



Case study – Yoga based team building event

The mission: Encouraging communication and teamwork

The client: Inside Outside Marquees Ltd, Bookham, Surrey

The date: April 2016

The problem

Inside Outside Marquees is a premier supplier of marquees for the events industry in the South East. The business is privately owned. Through successful marketing and business development, they were ramping up for their busiest season ever.



But there were concerns amongst management that the operations team had become slightly disengaged and that communication could improve in all directions. Teamwork on site is imperative to deliver high level customer service objectives. A disengaged and disinterested operations team were unlikely to live up to the high expectations.

A need was identified to remind everyone of this, encouraging the team to communicate and creating a platform for management to deliver a positive message of inclusion and mutual respect.

The solution



Sometimes, constantly working “in” a business means that working “on” it can be difficult. This particular team is quite physical, as they do a lot of manual work outside.

We suggested giving them some time out through engaging the mind and body in physical activity. A yoga-focussed team building session seemed a good idea!

So how did we get a team of 12 fit and strong, alpha male Marquee Erectors to engage in a yoga practice? It was, in fact, quite easy!

The beauty of yoga is that, as soon as the power of the breath is introduced and participants are given permission to simply relax and be still, the dynamic changes totally.



A lovely marquee was erected on the car park to create a new space for this activity. The day started with a gentle practice of breathing and movement. This immediately revealed injuries amongst several of the team members – An opportunity for management to put in place an employee wellbeing program to help people avoid injury and retain their mobility.

The yoga practice was interspersed with team building activities. The main aim of the group games where to make people rely on each other by removing the sense of sight.

The first game was **Blindfolded Rope Laying** – a race to get across the room as a team. This is a particularly good activity to discover leadership traits amongst team members. It certainly provided a few laughs too!



The second activity was again blindfolded. This time, each team was strapped together, and again the aim was to **Move as one** across the room. With a range of different heights, physical strength, injuries and personalities, working in close proximity with others demands consideration and respect. And again, the fun and laughter proved that communication was taking place at all levels!

Another yoga session challenged the team to do more difficult physical activities, with some balances and mild back bends included. Everyone enjoyed the physical challenge, and it was interesting to see how the natural competitiveness came out in the arm balancing sequence. For men who had never tried these yoga poses before, but were clearly blessed with good upper body strength, attempting and achieving “The Crow” was quite an accomplishment, and very empowering!



The final activity of the afternoon, now that everyone was relaxed and engaged, was to discuss the positives and negatives of their jobs. This gave management a good insight into how everyone felt, and where changes could be made to improve the general situation. Every person participated, and the positive message delivered at the end was well-received. Yoga had paved the way for open, objective communication.

The outcome

Iain Booth, MD of Inside Outside Marquees, said:

“Cathy ran a team building session for our full time staff, which was a lot of fun, and a great success. She has been a huge support to me personally, and the business has a more promising future with the team we are building together.”



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