



ENGLISH PRACTICE Material 2-26-2020

Section One Reading

TEAM BUILDING

1. Particularly in times of economic downturn, efficiency is of supreme importance across all industry bases; whilst companies may be looking to cut their costs, many still invest in staff motivation, training and development programs, having developed an understanding of just how crucial strong internal relationships can be for success.
2. Louise Edwards of HR Success says that one of the barriers she comes across time and time again is that corporate heads often seem to understand that 'team building' is important but are not quite sure what it is or how to achieve it. In the terms of a sports club, she says, the team (i.e. what it is and how it is defined) is obvious and easy to identify. In contrast, she says, within a company – particularly a multi-layered, larger organization, definitions may become more confused. Many define a business 'team' as the group of people who report to the same boss – a department, for example. However, according to Edwards, it is more productive to define a team as a group of people working towards a common goal.
3. In training terms, therefore, this group could be members of a department with the same roles and responsibilities, such as a sales team with the common goal of selling or even the organization as a whole, whose 'goal' in this case is the continued success of the organization, their many different skills and roles all contributing to this in a number of ways.
4. Brenda Durham of Corporate Trouble-Shooters believes it inevitable that to some extent conflict will exist in a successful workplace since the necessary diversity of skills and personalities required for success will also unavoidably lead to misunderstandings and disharmony from time to time. A cohesive unit that minimises friction, she believes, can however be developed in any organization committed to investment in its people.
5. Whilst the taking on of external expertise for staff training and team building programs can be costly, a number of companies, particularly those with a robust human resources department, are undertaking the training themselves. Liaison Wizards, established in 2001 and headed by Jeff Blackshaw, offers free training and development advice to companies wishing to offer motivation seminars designed in house, in the belief that contextualised training is always more effective. The company's own business model is based upon generating revenue from advertising on their popular website – a great success, so far, having surpassed financial projections for each year it has been in operation to date.
6. Blackshaw likens the key to successful corporate team building to the tactics employed in a less formal sporting environment. He says that bonds, connections and empathy developed between members of a rugby team, for example, can also be developed within a department in the business world or even at company level. He says that good team work is fostered by respect, encouragement, shared enthusiasm and a caring and supportive workplace. Trying to exploit or dictate to personnel is sure to lead to failure, Blackshaw says.
7. Brian Osbourne, Human Resources Director of Opmax Inc, believes that programs developed in house are inherently more likely to be of greater success than external offerings for two main reasons. Most importantly, he says, people are much easier to motivate if they themselves can be involved in designing and deciding activities – this level of consultation at the planning stage being much easier to achieve for an internal department than an external consultant. Of only slightly less importance, says Osbourne, training activities must be perceived by participants as providing outcomes geared towards developing the individuals' potential, Once again, programs developed by people with an insight into the personalities and culture at hand can be more easily tailored to suit the distinctive needs of that particular audience.
8. According to Osbourne, one of the biggest barriers to successful staff training is the perception that activities are too game-focussed, with no real objectives; many professionals, believing that such games are trite or patronising, are unable to appreciate the hidden benefits of building understanding and camaraderie within the group. If presented correctly, within the correct context and in conjunction with other, more staid approaches, Louise Edwards holds that games can be an enormous asset in staff training. In simple terms, Edwards defines the objectives of team building activities as a process, starting with the first stage – the clarification of the collective goals.



9. This leads to the identification of the inhibitors preventing achievement of those goals and the introduction of enablers which will assist in goal achievement. This is followed by stage four – the final stage, where outcomes are measured and from that point on are monitored to ensure that goals are achieved and continue to be achieved.
10. In stages 2 and 3 (identifying barriers and introducing positive alternatives) Edwards believes that the use of humor goes a long way towards relationship building on a personal level through development of empathy and removal of antipathy, ultimately fostering cooperation and support on a more formal level.
11. Alan Kidman, HR Manager of Tellam Industries agrees that the use of humor and games within a training context can go a long way towards helping an organization achieve its goals. He has recently designed a two month long in house team building program for senior management and will soon be delivering the first of a series of 8 workshops and activities. The goal of the project, he says, was to strengthen communication and support within the extremely diverse departments of the organization.
12. Heads of six departments, collectively responsible for over 200 staff members, are to be involved in the series of seminars. The program, Kidman says, is experimental and if it proves to be a success is also intended for use in the organization's branches overseas. Previously the organization has taken a more formalized approach to staff development training relying on methods such as psychometric testing discussions, motivational conferences and formal appraisals. The new, and as yet untried, approach will challenge participants in, by comparison, rather radical ways. One initiative, for example, requiring the writing, organization and delivery of a theatrical performance to which all staff members will be invited to view.
13. Team building and motivational approaches include a wide variety of methodologies, techniques, theories and tools. Experts generally agree that different options may succeed or fail depending upon the culture of the organization in which they are implemented. A fit with the personalities involved is crucial to success. Not only is delivery of appropriate training sessions themselves important but professional and measurable follow up is also a must.

