



# 17 TEAM BUILDING IDEAS

**BusinessManagement**  
DAILY

# 17 Team Building Ideas:

***The team building kit for managers with team building exercises, activities and games to build winning teams today!***

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## **17 Team Building Ideas:** ***Teamwork examples, exercises and tips*** ***for leading a winning team***

With employees still reeling from workplace budget cuts, now's a great time for new team building ideas. No, you don't need an expensive round of paintball to gain the benefits of team building exercises, but you do need to squeeze the most out of them. In this special report, **17 Team Building Ideas**, we'll show you how to do that.

**17 Team Building Ideas** provides teamwork examples, exercises and tips for leading winning teams. Specifically, you'll read tips on corporate team building, team building exercises that can help your team see the big picture, fun team building games (like Taking the Marshmallow Challenge), teamwork examples (such as Mayo Clinic's team collaboration secrets), steps to creative team building and change management training for your team.

Let **17 Team Building Ideas** take your leadership skills to the next level. Go from being a manager who oversees people to a leader who molds them into winning teams.

### **1. Corporate team building**

## **Help cross-team projects succeed, step-by-step**

Sometimes it's not clear how cross-team projects should proceed. Follow these guidelines on corporate team building for accomplishing as a group what individuals can't do alone.

- 1. Set up some basic parameters: a goal for the next meeting, everyone's role and the type of discussion (e.g., brainstorming vs. goal setting). Be sure to include any earlier agreements.
- 2. Use this series of framing questions. First, ask:
  - Where are we so far?
  - Can we report the status of the project's main elements, listing everything we know?
  - What do we want to achieve at this meeting, specifically?
- 3. At the next meeting, ask:
  - What's the best way to reach our goal for this meeting?
  - Should we brainstorm or share what we've prepared?

- How should we best think this through as a group?
- Let's throw around a few options and work out how to move forward.

■ 4. Make assignments and tap the energy of the group.

- What are our action items?
- Who's the best person to focus on each particular action?
- How do we make this happen?
- What's our deadline? (This is essential.)
- Next steps?

— Adapted from *Quiet Leadership*, David Rock, Collins.

## 2. Team management

### Leadership Rx for coaching your team

Well-supported teams receive the information, training and rewards they need to keep chugging along. Here are four prescriptions for coaching your team:

- 1. Don't skimp on guidance.** Employees are remarkably adept at developing self-correcting strategies, not to mention workarounds for obstacles. They'll be much more effective, though, if you're in there asking what they need and providing skilled coaching.
- 2. Get help if coaching isn't in your skill set.** You need to model the attitude you want your team to adopt, but an expert coach can jump in to help you if the processes for running large-scale projects aren't clear or you see conflict within or between your teams.
- 3. Timing is important.** At what point you offer coaching matters. The beginning is a good time to explain purpose and processes. Use natural break points—such as thirds or halfway through—to help everybody take stock, make adjustments and solve problems.

Debrief at the end of the launch, and run a postmortem later, especially if things go wrong.

- 4. Watch for coaching aptitude among your team members.** Any one of them may have the main coaching talent in your group. Draw on it, develop it and reinforce it. Resist the impulse to feel threatened and squelch it.

— Adapted from *Senior Leadership Teams*, Ruth Wageman, Debra A. Nunes, James A. Burruss, J. Richard Hackman, Harvard Business School Press.

## 3. Team building exercise

## Test your team's ability to see the big picture

People who don't understand strategy and the big picture can end up working hard on the wrong things, making poor decisions or even quitting out of frustration.

Do your people "get it"?

To find out, use this team building exercise to test their ability to discuss the big picture.

For example, ask each person the same five questions about strategy to see if their answers line up with yours:

1. Who are the customers or customer segments we serve, listed in priority order?
2. What are the services we provide now, and which ones, if any, need to change as we implement the current strategy?
3. What is our value proposition and how does it set us apart and give us an edge in the marketplace?
4. Which environmental trends/issues (such as market, economic, societal, political or environmental) are important to our strategy?
5. What are three things your division is doing (and/or doing differently) to support the strategy?

