



Sports at Work: Team Building through Recreation

Once, work was a major source of friendships. We took our families to company picnics and invited our colleagues over for dinner. Now, work is a more transactional place. We go to the office to be efficient, not to form bonds. We have plenty of productive conversations but fewer meaningful relationships.

-Adam Grant of the New York Times

Making friends at work has been on the decline as people tend to have more than one profession in adulthood and are connected to current social circles 24/7 through online mediums, so many perceive that there is no need to make new friends.

We may see our co-workers in the same situations day after day and never consider the relationships or networking possibilities that may be built with our peers. Besides being a chance wellbeing, team sports and physical activities can help employees boost concentration, morale, and team building skills. Participation in these teams can highlight initiative and leadership skills in team members. Creating social connections does not always work through office parties, as people tend to hang out with people they are already familiar with. Engaging through sports or team activities provides an opportunity to find common ground, which is a perfect starting point for budding friendship or finding networking opportunities. Whether its disc golf, bowling, a break room bean bag competition, or a softball team, sports, and

team-based activities allow employees to set and achieve physical activity goals, make new connections and friendships at work and in life, and allow for greater productivity of an employee population that can work together.

Coming together is a beginning.

Keeping together is progress.

Working together is success.

-Henry Ford

Physical activity will not only strengthen employee bonds but the employees themselves could become fit and healthier overall. The CDC states that adults need 2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity (i.e. brisk walking) every week as well as, two or more days of strength training, featuring all muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms) each week. While 150 minutes can sound daunting, it's only about the length of a film and can be broken down into manageable times of exercise with at least moderate-intensity aerobic activity for ten minutes at a time or more.

What does moderate-intensity aerobic activity actually mean? The CDC defines it as when you break a sweat and wouldn't be able to sing a song but you would still be able to talk during the activity.



“The secret to getting ahead is getting started.”

– Mark Twain

Getting Started:

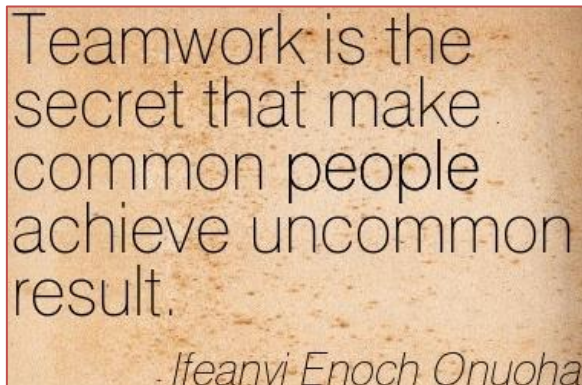
Host a survey, paper surveys or online.

(www.Surveymonkey.com)

- Ask what employees may already be doing for physical activity (hobbies, leagues, clubs, and pick-up games), anything that could open an opportunity for collaboration whether for one time activities, outings, or full league participation.
- Ask employees what kind of activities they would like to do.
- Ask employees what may prevent them from participating (cost, time conflicts, daycare, disabilities, etc.)
- Ask if employees have a preferred time or, day for activities.
- Ask employees if they would like to be on a committee for planning activities/league management.

Assess Resources

- Will administration be willing to pay into these activities/leagues or offer incentives?
- Is an employee willing to share his/her knowledge/equipment in a specific sport or activity?
- Is there interest in a specific sport or activity?
- Was there a history of team sports or other physical activities in the past? This is a great opportunity to chat up your higher-ups about getting support in moving forward as well as some lessons/equipment from the past.



Resources:

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/06/opinion/sunday/adam-grant-friends-at-work-not-so-much.html?_r=2

<http://www.jobsite.co.uk/worklife/benefits-setting-office-sports-team-11129/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/adults/>

Prepare

- Seek approval of and encourage supervisors and administration to be involved.
- Determine if insurance is required (Some leagues require insurance for teams).
- Encourage your employees/co-workers to be on the team or participate in the activity.
- Send emails, post to community/all-staff calendar/ place sign-up form in breakroom/ paystub/wellness newsletter. Make sure to have enough folks in case someone cannot participate.
- Determine a team name and logo/mascot (even creating silly team names for one-time events can increase team bonding).
Fun Tip! Have everyone write down an adjective and a noun on another slip and place in separate containers and draw team names out. One adjective + one noun= team name (ex. Purple Raccoons or Rusty Buckets).
- Create a needs list and have equipment donated, or pool money to purchase/rent equipment or rental space, if necessary.
- Fundraise if necessary.

Implement

- Host practices, games/event.
- If it is a recurring activity, begin a social media group to help track dates, events, and participation in a casual setting.
- Continue to promote at work and at wellness committee meetings and welcome the opportunity for new ideas to flourish.

Evaluate

- Host a survey (online or paper) asking if and why employees enjoyed the event.
- Report findings to wellness committee to create a successful future event or team.
- Keep it up. Start cycle again with a new or improved activity.

