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WHY START NOW WITH TEAMBUILDING?

The importance of teambuilding, what teambuilding brings and seven insider tips to get started effectively.

INTRODUCTION

If you are wondering whether team building is a good idea, it is important to understand what it actually is. For this, it is also essential to be clear about what is meant by a team. This whitepaper provides you with seven insider tips to consider before starting with team building.

This whitepaper ends with seven insider tips to pay attention to before you start with team building.

We wish you a lot of reading pleasure and we hope that this white paper will be of value to get started with team building within your own team and organization.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAMBUILDING

Teambuilding: reflect before making the next step

Not every team activity is about team building. Team building is about solving a problem or seizing an opportunity with your team that can't be dealt with during day-to-day work. Within most teams, small frustrations, subgroup dynamics or negative images tend to emerge over time. Unnoticed, habits might form that negatively affect collaboration and productivity. Team building helps to reveal these issues, to recalibrate collaboration and to get rid of friction.

Therefore, team building can be seen as a moment of reflection before making the next step. It asks team members to have a look in the mirror, to critically review the collaboration, to be honest about what is bothering them and, when necessary, to discuss underlying issues.

Furthermore, team building can also be fun and challenging, but that is certainly not a condition for effective team building. In fact, team building might initially cause a certain amount of discomfort by revealing root causes for a team to learn and grow from.

In general, good team building first causes discomfort after which a breakthrough is achieved.

The benefits of teambuilding

Team building can be of great value at an individual, team and organizational level.

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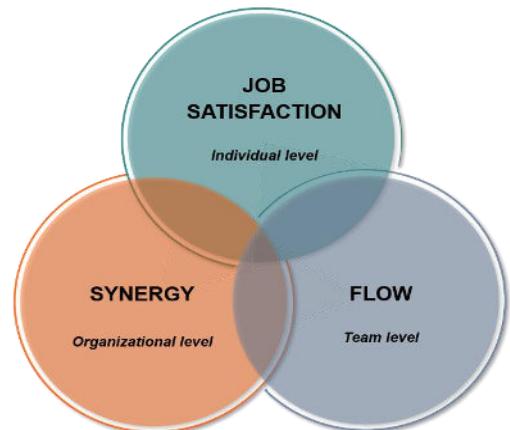
> At an **individual level**, teambuilding will contribute to job satisfaction. Team members make the best possible effort, feel they are part of something bigger than themselves and take the opportunity to learn and further develop themselves. A high degree of job satisfaction has a positive influence on other factors too, such as productivity, customer focus and retention.

> At a **team level**, teambuilding will contribute to achieving flow. This leads to efficiency, connection, transparency and trust.

> At an **organizational level**, teambuilding leads to synergy. When teams cooperate in an optimal way this is of added value as it leads to higher productivity of the organization as a whole.

WHEN TO START WITH TEAMBUILDING?

There are two reasons to start with team building: There is an opportunity to improve or there is a problem to solve.

What is experienced as a problem and/or an opportunity depends on the type of team. Not all teams experience the same issues or opportunities. What works for one team can be poison for another team. Therefore, it is essential to distinguish between different types of teams. More about this later.

Obviously, team members must be able to exert a certain level of influence on the issues they want to solve. For example, if the salary structure is a major problem for the team, but no one within the team has any influence over it, it makes little sense to tackle this topic in a team building session. Team members often have high expectations and there is no reason to work together on a problem or opportunity when the influence the team has on it is negligible.

Different types of teams require a different approach

We often call a group that works together a team. According to a common shared definition, a team is a group of people who work together towards the same goal. Although this is a valuable definition, it excludes many groups of people working together. We prefer a wider definition of a team; a group of people who work together and, to some extent, depend on each other to achieve success. Using this definition, we distinguish four types of teams:

1. Shared resources team

The shared resourced team is the most disjointed team type. The team members individually achieve their goals but share certain resources they need to do their work. A sales team is an example of such a team, especially when the team members have individual targets. However, the team members are dependent on each other as they share information, tools or other resources. Therefore, they need to cooperate to achieve their individual goals. Such a team cannot function without a coordinator or manager who directs the individual members and helps to resolve potential conflicts. Shared resources teams need structure, rules and agreements. This way, the scarce resources can be shared by the team members with a minimum of friction.

