



Building High-Performance Innovative Teams That Over Deliver On Results

'There is no "I" in team.'

You may have heard this team building mantra in corporate boardrooms, at the water coolers and quoted as part of the corporate team-building motto. True enough, it's for this very reason that many teams fail to reach their potential.

Are you looking for a team-building "silver bullet" in each new team-building activity or exercise?

The whole team building game works best for teams whose "Intent" and "Insight" (we will get to these in a moment) have already been established.

Playing team building games, activities and exercises with teams that have no clarity of intent and insight is like putting gas in a car with no engine. You have the fuel, but you have no means of driving the machine forward.

You have the fuel, but you have nothing to drive ("intent" and "insight") the machine forward.

A team consists of moving, breathing and living parts called "Individuals" (you see there is an "I" in team). Understanding the "I" (individual) level will help you to better understand the "T" (team) level.

Following is a summary of the Seven I's of the "iTeam Building™" Process.



I*ntent* – Why does this team exist? What is this team suppose to do? What is the value it's supposed to contribute? Who is that value supposed to be targeted to? How is that value supposed to be delivered?

Before you can build an effective team with the right cast members and team players, you must first understand what the team's objectives are.

By first understanding what the team is designed to do, then you can more effectively understand who needs to be on that team, and what talents and skills they need to bring to the table. It's like putting together a puzzle.

If I were to give you a bag of 1,000 puzzle pieces and say “put it together,” it would be rather difficult. You may eventually get it done, but not without many hours of frustration, misplaced pieces and confusion.

However, if I were to give you a picture of that puzzle beforehand and then give you the 1,000 puzzle pieces, it would be much easier to reach the objective of putting the puzzle together.

As simple as it is, this same basic concept works with building your teams.

DO NOT build the team and then set the objective.

Set the objective FIRST and then build the needed team players around the goal of the team’s purpose.

If you were looking to build a winning basketball team, you will not likely sign a 500lb noseguard from the NFL to your team.

Sure, he may be an athlete and a darn good one at football. However, you are looking to win the NBA Finals, not the NFL Super Bowl.

Understanding the team’s purpose and objective first will allow you to better configure and build a powerful, high-performing team that produces explosive results.

Now, if you’re in the position where you have a team that’s already assembled but needs to move from underperforming to being a high-performing team, then, the team building process that follows can assist you in reconfiguring your team for maximum performance.



Insights – A proper foundation must be laid before team building can produce consistent positive results.

Each team member must...

- ü Understand his/her individual strengths.
- ü Understand his/her individual weaknesses.
- ü Understand individual roles and opportunities based on their strengths and weaknesses.
- ü Understand the team objectives and vision.
- ü Understand how individual goals connect with the team goals.



Investigate needs – Only a proper team diagnoses can yield the best direction for the ideal solutions for team building. Anything short of fully understanding the team’s needs is team building malpractice.

So, after you gather the individual **Insights**, you next need to **Investigate needs**.

Is there a problem that needs to be fixed?

Is there a goal that needs to be reached?

In either case, there is a “gap” that needs to be uncovered so you can have greater clarity of the distance to cover to get from where you are today to where you ultimately want to be.

1. What are the team’s goals, challenges and problems?
2. What is needed, wanted and wished for in the team?
3. What are the most important questions and issues the team should address in order to solve the problem or reach the goal?
4. What must the team master in order to solve the problem or reach the goal?
5. What are the team’s collective strengths?
6. What are the team’s collective weaknesses?
7. How does the team’s collective strengths and weaknesses relate to what the team must master in order to solve the problem or reach the goal?



Idea creation – Once you have clarity of the team’s top goals, challenges, problems, needs, wants and wishes, you can begin the team-building ideation process. This phase involves coming up with a variety of potential solutions for building a better team.

Using any number of proven ideation tools and processes you can engage each individual on the team in a fun results-driven team building brainstorming or rolestorming session to create breakthrough ideas.



Idea evaluation – Not every idea is worth implementing. So, it’s important to set up a list of criteria that will be used to evaluate which ideas and solutions are worth pursuing.

- What criteria should be used to evaluate proposed team ideas?
- Does the proposed solution fit the team’s strategic purpose?
- Is the level of difficulty of implementation satisfactory?
- What are the results of the cost/benefit analysis?
- If the select idea(s) are implemented would it close the gap from where you are to where the team wants and needs to be?



Idea implementation – The only thing worse than a bad idea is a good idea that is never implemented.

Therefore you must move beyond the planning and get into action.

Activating your ideas is the process of using sweat equity (your brains and your back) and the available financial equity to make your ideas a reality.

- ü Who is going to be playing what roles?
- ü Who should do what, and by when?
- ü What are the critical action items that must be done?
- ü What are the easiest things to do first to get momentum?
- ü What are the success measures so we can monitor how we're doing?



Integrate and **I**nnovative – Creativity, innovation and high performance teams are the result of designed processes – not chance.

Team building is more than an offsite office vacation. Team building is a process, a corporate lifestyle, it's a framework that is woven in the fabric of the company culture.

It's a process flow that is fun, inviting and results-oriented that is yet simple and comprehensive enough to allow new team members to quickly get into the flow and start making impactful contributions.

That means the process for continuous team building must be integrated and celebrated daily.

Using the simple framework of this "iTeam Building™" process, you can begin integrating proven processes that will allow you to lead your teams into high performance without high turnover.



iTeam Building™ is a trademark of Stephen Pierce and Innovation Marketers, LLC.