Each question gets at the intent behind the strategy. There are right answers and wrong ones. And the answers change as strategy changes.

Good people could be working really hard on the wrong thing if their understanding of these questions is off base. Your job, as a leader, is to ensure that everyone in your reporting structure knows the answers.

— Adapted from *The Executive Guide to High-Impact Talent Management*, Steve Trautman.

### 4. Team management

## Help your team get comfortable with risk

Encourage your team to take risks? The very idea is enough to make many CEOs shudder.

Because you shoulder the responsibility of keeping performance high for the entire organization, sometimes you may be risk averse. Even acknowledging the existence of

risk requires you to admit that you don't have all the answers. That doesn't sit well with the image of you as a fearless, confident leader.

Doug Stern, CEO of United Media, follows an explicit process anytime he faces a new, risky project, such as selling some of his company's assets. He uses the same tactics to help his team evaluate risks and build its confidence about confronting the unknown:

1. **He asks the team to imagine every bad scenario**, even the most unlikely—what he calls the “darkest nightmares.”
2. **He gives everyone a chance to describe those scenarios** in detail and then to “peer into the darkness” together.
3. **The team collectively devises a detailed plan** in response to each nightmare.
4. **After fears are exposed and dealt with**, the team has a protocol in place for every “nightmare” scenario.

**Bottom line:** CEOs who hone their skills at engaging with risk—who learn to acknowledge the fear and overcome that emotion—can also help others summon their courage and unleash tremendous potential.

— Adapted from “How centered leaders achieve extraordinary results,” Joanna Barsh, Josephine Mogelof and Caroline Webb, *McKinsey Quarterly*.

## 5. Team management

### 10 steps to get your team's mojo going

Need to get your team's momentum going, so they're invigorated and ready for their next goals? Here are 10 steps blogger Terry Starbucker recommends:

1. **Don't dive in—yet.** First, pause and reflect on the year gone by. Learn from the setbacks and savor the wins. Talk them over with your team.
2. **Analyze your blueprint.** Review your plans and projects. Visualize the full picture, then describe it.
3. **Size up your team.** *Ask yourself:* Is everybody committed to the plan? Do we have unresolved issues? Do we need to reshuffle tasks or jobs?
4. **Express the goals.** Call upon your team to help you articulate the big goal and three to five of the fastest or best ways to get there.
5. **Raise the bar.** Calculate how to do things better.
6. **Read your own fine print.** In Starbucker's parlance, the “fine print” is the flip side of your strengths. While it's good to be a “hard charger,” it's bad to charge right over your people or customers.

**7. Get out your “virtual Q-tip.”** Sit quietly without a smartphone or other distraction and take in what’s happening. Then create this “listening environment” every time you’re with one or more members of your team.

**8. Set an “accountability meter.”** This is not just the big target your team has to hit. It’s the expectation gauge for every person on the team.

**9. Give frequent feedback.** Key your feedback to your accountability meter and correct course immediately.

**10. Remain patient, calm and open to ideas.** Your people and your customers are looking to you to set the standard as their leader.

## [6. Fun team building game](#)

### **Taking the Marshmallow Challenge**

With 18 minutes, 20 sticks of spaghetti, a yard of tape, a yard of string and one marshmallow, Tom Wujec believes he can tell you how innovative any team is.

*Here’s how to conduct his fun team building game:*

After giving a four-member team the list of supplies mentioned above, Wujec asks them to build the tallest free-standing structure they can. The only rule: The marshmallow needs to be on top.

“I believe the Marshmallow Challenge is among the fastest and most powerful techniques for improving a team’s capacity to generate fresh ideas, build rapport and incorporate prototyping—all of which lie at the heart of effective innovation,” says Wujec, who is a Fellow at Autodesk, the leading 2D and 3D technology firm.

He has used this team building exercise with CEOs, business-school students and kindergartners. And he has learned some surprising lessons about the nature of collaboration.

