



Team Events

WHAT IS A TEAM EVENT?

A *Team Event* is something done by a *natural work team*. Sometimes called an 'awayday', a *Team Event* is an opportunity for a leader and the people who work from them to take a step back from day-to-day work, reflect and plan.

A *Team Event* is not the same as team building. We won't take you out into the countryside and get you to dangle each other on the end of ropes. We won't make you build bridges out of Lego bricks and draw profound conclusions about how you need to work better as a team.

TYPICAL CONTENTS AND DURATION

Typical contents

Successful *Team Events* are a combination of the following elements:

- Getting to know each other better
- Leader Speaks
- Strategy development
- Annual Planning
- Roles and responsibilities clarification
- Reviewing how the team has been doing
- Real work as required
- Improving interfaces with other teams

The knack is to get the balance right and do what is appropriate for your team at that time.

Duration

Experience shows that a 2-day format works best. Even with a full 2-days, many teams go away feeling they could have spent even longer on it. 1-day is the minimum amount of time needed to get anything sensible accomplished. Other options are lunchtime-to-lunchtime or a late afternoon start and then a full day. An important opportunity is for the team to socialise and therefore we do not recommend any heavy evening activity.

WHEN TO HAVE A TEAM EVENT

All management teams should have a *Team Event*:

- Once a year as a matter of routine
- When a new team has been formed
- When a new leader has been appointed to an existing team
- When some new members have joined
- When there is a lot of change going on in the team
- When the team has a lot of work to do
- When the team is in trouble - this could be team or task related

THE PROCESS

Stage 1 - Exploratory meeting

First we meet with the leader of the team to find out what is going on in the team both in terms of task and how they the members of the team are working together. We'll also ask why they want to have a *Team Event* and what they'd like to get out of it. If necessary, we'll also meet 1-1 with other key individuals or each team member. This is usually when the leader wants to canvas wider opinion but is not normally necessary when things are going well.

Stage 2 - Proposal

We will prepare a proposal outlining the structure and contents of the *Team Event*.

Stage 3 - Delivery

We run the *Team Event*, working closely with the leader throughout.

Stage 4 - Review meeting

Finally we will hold a review meeting, share reflections on the *Team Event*, find out what's happened since and give guidance on next steps.



LINKING TEAM EVENTS TO REAL LIFE

The main problem with traditional team building is that there is no link between the activities undertaken and real work back in the workplace. In contrast a *Team Event* using UIMPROVE:

- (1) Should be seen as part of the annual routine of the team and linked into the team meeting programme.
- (2) Should produce actions and projects as outcomes. These are then monitored and moved forward at the regular team meetings.

THE ELEMENTS BRIEFLY EXPLAINED

Getting to know each other better

An activity that does what it says. There are different formats depending on how well individuals already know each other.

Leader Speaks

An opportunity for the leader to say what they see as the important issues for the team followed by a structured question and answer session. Also useful in outlining background, setting direction, talking about change, achievements and so on. We will provide a checklist of topics to cover so the leader doesn't have to start from scratch.

Strategy development

There are various ways to develop strategy. We can start with a blank sheet of paper, review and update existing strategy, or translate organisational strategy into departmental strategy - whichever is appropriate.

Annual Planning

We can help the team to translate strategy into specific projects and pieces of work, prioritise, allocate tasks and projects to individuals, identify people to be involved, work out timescales - all as appropriate.

Roles and responsibilities clarification

There are two options for this. If it is useful for individuals to review their roles and responsibilities, we have a good structure for this. If roles and responsibilities are clear, then we can work on individual status reports.

Reviewing how the team has been doing

The team might wish to review the past 12 months identifying highs, lows and learning points. Alternatively there might be a specific incident or piece of work that needs to be reviewed.



Real work as required

If there is some real work the team needs to get on with, we will put together a structure to help do this.

Improving interfaces with other teams

An exercise that examines how the team is getting on with the rest of the organisation - what's working well, what isn't and what needs to be done about it.

OTHER TYPES OF TEAM EVENT

There are several other types of *Team Events* as follows:

Departmental Event

A *Departmental Event* involves bringing together a number of different teams that make up a particular Department.

Interface Event

An *Interface Event* involves two or more teams who need to improve the way they work together. The teams concerned might be from one organisation or from different organisations that need to work closely together.

Networking Events

Many organisations have a number of people doing similar jobs in different departments or locations who do not fall under the same line manager. It makes good sense for these people to get together now and again to make sure they are approaching their jobs in a consistent manner.

Merged Team Events

A *Merged Team Event* follows a very similar formula to a *Team Event* but is appropriate during or immediately after a reorganisation when two or more teams are about to or have just merged.