"What works for one team, can be poisonous for another. Therefore, it is very important to distinguish between different types of teams."

Thomas Benedict - CEO and founder InContext

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2. Production team

There is one major difference between a production team and the previous team; the team members have a common goal. There may be different specialists in this type of team, each making their own unique contribution to the team goals. However, that goal can only be achieved if all team members work together. Such a team needs leadership, but to a lesser degree than a shared resources team

In these teams, attention is focused on formulating a shared goal, agreeing on working methods and processes, optimizing the performance of the entire team and monitoring quality.

3. Coordinating team

This type of team leads others, with the different members each representing their own department, work team or stakeholder.

A coordinating team has both shared and individual goals. Bringing these together and agreeing on a shared approach is a core purpose of such a team. The members of this type of team must have sufficient experience in solving problems and having constructive conflicts. Courageous conversations, giving and receiving feedback and continuous learning are known to be important within a coordinating team.

The leader of a coordinating team focuses on the process instead of the content. He/she is more of a chairperson than a manager.

4. Innovation team

This last type of team is characterized by a shared innovative goal, a high energy level and a high degree of commitment from all team members. This is common in, for example, an ambitious project or a start-up. The team works as a network, whereby all team members know each other's added value. Such teams are often temporary, have an exciting vision and high ambitions. In an innovation team, formulating and committing to a shared vision requires attention.

The high workload, identification of team members with the objective and the team as well as the commitment that comes with it might cause intense conflicts. The team must learn to deal with this in a constructive way. Many innovation teams have a high degree of self-management, which requires strong communication and problem-solving skills.

7 INSIDER TIPS FOR THOSE WHO ARE CONSIDERING TEAMBUILDING

1. Don't solve problems that don't exist.
In some organizations, team building is seen as an annually recurring activity. It is something that needs to be done. This is definitely a waste of time and money. To make team building a valuable activity, something of importance needs to be achieved. An issue that needs to be solved or an opportunity that requires the attention of the team. If there is no real problem or opportunity, but the team needs some relaxation or deserves a reward, just do something fun instead.

2. Let someone help you.
If it is worth the effort to do team building with your team, then it is worth the effort to do it right. Therefore, let a consultant or coach facilitate the team. Without an independent facilitator, it is difficult to properly define the scope, identify appropriate interventions and facilitate the process.

3. Always start with a diagnosis before starting with team building.
First, get a clear view on what topics are important for your team members, what do they actually think? Team building is a means to an end, not an end in itself. It has to be of added value for your team members. By gathering their input in advance, it is possible to define the desired scope and formulate a shared focus. By doing this, team members have shared and clear expectations and they are dedicated to and trust the team building process. You do need everyone's input and perspective to properly understand a team. A team diagnosis is a team intervention in itself. It

can make a valuable contribution to team collaboration and results. The traditional way to do this is to let a coach or consultant interview all team members. Thorough, but expensive. Using a tool such as Team Flow Index or, with a larger team CircleLytics, can be faster and cheaper.

4. Choose the right interventions based on what you see.
Many organizations, but also many team coaches, consultants or facilitators, are enamored with certain tests or tools for team building. However, familiarity and habit are the worst reasons for choosing a particular approach. When you start working with your team, you need to have a clear view on the desired result. The selected method must be aligned with the results of the analysis and needs to support achievement of the desired outcome. Therefore, it is essential to work with experienced facilitators who are familiar with many different interventions and therefore able to select the methods that suit the situation, composition and goals of your team.

5. Team building has no added value when a problem or opportunity lies outside the circle of influence of the team.
When a team has no influence over a problem or opportunity, team building is not the right approach. When the expectation is created that something can be tackled and improved together, this needs to be realistic. If this is not the case, employees become disappointed and demotivated.

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6. Don't avoid obstacles, just go for it.

If a problem or opportunity and the desired outcomes are clear to the entire team, it is time to start working on it together. While doing this, don't avoid challenging moments or subjects. By making these part of the team building activity and discussable, the team can work towards accepted and shared outcomes.

