



# The Insider's Guide to Systematic Team Building

Four Steps to Efficient, High Performance  
Business Teams



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# Executive Summary

## Systematic Team Building

Teamwork is now an everyday reality for thousands of people and team building & team performance are central to company profitability. When organised into teams, people contribute greater levels of achievement and work well with their colleagues given a shared sense of purpose. In fact, the advent of teams account for many of the increases in productivity over the past decade.

Unfortunately, most companies fail to exploit the full potential of team building as a vehicle for sustained productivity and business growth. Some fail because they are unable to repeat earlier team building successes. Some fail because team building is considered to consist of issues that are hard to quantify in the workplace. Others fail because of the inability to measure team performance and learn from their mistakes. Others even neglect the development of their team members and as a result, individual and collective performance suffers.

There is a cost for such failure. Companies that don't develop team building end up with badly performing operations and spend more money making up for such inefficiencies. This is because without effective team building, companies are faced with low productivity, low staff morale, low staff retention rates and an overburdened management that is constantly dealing with personnel issues. Companies who cannot build successful teams also loose customers through poor service levels and an inability to match the efficiency of more productive competitors.

To this end, Four Groups facilitates 4G, a new method for creating efficient, high performance business teams. 4G is a great way to bring a measured and controlled approach to your most valuable asset – people. 4G brings with it the following benefits;

- Increased levels of productivity and higher levels of goal achievement
- Increased levels of staff retention and employee morale
- Increased levels of management efficiency

This document distils the approach pioneered by Four Groups in adding to individual productivity and team performance. By focussing on people as the critical element in the team building process, management is free to determine remuneration and job functions while individuals are assessed for their strengths and abilities. Through Four Group's four stage process, goals are set, new teams proposed, team members identified and results are measured. Only through 4G can companies realise the full potential of their most valuable asset – people.



# Section 1 – Business Benefits

## Benefit 1 – Team Productivity & Results

The essence of any team is to deliver value that is greater than the sum of its parts. While team productivity is the lifeblood of all departments and organisations, the ability to optimise the performance of teams and consistently achieve results ensures sustainable success at all levels. Four Groups offers companies benefits in three areas;

- Team building that provides a hard, quantifiable return on investment
- Team performance that is measured against existing benchmarks & goals
- Improved individual and team results that are clearly visible

Many team building exercises fail to show a direct link with the bottom line or at best can only be considered to foster 'team bonding'. Neither of these approaches have a sustainable impact on the bottom line, nor do they contribute towards the development of a company's human capital. Some approaches fail to understand the links between personal relationships and team performances whilst others focus only on short term morale boosters. However, Four Group's systematic approach to team building offers management tangible, quantifiable improvements in team performance.

Team assessment is critical for smooth operations and ensuring that management's goals are met. Any new approach to team building and team performance needs to be benchmarked against existing standards and targets. To this end, improvements in targets and output can be easily measured and then cross checked against control groups or historic averages. In this way, it is possible for management to demonstrate improved performance against previously agreed internal criteria.

With the two factors above in mind, it is clear that any improvements in individual and team performance are easy to demonstrate and can be clearly seen by management, individual team members and through various internal measurement techniques. Improved individual and collective results are clearly visible. A clear link to results and tangible benefits are of paramount importance when building teams and improving results.

## Benefit 2 – Staff Retention & Morale

Staff retention & morale is a long term driver of team and company success. Building and developing teams and the individuals that make up those teams is best carried out in an environment which improves morale and leads to increased levels of employee retention – even the best laid plans can be put to rest by people's sudden departure! Four Groups brings triple benefits to companies engaged in team building and who are considering the impact of staff retention and morale on those plans.

- Successful team building enhances staff morale & productivity rates
- Higher levels of staff morale reduces staff turnover
- Lower levels of staff turnover saves recruiting & training costs

Success in the work place and morale go hand in hand, when people achieve success, their morale goes up and when people's morale goes up, so do their own successes. This phenomenon applies equally in a team situation as it does to the individuals that comprise that team. This complimentary cycle creates a self-fulfilling prophecy that benefits management and team members. However, experience tells us that this cycle is hard to create and even harder to sustain. 4G builds teams that foster success and higher levels of staff morale, creating a win-win situation for all concerned.