Among them:

√ **“Ta-da!” can quickly turn to “Uh-oh.”** Most people begin by orienting themselves to the task, he says. They talk about what their structure will look like, sketch it out and jockey for a leadership position in the group.

Wujec says, “They spend most of their time assembling the structure, then just as they’re running out of time, they gingerly put a marshmallow on top. They stand back and

admire their work—“Ta-da!”” Then the entire structure collapses under the weight of the marshmallow.

√ **Rapid prototyping is the name of the game.** Recent graduates of kindergarten tend to perform best in the Marshmallow Challenge. They produce the tallest and most interesting structures.

Why? No one spends any time trying to be CEO of Spaghetti Inc.

Kindergartners, unlike other groups, start with the idea of the marshmallow and work backward, building multiple prototypes along the way. Kids get instant feedback with each version about what works and what doesn’t—in other words, they use an iterative process—so they don’t end up with a collapsed structure at the last moment.

√ **CEOs perform best with an executive admin on the team.** Why? Admins facilitate and manage the process. Facilitation skills plus specialized skills equal success.

Ultimately, says Wujec, the Marshmallow Challenge helps people find hidden assumptions, build a common language and learn how to manage the marshmallow.

— Adapted from MarshmallowChallenge.com.

## [7. Team building ideas](#)

### **Revisit team’s size and tasks**

Nothing right is going to happen with your team if the basic structure isn’t right. Here are some guidelines:

- 1. Look for signs that it’s too big.** The larger the team, the slower it moves. Consider a smaller team or a tiny executive committee.
- 2. Dispense with tactical trivia.** Toss everything except important work that requires collaboration.
- 3. Enforce healthy norms.** Four universal ones: everybody is as committed as the leader; every issue is on the table; everybody’s voice is heard; and what you say and do when you’re with the team is the same thing you say and do outside the team.
- 4. Have your team review its structure.** Revisit size and tasks.

— Adapted from *Senior Leadership Teams*, Ruth Wageman, Debra Nunes, James Burruss, J. Richard Hackman, Harvard Business School Press.

## 8. Team management

### **Consistent contributors = good team**

Whether a group is planning a conference or working on a shared budget, the more cooperative the group is, the more likely it can rise above a challenge. It helps a leader to understand, then, why some groups cooperate more than others.

In a new study published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, two professors find that a “consistent contributor” makes all the difference.

“The consistent contributor looks for the collective good first and personal good second,” explains Keith Murnighan, a professor of risk management at the Kellogg School of Management.

The contributor initiates cooperation, leading others to follow suit.

“In a larger group, if someone consistently acts as a friend, it’s easier for others to act as friends and everyone benefits,” says Murnighan. “In a budget meeting, for example, each person wants the most for his or her division or department. One person asks, ‘What’s in the best interest of the organization?’ The marketing department head sees that R&D is on the brink of a major breakthrough and says, ‘We can make do with what we had last year, so let’s contribute all of the increase to R&D.’ ”

**Bottom line:** Encourage consistent contributors on your team—or add one: yourself.

— Adapted from “Consistent Contributors,” *Kellogg Insight*.

## 9. Teamwork examples

### **‘FedEx Days,’ Mayo Clinic’s secret, teamwork after 9/11**

#### **1. ‘FedEx Days’: Forget carrot-and-stick motivators**

To get better results, companies don’t need better managers, says Daniel Pink, author of *Drive*. They need more radical autonomy among employees.

The old carrot-and-stick approach is failing, he says. It’s for work that most Americans aren’t doing anymore.

“It’s good for simple, routine, rule-based tasks, like turning a screw the same way,” he says. “But there’s 50 years of science that says it’s ineffective at creative, complex work.

*Example:* Atlassian, an Australian software company, holds something called “FedEx Days” once a quarter, on a Thursday afternoon.

On that day, leadership says to software developers, go work on whatever you want, with whomever you want. On Friday afternoon, show the rest of the company what you’ve done.

The initiative is called “FedEx Days” because team members have to deliver something overnight.

