

How to unify the best: teambuilding in sales

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When we speak about team ship, there appears a desire to exclude competition from a set of management tools. And that is not fully correct. Competitiveness is transferred from interpersonal level of self-conscious level of functioning and communications to internal level of self-consciousness of every separate employee. To put it simpler, it is important that a manager and a seller become competitors themselves and compete with themselves. It is opened in habitual practice of a change of personnel parameters of resultativeness, efficiency, optimality. A good seller is the one, who constantly longs for excelling themselves, beats their records, improves the results. If he does not compare himself with others, then he always compares himself with himself and his current achievements with his previous ones. Competition for him is his inner fuel for development. That should principally be taken in mind while staff recruiting in sales departments and also for the purpose of teambuilding.

For a successful seller a psychological profile, described here in below in a table, is distinctive:

PARAMETER	MEANING
Professional qualities	Longing for a commercial efficiency
	Certainty about high quality and product liquidity
	Congruence (entirety)
	Ability for constant studying and self-developing
Personal qualities	Ambitiousness and wish to earn
	Sense of purpose and self-motivation
	Consciousness and positive thinking
	Empathy and flexibility
	Attention and analyticity
	Communicability and readiness for bigger charges in communication
	Stress- resisting
Working capacity	

Type of activity orientation	Orientation on the result and search for opportunities
Type of reference	Internal reference
Type of motivation	Motivation of achievement (it is clear that it is not definitive: external type of reference, motivation of avoidance, orientation on process and following procedures)

Table 1. *Psychological profile of an ideal seller*

Such general profile could be turned into a tool, if it is used as a questioner, adding a column with evaluation of this quality with scores, for example, from 1 to 10. Or as a tool of self-estimation and control, if we include here in a question: “what do you lack the most so that your index (or index of your subordinates) was maximum and what should be done so that it becomes maximum».

In Russia, and all around the world in general, it is difficult to find such people, as there are very few of them. The majority of people are likely to compare themselves with others, and others with themselves. And the minority is independent from this inclination. They compare themselves only with themselves- in time, in achievements, according to indexes of working capacity, efficiency, successfulness. Such people possess high level of moral autonomy. The majority is quite dependent on the opinion of their surroundings, as they are committed to traditions of a community, their moral autonomy is not well developed. Representatives of the majority do not like expressing their individual traits and solve something on their own behalf, it is much more comfortable for them to act in a team. There are very few people of «modern», in essence, Western-European type, in Euro Asian cultural environment, even among young people. That is why they are so valuable, that is why there is a fight for them in the market.

What does it speak about? – Before you build a team, you need to find people, who you will be able to make it from. There is a stereotype that sellers

in B2B are inactive people, who sit not in fields, but in offices next to windows. Often it is fair and really corresponds to the reality. They usually answer an asked them question during specialized trainings “Where is your working place?”- “at the table”, “near window”, “next to the entrance”. Though the right answer here in is the only one- “my working place is in the mind of my client!”. Actually, B2B sellers spend a lot of time in front of a computer, monitoring market on the Internet. Some of them perceive this important analytical part of work as a routine or a possibility to have a rest. Very often they are deeply in this state of half-rest/ half-work, which demotivates them. If you have a goal “to put them on track”, for the first time they would be hopelessly lost for commercial activity, the meaning here in is the only one- to put them into a team where they will be without piece, quiet and sleep.

Here in the moment of personnel traits is important, that is the reason why the accent is put on the moment of burn-out. Making trading teams, like recruiting people in sales, you need to pay more attention to qualities than to competences. It is clear, that some minimal, “incoming” level of competences should be defined, but anyway personnel traits are the basic ones. There will be no team without high level of a team.

Teambuilding and motivation, as well as other functions of management, are not what appears automatically, when a person is appointed. Realization of these functions in scale of personality of a manager is provided by relevant competences, which you need to learn in order to master and develop on a constant basis, improve and “pump” regularly. In scale of a company, environment, which should be created by administrative methods, provides team building, unification, team management.

