



## ENGLISH SPEAKING CORNER 2 – Team Bonding

Docente: *Alessandra Trimarchi*

### Team Bonding in the midst of Covid-19

#### Before you listen

1. What springs to mind when you hear the expression *team bonding*?
2. Why should companies and organisations invest on team bonding?
3. What is your personal experience of team bonding in the workplace?

#### While listening

**Marke the following sentences true/false/doesn't say. Correct the wrong ones.**

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| 1. Worldwide companies are not getting used to working remotely              | T/F/DS |
| 2. Business productivity and profitability benefit from strong team bonds.   | T/F/DS |
| 3. Employees benefit from current communication modes.                       | T/F/DS |
| 4. There is no action to promote team bonding worldwide at present.          | T/F/DS |
| 5. Prioritizing is central.  | T/F/DS |
| 6. It is important for employees to meet online whenever they can.           | T/F/DS |
| 7. Empathy can help understand everyone's reaction to the ongoing situation. | T/F/DS |
| 8. Do not waste time on personal conversations.                              | T/F/DS |
| 9. Arranging virtual gatherings can positively impact on productivity.       | T/F/DS |
| 10. Employees' resiliency for the future does not rely on team bonding.      | T/F/DS |

#### After you listen

- Make a list of **pros** and **cons** when talking about team bonding;
- Suggest some more **daily strategies** to improve team bonding.

## Answers

1) F; 2) T; 3) DS; 4) F; 5) T; 6) DS; 7) T; 8) F; 9) T; 10) F

## VIDEO LESSON COMPLETE TEXT – Team Bonding

Hi everyone and welcome back to our English corner, where to boost our language and challenge our skills.

As previously discussed, Covid-19 has been reshaping our working practice throughout the world. As more and more **companies are getting used to working remotely**, it's more important than ever to maintain that sense of connection for employees. At a time when employees need to feel connected more than ever, it's the experiences they share that help them get through each day. Social distancing can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness, **team bonding stands as a challenge** as well as an incredibly helpful opportunity for making people feel like they are not alone.

And this is going to be today's topic for us.

As just said, organizations around the world are struggling to maintain key relationships and connections within this new remote working structure. Indeed, **maintaining strong team relationships** is so important not just for morale but for **day to day productivity** (which ultimately impacts on **long term profitability**). We don't realize how much those quick chats in the break room, hallway conversations and meeting room banter create and sustain team bonds until they're gone. Now with everyone working from home, teams are unfortunately forced to rely on impersonal communication modes like emails, chat rooms and video conference calls to engender a sense of personal connection.

Not to fear though – **there is hope!** Leaders and teams around the world are using specific daily habits **to bridge the gap and promote bonding** with their teams.

Let's have a look together at some of these **recommended actions**:

1. First of all, set a **Clear and Rigid Prioritization** so that individuals and teams can work on the most valuable things even when they are remote;
2. Secondly, work in **Small, Cross-Functional Autonomous Teams**. Small teams build resiliency and make it easier to change direction when needed.
3. Thirdly, make sure you have a **Regular Rhythm of Meetings**. This is because a regular meeting cadence helps to make sure that everyone is aligned and enables collaboration when people are working from home. Overall, hosting a **daily virtual team check-in**, in our morning meetings, keeps employees connected and focused on their task throughout the day;
4. **Show Empathy**. Some people will respond more readily than others to the total disruption of their work environment. Those with children may have more challenges working from home than those without, for example. Consider that everyone's reaction to this situation will be different;
5. Employ **Transparency**. At a time when the only thing that seems certain is uncertainty itself, employers, managers and leaders should make an extra effort to be totally transparent about their work, ongoing deadlines, and their personal responses—even if the answer is, "I don't know right now."

6. Bear in mind the importance of **Engagement**. Encourage conversation among colleagues. Take time to connect on a more personal level. Not all online conversations should be about work. Ask colleagues how they are coping or how their family members are doing;
7. Finally, organise **virtual coffee breaks**. Taken together, these virtual breaks promote team bonding and also provide a nice mental break for workers who can recharge and ultimately increase their productivity.

To conclude, no one knows how long the COVID-19 crisis will last, it seems inevitable that many of us will be working remotely for at least weeks if not several months. Productivity is a priority. Team bonding can keep **remote teams functioning effectively** and make them **more resilient for the future**.

So, having a daily virtual coffee break or a five minute check-in at the beginning of meetings can be a **worthwhile investment**.

#### **Online sources:**

<https://www.bcg.com/it-it/publications/2020/remaining-agile-and-remote-through-covid.aspx>

<https://justworks.com/blog/virtual-team-bonding-during-covid-19>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/danabrownlee/2020/04/08/use-these-4-daily-habits-to-promote-remote-team-bonding/>