In one day, employees have come up with scores of ideas for new products, fixes to existing products, and other improvements within the firm.

The approach is radical, says Pink. Leadership is saying to a capable team, “Let me get out of your way because you’re a talented human being.”

“What we want more than anything else is engagement,” he says.

— Adapted from “On Leadership: Poisonous carrots, blunt sticks,” *The Washington Post*.

## **2. Mayo Clinic's success secret: team collaboration**

After a diagnosis, patients at the Mayo Clinic meet with a team of specialists who help them understand what’s happening so they can decide about treatment together, says president and CEO Denis Cortese.

This kind of teamwork is the stock-in-trade of Cortese, who won last year’s top leadership award from the National Center for Healthcare Leadership.

Asked why health care so often lacks the team collaboration that makes Mayo famous, Cortese traces the problem to medical schools, where he says students aren’t trained to work in teams. Each student takes exams alone, and even in clinical practice, most rewards relate to things you do as an individual, such as specialized procedures and reading X-rays.

What’s more, he says, “doctors are going into sub-, sub-, sub-specialties where it is easier to build all-in knowledge in that area where they operate alone. But it is difficult to take care of patients with five different conditions. That requires teams.”

Can you mimic the Mayo teams on behalf of your customers? A conference call up front to plan out services? A whole team descending on your customer’s problem like pit stop mechanics rushing up to refresh a racecar?

— Adapted from “Dr. Denis Cortese Talks About Mayo Clinic’s Culture of Collaboration as the Foundation for Patient-Centered Healthcare,” *Modern Healthcare*.

### **3. Teamwork after 9/11**

The day after friends, colleagues and family members died in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center, Mark Loehr asked his people to come to the office. Not to work, but to share their thoughts and feelings about what had happened and what they should do about it.

In the ensuing days, the CEO of SoundView Technology encouraged his team to find meaning in the horror by deciding on a project they all could participate in. Instead of making a group donation to victim relief, they decided to contribute one day of the technology brokerage's profits. In the past, that figure had reached as high as \$1 million, a remarkable contribution. But as word spread about what SoundView employees were doing, enthusiasm grew and the company ended up donating \$6 million.

In a crisis, people look to leaders for emotional guidance. Loehr helped his team find meaning even in the face of seemingly meaningless violence and chaos.

—Adapted from *Primal Leadership*, Daniel Goleman, Harvard Business Review Press.

## **10. Team management**

### **Encourage teams to share what they know**

A study published in the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* points out that companies investing in knowledge-transfer software aren't seeing much improvement in their information flow. *One reason:* Employees simply won't share what they know.

“A lot of companies have jumped on the bandwagon of knowledge sharing” by investing heavily in software, says one of the authors. “It was a case of, ‘If you build it, they will come.’ But they didn't come.”

Unlike knowledge hoarding, knowledge hiding is when someone intentionally conceals information from a colleague—perhaps out of distrust, or to undermine the other person.

Authors of the study say that people tend to hide knowledge in one of three ways:

- 1. Playing dumb.** Employees pretend not to have the requested information.
- 2. Being evasive.** Employees provide incorrect information or falsely promise to give a complete answer later.
- 3. Rationalized hiding.** An employee might say, “I'm not allowed to provide that information” or blame someone else for their inability to share.

Keep information flowing in your corridors and among your teams with these tactics:

√ Increase staff members' perceptions of their colleagues' trustworthiness. You can do it by emphasizing a shared identity, or highlight an example of an employee who followed through on a promise.

√ Encourage face-to-face contact and discourage a reliance on email communication.

√ Remove incentives for employees to "betray" one another.

Building a culture of trust is key in encouraging employees to share what they know.

— Adapted from "When Knowledge Sharing Turns to Knowledge Hiding,"  
strategy+business.

## 11. Creative team building

### **For the sake of your team, fire a prima donna**

If you're a leader who has a prima donna on your team (one who produces great results but alienates everyone), what should you do? It's simple. Bite the bullet and fire that person.

