

OUT OF THE 'BORED' ROOM

HOW TEAMBUILDING
CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE
BEYOND THE WORKPLACE.

BY LAURA KENNEDY





One of the top challenges companies face is fostering – and evolving – a positive spirit of teamwork, creativity, and innovation in the workplace. One of the top challenges employees have is maintaining a healthy balance between the demands of their career and perceived expectations from up the corporate ladder, with a fulfilling personal life.

Can a teambuilding experience help achieve both? Absolutely, according to Mark O'Dell, Developer & Director of Adventures in Excellence for Skyline Hotels & Resorts.

“The biggest thing we’re focused on is getting people to reconnect to their ‘human selves,’ to disconnect from technology, from corporate expectations and from personal limitations. By having fun together as their true self, they understand each other and themselves better, which continues back in the workplace and in personal lives as well. You learn more from having fun with someone in one hour than you do strictly working together for one year. You can’t know someone if you only ever see them wearing their work hat.”

At Deerhurst Resort, where the program began almost 20 years ago, and at Horseshoe Resort, there is an incredible array of outdoor experiential learning elements that lend naturally to teambuilding programs. From low and high ropes courses, adventure parks, trail adventures, and waterfront or ski hill challenges (depending on the location), the sky is virtually the limit when it comes to recreational facilities. But for groups strapped for time or for those meeting at the downtown Toronto Skyline properties – the Pantages and Cosmopolitan Hotels – creative, customizable programs are also available.

Why does the teambuilding experience resonate so much? Because people learn things about themselves and accomplish feats they never knew they were capable of. After all, the first 20 minutes of the program is devoted to setting a new comfort zone, letting your guard down, and pushing your limits.

Mark calls it ‘challenge by choice’. “Looking at the high ropes course is daunting but we encourage people to challenge themselves with bite-size goals until they feel confident and excited to push themselves further. For example, at the rock climbing wall the first goal could simply be putting on the harness. The second is to approach the wall. Bit by bit, they challenge themselves further and leave with a lasting exhilaration of accomplishment. Here, we foster that feeling of, Yes, I can do this!”

While adventure and reality TV-themed challenges (like the *Amazing Race* and *Survivor*) are extremely popular, motivation can be taken indoors with a similar impact. The most insightful of the classroom-style workshops is Personality Dimensions™, which enables employees to understand themselves and each other that much better, in an engaging and interactive setting. Delegates leave with a new perspective of themselves and are excited to put their learning to use both in the office and at home.

Ultimately, it’s the ability to customize programs and the coaching that sets Adventures in Excellence apart. According to Mark, HR professionals who have been involved with teambuilding for 30 years have told him they’ve never seen so much impact in such a short time. These exceptional results translate into positivity that employees can practice with one another day-to-day, helping companies to build an environment that is innovative and collaborative. One teambuilding experience tailored to your needs could be the first step towards a healthier, livelier work life.™