</sup>.De Jong, B. A., Dirks, K. T., & Gillespie, N. (2016). "Trust and Team Performance: A Meta-Analysis of Main Effects, Moderators, and Covariates." Journal of Applied Psychology.

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## MORALE

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Team building activities can also enhance morale. Employees with high morale are not just happier—they're more productive. A study on the Effects of organisational team building on employees' (3) concluded that employers could increase morale and, consequently, job retention by increasing the frequency and quality of team building activities in the workplace. The researchers found that team building activities significantly increased employee morale.

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## CONFLICT

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Team building activities can also play a significant role in reducing workplace conflicts. According to a study published in the book "Team effectiveness in complex organisations: Cross-disciplinary perspectives and approaches", team-building interventions that focus on role clarification can help reduce conflict and improve team effectiveness (4). A harmonious work environment, free from conflicts, is conducive to higher productivity (5).

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## PRODUCTIVITY

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Finally, a study titled "Does team building work?" published in the Small Group Research journal found that team building activities have a moderate positive effect across all team outcomes, suggesting that they can indeed boost productivity in the workplace (6).

3 .Zia, S., 2012. Effects of organizational team building on employees' morale & job retention. Business Management Dynamics, 1(7), p.31.

4. In E. Salas, G. F. Goodwin, & C. S. Burke (Eds.), Team effectiveness in complex organizations: Cross-disciplinary perspectives and approaches (p. 223–250). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

5. Spector, P. E., & Jex, S. M. (1998). "Development of Four Self-Report Measures of Job Stressors and Strain: Interpersonal Conflict at Work Scale, Organizational Constraints Scale, Quantitative Workload Inventory, and Physical Symptoms Inventory." Journal of Occupational Health Psychology.

6. Klein, C., DiazGranados, D., Salas, E., Le, H., Burke, C. S., Lyons, R., & Goodwin, G. F. (2009). Does team building work?



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PSYCHOLOGICAL  
TRANSFORMATIONS

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# The Psychological Mechanisms at Play



Delving into the science behind consistent team building reveals its profound psychological transformations. Team building exercises break down barriers and foster unity within a team. They go beyond task collaboration, building a shared understanding, common language, and collective identity.

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# PSYCHOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATIONS

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Team building activities serve as a masterclass in communication, enhancing the human skills teams need to thrive. They nurture trust, fostering strong bonds that glue the team together. By overcoming challenges together, team members enhance problem-solving abilities and camaraderie.



These activities create a safe environment where ideas and risks are freely expressed. This psychological safety encourages open dialogue, diverse perspectives, and boosts innovation and creativity.



Team building exercises deepen appreciation for strengths and weaknesses, building respect and empathy. Individuals step out of their roles, connecting on a personal level, and increasing trust and collaboration.

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With a newfound understanding of the profound psychological transformations brought about by team building, **we uncover a beautiful connection**—where these shifts in mindset and connection intertwine into a range of positive emotions and intricate physiological responses.



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THE POWER OF PLAY

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# The Feel-Good Physiology of Team Building



Peeling back the layers of team building, it's clear that at its core, it's all about fun. It's about the laughter that echoes around the room when a challenge is met, the shared smiles of a group working in harmony, and the collective cheer when a goal is reached. It's about the power of play.

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# When we engage in team building activities, we're not just working together— **we're playing together.**

And this play comes with a rush of feel-good emotions that permeate the group, creating an environment that's not only enjoyable but also incredibly productive.

**Ever noticed the surge of positivity after a team activity? That's the morale-boosting effect in action, injecting us with a can-do spirit.**

These feel-good emotions aren't just a fleeting sensation. They have a physiological basis. When we complete a challenge as a team, our bodies respond by releasing endorphins—the body's natural 'feel-good' hormones. These endorphins contribute to feelings of happiness, relaxation, and a sense of achievement.



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“OUR BRAINS ARE BUILT TO BENEFIT FROM PLAY NO  
MATTER WHAT OUR AGE.”

-THERESA KESTLY

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## COLLECTIVE EFFERVESCENCE

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Moreover, the act of playing and having fun together leads to what sociologist Emile Durkheim termed 'collective effervescence'<sup>(7)</sup>.

This is the exhilaration, the shared joy, and the sense of unity that arises when people come together in celebration or in overcoming a challenge. This feeling of collective joy can strengthen the bonds between team members and boost productivity.

In essence, the feel-good emotions that arise from team building activities are more than just a bonus—they're a crucial element of the process. They create an atmosphere of positivity and camaraderie, fostering a work environment that's not only productive but also enjoyable.