Here are three reasons why you should:

**1. You'll get more from the rest of your team.** Prima donnas are productivity and morale killers. When they're playing their game, everyone around them is miserable, resentful and spending most of their energy griping about the prima donna.

Take the diva (or divo, as the case may be) out of the picture and everyone else gets on with the work. As a leader, you'll likely be pleasantly surprised by how much more creative the rest of your team is when they get to breathe some of the oxygen the prima donna was sucking out of the room.

**2. You'll send the right message.** While it feels a little strange to quote Karl Marx, curing a prima donna situation is one in which the good of the many outweighs the good of the few. By getting rid of the prima donna, you send the message that the health and welfare of the team is more important than the ego of any individual.

Most people are motivated by being a part of something that's bigger than themselves. You can't create the conditions for that to happen when one person is demanding the spotlight. Don't let one bad apple spoil the whole bunch.

**3. You'll save yourself headaches.** As tough as it can be to let go of someone who is getting results at a critical time, you've got to do it and look at it as an investment in the long-term success of your team.

It's like removing a Band-Aid from your arm. You know the Band-Aid will pull some hairs out when you remove it. You can just rip it off or peel it slowly. Either way, it's going to hurt. You might as well rip it off and get it over with. The same is true of firing someone who's established a history of being a long-term source of heartburn and headaches. Get it over with.

## 12. Corporate team building

### **Foster teamwork to cut costs by sharing financials**

One thing that binds the Zappos team together is an openness with numbers. It shares vital signs not just on the team level, but across the entire company.

What are the tenets of a team culture that values such broadcasts? Speak to the masses. Craft and communicate metrics in a language everyone can understand. Make deadlines and accountability visible.

At the online shoe company, for example, a finance class teaches every employee to read a balance sheet.

“Last year, a lot of people in the company wondered how we did a billion dollars in revenue but didn't turn a big profit,” says Loren Becker, a supervisor of training at Zappos. “So we showed everyone that about half of our money went to buying the goods we sold, a quarter went to rent and salaries, a quarter went to advertising and other expenses. Pretty soon there's not a lot left over of that billion.”

That communication about financials has fostered teamwork in cutting costs.

Becker hears people saying things like, “Maybe we can do without these pens.”

“We've become a lot more cost conscious because of our openness,” she says.

**Lesson:** Broadcast deadlines, goals, responsibilities and progress for everyone to see. Help team members be more aware of each group's objectives.

— Adapted from “The Orange Revolution,” Adrian Gostick and Chester Elton.

## 13. Change management training

### **Teach your team how to respond to change**

You've laid out how you're going to hold the team accountable, and they all understand what's expected of them. You've planted responsibility squarely in their laps. But you're not totally home free.

There's one more piece of the puzzle left: responding to change.

Few teams remain static over time. As an organization matures, so does a group's mission. Objectives can and often do change midstream. This can occur when:

- **A team must respond** to an urgent competitive threat.
- **A management shakeup can lead** the team in a different direction.
- **A new technology enables** a team to grapple with new challenges.
- **Some members of the group leave**, and newcomers bring different skills or backgrounds.

#### Try team building ice breakers

Break the ice quickly with a new team by trying this: Ask everyone to think of a nickname they've had or one they'd like to have. Tell them to write it on an index card, keeping the name hidden from others. Then collect the index cards. Read the names one at a time and ask the group to guess who owns each one.

Change can prove especially disruptive if it deflates or defeats the team's performance to date.

Teammates who were held accountable for producing results may now complain: "It was all for nothing," "We don't want to start from scratch" or "This new setup just isn't fair—the goals aren't realistic."

Managing a team's disenchantment will test your leadership skills. Unless you take the easy way out and disband the group, you'll need to achieve three quick goals:

1. **Convince the team** that the changes will ultimately benefit them and/or the organization.
2. **Urge the team to work** with you to revise its mission.
3. **Settle on a new set** of accountabilities so that all the members know how they'll be measured from this point forward.

