

Team Building Program Template

The template below is included as a starting point to help leaders who desire deeper, transformational change on their teams. Even if you do not have the budget to bring in external resources, you can still be successful by leveraging internal experts and thought leaders. More information (including details about the exercises references here) can be found in *All Rise: Practical Tools for Building High-Performance Legal Teams*.

Step 1: Diagnose

- A. Conduct the Team Health Assessment (survey + interviews)
 - a. A template for the survey can be found at AllRiseBook.com. The survey should be distributed to all team members, including team leaders (e.g., partners). The goal is to develop a heat map of strengths and weaknesses for further inquiry.
 - b. Conduct confidential interviews with a representative sample of team members (including team leaders), asking for specific examples related to the strengths and weaknesses surfaced in the survey. An outsider, such as someone from the HR or professional development team, may be necessary to encourage candor. The goal is to resolve ambiguities from the survey and extract specific examples to enrich the assessment.
 - c. Compile key themes into a report for the leadership team.
- B. Meet with the leadership team to review the Team Health Assessment and set training priorities.

Step 2: Introduce the Principles of High-Performance Teams

- A. Format: Full-day and half-day training sessions will be the most impactful. A two-hour training can also work but will require significant adaptation of the agenda suggested below. Be sure to include all members of the team (e.g., both partners and associates).
- B. Description: Frame this training session as a kickoff, not a one-and-done event. The goals are (i) to build a common vocabulary around the principles and processes we need to be successful; (ii) to open a dialogue about where we are and the distance to travel; and (iii) to commit to the role we *all* play in the team's improvement.

C. Sample Agenda:

- a. Begin with an overview of key traits of high-performance teams: trust, ownership, productive conflict, and accountability.
- b. Open an honest dialogue by dividing participants into breakout groups (4-6 people) and prompting them to share their personal opinions on which of the “agree or disagree” statements in the survey portion of the Team Health Assessment illustrate the team’s current strengths and weaknesses.
- c. Dive deeper into each of the key traits on high-performance teams. (In a two-hour program, select at most 2-3 traits for deep dives.) For each trait, in addition to brief lectures where necessary, use breakout sessions to encourage concrete, actionable discussions. For example, use the Motivation Sharing Exercise and Social Styles assessments to build trust (see Chapter 4 of All Rise).
- d. If leaders have specific proposals in mind to address pressing concerns, have the team discuss those proposals in breakout groups to encourage ownership and sharpen the implementation plan. Collect any feedback from these breakouts for later.
- e. End the session with a review of action items. If more time is required to consider proposals, be clear about who is in charge of each effort and the expected deadline.

Step 3: Monitor Progress

- A. After the introductory training session, set a timeline to follow up on any agreed-upon action items.
- B. Every three to six months, conduct an abbreviated survey (see “Pulse Check Surveys” in Chapter 17 of All Rise) to check in on the biggest areas of concern from the Team Health Assessment.
- C. Conduct additional training sessions every six months based on the specific needs of the group (e.g., Feedback or Delegation). For example, each chapter of this book reflects one (or more than one) training session from my own curriculum.
- D. Every twelve months, repeat the full Team Health Assessment (both the survey and interviews) to set new training priorities.

Step 4: Rinse and Repeat

1. Typically, after three to four years, teams will need to restart the cycle, beginning with a refresher on the core principles of trust, ownership, productive conflict, and accountability. (This also ensures that new employees do not miss these fundamental concepts, though they can also be trained via “catch-up” sessions.)
2. Before restarting the cycle, gather feedback on the training program as a whole, iterating as needed to ensure the program meets the needs of your particular organization.