Sometimes teams are built spontaneously, historically. But more often they are formed purposefully for solving some specific tasks. Teams could be created from ready teams or from combinations of representatives from initially different teams, for example, while creating project groups. Often

activities for team building, its tightening, forcing its manageability, roles distributing, pumping leadership are held in existing structured enterprise. For example, in sales department.

Basing on different contexts of team building there are four basic approaches to managing time building process: emotional- integrating (basing on emotional unity), role-based (basing on functional labor distribution), problematically oriented (basing on objectives and tasks) and dynamical (basing on stages of development). Every approach suggests using of a certain set of teambuilding tools, which corresponds to his idea.

№	APPROACH	TOOLS
1	Emotional integrating	- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • funicular trainings • trainings of team building • corporate events
2	Role-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training by the method of role games • business games • team studies
3	Problematically-oriented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meetings • brainstorming • organizational and strategic sessions
4	Dynamic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trainings of project management • agile-management • methods of group dynamics

Table 2. *Team building tools*

Generally speaking, any methods of formatting and developing teams depend on such terms, as sphere and format of its future activity, goal and objectives, open or closed (official, semi-official or non-official) regime of work, character and level of internal discipline, character of delegated responsibilities, working regulations, specifics of choosing participants, system of their motivation.

Formation, development and motivation of trading teams would directly define their goals. They could be set in the following directions:

- stabilization of profit
- increase of profit

- increase of sales volume
- increase of middle bill of a purchase
- development of certain sales units
- output of a new product to the market
- development of new clients
- saving existing clients
- teaching and mentoring

In order to form a team, it is important to orient in the following parameters:

- team size
- team composition
- team norms
- level of unity

Ways of teambuilding and team developing, not depending on any variables, are oriented on formation such features of integrated group of people, as compatibility, adaptiveness, single-mindedness, common values and demands, approximately the unique level of competent development, systemics.

Often a team is formed around a leader, that is why he is given tasks to unite and motivate the members of a team. In order to do it he has to possess famous professional and management competences, as well as developed emotional intellect and flexible skills.

Quality of a team is important for a team- united, played and manageable team. These qualities of a team could be estimated with help of checked algorithms of diagnostics, for example, by means of questioners.

№	Question	Variant of answer
1	Which people work in a team?	a) positive b) negative c) more positive d) more negative

		e) both equally f) have not thought about it
2	Are you satisfied with a working environment in your team?	a) yes b) no c) more yes than no d) more no than yes e) I am indifferent
3	What is psychological compatibility between members of a team?	a) ideal b) more enough c) more not enough d) there is a problem e) I am indifferent
4	Are non-formal relations in a team developed?	a) yes b) no c) more yes than no d) more no than yes e) I am indifferent
5	Are you willingly take part in non-formal events of a team?	a) yes b) no c) more yes than no d) more no than yes e) I am indifferent
6	What is the atmosphere in a team?	a) friendly b) hostile c) neutral d) I am indifferent
7	What is working cooperation in your team?	a) ideal b) more high c) more low d) low e) non satisfactory
8	Are relations and roles distribution fair in the team?	a) yes b) no c) more yes than no d) more no than yes e) Cannot say
9	Are all participants of a team active in their working deals?	a) all b) the majority c) half d) the minority e) nobody is active
10	Is the team stable?	a) yes b) no

		c) more yes than no d) more no than yes e) Cannot say
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Table 3. *Questioner for team diagnostics*

Answers would show not only the level of awareness and estimation of the respondent, but also the level of his personnel participation in the team.

Now let's open some from these technologies basing on the material of cases.

Case № 1. *Teambuilding in the format of “reality games”*

PROBLEM	Lack of informativeness, unique thinking and teamness among managers in branches of a big holding
OBJECTIVE	Unify them into a team and reinforce their corporate spirit
SOLUTION	Usage of «reality game» as a tool of team building in mixed teams
RESULT	Employees of different business units in a holding as a result of conducting a reality game, got acquainted and started to communicate, learnt about deals and problems of each other, later on they cooperated friendly and constructively

Top-management of the holding “MetalsplavsnaB” (company is imagined), which has several enterprises and a net of branches, became aware of a team building objective. Practice showed that managing commercial departments of different units, which in this or that way have to work in a team format (for example, in projects), even in spite of different locations, show deficit of this teamness and dedication to a corporate spirit. They lack agreement in opinions, teamwork, respect to each other and necessary level of awareness about each other. Regular conduct of corporate events of educational, reporting and event-holiday character in Moscow for representatives of branches did not give any relevant effect: people continued to group basing on regional feature.