As the morale of a team increases and the results achieved rise in parallel, the immediate knock on effect is a reduction in staff turnover rates and a rise in retention. Retention levels are important for sustained growth and in isolation, are a very good indication of staff morale. Lower staff turnover allows for increasing levels of investment in human capital and a growing talent pool from which management can draw.

The combination of higher staff morale and lower levels of staff turnover saves companies money twice over. Firstly, there is no need to pay for additional recruiting costs which must be met when existing team members leave the company and replacements are sought. Secondly, because existing players have been at the company for a longer period, their levels of training and productivity rise, contributing to a more effective working environment. Successful team building is a critical factor in raising staff morale, reducing turnover and cutting costs.

## Benefit 3 – Management Efficiency

The third business benefit derived from 4G is the increasing levels of efficiency experienced by management. Successful business teams require little management time, freeing up additional resources for more pressing issues. Compounded with increased team productivity and improved staff morale, the benefits gained by management equate to increased performance across multiple layers within the organisation. Management's efficiency increases as follows;

- Management can quickly judge team improvements based on experience
- Management spends less time dealing with personnel issues
- Management is free to deal with issues of greater strategic importance

A good manager is able to rely on experience and their own judgement. In the case of team building, management should be able to gauge the chemistry of a new team and the likelihood of its success in a reasonably quick period of time based on their existing working relationships with team members. If nothing else, management's reference point provides a respected second opinion to any team building exercise. By extension, management is able to quickly judge team improvements and provide a valued opinion on any changes.

One measure of success in a team building environment is the reduction in the number of personnel issues. When people and teams work well, levels of autonomy increase as management receives the desired results. Additionally, teams are able to deliver without significant management intervention. The improved operational environment is conducive to further success and the reduced time spent on non essential items builds greater levels of business & management efficiency.

Greater efficiencies in the work place and management's ability to quickly judge the success of team building based on their personal experiences frees up time and improves operational performance. The less time that is required for non-core issues directly increases the amount of time that can be spent engaged in essential activities. Again, this adds to the bottom line of both team members and management. In short, management is free to deal with issues of greater strategic importance.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Four Group's systematic approach to team building offers companies three distinct benefits and clearly demonstrates a tangible return on investment. Your levels of team productivity and results will rise, your staff retention and morale increases and you experience greater levels of management efficiency.



- Team productivity & results increase
- Staff retention & morale rises
- Management efficiency improves



# Section 2 – Four Group’s Approach

## Overview

Four Groups systematic approach to team building consists of four steps that take a group through the various elements of the process. The following details this process and illustrates a breakdown of each individual step.

### Step 1 – Engagement

What problems are faced with human resources and team performance?  
What, if any, existing systems are being used to manage teams?  
What goals are set for team performance, personnel & internal culture?

### Step 2 – Planning

Four Groups submits a proposal detailing the team building plan  
The client ensures that the work matches company goals  
Once the client is happy, sign-off takes place and the plan is executed

### Step 3 – Execution

The systematic profiling of individuals and potential team members  
Reviews on behalf of team supervisors and management  
The implementation and establishment of new teams and new members

### Step 4 – Results

An initial 1 month review period conducted with management  
A review period at 3 months and an initial estimate of ROI  
6 – 12 month final review and full ROI realisation

## Step 1 – Engagement

The first step in Four Group’s methodology is Engagement. Engagement allows Four Groups to gain a full and proper understanding of a company’s business and all relevant team building and human resource issues. There are three areas that are addressed, each one contributing towards an overall perspective.

What problems are faced over human resources and team performance?  
What, if any, existing systems are being used to manage teams?  
What goals are set for team performance, personnel & internal culture?