The key to managing change is not to overfacilitate. Events can unfold rapidly and unpredictably. Trying to control the team's actions or rushing to reassure the group when you're still unsure what will happen next can backfire.

A wiser strategy is to unclog the lines of communication. Alert the team as to what the changes will mean to its purpose and goals. Promptly inform everyone of new developments.

**Tip:** Send e-mail alerts to team members whenever there's news to report. If you need them to refocus their efforts and deliver “stretch goals” within a tight time frame, explain in the e-mail the circumstances and context so that they see how their contribution affects the big picture. Sending a group e-mail ensures that every team member will receive the same information.

One benefit of weathering change is that you buy some time to establish a new yardstick to measure the team's performance. Don't rush to impose a detailed list of accountabilities. Evaluate team members on their flexibility and overall attitude as much as on their actual work product.

## 14. Team building ideas

### Tie 'bonding' activities to core values

Next time you're tasked with coming up with a good “bonding” activity for your team, take a cue from today's event planners. In the past five years, more companies have veered away from outdoor team building—organized sports and ropes courses—and are trying nontraditional events.

The best events tie in somehow to a company's core values and have a philanthropic element. A few examples:

- **Sign up to work** on a Habitat for Humanity house.
- **Volunteer** at a food bank.
- **Incorporate an element** of surprise by organizing scavenger hunts with puzzles that lead to local landmarks.
- **Adopt a park**, stream or other space and have a “cleanup” day.
- **Spend an afternoon** assembling kids' bicycles, then donate them to children in need.
- **Use Volunteer Match** ([www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org)) to find ideas to help local charity organizations. Simply enter a ZIP code and an area of interest and—presto!—a truly great event materializes.

**Tip:** Whatever you choose, watch the clock. Longer than two hours, and participants tire of almost anything

## 15. Creative team building

### Diversify your team by job, age, gender

You probably know that a diverse group is likely to yield the most creative work. But you may not realize just *how* diverse a team should be, particularly if it needs to come up with new, innovative ideas.

“Diversity guarantees the best project result and usually some layer of innovation,” says Gary Curtis, a managing director at the technology consulting firm Accenture.

Your team needs diversity in three areas:

**1. Job function:** “You need people who can see things differently and not get trapped in their own disciplinary assumptions,” says Robert I. Sutton, a Stanford University engineering professor. “People from different disciplines will have different points of view.”

**2. Age:** Younger employees, or “millennials,” for example, come to the workplace with “a whole different life experience, especially with regard to technology in their personal lives,” Curtis says.

**3. Gender:** “A team of all men is generally going to work in a hierarchical way. If it’s a big team, men are more comfortable taking their part of the problem and going off and solving it,” Curtis says. In comparison, a team of women tend to work in a more communal way.

— Adapted from “Building a new-age workforce,” Julia King, *Computerworld*.

## 16. Fun team building activities

### **Pet pageants, cook-offs, ugliest earrings contest**

Liven up your workplace with one of these morale-boosting team events:

■ **Pet pageant.** Employees post photos of their pets on a bulletin board. Make up categories, and then have everyone vote on their favorites. *Examples:* cutest, funniest picture, best pet/owner look-alike, best pet story.

■ **Chili cook-off.** Each department cooks up its favorite chili recipe and enters it into the contest. A panel of “chili experts” selects the champion, or everyone votes on their favorite.

■ **Awful tie/ugly earrings.** Everyone comes to work wearing his or her entries. Place a voting box in the office, and then tally up ballots at the end of the day. Bring a camera and post photos of the winners.

- **“You ought to be in pictures.”** Give employees a photo of a top executive to take home for their children to draw. (Limit the contest to children age 12 and under.) Employees vote for their favorite drawing. Hang the winning portrait somewhere visible.
  
- **Create a “spirit team,”** made up of employees up and down the ladder. *Example:* At General Mills, a spirit team seeks out and identifies activities that build a common culture and encourage positive feelings about the company. A few years ago, the team suggested doing volunteer work with a particular nonprofit. Employee satisfaction surveys show volunteering makes them feel good about their jobs and the organization.