In order to find a really working tool in order to solve this task, top management of the holding applied to an agency, which renders services of gaming technique in business. They developed and realized not typical teambuilding, the essence and details of which were known only to several people.

What was done?

Before the start of summer nearly fifty people: directors of commercial directions, sales managers, marketing specialists and PR specialists received as a reward, trips for a week to one of Balkan countries. They were promised a rest there for the period of five days after three days of corporate studying. They agreed for this mix because of the resort.

They flew to the «resort» through Moscow, where they were mixed by the reason of “positional placement”, and when they arrived, they were sent to different buses, that is why there were several mixed groups with representatives of different regional enterprises and branches. So, they had to get acquainted and start communication on their way.

All the buses went in different routes, which after some time stopped on the road, made their passengers leave the buses because of repair, and then they left. People had to get to their destination through an open crossed area, at the same time they were solving different organizational tasks, which required good team cooperation.

Process of teambuilding was a range of alleged accidents, which happened with participants. Every group of participants felt that it became a victim of some accident and was left in mountains to the mercy of fate without any contact with colleagues. Instructors from the agency were in every group, pretending to be new employees, who, according to the legend, had to blend into the team. The instructors could only invisibly flexibly model the situation and guard, but the decisions were made by the participants.

Having finished their routes through organized in advance obstacles, all the groups met in one location, where the payoff of the events was waiting for them, as well as prizes and transport, which had to deliver them to the place of their rest.

What for all was needed?

Team building in the format of a reality game had a purpose to mend communications between representatives of different enterprises and branches of the holding, which had to become a team. Taking into consideration status of participants and character of set communicative objectives, none of standard forms to conduct teambuilding training could guarantee 100 % of involvement the participants into the process. Earlier, in the frames of all the previous forms of integration, some participants of the events just refused from fulfillment orders of trainers, moderators, facilitators. They hooked for their “separateness”, which they also misunderstood, they were careful about their status and current situations, they were afraid of changes, which they intuitively felt. That was not a principal training, so there were no made in advance preparations in the form of exercises and program conclusions from them. There was also a risk of failure to fulfil it, but situation itself was different: not a comfortable place with an AC and water dispenser but an open area, where they spent their real-life forces. So, participants’ involvement was fully provided, though when they did not understand that they are inside purposeful process of team building.

What was the result of all this?

Conduction of this reality game gave a range of useful effects. Several people, indignant with the fact, “what was done to them”, filed an application about leaving the company. Top management let them go without any regrets: they were not starring in everyday work earlier, so

there was no reason to hold them after the experiment, as they showed their true attitude to the company. The majority, meanwhile, liked the adventure. All the rest, firstly, got acquainted with each other, learnt strong and weak sides about each other. Information between them, including also working questions, was accepted naturally, even in so extraordinary circumstances, that is why it was well perceived and remembered. Secondly, they worked well together, having known each other, again, in so unusual situation. Thirdly, after such a challenge, they rested together and had an opportunity to discuss what happened. So, later on, in context of current and project work, representatives of different enterprises and branches of “Metalsplavsnab” communicated freely, friendly, constructively and productively.

Above described case shows that “reality game” works in the role of a teambuilding tool. “The essence of a reality game” — to present all strictly and motivating, from the position of team building, events as a chain of accidents- and what is more important!- to control the chain»¹. Such tool should be implemented only in case, when standard ways of team building by these or those reasons (such as, for example, internal resistance in a team) give no result. Another thing is that initially you need to predict, forecast and understand all the risks, which such radical method of actualization horizontal communications and team uniting guarantee.

Usual trainings of team building would cope with their objectives in the majority of cases quite satisfactorily. In another situation, they would help even when the situation seems unpromising. That is shown by the following case.