Data gathering for each issue is to be undertaken through a series of interviews, meetings and discussions, allowing the company in question to raise issues of relevance and enabling Four Groups to establish a foundation of understanding. This process is intended to align company goals with the outcomes of Four Groups team building process. It is important at this stage that both parties have a full and frank appreciation of the process that is to be embarked upon and that a sense of shared purpose is evident.



## Step 2 – Planning

Once a firm foundation of understanding has been reached, the second step allows Four Groups to plan and propose a route map forward. Having gained an overview of specific company issues, a team building strategy can be proposed and reviewed by the client. This stage encompasses three elements.

- Four Groups submits a proposal detailing the team building work
- The client ensures that the work matches company goals
- Once the client is happy, sign-off takes place and the plan is executed

The proposal submitted by Four Groups contains the specific elements of the proposed team building strategy. This strategy is dependent on a number of factors and is a bespoke piece of work, tailored to each individual client and each individual project. While it would be inappropriate to mention all of the factors taken into account, major influences include; company culture, the nature and performance of existing teams, drivers of success, rewards given for goal attainment, job descriptions and environmental stability. Each proposal takes account of the wider corporate environment during the development of each team building strategy.

When a client receives a team building proposal, they are encouraged to check the strategy against existing internal plans and considerations. At this point, it is important that management and relevant corporate actors acknowledge the changes due to take place and that these are in line with overall goals and expectations. It is also important to state that team building remains the sole focus of Four Groups work; there is no attempt to re-engineer business processes or alter the balance of specific internal variables. Clients are encouraged to assess the proposal in light of their own considerations and ensure that a tight alignment between the team building proposal and their business goals exists.

Once the client is happy with the submitted proposal and both parties have a firm understanding of the client's goals and the work to be carried out by Four Groups, sign-off takes place and 4G begins.

## Step 3 – Execution

The third step marks the bulk of the value added work undertaken by Four Groups. It is during the third stage that the 4G process becomes evident and the client can begin to witness the benefits associated with Four Group's approach. The execution stage consists of the following elements;

- The systematic profiling of individuals and potential team members
- Reviews on behalf of team supervisors and management
- The implementation and establishment of new teams and new members

The systematic profiling of individuals and potential team members is the most critical stage of the four stage process. The process itself is quick and simple and can be applied to anyone, regardless of whether they are existing employees or are from external environments. In order for each individual and potential team member to be profiled, three simple tasks are undertaken; firstly, a psychometric instrument is completed and the results are compiled and assessed, secondly, a simple passport style photograph is taken of the individual and finally, the individual is interviewed. This simple three stage process is familiar, simple and effective, allowing the appropriate team focussed strengths and weaknesses to be identified. Further details of this process can be obtained via the document "An Introduction to 4G". Please contact us for more information, details are at the end of this document.



Having successfully identified potential team members and with the new teams proposed, there is a good opportunity to review the changes with management and supervisors. This is as much a chance to screen the new teams as to avoid any potential conflicts as it is to offer an 'advanced viewing' for the benefit of the client. While individual difficulties are not anticipated, it is wise to have full knowledge of the changes that are about to take place. This then smoothes the process of building new teams and reduces the chance of any unforeseen difficulties or extenuating circumstances on behalf of both the client and Four Groups.

Assuming that management is happy with the proposed changes, Four Groups will instigate the establishment of the new teams in accordance with the appropriate team orientated strengths and weaknesses identified previously. It is the work carried out by the team members that will determine the exact nature of the new teams and their communication channels.

## Step 4 – Results

The fourth stage of Four Group's methodology focuses on deliverable results and the returns on investment. While the team building process carried out during the third stage is reasonably quick, the results stage is likely to deliver after a minimum of 3 months and the full benefits can only be realised after 6 – 12 months. Given the nature of 4G, clients can expect a ramp up period in order to feel the benefits in totality.