## 17. Team building ideas

### 3 ways to ward off groupthink

Collaboration works—until it starts to resemble groupthink. That’s when healthy dissent evaporates, self-defeating tendencies surge and negative emotions corrode the group’s work.

Make sure your team is working more like the Manhattan Project and less like Enron: Three ideas:

- 1. Model constructive dissent.** Play devil’s advocate and disagree with a unanimous decision. *Benefit:* You’ll encourage a reluctant but wise person to speak up.
  
- 2. Have a brainstorming group write ideas on unattributed Post-it notes.** Why? No one knows whether an idea came from top brass or a low-level player, so people back ideas with merit regardless of source.
  
- 3. Encourage team members to do self-affirmations.** Research by behavioral scientist Tanya Menon shows that simply listing one’s own personal skills and accomplishments before meeting with a group enhances one’s ability to let colleagues shine.

— Adapted from “When Groups Don’t Think,” Jake Mohan, Utne Reader.

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*Think you deserve a raise, but are afraid to walk into your boss's office and ask? Don't let ineffective negotiation skills hold you back. Employees at all levels can boost their career earnings by following the rules on negotiating a raise, hashing out the best pay package in a job offer negotiation and knowing their market value.*

[www.businessmanagementdaily.com/SalaryNegotiating101](http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/SalaryNegotiating101)

**FMLA Intermittent Leave**: 5 guidelines to managing intermittent leave and curbing leave abuse under the new FMLA regulations

*One of the biggest employer complaints about the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is the productivity problems caused by employees' use—and abuse—of FMLA intermittent leave. The problem: Employees with chronic health problems often take FMLA leave in short increments of an hour or less. The Department of Labor took steps to help minimize workplace disruptions due to unscheduled FMLA absences by saying that, in most cases, employees who take FMLA intermittent leave must follow their employers' call-in procedures for reporting an absence. Amend your organization's policies, update your employee handbook and revisit how you track FMLA intermittent leave with these 5 guidelines.*

[www.businessmanagementdaily.com/FMLAIntermittentLeave](http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/FMLAIntermittentLeave)

**Overtime Labor Law**: 6 compliance tips to avoid overtime lawsuits, wage-and-hour Labor audits and FLSA exemption mistakes

*Employers, beware: The Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division reports that wage-and-hour labor litigation continues to increase exponentially. Federal class actions brought under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) outnumber all other types of private class actions in employment-related cases. Use this special report, Overtime Labor Law: 6 compliance tips to avoid overtime lawsuits, wage-and-hour Labor audits and FLSA exemption mistakes, to review your overtime pay policy and double-check your FLSA exempt employees' status. Expecting a visit from a DOL auditor? Get prepared by taking the self-audit at the end of this report.*

[www.businessmanagementdaily.com/OvertimeLaborLaw](http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/OvertimeLaborLaw)

**Office Communication Toolkit**: 10 tips for managers on active listening skills, motivating employees, workplace productivity, employee retention strategies and change management techniques

*A manager's job is 100 times easier and more rewarding when his or her employees are performing like a well-oiled machine. But when that machine runs slowly or breaks down entirely, a manager's job becomes exponentially harder. The best managers are the best listeners ... listen to our 10 tips and maximize office communication skills and bolster workplace productivity.*

[www.businessmanagementdaily.com/OfficeCommunicationToolkit](http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/OfficeCommunicationToolkit)

## **Workplace Violence Prevention Toolkit:** HR advice, guidelines and policies to keep your workplace safe

*Unfortunately, in the wake of a spate of workplace shootings, HR professionals and managers nationwide must consider the horrific possibility of violence erupting at their own facilities and events. To help employers prevent tragedy, this toolkit offers business advice, guidelines and policies aimed at keeping workplaces safe from employee violence. Learn prevention strategies, tips on identifying potentially violent workers, managerial advice on maintaining a safe workplace. It includes two sample anti-violence policies, adaptable for use in any company, plus checklists to use in case violence erupts.*