Case № 2. Corporate team building

¹ Cases of real team buildings from Mikhail Klemanov . <https://event.ru>

PROBLEM	High staff turnover in sales department
OBJECTIVE	Stabilize the staff and form its material motivation
SOLUTION	Regularly holding in the company teambuilding trainings
RESULT	During a period of half a year a problem of staff turnover was solved, team was stabilized; cooperation between different departments of the company entered a new level of quality

LLC «LopNEP» (company is imagined) – not big trading-logistical company, the most part of which staff is sellers and warehouses’ workers. Problem is their high turnover. In spite of quite competitive level of salary, practice shows that during a year full rotation of employees could happen in a year period in sales department. It was not easy to understand the reasons for this situation, as the company put the issues of saving employees in the last place. In some moment a management realized the emergency of this situation and took the decision to settle the problem.

Previous measures did not help: they were connected with motivation, but introduction of inducements and penalties did not provide stability and did not influence the behavior or the staff. Auction “The best seller” was held, the winner was given the last model of iPhone, however even he left the company: he was not inspired by the prize, neither was he persuaded nor saved. Also, other methods of stabilization the situation were not effective.

What was done?

Appearance of a new HR favorably influenced the company and helped to solve the problem with non-stability and demotivation of the staff. New HR, young ambitious specialist after graduation from the university with a degree in psychology immediately found out what the problem was: employees lacked not material motivation, but personnel relations and favorable climate in the team. Employees, in particular sellers, were not pressed, but they thought themselves small screws without names, and though it did not tense them immediately, then with time it turned into a

factor of inconsistency between employees and the company. In order to change the situation, HR- manager launched in the company a chain of corporate trainings in team building. Firstly, she did it with her own forces. From the very beginning the trainings were under interest and employees did not miss them. These trainings gave them what he lacked: communication, new knowledge, work in groups, dynamics of growing. Then, with support of the management of the company, external specialists were invited in order to “water down the blood”. Events reached almost 100 % of involvement and gave positive feedbacks.

How it worked?

Besides those employees, who started to communicate long time before as they worked together for a long period of time, they still learnt more about each other and studied the basics of team synergy, also the trainings influenced favorably on new employees. They helped them quickly and naturally adapt in a team. And due to the fact, that representatives of sellers, warehouse employees, transport workers, packers, security, switchboard operators started cooperating in trainings, solving one and the same tasks, all worked by them models of cooperation were transferred into real working practice.

What did it give?

Thanks to corporate teambuilding, every employee was able to feel that his actions in most part define the final result of a team. Borders between departments were constantly smashed, communicative convention increased the quality of cooperation between them.

So, implementation of teambuilding allowed them to achieve the following results:

- during half a year a problem of staff turnover was solved in the company, team was stabilized;

- adaptation of new employees started passing quicker
- cooperation between different departments of the company entered a new level of quality.

As the practice shows, standard trainings are perceived the best in teams, which are not spoilt by the attention from the management. They could also work effectively in companies, which are used to studies and development. But in order to save the interest to them among the audience, which got used to them, you need to find new, original forms of trainings and not be afraid of making experiments.

Case № 3. Reality-training: original team building

PROBLEM	Traditional trainings of team building lost efficiency, it required to hold them regularly
OBJECTIVE	To conduct an original training with the effect of teambuilding and teaching practical skills, useful for sales
SOLUTION	Development and conduct of an authorial Reality-training into flexible skills
RESULT	Effect of team building was provided by intensive cooperation in frame of group work, achievement of synergy between participants

Employees from sales department from a trading house “SprosChoz” (company is imagined), which deals with distribution of industrial and servicing special clothes wholesale or retail, through trading nets and for orders, got used to different trainings. Both “selling” and team building. In some moment the management noticed that interest to these trainings started to disappear. Feedback and reporting indexes of work showed that efficiency of this work was decreased significantly. But the process should not to be given up: because of possible staff rotation, sellers had to be kept in tonus constantly. Moreover, HR-analytics showed that regular increase

of qualification became a business card of HR-brand of the company. People agreed to it. Everybody, who knew, positively reacted to it.

