

Team Building Exercises



...a better way to manage

the
happy
manager

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HOW TO BE A BETTER MANAGER

Team Building Exercises: 15 Ways to Build a Better Team

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How to be a Better Manager...

About the "How to be a Better Manager..." Series

Team Building Exercises is one of a series of practical, thought-provoking guides, designed to help you deal with a wide range of management ideas, activities and situations. Whether you are a new manager, or one who wants to hone or develop existing skills, we're sure you'll find something valuable in any of these guides.

This series of e-guides is published by Apex Leadership Ltd. The guides have been developed by a team of professional managers, consultants and educators. The full range of titles is available from [Apex Leadership Ltd](#), or from [the Happy Manager.com](#). Use these guides to benefit from our wealth of management expertise. Let us help you find: **a better way to manage...**"

Phil Higson & Anthony Sturgess

Directors, Apex Leadership Ltd

Using the guide

This guide contains a selection of team building exercises designed to help you build a better team. The exercises can be used for a variety of purposes such as: introducing ideas; fostering team bonding; developing teamwork skills. They are conveniently grouped to help you with teams at each of the four team development stages, as shown on page 5.

The exercises can be used in several ways.

- They are ideal as short activities, perhaps to introduce a meeting for a specific purpose (such as discussions on progress or problems).
- Put them on a meeting agenda, to encourage team involvement and concentration.
- Use some to close meetings, sending team members away with insights or ideas to think about until the next meeting.
- Adapt them for use as part of wider team development activities, such as away days or off-sites.

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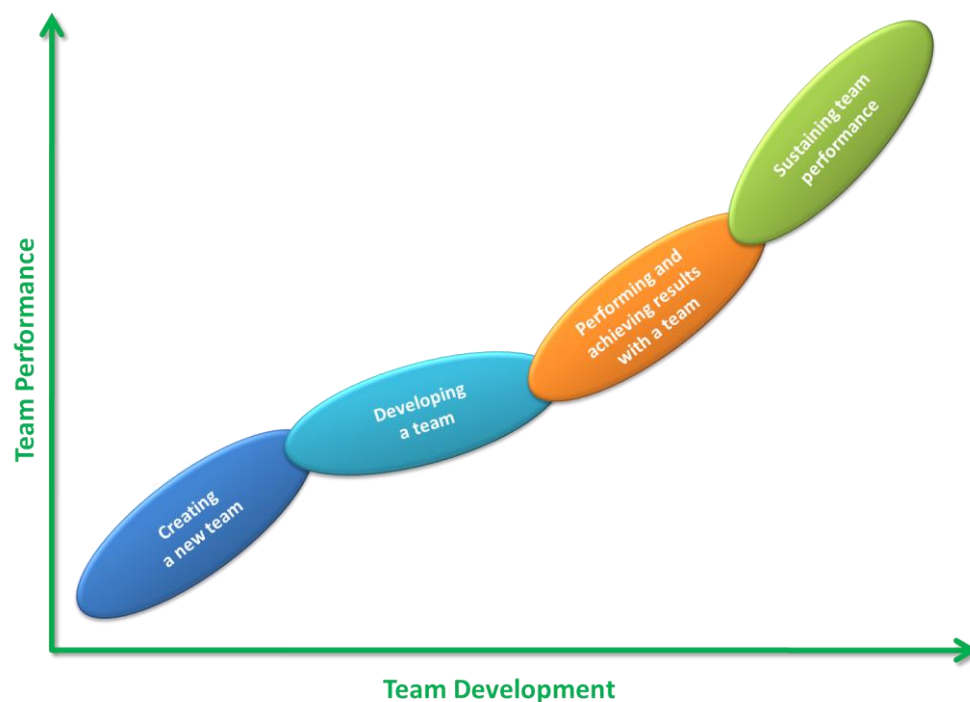
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Team Stages and Team Exercises

The exercises in this guide are grouped according to our team stages model. Remember, each team is unique and needs to be led through several developmental stages. These include:

1. Creating a new team or taking over an existing team
2. Developing a team
3. Performing and achieving results with a team
4. Sustaining team performance

The link between team stages, the development of relationships, and performance improvement is illustrated in the team stages model:



The team building exercises can be used or adapted to a variety of aims. In this guide we have shown how they can be used to help you build your team with a focus on a particular stage of the team's development. Of course you may decide to adapt any of these exercises for use at any stage.

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Doing something for the first time

Description: An activity to run at the start of a team event dealing with change.

Aim: To explore team members' attitudes to change and to encourage a focus on the benefits of change.