[www.businessmanagementdaily.com/WorkplaceViolencePrevention](http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/WorkplaceViolencePrevention)

## **14 Tips on Business Etiquette:** Setting a professional tone with co-workers, clients and customers

*For organizations and employees alike, recognizing the critical link between business protocol and profit is key to your success. Learn how to confidently interact with colleagues in ways that make you and your whole organization shine. Discover best practices on making proper introductions; cubicle etiquette; “casual dress” rules; handshake protocol; guest etiquette; workplace behavior faux pas; business dining etiquette, office wedding invites and other co-worker special occasions; business letter and email protocol—and even how your office decorations may affect your professional image.*

[www.businessmanagementdaily.com/BusinessEtiquette101](http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/BusinessEtiquette101)

## **12 Ways to Optimize Your Employee Benefits Program:** Low-cost employee incentives, recognition programs and employee rewards

*If you've had to cut pay and staff and now expect more from those who remain, it's vital to revamp your employee recognition and rewards program. Employers can double their rewards and recognition efforts in innovative, cost-efficient ways with employee-of-the-month awards, employee incentive pay, employee appreciation luncheons, more time off, shopping sprees, wellness incentive contests, plus employee rewards customized to motivate Millennials, Gen Xers, Baby Boomers and the Matures. Now is the time to get clever with your employee recognition programs. This report shows you how with great ideas offered up from our [Business Management Daily](#) readers.*

[www.businessmanagementdaily.com/EmployeeBenefitsProgram](http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/EmployeeBenefitsProgram)

## **The Bully Boss Strikes Again!** How to deal with bosses who make crazy requests

*And you thought your boss was unreasonable? Bet he never asked you to perform oral surgery or fill in for the bomb squad. Talk about “other duties as assigned!” Even if your direct supervisor swamps you with petty tasks and doesn't appreciate all you do, you can always “manage up” to make sure the boss's boss knows your worth. This report includes practical advice on how to manage a toxic boss along with dozens of outrageous stories about bully bosses.*

<http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/BullyBoss>

## **Microsoft Email: Outlook Tips & Training**: How to improve productivity by effectively employing under-used features already at your fingertips

*We all use Outlook. It's easy. You can answer email, keep your appointments and your calendar, and save your files in various folders. But are you using it to manage your entire workflow? You can. Melissa P. Esquibel combines her 25+ years of experience in information technology with a background in training, technical writing and business risk analysis to move beyond email and help you understand Outlook's amazing workflow benefits. You'll discover how to get more out of Outlook than you ever dreamed possible with this hands-on road map to Outlook that can send your productivity skyrocketing.*

<http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/MicrosoftEmailOutlook>

## **17 Team Building Ideas**: The team building kit for managers with team building exercises, activities and games to build winning teams today!

*With employees still reeling from workplace budget cuts, now's a great time for new team building ideas. No, you don't need an expensive round of paintball to gain the benefits of team building exercises, but you do need to squeeze the most out of them. This report provides teamwork examples, exercises and tips for leading winning teams. Go from being a manager who oversees people to a leader who molds them into winning teams with these 17 team building ideas.*

[www.businessmanagementdaily.com/TeamBuildingIdeas](http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/TeamBuildingIdeas)

## **10 Time Management Tips**: A how-to guide on efficiently managing your time through effective delegating, calendar management and using productivity tools

*In this era of downsizing and the quest for efficiency, businesses of all sizes are asking employees to take on extra tasks to boost productivity. Has your job turned into one of those "stretch jobs"? If so, you may be looking for a better way to get more done in less time, reduce stress and stop burning the midnight oil. Read about calendar management, keyboard shortcuts, running productive meetings, setting up agenda templates and using tech tools for project management with these 10 time management tips. Learn to prioritize your tasks and stop working in a crisis mode all the time*

[www.businessmanagementdaily.com/TimeManagementTips](http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/TimeManagementTips)

## About Business Management Daily

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