We find our greatest bliss in moments of collective effervescence. It's a concept coined in the early 20th century by the pioneering sociologist Émile Durkheim to describe the sense of **energy and harmony** people feel when they **come together** in a group around a **shared purpose**.

-ADAM GRANT

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<sup>7</sup>.Durkheim, E. (1912). "The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life."

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A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

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# Team Building Blueprint



Having delved into the profound impact of team building, let's now transition into a practical application of these insights. As you plan your next team-building endeavour, consider the following Strategic Team Building Blueprint. These actionable steps are designed to harness the science we've explored, offering a clear guide to cultivate a more cohesive and productive team.

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# Your **go-to blueprint** for every team occasion.



Versatile in its application, this Team Building Blueprint is designed to enhance both formal and informal team-building initiatives, ensuring its effectiveness across diverse settings.



## ASSESS YOUR TEAM'S CURRENT STATE

Begin by evaluating your team's current dynamics, strengths, and areas for improvement. Consider conducting surveys or organising team meetings to gather feedback and insights from team members. This assessment will help you understand the specific human skills to focus on and goals of your team. [Dive deeper into assessing your team with this recent blog.](#)




## SET CLEAR OBJECTIVES:

Clearly define the objectives you want to achieve through team building activities. Are you aiming to improve communication, enhance collaboration, boost morale, or develop specific skills? Setting clear objectives will enable you to tailor your team building efforts accordingly. Like any good plan, it should come complete with goals that are SMART (specific, measurable, acceptable to you, realistic to achieve, and time-bound)

"COMING TOGETHER IS A BEGINNING, STAYING TOGETHER IS PROGRESS, AND WORKING TOGETHER IS SUCCESS."  
-HENRY FORD





## ADAPT TO THE TEAM'S STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

The art of mastering the frequency of team building is to align with the stage of your team's development. As teams go through different phases, their needs and priorities evolve. For example, a team in the forming stage requires more frequent team building activities to foster trust and establish clear communication channels. In contrast, a team in the performing stage may benefit from less frequent but more focused team building efforts aimed at enhancing specific skills or addressing specific challenges. In this recent blog we discuss the best team activities for each stage of team development.



## MIX IT UP

Vary the types of team building activities you engage in to keep things fresh and engaging. Consider incorporating both structured and unstructured activities, such as workshops, team outings, retreats, charity team building or virtual team building exercises. Experiment with different formats and approaches to cater to diverse preferences and learning styles within your team. More on this below!



## INTEGRATE TEAM BUILDING INTO YOUR TEAMS DNA

Instead of treating team building as a separate event, integrate it into your team's routine. Allocate regular time slots for team building activities, such as dedicating the first 15 minutes of a weekly meeting to a quick icebreaker or incorporating team building exercises into your quarterly planning sessions. By making it a regular part of your team's schedule, you can ensure consistent engagement and progress.



## SEEK EMPLOYEE INPUT

Involve your team members in the decision-making process when planning team building activities. Encourage them to share their ideas, suggestions, and preferences. By incorporating their input, you can create a sense of ownership and engagement, leading to more meaningful and impactful team building experiences..

## EVALUATE AND ADAPT

Continuously evaluate the effectiveness of your team building efforts. Monitor the impact on team dynamics, collaboration, and performance. Collect feedback from team members and assess whether the objectives were met. Based on this evaluation, make necessary adjustments to the frequency, format, and content of your team building activities.





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# FINAL THOUGHTS

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With these strategies in mind, you're well-prepared to leverage the power of play for your team's success.

Throughout our exploration, we've delved into the intricate psychological dynamics and physiological responses that unfold during team-building activities, paving the way for a more cohesive, motivated, and productive team.



The science behind team building is irrefutable, establishing a foundation that fosters unity and shared identity. It triggers the release of 'feel-good' hormones, generating a host of benefits—from boosting morale to enhancing productivity—that extend well beyond the immediate experience.



Yet, beyond the science lies the essence of team building—the power of play. The shared laughter, collective achievement, and the exhilaration of overcoming challenges together infuse teams with energy, joy, and a profound sense of purpose.

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**Ready to supercharge your team's productivity and cohesion?**

Start implementing the Strategic Team Building Blueprint today. Your team will thank you for it, and the positive impact on your workplace culture will be unmistakable.



## GET IN TOUCH

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we believe success is  
created through  
positive team  
cultures.

Our passion is to help organisations achieve this through delivering unique and rewarding events, corporate training and team experiences that leave a lasting happiness.