- An initial 1 month review period conducted with management
- A review period at 3 months and an initial estimate of ROI
- 6 – 12 month final review and full ROI realisation

1 month after Four Group's team building process has ended, there exists a good opportunity to conduct an initial assessment of the new teams. While the new teams are only 4 weeks old, the experience of management and the use of internal ROI measurements are likely to indicate improved performance levels. Additionally, this first review period is a good chance to ensure that individuals and teams are running as intended and that management is beginning to experience tangible benefits from the work carried out.

While the first review at the end of month 1 ensures that all teams are running as required, the three month interval offers a chance to assess ROI after the teams have bedded down. The delivery of tangible and measurable results at this point illustrates that the differences are more than short term in nature. Again, returns are likely to be derived through existing internal measurements, targets, informal indicators of staff morale and the gut reaction given by management. Given the nature of teamwork and the new levels of performance, both Four Groups and the client should have a good feel for the final ROI that can be expected.

The last stage in the results process is that of establishing a final ROI and the sustainability of improved team performance. As additional time passes from the original team inception, internally measured results show a clear and lasting improvement and given the time factor, there is little doubting their sustainability. As departments grow and teams expand, additional inputs will be required to maintain optimal levels of team performance. 4G offers tangible returns on investment and keeps pace with any growing organisation.

## Optimise Your Team's Performance Today!

Four Group's systematic four stage approach to team building offers a clear path to tangible results. The process offers returns on investment that are easily illustrated using existing internal measures and in combining increased productivity, improved staff morale and greater management efficiency, team building adds to the overall success of the company. Given the importance that teams play in modern business life, the ability to control, enhance and



harness their power offers any company a distinct advantage over and above their competitors.

Try Four Groups Now. If you'd like a first hand view of how Four Group's systematic approach to team building can radically improve your company's team performance, staff morale and retention, visit us at [www.fourgroups.com](http://www.fourgroups.com) Alternatively, call us on +44 (0) 20 7250 4779 or email [contact@fourgroups.com](mailto:contact@fourgroups.com) and request a sales presentation. You too can create efficient, high performance business teams via 4G!



# Section 3 - Industry Opinions

## Industry Opinions

“It’s something of a truism that a company’s most valuable knowledge workers... require special handling. And when it comes to improving their performance, most organisations aspire to lofty heights of creativity and innovation. In fact, however, these organisations usually end up settling for modest operational efficiencies – even when they know that the greatest long term benefits come from the former, not the latter.” *Thomas Davenport, Human Performance 2, Accenture Outlook, 2002, Number 1*

“By providing workers with the right work context, organisations are likely to achieve at least some improvement in the performance of their most valuable workers. And even a little improvement can translate into a vast improvement for the company overall.” *Thomas Davenport, Human Performance 2, Accenture Outlook, 2002, Number 1*

“In practice, only about 5 percent of teams reach a level of performance that goes beyond the sum of what individuals could achieve on their own. It is perfectly possible therefore for [remote] teams to be among the best performers provided they pay attention to the first three team basics... shared beliefs, credibility & trust and shared space” *Richard Benson-Armer, Teamwork across Time and Space, McKinsey Quarterly, 1997, Number 4*

“The war for management talent is intensifying dramatically. Last year, McKinsey updated a 1997 study in which researchers surveyed 6,900 managers at 56 large and midsize US companies. The update found that 89 percent of those surveyed thought it is more difficult to attract talented people now than it was three years ago and 90 percent thought it is now more difficult to retain them. Just 7 percent of the survey’s respondents strongly agreed that their companies had enough talented managers to pursue all or the most promising business opportunities.” *Elizabeth Axelrod, The War for Talent Part 2, McKinsey Quarterly, 2001, Number 2*

“All eight felt extremely positive about the new approach [team building]. Real team capability has made a tremendous difference to their motivation, enthusiasm and commitment. As Nicholas puts it, “I can’t wait to get to work every morning; I never worked this hard or enjoyed my work this much.” Coming from a man considered to be the ultimate workaholic, this is quite an endorsement.” *Jon R. Katzenback, A Tougher Game at the Top, McKinsey Quarterly, 1997, Number 4*



# Contacts and Legal

## Contact Us

If you would like to find out more information, please contact us;

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## Legal

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