Owner set an objective to find a possibility to conduct training in the original form. For this purpose, external training company was hired, the following terms were given to it. Program of team building should:

- be oriented on sales department;
- have nonstandard content and scenario;
- orient on general result so that all the participants acted as the one team;
- not to include moving activity and physical efforts;
- besides the effect of team building, give also skills, which are useful in professional activity of a seller.

What was done?

External training company developed original authors training for setting and developing flexible skills, including intuition, empathy, emotional intellect, mimics, body language and gestures. Serials about experts and investigators- physiographists, as well as different court talk-shows were taken as a basic of gaming techniques and scenario. Idea was out into a scenario, played out in exercises and group dynamics, it was also probated on employees of a training company. The objective of the game was to reveal lie, misinformation, communicative manipulations and attempts of hidden influence, also to learn how to cope with situations, when they appear from the side of an interlocutor, an opponent, a speaker, a client.

Program consisted of three parts:

- *theory from the specialist- vinificator*, who revealed the main manipulative methods and “micvrogestures”, which spoke for lie;
- *individual practice* for setting skills of lie definition during the game, made according to the principle “mafia”;
- *group practice* of drilling these skills in dynamic exercises.

Game in the second part of the training was to drill by every participant given to him in the frame of the game task accusation, even if it was fair in this game role. During his performance, the participant had to control his mimics and body movement so that not to show lie and attempts to manipulate the audience of players. The rest participants of a training had to reveal the lie and define the truth in the speech of performers basing on received by them knowledge in theoretical part.

In the third part of the training participants played roles of jury in a game court, and playing technicians, who had the roles of a judge, a prosecutor and an advocate, gave them for consideration administrative and criminal “cases”. The subjects of these cases were real, a bit transformed stories in the format of storytelling, but not just created and non-convincing, not connected with life plots. And also playing technicians were not actors, but ordinary people without special preparation, which could have allowed them to hide manipulations and lie. They were invited to a training especially from aside.

According to the results of the training, work was analyzed, a trainer gave commentaries for usage by the participants given to them knowledge and tools, as well as evaluation of recommendations.

What did it give?

Effect of team building was provided by intensive cooperation in the frames of group work, achievement of synergy by the participants. Later on, they acknowledged that the received by them knowledge and skills helped them a lot at work and even in everyday life.

Trainings for teambuilding are often associated exclusively with funicular methods or other movable forms of uniting, including all-too-common exercises “for trust”. However, fortunately, that is not true. The theme of team building is now actively developing: new methods are

appearing to present it through indirect influence, and absolutely different, as it could seem, themes and objectives for skills. Teambuilding is intellectualizing: “smart” tracks start working in it, oriented on communicative skills, influence, leadership, roles division and other soft skills-flexible competences. It often happens – which is actually good for an employer, that it works better in sales. Bright leaders sometimes are selfish, and they have a jealous attitude to their success, and to secrets of their achievements. They are individualists, that is why it is psychologically difficult for them to work in a team. Meanwhile it is important for a management that such stars gave positive example to colleagues, and, desirably, taught them something. They are to be opened for cooperation not directly and not vividly, not noticeably and tactically, step by step and with respect. And it seems to be the best format for solution of this problem – teambuilding- nothing better could be created.

Let us give the following thesis as conclusions from the above discourse.

- Teamness does not exclude internal competition, it could be any in the view of the object, relations and criteria, the most important here in is that it does not break the core of the teamness- mutual achievement of the goal and connection of award for one and all at common result.
- Before you form a team, you need to find people, who you would be able to form it from. Preferably, all of them possess orientation on the result and internal type of reference.
- Sometimes teams are made historically, spontaneously, but even there the team is to be supported regularly.
- More often teams are formed purposefully, for certain objectives and with certain, set in advance, parameters, from which key ones are functions, roles and spheres of responsibilities of its participants.
- Compatibility, similarity in goals and range of personnel consistency - that is the most important, which unites people into a team. You could

learn about it in teambuilding. The same format is necessary also for “adjusting” members of a team to common and necessary for them standards and algorithms of cooperation.