7. Don't underestimate the importance of a unified and solid team, even when working from home.

Especially in times when collaboration is under pressure, it is essential to invest time in the connection between team members. When sufficient attention is paid to the well-being of team members, this leads to the right flow; Employees are satisfied and feel part of the team, the work is performed in a connected and efficient way and there is transparency and trust. Many people wonder whether it makes sense to do team building if people can't get physically together. Currently, there are plenty of tools and methods available for effective remote team building.

Curious about teambuilding?

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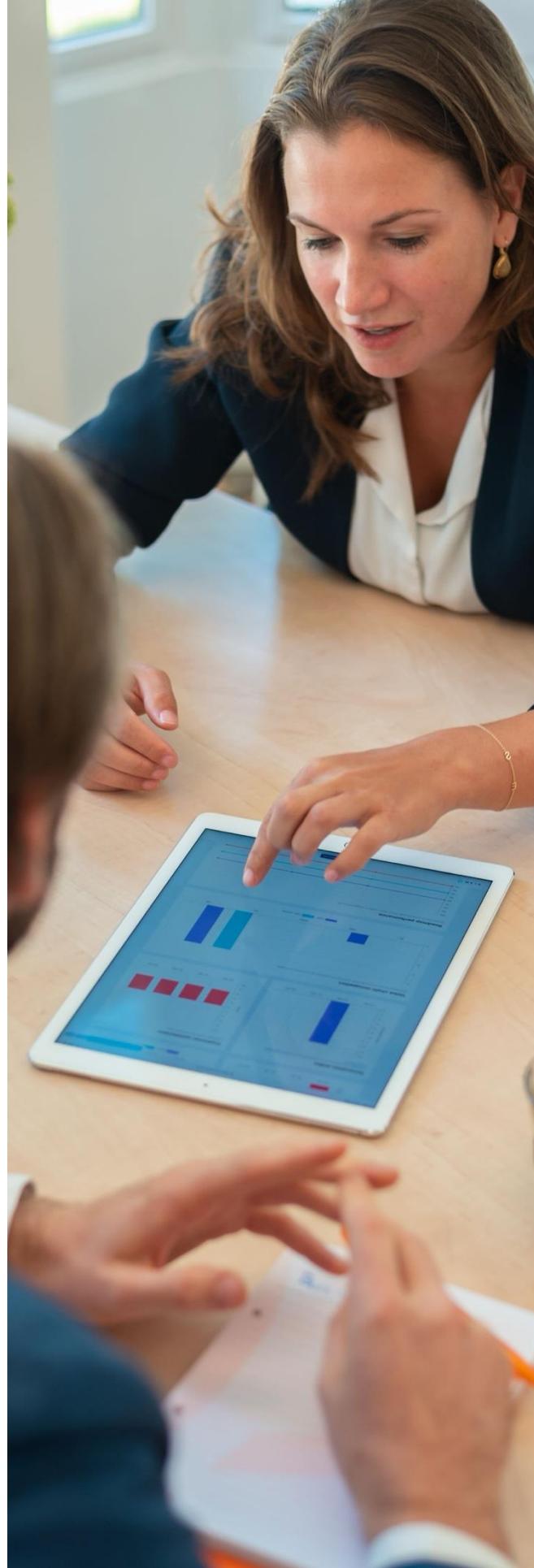
ABOUT INCONTEXT CONSULTANCY GROUP

InContext Consultancy Group exists to provide all possible support to people who want to change something in their organization for the better.

InContext is a distinctive consultancy firm that helps organizations to nurture the human factor and to connect organizations to their people. Inspiration, creativity and partnership go hand in hand with analysis, action and results.

With ambition and guts we really make a difference and offer innovative, sustainable solutions to our clients. Clients describe our approach as unorthodox, passionate, careful, surprising and always focused on achieving measurable results.

InContext supports substantial changes in

organizations and in the behavior of people. This is illustrated in our motto "The people side of business - The business side of people".

With this unique combination of knowledge and skills, of hard and soft, we place every intervention in the context of each organization and thus directly in the heart of the issue. With connection, impact and results.

Curious what serious games could offer your organization? We would be happy to help you with options designed to suit your organization.

Interested? Contact us