Material and preparation: Flip chart & pens.

Instructions:

This exercise is a simple way to start your team thinking about change. Before the session think about the kind of changes you are going to discuss with the team. Use the facilitation section below to develop questions which best fit your specific team needs and aims in this exercise.

Introduce the session on change by asking the question below. Be prepared to get the discussion started with your own answer, based on your own experience. The answers don't need to be work-related. In fact, it might be useful to encourage as broad a response as possible.

"When was the last time you did something for the first time?"

Initially, ask people to volunteer answers. Then try to get a response from everyone in the group. Be prepared to encourage group members to elaborate on their answers using the prompts below.

Facilitation, questions and discussion:

- Make notes of answers and interesting key points on the flip chart.
- Try to explore as many different perspectives from the range of answers you get.
- How did each person feel about doing something for the first time?
- Did they enjoy the new experience? Why? If not, why not?
- List the ranges of explanations for both positive and negative responses.
- Were they surprised at what they achieved?
- What helped in making a new experience a good one?
- Was it something they wanted to do, or had to do?
- Summarize with a focus on the positives to be gained from new experiences and change.

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Positive feedback

Description: This is an activity to encourage team members to get to know each other and to practice giving and receiving positive feedback.

Aim: To foster appreciation of the benefits of positive feedback.

Material and preparation: Flip chart, paper and pens for each person in the team/group, sticky tape,

Instructions:

Use the quotation below to introduce this team building activity on positive feedback. Display the quote for reference as a PowerPoint or on a prepared flip chart:

"Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you help them to become what they are capable of being."

Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

Ask for comments on initial thoughts the team might have about the quotation and encourage a short discussion. Next ask each person to pair up with someone else.

If the individuals already know each other, ask them to spend a few minutes noting four or five positive things about the other person. Remind them that all points must be positive. Then give the pairs time for open discussion where each person feeds back positively to the other what they have noted.

If the pairs don't know each other particularly well, ask them to spend a few minutes finding out about each other. Allow them three minutes each to make notes about what the other person says. Then give the pairs time for open discussion where each person feeds back positively to the other what they have written.

Note key points on a flip chart then encourage a discussion.

Facilitation, questions and discussion:

- How easy is it to give positive feedback?
- Was it easier to give positive feedback or to receive it? Why?
- What are the benefits of positive feedback?
- Why might positive feedback be particularly helpful in the team?
- What would help to make it easier to give positive feedback?

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Scarce resources

Description: This is an activity which you can use to start a discussion about how to maintain progress towards goals, even in difficult times or when resources are limited.

Aim: To encourage discussion of positive and creative thinking in the face of resource constraints

Material and preparation: Flip chart & pens, sticky tape.

Instructions:

Introduce this session as an opportunity to do some thinking about how the team can still achieve its objectives, even within the constraints of limited resources. These may be general budgetary constraints or specify any other particular limitation facing the team.

Read this quotation from Lord Rutherford out loud:

“We haven’t got the money, so we’ve got to think.”

Explain that, through his work on the atom, Lord Rutherford is recognized as the father of atomic physics.

Discuss the implications of the quotation. Optional: You may want to conclude the discussion with the story of Lord Rutherford’s death. This was a salutary lesson in the danger of delaying action, brought about by unusual resource constraints.

Lord Rutherford’s untimely death was due to a delay in operating on an umbilical hernia. This was said to be due to the fact that, in those days, British social protocol meant peers could only be operated on by a “titled” doctor. The delay was said to have cost him his life.

Facilitation, questions and discussion:

- When budgets are tight teams need to be creative.
- What ideas can help us to meet our objectives within these constraints?
- What should we be doing that we are not currently doing?
- What are we doing at the moment that we don’t need to do?
- If we were starting from scratch, what would we do differently?
- Discuss which future ideas for action are the most promising.

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Join the conversation: bookmark the Happy Manager blog.

(www.the-happy-manager/blog) Leave any comments, suggestions or examples of your own experiences for the benefit of other readers.

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Have a Good Workday
How to Build a Happy Workplace
Workstyle, Lifestyle

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Team Building Exercises
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The Problems with Teams
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Leading with Style and Focus
Leading Insights

Transformational Change
Sustaining Change
Making Change Personal

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Manage Your Own Performance
Motivating Performance

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Managers Make the Difference
Re-defining Middle Management
Do More with Less
Managing Time and Priority
Extreme Thinking: Unlocking
Creativity
SMART Goals, SHARP Goals
Making Better Decisions
What's the Problem?

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