Task 1: Do the following statements agree with the information given in the reading passage?

- TRUE if the statement agrees with the information
 FALSE if the statement contradicts the information
 NOT GIVEN if there is no information on this

26. Typical stresses of working with different people are removed with the correct training.
27. Liaison Wizards claims that training has increased their income every year since the company started.
28. Many companies are unsuccessful because they are dogmatic and take advantage of staff.
29. In house training is more successful primarily because employees feel more involved in the planning.
30. The value of games as a training tool can be misunderstood.

Questions 31 – 35

Look at the following list of statements based on Reading Passage. Match the statement with the correct person A-E. You can use each letter more than once.

- a. Louise Edwards
- b. Brenda Durham
- c. Jeff Blackshaw
- d. Brian Osborne
- e. Alan Kidman

31. Many companies will experience friction between staff.
32. Training specifically tailored to a company is more efficient than generic training.



33. Modern methods of training, although still only being piloted, can bring people from different perspectives together.
34. Successful team relationships are formed in a positive work environment.
35. A lack of clarity as to what the term 'team building' means

Questions 36 – 40

Complete the summary **USING NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from Reading Passage 3 for each answer.

Team building can be considered to have 36 _____ clear stages. Initially, it is essential to be clear as to the 37 _____ of the entire team or company. Those barriers which are preventing the team from achieving these aims are identified as 38 _____, and are addressed by introducing enablers. Here the use of 39 _____ can be used to help build a cooperative relationship. Finally, success can be quantified and continually 40 _____.

ARTICLE B: Millennials in the workplace

1. Millennials (those born between the early 1980s and the early 1990s) make up a huge part of our workforce but they seem to lack loyalty to the companies and the leaders they work for. Multinational companies are noticing larger turnover rates of millennials as employee retention rates fall. This report looks at the findings of two large-scale surveys on the mindset of the millennial generation and explores how organizations can strive to address these needs, increase employee engagement and encourage retention.

Research

2. In a global survey conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), more than 40,000 millennial (born between 1983 and 1993) and non-millennial responses were collected on the topics of workplace culture, communication and working styles, pay structure, career development, work–life balance, etc.

In a separate global survey conducted by Deloitte, more than 10,000 millennials participated in a study about their perceptions of the threats and opportunities in the complex world of work.

3. Key findings

- Millennials are as committed to their work as their more senior colleagues.
- Millennials value interesting work and a good work–life balance. They do not believe that excessive work demands are worth sacrifices in their personal lives.
- Millennials want flexibility in their working hours and are willing to give up pay increases and promotions for a flexible working schedule. They believe that success should be measured by productivity and not by the number of hours they are seen in an office.
- Millennials want to feel supported and appreciated by their company and their superiors.
- Millennials want more opportunities to develop their skills. These include technological skills, teamwork and interpersonal skills.
- Millennials believe that businesses and business leaders should contribute to the improvement of society and they are more likely to be loyal to a company with strong ethics.

4. Recommendations

Organizations and managers wanting to retain millennials should consider:

- monitoring their workload and satisfaction levels with their work–life balance.



- creating a flexible work culture where employees have more control over their working hours and their work location.
- providing meaningful work and interesting opportunities.
- offering help and support in continuing professional development.
- Changing the organization's goals from being mainly about profit-making to motives that address social concerns and solve wider societal problems.

Task 1 Circle the best answer.

1. This report is based on the findings of how many surveys?

- a. two b. six
- c. forty thousand d. fifty thousand

2. This report was done for organizations that want to ...

- a. get rid of millennial employees. b. have higher turnover rates.
- c. prove that millennials are more difficult than non-millennials.
- d. increase the job satisfaction of the millennials who are working for them.

3. According to the report, which of the following would millennials be happy to do?

- a. give up family time on weekends to finish a work project b. sacrifice pay so that they can work shorter hours
- c. be left to find their own developmental opportunities
- d. be committed to their companies' profit-making motives

4. According to the report, which of the following would promote millennials' loyalty to their company?

- a. better pay structures
- b. more opportunities for promotion c. a more regular working schedule
- d. the company's commitment to the greater good of society

5. According to the report, millennials believe that it is important to ...

- a. be appreciated for the work you do. b. measure your productivity.
- c. show your bosses how long you are working in the office. d. work for a company that is bringing in a lot of money

6. If managers want to keep their millennial employees happy, they should ...

- a. avoid giving them feedback on the work they're doing.
- b. give them options to work from home.
- c. have them develop the technological skills of the non-millennials. d. promote the importance of remaining loyal to the company.

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